

I.S.S.

OCCASIONAL PAPERS

THE STRUCTURE OF DEVELOPMENT:

an invitation to the sociology
of Norbert Elias

Godfried van Benthem van den Bergh

Working paper, not for quotation. The views
expressed in this paper are those of the author
and do not imply the endorsement of the
Institute of Social Studies.

(No.13, October 1971)



Institute of Social Studies
THE HAGUE - THE NETHERLANDS

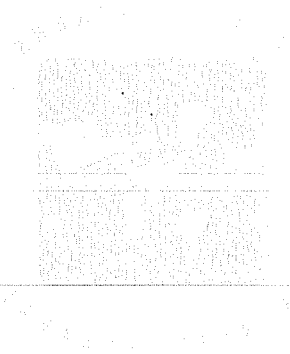
OCCASIONAL PAPERS

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

1954

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

1954



"My whole conviction is that our image of and orientation in our social world will become very much easier once we realize that human beings are not economic in one of their pockets, political in another and psychological in another, in other words that no real divisions correspond to these traditional conceptual divisions".

Norbert Elias

1. Introduction: the state of development and peace research

The study of development of societies has created a growing awareness among its practitioners that the academic disciplines in which they have been reared, are inadequate as tools both for the diagnosis and for the therapy of the problems with which they are concerned. Because they do not sufficiently understand the "mechanisms", the "dynamics" of the overall socio-economic and political processes, which they designate as "development", they cannot sufficiently cope with the practical problems to which these processes give rise. It is not only in development studies that the need for multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary research is acutely felt. The same is true for what has come to be called peace research: the study of the causes of war and the conditions of peace. Both development and peace research have emerged as the consequence of an awareness of urgent social problems, perhaps in the final analysis of the belief that the survival of the human species has become problematic, given the combination of the availability of unprecedented means of destruction and the increasing competition for life-chances resulting from population growth and the direction of technological and organisational development. This belief stands in sharp contrast both to the idea of progress, the basic assumption shared by the founders of the social sciences in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and to the idea of "having arrived" with which social scientists in the industrialized countries reassured themselves (and others) after postwar economic recovery had succeeded. ¹⁾ Both the belief that history ("objectively", automatically) moves towards certain desirable goals and the assumption that the present political and

1) Examples can be found in the work of W.W. Rostow, Seymour Martin Lipset, Daniel Bell, Raymond Aron.

socio-economic system would continue indefinitely could give a relatively large degree of confidence to social scientists. Especially after the second assumption became dominant, did it become easy for social scientists to find a niche for themselves in a particular discipline or specialisation, to study a particular aspect of society, economy or polity without doubting the meaning and relevance of their activities. This conservative assumption together with the material and status advantages resulting from producing 'useful' information has been responsible for the increasing specialisation within the social sciences before there had emerged a common paradigm by which these specialisations could be justified on the grounds of the progress of theory-building.²⁾ The social sciences have in fact accepted as their (implicit) paradigm the structure of industrial society as it had developed in the context of multi-party states: "... the division of the social sciences and the occupational role systems of industrialized societies are congruent with one another to a remarkable degree."³⁾ It is therefore not surprising that problems which transcend the framework of these industrial state societies could not be adequately dealt with by the existing disciplines. Both development and war and peace are in fact problems of mankind as an interdependent, structured whole, of a world made interdependent by the process of expansion of the West. At the same time that these problems were becoming increasingly urgent the industrial state societies have begun to lose the stability of the postwar period which was based on a wide consensus that they had solved their fundamental problems, so that their future would only be "more of the same", while they held up to the rest

2) I use the term paradigm in the meaning given to it by Thomas Kuhn, "The Structure of Scientific Revolutions", Chicago, 1962. A paradigm is a set of "universally recognized scientific achievements that for a time provide model problems and solutions to a community of practitioners". A paradigm therefore makes it possible to practice what Kuhn calls "normal science", and compares with puzzle-solving, i.e. even though the rules and methods for the solution of problems are given, their solution still requires a great deal of ingenuity. In periods of 'scientific revolution', when the old paradigm proves insufficient because important problems cannot be solved and new ones compete for its succession, scientists return to questioning the foundations of their discipline, acquire interests in problems of 'philosophy' etc.

3) J.F. Glastra van Loon - "Social Science and Social Change" in Development and Change, 1, 1969, pp.35-49.

of the world the image of its own future.⁴⁾ The radical protest movements, that unexpectedly emerged in the Western welfare states in the sixties, have particularly affected the social sciences. In trying to shake the foundations of their societies, the new protest movements have made it clear that the foundations of the social sciences are shaky indeed, that they lack not only an established body of theory, but even a common paradigm and a method by which criteria to determine the relevance and moral acceptability of social-scientific research can be developed.⁵⁾ Social scientists now seem to be faced with the choice between either simply going about their business - which in practice often means linking their work to the policies of existing public and private bureaucracies and helping these to increase their control over their environment - or admitting their dis-orientation and confusion as the first prerequisite for the development of new criteria for social scientific specialisation and cooperation.⁶⁾ Every individual social scientist now is to a very large extent forced to create his own social science - again, unless he is able to function as an 'expert' or

-
- 4) This is for example the message of the concluding chapter of Seymour Martin Lipset's influential book "Political Man", New York, 1960. Who could now still dare to write: "... the fundamental political problems of the industrial revolution have been solved; the workers have achieved industrial and political citizenship; the conservatives have accepted the welfare state; and the democratic left has recognized that an increase in over-all statepower carries with it more danger to freedom than solution for economic problems. This very triumph of the democratic social revolution in the West ends domestic politics for those intellectuals who must have ideologies or utopias to motivate them to political action"? The assumption of "more of the same" also runs through much of what passes for "futurology", like Kahn and Wiener's "The year 2000" and Brzezinski's conception of "technetronic society".
- 5) For the last problem see Godfried van Benthem van den Bergh, "Science and Reason in Peace Research" in Proceedings of the International Peace Research Association, Third General Conference. Vol. I, Philosophy of Peace Research, Assen 1970, pp.220-230.
- 6) In chapter 2 of his "A sociology of sociology" (New York, 1970) Robert W. Friedrichs provides a long list of contenders for an alternative to the "system" paradigm, which he considers to have determined "normal" sociology after the second world war. He also cites (p. 27) a study by Mihailo Popovitch, who has reported that only six out of thirty prominent American sociologists which he interviewed in the academic year 1963-1964 believed that their discipline could claim a single "over-arching theoretical posture". Significantly, the dominant response to the question what they considered the most important problem for sociology was "social change".

'specialist'. For some time the lack of theoretical integration has been hidden behind the screen of sophisticated methodology, but that screen is now also beginning to wear thin. What remains is confusion. To a world desperately in need of orientation, of understanding how the world is changing as it is, social scientists have little to offer. Many young development and peace researchers therefore started to look for theoretical guidance in Marxism, because that does offer a theory of the development of human society, which incorporates socio-economic and political factors. But Marxism has the handicap of being not just another more fruitful theory. It has also developed into a series of contending political ideologies, guiding and legitimating the political systems of states and the power aspirations of political parties and revolutionary movements. This has prevented many Marxists from developing their historical-sociological theory - and those who do tend to emphasize the inadequacy of its present theory.⁷⁾ Marxism clearly offers an alternative paradigm, but it is not a fully satisfactory one. The strength of Marxist theory is its recognition of the importance of the political consequences (shifts in power distribution; class formation) of increasing social and economic differentiation (industrialisation, technological advance). The concepts of class and surplus appropriation, and the analysis of the dynamics of "free" economic competition are scientific discoveries the importance of which has still not been sufficiently understood - for the obvious reason that they are not comforting to the privileged strata in nearly all state societies of the present world, including most of those professing a Marxist state ideology. But Marxist theory is weak in precisely the same areas that the established Western social sciences have also neglected: state formation and national integration processes; the consequences of interdependencies between state-societies for the political, economic and social development within state-societies. And these processes and patterns of interdependence are crucial both for development and for peace research.

7) See f.e. Norman Birnbaum - "The Crisis in Marxist Sociology". Social Research, 35, 1968, pp.348-380.

As far as I know most attempts to get a better grip on development processes or on the conditions of peace through multi-disciplinary or inter-disciplinary teamwork have also failed.⁸⁾ This is not surprising: the lack of a common paradigm could not be but prohibitive. Either cooperation is impossible or the paradigm of one of the disciplines has to be accepted by the representatives of the other disciplines. In development studies economists have often succeeded in having their paradigm accepted as the common frame of reference, so that they were able to enlist sociologists, anthropologists or political scientists in their services to deal with the "obstacles" to the application of their theories. In peace research it have been mostly individual scholars who have combined elements from different disciplines for the theories which they have developed.⁹⁾

Both development and peace research have had to face yet another difficulty: the divergent value-orientations and/or political allegiances of its practitioners leading to as yet unresolved debates about the definitions of "development" and "peace",¹⁰⁾ in which often 'peace' came to mean 'development' and vice versa. The concepts of development and peace both have not only descriptive meaning, but also normative associations. Both development and peace research are commonly understood to be problem and/or policy oriented. That has to lead to "political" debates among its practitioners. But in these debates questions pertinent to diagnosis have very often become intertwined with questions pertinent to therapy. How is the world becoming as it is? What do we consider desirable directions for world society to take? How can the process of social development be changed in desired directions?

Even though diagnosis and therapy in practice are inseparable, there is still a difference. Therapy poses greater normative problems than diagnosis. But therapy without adequate diagnosis is impossible.

8) See f.e. Michael Lipton. Interdisciplinary Studies in Less Developed Countries. Journal of Development Studies, October 1970, pp.5-18.

9) Most influential have been Johan Galtung, Kenneth Boulding and Anatol Rapaport.

10) See f.e. Johan Galtung "Violence, Peace and Peace Research". Journal of Peace Research, 1969, no.3, pp.167-191 and Dudley Seers "The Meaning of Development", International Development Review, December 1969, pp.1-6.

In order to adequately design development or peace policies the structure of development processes has to be understood. And to those sceptical of the usefulness of 'theory' or afraid that scientific knowledge will inevitably be misused, I would reply that even if knowledge of development processes is misused (according to criteria of development like equality or ecological balance) by policy makers, it will in any case according to one important criterion - diminish human suffering - be used beneficially. The more knowledge of the likely outcomes of decisions that policy-makers will have, the less blindly they can try to achieve their (perhaps abominable) goals, the less likely it is that they will feel forced to resort the use of physical coercion or terror when they meet with resistance. Therefore I believe it is justified to assume that distantiated diagnosis - even if misused by powerful bureaucracies or rulers - can help to reduce the human costs of the struggles and conflicts that we call history.

2. The Structure of Systems or the Structure of Change?

The social sciences have taken as their paradigm the structure of industrial state societies: societies with a highly developed division of labour, with a complex money economy, with large central administrations, with one or more political parties, a high degree of urbanisation and only a minority engaged in food production. Each of the major social sciences - sociology, economics and political science - made the boundaries of their units of analysis coincide with those of territorial states. International Relations were only studies as subfields of economics and political science, dealing with the political relations (conflict and cooperation) between states and with international trade. Transnational interdependencies and processes have not been systematically studied by any discipline. Specialisation in the social sciences has been the consequence not of theoretical considerations, but of the division of labour within a state-society at a level of socio-economic development at which it became to some extent possible to separate the economy, the polity and the society from each other and treat and study them as more or less autonomous. The economic, political and social subdivisions within a society of this type were taken as a given, particular aspects and interrelationships of which could be made the object of scientific research. To use scientific method in the manner of the natural sciences "parameters" and "ceteris paribus" had to be introduced. And this was in

turn facilitated by assuming the autonomy of the sub-divisions (now often called "sub-systems") of societies corresponding with the three major social sciences economics, sociology and political science. The object of social scientific research in the conception of social science based on a model derived from the natural sciences (at a particular stage of their development) was to develop generalisations and eventually theories about relations between "variables" tested through comparative analysis of different "systems". To find explanations for the historical development of societies and their interrelations could in that conception not be a task for the social sciences. Their perspective thus had to be static.

Next to the empirical social sciences which implicitly took the structure of industrial state societies as it now is as their framework, explicit attempts to articulate a paradigm have also been made. In sociology Talcott Parsons's representation of society as a "structural-functional system", the maintenance, adaptation to the environment and integration of which was assured primarily by a "central value system" was the most influential. As Friedrichs notes, "system" and "function" became the major organizing principles of the textbooks with which a whole post-war generation of sociologists was reared.¹¹⁾ In political science David Easton's "The Political System" was similarly influential. The "system" paradigm and the implicit image of Western society as having become inherently stable fitted together perfectly. As T. Bottomore has remarked "It is easy to see how the ideas of "stable democracy" and the "end of ideology" fit into this functionalist scheme (of Parsons, vdB). A "stable democracy" can be represented as a well-nigh perfect example of a society in equilibrium while the cessation of ideological conflict - notably in the specific form of the conflict between classes - can be interpreted as the culmination of a process of adaptation and integration, which is accomplished through the working of the central democratic values".¹²⁾

11) Friedrichs, op.cit., pp.19-23. "The new Ph.D. had no need, during this period, to underpin each empirical or theoretical venture with his own first principles, his own language, methods and standards. The system paradigm was set down for him in lecture and text as "given". Those who proved to be ideologically or psychologically immune to the frame were apt to be written off as idiosyncratic and consigned to the speculative arena of philosophy or to the deserted halls of activism".

12) T. Bottomore "Conservative Man" - The New York Review of Books, XV, 6, October 1970, pp.20-24.

To think in terms of a system paradigm - whether of the 'structural-functional', the 'cybernetic' or the 'general systems' variety - implies a particular conception of development and change. Structural functionalism and systems theory have often been attacked for not being able at all to deal with conflict and change.¹³⁾ Their representatives deny that equilibrium, homeostatis, stability, they say, do not preclude change: "an open system, whether social or biological, in a changing environment either changes or perishes If a complex social organization is to survive critical changes in its environment, it can do so only by changing its structure or behaviour".¹⁴⁾ Change is then defined as a process of adaptation of structure and behaviour to environmental pressures. But the units of analysis (states, business corporations, trade unions etc.) then have to be taken for granted. This can lead to extraordinary ahistoric statements like the following: "That Great Britain has survived through medieval, mercantile and capitalist periods means that as a national state it has ultra-stability".¹⁵⁾ But we cannot speak of "national states", in the sense of political communities seen by all their members as "nations" with which they identify and upon which they rely for protection, before the nineteenth century. And in the medieval period even "states" did not yet exist. What "survived" is thus not the social organization "Great Britain" but the geographical area, that is now controlled by a state which is named Great Britain. There is no need to discuss here the stages of development of English, Welsh and Scottish societies or the structural characteristics which distinguish the national state of the 19th and 20th centuries from the dynastic or feudal types of states which characterize earlier phases of a state-formation process. But the naive use of the term "national state" with reference to all of them is a good example of the inability of those who believe in this type of system theory to take the historical development of societies into account.

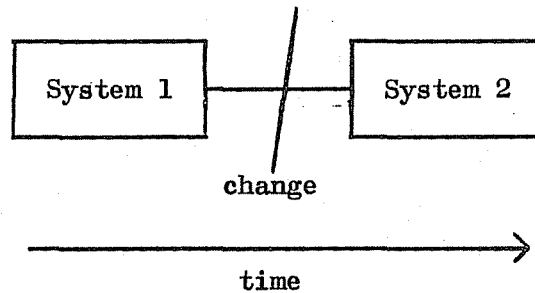
13) See f.e. Ralf Dahrendorf - "Toward a theory of social conflict" in Amitai and Eva Etzioni - Social Change, New York-London, 1964, pp.94-112.

14) Mervyn L. Cadwallader - "The Cybernetic Analysis of Change" in Etzioni, op.cit., pp.159-164.

15) Cadwallader, op.cit., p.160.

To think in terms of "systems" makes it very difficult to see change as a structured process, to analyse and explain - which, as will be discussed later, Elias has done - the directions of social change over long periods of time. The "system" metaphor does not allow for such a conception of change. A system can adjust itself. If not it perishes (biological organisms) or it is transformed into another system (social organisations). But as Parsons himself has written: "a general theory of the processes of change of social systems, is not possible in the present state of knowledge. The reason is very simple that such a theory would imply complete knowledge of the laws of process of the system and this is knowledge we do not possess. The theory of change in the structure of social systems must, therefore, be a theory of particular sub-processes within such systems, not of the overall processes of change of the systems as systems".¹⁶⁾

The conception of change as system transformation can be graphically represented as follows:



The use of this system transformation paradigm in empirical studies of social change leads to looking at change as the disruption of continuity, caused by factors located in a specific segment of time. For example, in studies of international relations in terms of a succession of "international systems" the time segments selected have been the French Revolution, 1848, 1870-1871, the first and second world war.¹⁷⁾ In between such short transformation periods discrete continuous systems in dynamic equilibrium have to be presumed. Similarly, in economics the problem of development is also often seen as a problem of system transformation:

16) Talcott Parsons - "The social system", Glencoe, 1951, p.486.

17) Stanley Hoffman in "International Systems and International Law" in Klaus Knorr and Sidney Verba (ed). "The International System", Princeton, 1961; Richard N. Rosecrance "Action and Reaction in World Politics: International Systems in Perspective". Boston-Toronto, 1963.

"We know the structure of the pre-industrial system, we know the structure of the industrial system, but what we do not know is what causes the transformation of the pre-industrial into the industrial system".¹⁸⁾

In other words: if we would know, we could bring the transformation about - and the "problem" of development would be solved. The concept of 'modernisation' is similarly derived from the system image: one constructs an ideal type under the name "traditional society" or "traditional system", contrasts it with another ideal type "modern society" or "modern system", and represents each of them by a small number of attributes (expressed f.e. in the form of Parsons "pattern variables")¹⁹⁾. 'Modernisation' then becomes the process of transformation from the first of these two static types of society to the second. Another problematic aspect of this type of theorizing is that the characteristics of the "modern system" are usually derived from the existing advanced industrial societies, and in particular from the United States. The system transformation conception of change, if used for policy purposes, will then lead to attempting to remodel societies classified as "traditional" or "underdeveloped" in the image of the society classified as the most "developed", but perhaps better called the most "powerful" system. But on the purely theoretical level the varieties of systems theory can hardly do more than to interpret change as a disturbance, if they explain change at all. This relative remoteness both from empiry and practice has been justified by the fact that they represent a well-articulated paradigm and hence: "sacrificing the dysfunctional for the functional, the dynamic for the static, did not at the time seem too great a price to pay for clarity of focus".²⁰⁾

The consequence is that "socially important problems that are not easily contained within the paradigm are simply put aside"²¹⁾ - until they become so pressing that the paradigm itself is rejected. And that is precisely, what is happening now. The social sciences are in ferment.

18) Kurt Martin in seminars of the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague.

19) For an application to the study of the "international system" based on Parsonian categories, see George Modelski "Agraria and Industria: two models of the international system", in Knorr and Verba, op.cit., pp.118-143. Not surprisingly Modelski's paper: "elaborates from a theoretical perspective the international models corresponding to agrarian and industrial societies and touches only briefly upon problems of transition".

20) Friedrichs, op.cit., p.22.

21) Friedrichs, op.cit., p.5.

A large part of the results of 'normal science' - to use Kuhn's expression - as they are published in the established professional journals appears to a growing number of students of the social sciences as neither theoretically relevant nor helpful for the restructuring of societies. They therefore find it necessary to be radical, to go to the roots of their discipline, both in terms of the implied conception of the role of the social scientist and of the fundamental image of its subject-matter.²²⁾ Up to now the former problem has received most attention: in a growing number of programmatic statements and discussions it is alternatively argued that social scientists should become intellectuals, social critics, therapists, experts in the service of oppressed and exploited groups and even that they should stop being social scientists and become political organisers or guerillas. But the latter problem which has not gotten as much attention is at least as important. The sociology of Norbert Elias offers both an alternative conception of the role of the social scientist and an alternative paradigm - hence this invitation to his work.

3. The task of the social scientist

Elias tries to restore the long term perspective common to 19th century sociology to the present day social sciences. The social sciences should make it possible to orient ourselves better in the world. In order to change ("develop") the world, we have to know how it is changing in the way it is. Diagnosis or a "detour via detachment" is necessary for more adequate and realistic forms of therapy.²³⁾ Elias' main work: "Ueber den Prozess der Zivilisation: sociogenetische und psychogenetische Untersuchungen" was written in the years preceding the second world war. Why did he at that time direct his research to what he has called the civilising process?

22) Friedrichs (op.cit., pp.55-56) believes that scientific revolutions (paradigm change) in the social sciences involve not only a change in the 'Gestalt' of the subject matter of a science, as Kuhn analyses scientific revolutions in the natural sciences, but also a change of the "grounding image the social scientist has of himself as a scientific agent". But it may well be that the increasing awareness of the fact that natural science is linked to purpose, will also lead to a change in the role image of natural scientists. In fact, I believe that this has already started.

23) For another defense of the role of the social scientist as diagnostician see J.A. Ponsioen "The Analysis of Social Change Reconsidered", 1969³, pp.19-21.

"The question asked derives less from the scientific tradition in the more narrow sense of the word than from the experiences shared by us all, the experiences of the crisis and the transformation of western civilisation, and from the simple need to understand, what in fact is the case with this 'civilisation'".²⁴⁾

His conception of the need for a 'detour', which makes the relationship between sociological research and social action a two step procedure, is based on the recognition that long term processes of social change and development are blind, unplanned, but at the same time structured processes. Social science, if it deals with the problems of explaining how it is possible that long term processes are structured even though unplanned, can help to "bring the blind course of coercive processes, which are for human beings often meaningless, often destructive and which cause great suffering, better under control and to steer them in such a way that they are less destructive of life, happiness and meaning".²⁵⁾ Of course, the unplanned development of societies has led in our time to a greater scope for "planning" than ever before. Some measure of control over social processes by decision-makers is possible. But even the governments of the most powerful states have

24) Norbert Elias - "Ueber den Prozess der Civilisation", Bern und München, 1969² vol.I, p.LXXX. The second edition appeared thirty years after the first edition had been completed by the publication of the second volume in Basel, 1939. The first volume had already appeared in 1936. In the text of the second edition not a word has been changed. Elias has only written a new introduction in order to explicate more clearly the theoretical implications of the study. Further references to this work will be to: Prozess, Introduction; Prozess, I and Prozess, II. The other writings of Elias to which reference will be made are: "Problems of involvement and detachment", British Journal of Sociology, 1956, pp.226-251; together with J.L. Scotson, "The Established and the Outsiders", London, 1965; "Sociology and Psychiatry", in S.H. Foulkes and G. Stewart Prince "Psychiatry in a Changing Society", London, 1969; "Die Höfische Gesellschaft", Neuwied und Berlin, 1969, "Was ist Soziologie", München, 1970, and "Dynamics of Consciousness within that of societies", paper for the 1970 World Congress of Sociology at Varna, Bulgaria.

25) "Was ist Soziologie?", pp.13-14. Elias' justification of this conception of the task of the social scientist is expressed most clearly in the introduction to this book pp.9-31.

insufficient insight in the consequences which result from the interweaving of their own actions with those of other governments as, for example, the American intervention in Vietnam demonstrates. Images of social reality of human groups tend to be mixtures of phantasy and reality-oriented representations: "The whole of history is up to now basically a cemetery of human dreams. They are often fulfilled in the short run, but in the long run they end nearly always in an emptying of meaning and in destruction".²⁶⁾

Because the natural sciences have made possible an increasing control over nature, there is a tendency to believe that it is possible to apply the same kind of "rationality" - independently of the state of social-scientific knowledge - to social problems. Government and bureaucracies nowadays often pretend that their policies are "rational", whereas they are in fact the result of unsupported beliefs, routines and short term compromises. Decisions are - and have to be - taken without sufficient knowledge of their consequences. In that respect, it is very misleading to call bureaucracy a "rational" form of social organisation, as Max Weber has done. The behaviour of decision-makers has indeed become more rational, compared with previous centuries. But the sectoral division of bureaucracies, based on a strict division of competences, hierarchically organised and led by oligarchies who seldom think beyond their own sphere of power, gives present bureaucracies still far more the character of an untested "traditional" form of organisation than of a 'rational' organisation which can continuously be changed in accordance with the requirements of its tasks.

The task of the social sciences then is to provide mankind with more adequate understanding and insight in the dynamics of human interdependence; "to explore and make men understand the patterns they form together, the nature and changing configuration of all that binds them to each other".²⁷⁾ This makes it necessary for the social scientist to "hunt for myths".²⁸⁾ The natural sciences have progressed in a continuous fight against untested, metaphysical systems of thought, which

26) "Was ist Soziologie?", p.13-14.

27) "Problems of Involvement and Detachment", p.234.

28) "Was ist Soziologie?", ch.2, p.51.

powerful groups in the society believed to be selfevident. The social sciences still have to accomplish a similar emancipation from social mythologies if they are to help preparing men for the use of more realistic standards of social action, both in inter-national and intra-national processes and relations. Fighting social myths remains a necessary task, even within the scientific professions themselves, since very often groups of specialists unwittingly transform scientific theories into self-centred belief-systems.²⁹⁾ Elias thus pleads for distantiation as a necessary condition for the achievement of more adequate forms of diagnosis and therapy for the problems of living together that human beings cannot escape having. Contrary to what is advocated by radicals and policy-scientists alike - though from very different political perspectives - he warns against identification with the short-term perspective of any class, government or even academic discipline.

But the impression should not be created, that Elias believes that his conception of the task of the social scientist is easy to bring into practice. His essay "On problems of involvement and detachment" is a painstaking analysis of the consequences of the fact that the social scientist himself is part of the process that he studies and of the enormous difficulties for the social scientist of attempting to achieve the right kind of balance between involving and distantiating acts. The following citation from this essay may serve as illustration of his way of viewing the problem:

"But the growth of men's comprehension of natural forces and of the use made of them for human ends is associated with specific changes in human relationships; it goes hand in hand with the growing interdependence of growing numbers of people. The gradual acceleration in the increment of knowledge and use of non-human forces, bound up with specific changes in human relations as it is, has helped, in turn, to accelerate the process of change in the latter. The network of human activities tends to become increasingly complex, far-flung and closely knit. More and more groups, and with them more and more individuals, tend to become dependent on each other for their security and the satisfaction of their needs in ways which, for the greater part, surpass the comprehension of those involved. It is as if first thousands, then millions, then more and more millions walked through this

29) For Elias' analysis of this process see "Sociology and Psychiatry".

world their hands and feet chained together by invisible ties. No one is in charge. No one stands outside. Some want to go this, others that way. They fall upon each other and, vanquishing or defeated, still remain chained to each other. No one can regulate the movements of the whole unless a great part of them are able to understand, to see, as it were, from outside, the whole patterns they form together. And they are not able to visualize themselves as part of these larger patterns because, being hemmed in and moved uncomprehendingly hither and thither in ways which none of them intended, they cannot help being preoccupied with the urgent, narrow and parochial problems which each of them has to face. They can only look at whatever happens to them from their narrow location within the system. They are too deeply involved to look at themselves from without. Thus what is formed of nothing but human beings acts upon each of them, and is experienced by many as an alien external force not unlike the forces of nature."

But science has brought natural forces to a very large extent under control, although this does not mean that 'nature' is under human control, as the possibility of an "ecological armageddon" (Heilbroner) demonstrates. Nevertheless it can be said that approaches to "nature" in industrial societies are much more detached than they were a few centuries ago. Elias has discerned in this respect "the principle of increasing facilitation": "It must have been extremely difficult for man to gain greater control over nature as long as they had little control over it; and the more control they gained, the easier was it for them to extend it." But with respect to social forces we are again and again confronted with problems and processes which are beyond our control. And Elias continues:

"Thus vulnerable and insecure as men are under these conditions, they cannot stand back and look at the course of events calmly like more detached observers. Again, it is, on the other hand, difficult for men in that situation to control more fully their own strong feelings with regard to events which, they feel, may deeply affect their lives, and to approach them with greater detachment, as long as their ability to control the course of events is small; and it is, on the other hand, difficult for them to extend their understanding and control of these events as long as they cannot approach them with greater detachment and gain greater control over themselves. Thus a circular movement between inner and outer controls, a feedback mechanism of a kind, is at work not only in men's relations with

the non-human forces of nature, but also in their relations with each other. But it operates at present in these two spheres on very different levels. While in men's relations with non-human forces the standard of both the control of self and that of external events is relatively high, in relations of men with men the socially required and socially bred standard of both is considerably lower.

The similarities between this situation and that which men had to face in past ages in their relations with the forces of nature, are often obscured by the more obvious differences. We do already know that men can attain a considerable degree of control over natural phenomena impinging upon their lives and a fairly high degree of detachment in manipulating, and in thinking of, them. We do not know, and we can hardly imagine, how a comparable degree of detachment and control may be attained with regard to social phenomena. Yet, for thousands of years it was equally impossible for those who struggled before us to imagine that one could approach and manipulate natural forces as we do. The comparison throws some light on their situation as well as on ours."

4. The image of social reality

One of the most important aspects of Elias' work is the demonstration by the practice of his research that it is possible as well as necessary to develop dynamic, instead of static models of societies. Only with the help of such models can the connections between the actions of human beings and human groups and the patterns or configurations which they form be explained.

The practice of his research: the paradigm which he has developed is not based on any a priori notions or on speculative reasoning. He has developed his models of the civilising process, the state and nation formation process, the process of functional democratisation and national integration and his more general game models by struggling to find explanations for historical transformations. Why did European societies change from the decentralised and autarchic feudal units into more centralised dynastic states, in which often one person, a king or prince, could gain greater power chances than any other single social stratum? Why did dynastic states in turn develop into nation-states, where the

ruling groups were recruited through political parties? Why has there been, first in Western Europe but gradually spreading in other parts of the world in connection with analogous state-formation processes, a "civilising" process in the direction of growing restraints on more spontaneous expression of emotions and drives (eating, bodily functions, sexual relations, aggression)? What is the relationship between 'civilising' and 'state-formation' processes? Why has the direction of the shifts in power balances in industrial state societies been the same, even though their specific histories have been very different?

Such questions refer to unplanned and at the same time structured long-term social processes with a specific direction. But such processes are reversible; they can go in the direction of greater or lesser differentiation and integration, centralisation or decentralisation, they can go towards a strengthening or a lessening of external as of self-restraints. And often enough movements in both directions can be observed at the same time, with one trend gaining the upper hand over the other. To be able to observe and explain such processes and their interconnections is the reorientation in our thinking about social reality, which Elias tries to bring about. At present, social scientists are not accustomed to thinking in terms of a structure of change or development. This use of the term structure contrasts sharply with the present day use of the term "structure", which like "system" refers to seemingly static societies. Thus one speaks of the "structure" of a social or political system, an economy, an administration, etc. A structure is seen either as a set of institutions or as a pattern of relationships between "variables" that remain stable over time. Change is not seen as structured, but as a disturbance of the stability of a static structure. This static image of social reality is needed to justify the short term perspective of the great bulk of empirical social research. Implicitly social scientists let their method be determined by the image of nature, where recurrence is the basis of validation of theories. An already obsolete image of the structure of nature is used as the model for the structure of the subject-matter of social sciences. Social scientists therefore use the same conception of causality as natural scientists are believed to use and try to develop general theories of relations between "variables".

Theories, they believe, should be universally applicable, and their "validity" should be independent of the flow of time. As Karl Popper has said: "..... it is an important postulate of scientific method that we should search for laws with an unlimited realm of validity. If we were to admit laws that are themselves subject to change, change could never be explained by laws".³⁰⁾ Popper, it appears, does not see clearly enough that to search for laws implies an assumption of recurrence. This assumption has been eminently useful for explanations of physical-chemical connections, but there is no reason to assume that it is also useful for theorizing about the subject-matter of the social sciences. On the contrary, as human beings are born, grow up, become old and die and in the course of their lifetime enter into changing relationships with each other, to imagine a continuously changing stream and to ask for its long-term structure instead of a multitude of "particular cases" of an unchanging general law is much more adequate as a starting point for the social sciences.

Few social scientists would deny that social connections are diachronic and not synchronic, so that no adequate explanations can ever be found by using only synchronic data. Yet, a great deal of social research does precisely that. Many social theories (systems theory, structural-functionalism) are also static in the sense that they reduce all diachronic to synchronic relationships. This is of course not to say that particular social configurations cannot persist for a long time -

30) K.R. Popper, "The Poverty of Historicism", second edition, Routledge paperback, London 1961, p.103. See also his examples of sociological laws, which he considers "analogous to the laws or hypotheses of the natural sciences" (p.62) like "You cannot introduce agricultural tariffs and at the same time reduce the cost of living". It is interesting to reflect upon whom Popper would designate as the "you" in his example. I suppose he would have to admit that it is not a universal 'you' but the government of England in a specific phase of industrial development. He should then be questioned further: What is the meaning of "agricultural tariffs" before states emerged? That Popper believes that to strive for an "unlimited realm of validity" is meaningful, for sociology can only be explained by his obsessive concern with formalising scientific method. Elias points out an analogy with ethnocentrism. The method of the natural sciences is seen as the model of a correct science in the same manner as ethnocentrism is expressed by the statement: "if people do not look or behave like us, they are not real people." (Was ist Soziologie, p.64). See also note 33.

but the question to be asked is not: why is a normally static structure changing?, but: why can configurations contain the ever present pressures for change and persist over time? Why are individuals molded in such a way that they take up the same position in a particular configuration again and again?³¹⁾

Once we realize that the questions the social sciences ask have to be reformulated, we also have to ask why static paradigms and static ways of thinking have become so predominant in the social sciences. Why have neither history nor the social sciences tried to study the structure of long-term processes?

Elias provides us with a number of explanations. Basic is perhaps what he calls the heteronomous determination of problems and evaluation of results, from which the social sciences have not yet been able to sufficiently emancipate themselves. As was pointed out already, social scientists themselves form part of the human groups engaged in the struggle for power and life-chances which is the object of their research. To study long-term processes it is necessary to distantiate oneself temporarily from the immediate short term perspective of the groups (nation, class, organisation, academic specialisation) to which one belongs.³²⁾ And the more intense the conflicts, the more difficult distantiation becomes, certainly for the social science profession in a particular nation-state as a whole.

Great 19th century sociologists like Comte, Marx and Spencer were primarily interested in long term social processes. But this interest has disappeared in the 20th century. Static theories have become predominant and research into long-term social processes has faded out

31) The term 'configuration' is introduced by Elias as a substitute for reifying, static general concepts like system or social structure. Configurations are networks of interdependent human beings, with shifting assymetrical power balances.

32) It should be noted that Elias substitutes the terms "more autonomous" and "more heteronomous" for respectively "value-free" and "ideological". This terminology helps to emancipate the discussion about the relations between social science and politics from the by now rather sterile discussions centered on the assumed polarity between absolute value-freedom or the absolute dominance of ideological evaluation and problem-setting over the social sciences.

almost completely. That this is indeed the case can be illustrated by the fate of Elias' own work "Ueber den Prozess der Civilization". When it was first published in 1936 (I) and 1939 (II), it seemed self-evident to Elias that his book formed "the basis for an undogmatic, empirically grounded sociological theory of long-term social processes in general and social development in particular". He did not think it necessary to point out, that it was neither a study of an 'evolution' in the sense of 19th century sociology nor a study of an unspecific 'social change' in the sense of 20th century sociology. It is, perhaps, symptomatic of the changing configuration of our time that the importance of his work, almost completely neglected up to very recently, can now begin to be appreciated. It may well be that the fact, that western societies are changing in a manner and tempo not expected by social scientists has something to do with the greater receptivity to long-term developmental studies - like those of Karl Marx. The static paradigms, especially in sociology and political science, are so obviously at the end of their use, that a theoretical and empirical work based on a long term developmental perspective in advance of its time, can now come into its own. "Ueber den Prozess der Civilization" was republished in Germany and Switzerland in 1969 and is only now being translated into English, even though Elias has been living and teaching in England since before the second world war. As Elias says himself: "If the different academic disciplines whose problem areas this study touches, if in particular sociology would already have reached the stage of scientific maturity, in which many of the natural sciences now find themselves, one could have expected, that a carefully documented study of long term processes, such as that of civilising and state formation processes, together with the theory proposed on the basis of this research, would have been thoroughly examined and discussed and that it would then after a critical survey have been either refuted or embodied as a whole or in specific aspects into the common empirical-theoretical fund of knowledge of the discipline". Instead it is still an innovating work illuminating sets of problems, which need thorough empirical and theoretical work today as much as thirty years ago. Why has Elias' work been neglected so much? Why has the static paradigm prevailed?

To this question belonging to the "sociology of sociology"³³⁾ Elias himself provides some answers in the new introduction to "Ueber den Prozess". That sociology has neglected long-term development processes can be seen as an over-reaction against certain teleological aspects of 19th century social theories, which tended to equate development with automatic progress - in the direction of their own social ideals. Some elements of the developmental theories of the 19th century pioneers no longer quite agree with the growing stock of empirical knowledge about society. But even the earlier developmental models, especially those of Comte and Marx, contain much that has retained its cognitive value. They could have been revised and corrected in the light of the growth of empirical knowledge. This is what Elias has tried to do, and which made it at the same time possible for him to go beyond the earlier models. He has come to the conclusion that the reaction against developmental sociology has not been simply the replacement of social 'ideology' by social 'science', as is often believed, but "a reaction against the primacy of certain ideals in sociological theory-building in the name of other, partly opposite ideals".³⁴⁾ During the 19th century the two industrial classes were

33) In his paper "Dynamics of Consciousness within that of Societies" for the World Congress of Sociology at Varna, 1970, Elias points out the curious fact that the theory of knowledge only asks the (static) question how the subject of knowledge can gain 'true' (scientific) knowledge of the object of knowledge, while the sociology of knowledge is concerned primarily with the we-oriented social and political ideologies, about which it asks equally static questions: "The prescription is: "Take a reasonable coherent, though not necessarily consistent, complex of thought as presented by a writer or a group of writers at a given period of time. Relate it to the group situation of its authors during the same period. You will then be able to explain the nexus of ideas, of thoughts, of knowledge, as a function of the historical situation and structure of the group within which it originates". But neither the theory nor the sociology of knowledge ask the developmental question how it has been possible for man to emancipate his thinking about nature from magical-mythical images and subject-centeredness. This implies that this emancipating process is neither seen as a problem for the social sciences, which are assumed to become 'scientific' simply by applying the scientific method, as formalised by the philosophers of science (but probably not even practiced by the natural scientists doing empirical research - not to mention paradigm innovators like Einstein).

34) Prozess. Introduction, p. XXVII.

both engaged in specific struggles: the entrepreneurial class had to fight against the aristocratic and patrician elites, who still controlled state power, while the working class just started its struggle against the entrepreneurial class. The spokesmen of both these rising industrial classes believed in a better future. The scientific study of long term social development could help them to have their belief confirmed that the social developments of their own time went into the direction which corresponded to their hopes for the future. Both rising classes tended to experience the scientific and technological development of their time as "progress" in the sense of being favourable to their own ideals. In the twentieth century this gradually changed: the two industrial classes become integrated in the national framework. The focus of attention narrows from 'humanity' to one's own nation. As the standards of living of both classes rose, however unevenly, the predominant social ideal became the maintenance and protection of one's own nation without any fundamental change in its form of social and political organisation. The belief in "progress" made place for the belief in the value of the existing national social order, in its 'stability'. At the same time scientific and technological development is not seen any longer as 'progress', but as 'growth' necessary to satisfy the demands of all the contending "interest groups" in the welfare state. From being progressive, the dominant climate of opinion in West and East becomes conservative. Elias mentions a number of factors to explain this change: the world wars, the increasing acceptance of 'national' ideals by both industrial classes, the end of the expansionist phase in European history and the concurring loss of power of European nations, implying the impossibility to see a bright future for one's own nation in terms of traditional ideals of power, glory and prestige.³⁵⁾ The stress of 'national values' itself strengthened conservative tendencies: "it takes the perspective away from that which has changed and is changing to that which is seen as existing and unchangeable".³⁶⁾ Since American sociology in the course of the 20th century takes the lead, the American national image and ideals become the model for sociological theorizing. To understand the ideological influences upon sociological

35) For the detailed argument see ibidem, p. XXXII - XXXVII

36) Ibidem, p. XXXVI

theories, it is for these reasons not sufficient to refer alone to class interests as is done in the Marxian conception of ideology. It is also necessary to pay attention to the development of national ideals and nation-centered thinking. Elias demonstrates this by an examination of Parsons's concept of 'social system', which he shows to be closely modelled on the ideal image of a nation: "all the people belonging to it are guided by the same norms because they are socialized in the same manner, they strive for the same values and they live therefore in normal circumstances well integrated and harmoniously with one another".³⁷⁾ The concept of a 'social system' is a construct, derived from the ideal of a presumably democratic nation-state: to see the nation as a harmonious community the members of which are socialized in the same manner implies the assumption of a relatively high degree of equality. The 20th century paradigm of a stable and harmonious 'social system' as the basis for social theorizing, far from being the 'end of ideology', represent therefore at least as much a mixture of social ideals and factual analysis as the developmental models of the 19th century. One of the differences is that in the latter case the future is idealised and in the former the present. However, this idealisation of the present structure of the American nation is offered as a general model for the scientific study of societies at all times and in all parts of the world. It is difficult to see how one can use a theoretical model of a society abstracted from a society with a relatively high degree of integration, centralisation and democratisation as a model for societies of all types and at all times. Does a system model apply to societies with a high percentage of slaves, or feudal and estate societies, in which not even the same laws apply to the different social layers, let alone the same norms and values?

The explanation for the nearly complete disappearance of any interest in long term social development in the 20th century is therefore not to be found in the emancipation of social science from ideology, an assumption articulated by the "end of ideology" school of social scientists and used by the great majority of empirical social researchers to justify their practice, but in the replacement of ideologies implying automaticity of 'progress' with ideologies idealising the status-quo.

37) Ibidem, p. XL.

But it is not only the ideological reflection of the social and political development of the West, that can explain the acceptance of the static paradigm by the social scientists.

There are more lasting reasons to be found in the peculiar structure of the Indo-European languages.³⁸⁾ Continuous movement or change is usually expressed in these languages by conceptualising it as an isolated object in a situation of rest to which a verb is then added. We say for example: the wind blows or the river flows, as if there could be a wind that does not blow or a river that does not flow. Our languages force us to think and speak in terms which imply reduction of movement and change to a static condition. Growing up with these languages makes it very difficult not to accept this as self-evident and as the only possible way of speaking and thinking. But as Elias points out, Benjamin Lee Whorf has shown that Hopi language makes it possible to conceptualise in a different form than in sentences based on substantive and verb, subject and predicate. Whorf has also suggested that the structure of our language may account for the great difficulties which physicists have had in understanding and conceptualising particular aspects of their research into atom particles.³⁹⁾

Elias believes that it has hampered the development of the social sciences even more. Many sociological concepts refer not to continuously changing human beings in continuously changing configurations but to isolated, unmoving objects. This is the case with concepts like 'norm', 'value', 'function', 'structure', 'power', 'social class' and 'social system'. The concept 'society' itself often carries the meaning of an isolated object in a situation of rest. The problem of inadequate conceptualisation in the social sciences is made even more serious by

38) See Was ist Soziologie, pp.118-121.

39) See Was ist Soziologie, note 28, p.200, which contains some critical remarks about the theories of Whorf and Levi-Strauss. Whorf is criticized because he tends to treat languages as having no history or future; Levi-Strauss because he takes the structure of language as a model for social structures, instead of trying to discover the nature of the connection between the structure of languages and the structure of the social configurations that use them.

the influence of the manner of thinking developed in the natural sciences, formalised into "the" scientific method. Concepts and methods in the social sciences thus both make it possible to split up social configurations into separate parts, called 'variables' or 'factors', without much need to think about the nature of the interconnections of the thus separated and isolated aspects of society. The tendency to think about social configurations as if they were 'objects' with an existence separate from the individuals which form them is reinforced by our unreflected experience of "society", of social institutions like the state, the bureaucracy, the army, the corporation, as having the power to coerce us. The "social coercion towards self-coercion" ("gesellschaftliche Zwang zum Selbstzwang") which we experience is conceptualised by assuming a dichotomy between 'society' and 'individual'. 'Society' and 'individual' are seen as each having a separate existence, normally in a state of rest, who at times "interpenetrate" one another, as Talcott Parsons has described their relationship. This experience of the relation between self and society is itself related to what Elias has called the 'civilising process' which has started in Europe and has spread from there to other parts of the world as a result of European colonisation. The 'civilising process' is seen by Elias as a structured change in the direction of increasing restraints on the expression of spontaneous emotions and drives (eating, bodily functions, sneezing, spitting, bedroom conduct, sexual relations and aggression) through socially induced self-control, maintained by internalised fear and shame. The process can be formulated in Freudian terms - though Freud himself did not see the historically determined character of the psychoanalytic categories that he introduced - as the strengthening of the super-ego, the repression of the id (or sub-consciousness) with the ego increasingly torn between super ego and id, becoming more and more unstable and therefore in need of certainty, orientation and order. But the civilising process can only be understood as the psychological reflection of the transformation of social relations. The process of internal pacification of large territories - state formation - increasingly obliged individuals to restrain their violent impulses. The increasing differentiation of socio-economic functions resulting in ever longer chains of interdependence required more rigid forms of organisation and regulation of behaviour, at first mainly in the central

coordinating agencies (courts, bureaucracies) and in commerce and industry, but gradually spreading to the other parts of society. For these social functions a long term perspective was ever more necessary (in this century elevated into the new specialism "planning") which again required greater self-control. The social modeling of children demands ever more time and specialised institutions (schools) in which children not only learn the skills needed to function in a highly differentiated social network but are also forced not to give in to their impulses of the moment and to see the long-term consequences of their actions.⁴⁰⁾

Only in the context of this long historical process can it be understood why the problem of the relationship between "society" and the "individual", both seen as static categories, has come to occupy such a central place in sociological thought.⁴¹⁾ Our present self-experience as an 'individual' separated by an invisible wall from other individuals - called by Elias the concept of man as an "homo clausus" - is the result of this process:

"Comparisons between different societies indicate that the feeling of aloneness, of isolation, of the ultimate separation and independence of oneself in relation to other individuals, which finds expression in the concept of the individual that prevails today - of the individual human being as a closed system with his essentials hidden away from others 'inside' - is lacking in many other, particularly in simpler, societies where privatization of bodily functions and of feeling is neither possible nor socially required to the same extent as in ours. There is good reason to think that

40) This very brief resume does insufficient justice to the richness of Elias observations, the originality of his empirical material (in particular his use of the books of etiquette written since the Renaissance, with which the civilising process can be clearly documented) and the enormously fruitful theoretical framework based on the combination of his empirical studies of the civilising and state formation processes. (*Entwurf zu einer Theorie der Zivilisation, Prozess, II*, pp.312-454). For the relationship between increasing social differentiation and integration, the development of a long term perspective and self-control see in particular *Entwurf I "Der Gesellschaftliche Zwang zum Selbstzwang"* and *II "Ausbreitung des Zwangs zur Langsicht und des Selbstzwangs"*.

41) Weber and Durkheim, for example, both based their attempt to develop a general theoretical framework for sociology on the dichotomous relationship between the 'individual' and 'society' as isolated, static objects. Elias shows that these attempts could not be but doomed to fail. (*Was ist Soziologie*, pp.125-132).

the feeling of oneself as a closed system, with all its conceptual representations, is symptomatic of the strength, the evenness, and the all-roundness of the social restraints that are built into the emerging individual in societies such as ours through specific types of social pressure as much as through deliberate family training. It is, one might say, an expression of a particular conscience formation bred in particular societies." 42)

The image of the individual as an "homo clausus" has its counterpart in the image of society as a closed, static system and even in the image of the relations between states as interacting billiard-balls.⁴³⁾ It may be concluded that more adequate concepts and a more adequate paradigm for the social sciences are inseparable. To be able to think about social configurations and human beings not as static objects - as Elias says: a human being does not go through a process of change, he is a process - requires a dynamisation and humanisation of our concepts and models. In his own words: Industrialisation means that more and more people work as entrepreneurs, employees and workers; democratisation means a shift in the balance of power towards what was in earlier days seen as the "plebs".

But that is not the only consequence. The reorientation in our thinking about society which Elias' work exemplifies, makes it also necessary to stop thinking in terms of the supposedly autonomous spheres into which we divide societies. The 'social', 'political' and 'economic' spheres refer to different kinds of functions which human beings fulfill for each other, and which have specific interconnections. But if this conceptual separation is not based on a sociological model, which shows how these spheres are related to one another, the social sciences will not be able to advance. As an example Elias mentions the phenomenon of taxation. Are taxes social, economic or political phenomena? Is the decision on the distribution of tax revenue a purely economic, political or social decision? Or is it the result of power balances between different social groups, which can only be accounted for by an overall dynamic model?

42) "Sociology and Psychiatry"; p.128.

43) See Arnold Wolfers, "Discord and Collaboration", Baltimore 1962.

We have now come full circle and returned to the motto of this essay. By providing the answer to the question why the development of the social sciences has been determined to such an extent by the use of static paradigms and reifying concepts, it has also become understandable that Elias' own work has been neglected. But it has at the same time become clear that satisfactory answers to such questions can only be provided if more adequate theoretical models of the structure of development of societies will be available. At the present stage of the discussions about task and method of the social sciences, it is still necessary to devote much space to such programmatic arguments. Perhaps Elias would already have had a greater reputation if he would have spelled out the paradigmatical and theoretical implications of his work himself in the first edition of "Ueber den Prozess der Zivilisation". But in that book he only cites authors that have provided him with his empirical material. He has consciously avoided exegeses of the theories of famous precursors like Marx, Weber and Freud, upon whose work he in fact does build. His justification for this omission is significantly to be found only in a footnote, where he explicitly states how much he is indebted to Freud: "It hardly needs saying, but it may here for once be stated explicitly, how much this study owes to the prior research of Freud and the psychoanalytical school. it seemed unnecessary to refer to this at specific points, because that would be impossible without an extensive discussion. The rather important differences between the whole approach of Freud and this study have also on purpose not explicitly been stated."⁴⁴⁾ Weber is explicitly mentioned in the introduction for his stressing the importance of the monopoly of violence for the form of social organisation, which we have come to call "the state". But Elias does not follow the sociological method of Weber. In particular he criticizes Weber's use of ideal-types.⁴⁵⁾ The influence of Marx is clearly demonstrated by his usage of the concept of class. Explicit appreciation and criticism of Marx can be found in Was ist Soziologie.⁴⁶⁾

44) Prozess, I, p.324.

45) Prozess, II, p.457.

46) Op.cit., pp.152-159.

It is difficult to prove, but I am fairly certain that Elias would have been better known, if he would have been more "philosophical" and if he would have given more space to interpretations and critiques of the theories of others instead of just producing his innovative historical sociological research.

This makes an invitation to his sociology still necessary. I believe that his work should be read and his example followed.

... ..
... ..
... ..
... ..

... ..

6
7
8

9
10
11