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THE FANTASY-REALITY CONTINUUM:

Science, Religion, Politics, Culture

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LIST OF PRESENTATIONS

(in alphabetical order)

Prof. Joseph Garncarz, Dr Adrian Jitschin

A TORCHBEARER WHO PASSES ON THE KNOWLEDGE: NORBERT ELIAS' INTERACTION WITH THE THINKERS OF HIS TIME

(Biographical session)

One of the basic assumptions of the sociology of knowledge is that we are "dwarfs on the shoulders of giants". Elias shared this basic assumption, which he found in variations, the most well-known of which is the torchbearer who passes on the knowledge.

In stark contrast to this is Elias' way of dealing with the classics, whose work he allegedly aimed to continue but in fact sharply rejected or used without mentioning it. To stay with the terminology used at the conference, one can speak of a lack of reality-congruency in his behaviour: He does, for example, refer to Kant, Freud, Marx, Durkheim and Weber in general, yet when looking at the actual references in his writings, there are hardly any agreeing statements. Mostly, Elias quotes these central thinkers only where he dismisses them. Concerning thinkers like Kant, Popper or Weber, this even leads to a distorted perception, whereby, as a consequence, arguments are imputed to the thinkers that they themselves have always criticised. In addition, there are a series of thinkers (e.g., Cassirer, Curtius, Borkenau) whom he virtually does not mention at all in his work, but from whom he adopts central ideas that he incorporates into his thinking and writings. And last but not least, there are a number of intellectuals (such as Hönigswald, A. Weber, Adorno) whom he personally knew and some of which he appreciated, but with whom he did not maintain relationship whatsoever in later years.

By the sheer number of examples, it cannot be seen as accidental but as a notorious behaviour on Elias's side. As sociological researchers, we find these empirical findings insightful and worth further investigation. Ultimately we want to work out a typology of how Elias behaved towards those academic thinkers from whom he has demonstrably learned or from whom he has distinguished himself. Is the behaviour pattern described above constant or has it changed over the course of his life? If the behaviour pattern is subject to change, is this related to his academic career or his increasing recognition in his later years? Can Elias' thinking tools help explain his behavioural pattern towards the thinkers on whose shoulders he stood?

In the compilation, we have a total of seven speakers who are familiar with Elias' texts and who have informed themselves about the biographical stations of Elias either from their research or observed as contemporary witnesses:

Joseph Garncarz: *Elias' dissertation*
Reinhard Blomert: *Elias and Freud*
Adrian Jitschin: *Elias at the University of Ghana*
John Goodwin: *Disputes, Disruptions and Dilemmas: Elias and the 'Empirical' Sociology at Leicester 1950s-1970s*
Gordon Fyfe: *Leicester 1964-1971*
Christophe Majastre: *Elias' critical relationship with the "Frankfurt School"*
Richard Kilminster: *Understanding and Misunderstanding Elias: some thoughts on the reception of Elias in the UK.*

Paweł Bagiński, Doctoral Candidate

THE BUSINESSWOMAN FANTASY IN POSTSOCIALIST POLAND

Based on the discourse of the lifestyle magazine *Zwierciadło* (Mirror), I will describe the figure of businesswoman as probably the most appealing emanation of the normative project of (upper-) middle-class women in Poland's transition period. The fantasy about becoming a businesswoman combines the desire for upward mobility with the imagined Western lifestyle of emancipated women in the free-market reality.

The normative identity project promoted in the 1990s' Poland aimed at adapting women to the new reality as individualized gendered subjects who operate on equal terms with (business) men. Glamour and splendor of a lady combined with the entrepreneurial spirit proposed a desirable lifestyle for women aspiring to the "new" middle and upper classes. The impact of Western liberal feminism on press discourse about businesswomen in *Zwierciadło* is clear in its focus on equal chances in business environment without serious questioning of the course of neoliberal reforms in Poland.

The discrepancy between this lifestyle's accessibility and the economic reality of Poland's structural unemployment in the 1990s and early 2000s indicates the increasing fantasy-related content in the postsocialist period in terms of the social status and stratification. The above discourse supported beliefs about the middle class – with the leading role of entrepreneurs – as the indispensable vehicle for the liberal democratic state and society.

Prof. Adele Bianco

THE FANTASY–REALITY CONTINUUM: FREE EXERCISE OR TURNING POINT TO DECIVILIZATION?

According to Herbert Marcuse, fantasy and imagination play an emancipatory function. In fact, the slogan "the fantasy in power" was a key issue for the student's movement in 1968.

More than fifty years later, the two play a reverse role. Today, fantasy and imagination allow for the flourishing of fantasy-based knowledge, usher in 'post-truth,' and lead to fake news. Science is considered to be nothing more than a matter of reason, based on critical detachment but inspired by emotional involvement.

In politics, fantasy and imagination often found radical ideologies and conspiracy theories. Starting from Norbert Elias's teachings, the paper will highlight that such phenomena result from decivilization.

The paper will be structured as follows. The first section will discuss how Elias considered fantasy and imagination. The second section will deal with the state formation and civilizing processes. The third section will hypothesize why "the fantasy in power" turns into decivilization.

Dr. Ryszard Bobrowicz

LEGIBLE RELIGION: HOW STATE FANTASY TURNS INTO REALITY

In *Seeing Like a State*, James C. Scott describes the tendency of modern states to impose central-level simplifications on governed phenomena to make them 'legible' from the administrative perspective. When combined with the state's coercive power and overconfidence in scientific methods of inquiry, these attempts are to significantly reshape the affected phenomena, depriving them of the crucial characteristics deemed inessential from an administrative perspective. This paper will argue that similar dynamics can be observed regarding the phenomena defined as 'religious.' By taking the so-called 'Multi-Faith Spaces' as a point of departure and discussing highly publicized cases of protests about such spaces in the UK, closures in Germany, political interest in Austria, and parliamentary debates in Denmark, this paper will claim that 'legible religion' is an administrative fantasy that is imposed on reality. On the individual level, administrative legibility expresses a bias in differentiating religions by promoting those that focus on individual, internal, private, cognitive, and syncretic religiosity and discouraging others. On the level of broader society, administrative legibility expresses a double-edged understanding of religion: either as a potential threat that should be tightly controlled or, functionally, as means to particular centrally specified ends. Thus, building on Scott and Hartmut Rosa, this paper will argue that both approaches hinder responses to challenges of religious diversity, suppressing complexity and impeding encounters between people of different backgrounds.

Marília Bueno, Doctoral Candidate

CONSPIRACY THEORIES IN THE BRAZILIAN DECIVILIZING PROCESS

Considering the recent rise of the far-right in Brazil, this paper will test whether conspiracy theories have a high decivilizing potential.

The narratives that thrive on and enable vicious circles of insecurity, high emotivity, and fantasy-laden thinking, and are often related to social turmoil, working as magico-mythical models of perception and thought. Underpinned by ideas of gnostic and hermetic nature, such as "nothing happens by chance" and "nothing is what it seems," their leitmotif is constructing an enemy with evil intentions, who is accountable for a series of real or imaginary threats and so powerful as to not only control the course of events but also hide all and any evidence of their actions. Therefore, such an enemy is immune to evidence and needs not demonstrate any congruence with reality to be convincing.

Through forging and dehumanizing the menacing enemy, conspiracy theories foster the "us vs. them" mentality, which appeals to the feeling of belonging to a we-group while contributing to the severing of ties and decreasing the integration of identity bonds, thus stripping the Other of the characteristics of someone with whom we share the same dignity and for whom we can have empathy and compassion – as in the civilized conduct outlined by Elias – instead posing the Other as a threat that must be fought and even eliminated.

In Brazil, the theory of an alleged *communist conspiracy* that promotes a cultural war to destroy the "Western Christian civilization" and the "traditional Brazilian family" found fertile ground in a country whose habitus is marked by authoritarian values and low integration of identity bonds. A more restricted and cohesive we-group was then assembled, one more radicalized and willing to fight and even use violence against the enemy that is blurred to the point of encompassing anyone who defends human rights, science, or democracy.

Prof. John Connolly, Dr. Paddy Dolan

ECONOMIC PROCESSES ON THE FANTASY–REALITY CONTINUUM: DIFFERENCES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF BOXING AND CYCLING IN FRANCE AND THE UNITED KINGDOM

Economic and commercialization processes are often given primacy in contemporary society for explaining social developments, the phrase "it's the economy, stupid" being an example. However, economic processes are interwoven with other processes, in particular shifting power relations, which are often glossed over or hidden by the amplification of economic processes over others. We will show how a comparison of the development of boxing and cycling in different periods in France and Britain can place economic/commercialization processes on a more reality-congruent position on the fantasy–reality continuum.

Our empirical context will include a comparison of sports (boxing and cycling), countries (the United Kingdom and France), and time periods (eighteenth and nineteenth centuries). Our analysis will show how economic/commercialization processes connected with both sports were enabled – and constrained – by the wider social structure in different periods. In the case of boxing, the class structure of the eighteenth-century United Kingdom enabled commercial entrepreneurs to act in particular ways that facilitated developments in boxing relative to the situation in France at that time. In the case of cycling, the opposite occurred. In France, the social structure that emerged in the late nineteenth century enabled commercial entrepreneurs and cyclists to act in ways that facilitate the development of professional structures in cycling to a greater degree than amateur structures. The opposite occurred in the United Kingdom, where despite commercialization processes, the social dynamic facilitated amateurism to become the dominant organizational frame for boxing.

While economic processes are significant, they are interdependent with other processes. We will argue for the need to identify these different processes and explain how they interweave so that explanations based on (otherwise relevant) economic processes would no longer incline toward the fantasy end of the fantasy–reality continuum.

Dr. Brian Conway, Prof. Bram Spruyt, Dr. José Pereira Coutinho

RELIGIOUS INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSMISSION AMONG CATHOLICS IN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES: TESTING THE RELIGIOUS SOCIALIZATION PERSPEC

As a big idea in sociology, the secularization theory has come under challenge on both empirical and theoretical grounds. Even though the European case has withstood this challenge perhaps better than most other world regions, little is known about European religious transmissions cross-nationally in specific religious traditions such as Catholicism. Using data from the 2018 round of the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP), this study used regression analysis to test the religious socialization perspective among Catholics from 12 European countries. We found support for the main idea of this perspective that family religious socialization is the key factor in prolonging religiosity from one generation to the next. More specifically, we found that parental religiosity is an important predictor of children's religiosity. Moreover, we found partial support for variation in the impact of parental religiosity across different cohorts. Overall, our paper will show findings confirming the religious socialization perspective and provide support for cohort replacement as a significant driver of religious change in modern societies.

Jan Czempiński

THE CONCEPT OF MULTIPLE REALITIES BY ALFRED SCHÜTZ: THEORY AND APPLICABILITY

What is "real" to the social actor? Are "fantasy elements" really not "reality-congruent?" Is there a "continuum" between fantasy and reality or are they both (separate) types of reality?

The paper will elaborate on these questions by referring to the theory of Alfred Schütz. Convinced of the inter-subjective nature of the social world, Schütz defined "multiple realities" as "finite provinces of meaning," separate yet coexisting, understood as "real" following the combined traditions of understanding (*Verstehen*) and lifeworld (*Lebenswelt*).

Reflection on the nature of realities should not be closed to socio-philosophical discussion. Thus, this paper will apply Schütz's approach to the case of the reception of Henryk Sienkiewicz's nineteenth-century novel *Deluge*. Namely the book's social meaning at the turn of 1970s and 1980s extracted from historical sources: reviews of Jerzy Hoffman's film adaptation (1974), intellectuals' essays, readership surveys, and qualitative research in schools. The sources suggest intriguing conclusions concerning the interconnections between purportedly finite "provinces of meaning," which encompass cultural, religious, scientific, and daily life.

Finally, the paper will compare the above with comments about a 2020 controversial theater adaptation of *Deluge* by J. Roszkowski, which will expose the dynamics of change in national myths' perception in the modern cultural field in Poland. These considerations will foreground the need of a serious scholarly approach to truly fantastic elements in social mentalities.

Dr. Valerie Dahl

"SHOULD I STAY OR SHOULD I GO?" INSTITUTIONAL DETERMINANTS OF ACADEMIC CAREERS FROM A PROCESS-SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Comparative studies about working conditions in the European academia show highly diverse results connected with the specific academic traditions and science policies. Since summer 2021 – particularly in German speaking countries – protests increase against precarious employment conditions in academia. Using social media hashtags #ichbinhanna and #ichbinreyhan, especially junior academics state that laws and regulations of scientific employment supposedly promoting innovation and flexibility in academia come at the cost of temporary, insecure, and precarious employment. A closer look at the discourse reveals that the jurisdiction outside the academic field is not the only driving force behind this conflict, but that tensions also arise inside universities, where junior academics demanding equitable employment stand as outsiders against the established professorial group, thus fueling the conflict with implicit working practices such as gatekeeping and sometimes even discrimination. Besides the general discourse about inequality in academia, we direly need an intersectional perspective on academic inequality, because research shows that academics not fitting into the "white, male, single" ideal of a scientist face severely higher barriers at entry and advancing levels of academia.

Against this background, this paper will describe a scientific fantasy – namely an ideal image of academia and academics – by exploring the question of the extent to which process-sociological established–outsider dynamics and drag-effects of social habitus in academia offer an insightful theoretical background for higher education research.

Prof. Joyce Dalsheim, Prof. Gregory Starrett

TRUTH IN THE SERVICE OF FANTASY: NARRATIVES AND ONTOLOGIES OF THE CAPITOL INSURRECTION

Like many other classical social theorists, Norbert Elias is convinced that human knowledge progressed through the long-term replacement of superstition or fantasy with what he calls "reality-congruent" understandings of the world. Recent work in anthropology, science studies, and other fields has challenged the ontological view that a single knowable reality underlies the various ways in which humans make sense of their experiences. Drawing on our fieldwork at the massive political rally in Washington, D.C., on January 6, 2021, which preceded what has come to be known as the "Capitol Insurrection," we raise questions about (1) the narrowing content of narratives describing the events of that day and (2) the extent to which assuming a single knowable reality helps or hinders our understanding of those events. We are particularly interested in how mainstream processes and institutions of knowledge creation have focused on attributing legal responsibility for the violent storming of the Capitol while simultaneously erasing much of the complexity we witnessed on January 6. We argue that this narrowing erases the broader empirical display of white Christian hegemony at the rally, which has assumed increasing urgency since those events. We make two interrelated arguments. First, that institutional processes of narrative creation produce highly specific sets of increasingly reality-congruent knowledge that nevertheless function as fantasy by seeking to organize and purify public apprehensions of "what happened." And second, that the white supremacism on display at the January 6 rally continues a long-term discourse and practice of Christian supersession that might appear either as a Freudian "return of the repressed" or as a Derridean haunting. In the end, powerful and enduring cultural fantasies such as supersession can be aided rather than challenged by the production of specific reality-congruent narratives.

Dr. Michael Dunning, Prof. Jason Hughes

THE SOCIOGENESIS OF PSYCHEDELICS: THE BALANCE BETWEEN SCIENTIFIC FANTASY AND SCIENTIFIC REALITY

The use of psychedelics for therapy and self-improvement is undergoing a renaissance in psychiatric and psychotherapy circles, and among lay individuals who believe such substances can enhance their health, well-being, and performance, particularly through the practice of microdosing. This represents a significant shift in public, political, and scientific attitudes toward such substances and comes about in the context of the US-led "war on drugs" that began in the late 1960s. This hardline stance has been supported by the scientific mainstream – for the most part – who together with politicians and mainstream media have focused on the perceived dangers of psychedelic substances. In turn, this has contributed to the development of public fears and associated moral and legal prohibitions of psychedelics and other "drugs." However, earlier scientific research on psychedelics in the 1950s and 1960s had previously contributed to their use in therapy, having shown positive results in the treatment of a range of illnesses, most notably alcoholism.

These changes in attitudes toward psychedelics over time provide a range of important questions, including: What are the social processes that have contributed to these apparently radical changes in scientific opinion? And relatedly, what is the relationship between science and politics? In other words, to what extent do ideological (fantasy) concerns shape scientific knowledge and vice versa?

Following these questions, we provide a preliminary examination of the sociogenesis of psyche-delics as a scientific concern by exploring how this can help us to understand the relationship between ideological (fantasy-based) and scientific (more reality-congruent) concerns. Therefore, we explore the prospect that the war on drugs contributed to scientific fantasies about drugs and consider whether recent developments represent a partial emancipation of reality-congruent knowledge relative to the fantasy-based knowledge in our understanding of psychedelic substances. Finally, we consider the consistent claim among psychedelic users – a claim partially supported by neuroscientific and therapeutic scientific data – that psychedelic "trips" can enable access to aspects of reality inaccessible via normal states of consciousness. Accordingly, we consider how such trips might serve to problematize the "polarization" of fantasy and reality in Elias's framing of the fantasy–reality continuum.

Dr. Florence Delmotte

THE FANTASY–REALITY CONTINUUM OF NATIONALISM AND NATIONAL IDENTITIES: THE EUROPEAN NATIONAL HABITUS, SINGULAR AND PLURAL

In 1987, Norbert Elias wrote, "if we are looking for examples of the reality-congruence of the concept of habitus, we could hardly find a more cogent example than the persistent way in which the national habitus of the European nation states impedes their closer political union." Thirty-five years later, this phrase remains largely relevant, and nationalism(s) appear more alive than ever in Europe and around the world. However, it remains unclear whether Elias meant the persistence of the national habitus per se or the persistence of national habitus in the plural, as different as the nation-states historically are.

What is sure is the double nature of national habitus in the democratic age that carries myths and beliefs yet takes strength from achievements framed by nation states in terms of democratization and extended access to rights. As Elias recognizes in *Involvement and Detachment*, "the self-esteem of nations and other survival groups needs not be undeserved." On the other hand, he never fails to indicate and denounce the fantasy content of nationalism(s), of which National Socialism represented an extreme version.

This paper will discuss the fantasy–reality continuum – or the "Janus face" – of the national habitus in and of Europe and the continuum between all forms of contemporary nationalisms. The hypothesis is that national identities are always a combination of myths, social beliefs, and realism in varying proportions. The discussion will be based on Elias's and other classics on nationalism, along with diverse empirical surveys: one conducted in Brussels with young people, the second one on the Citizens' Dialogues organized by the European Commission, and the last one on the early transmission of national belonging to children.

Ximing Fan, Doctoral Candidate

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN THE ESTABLISHED––OUTSIDER RELATIONS: THEORIZING THE FIGURATION OF CHINESE COMMUNITIES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

To what extent do social identities impact the physical activity participation of ethnic minorities? With the increasing trend of migration and ever-changing dynamics in society, health, and physical activity, inequalities remain a socially relevant challenge for migrants and marginalized communities. As "the most unknown" ethnic minority in the UK, British Chinese communities are the focus of the ethnographic research described in this paper, as it describes an investigation into the social processes that impact the communities' physical activity behavior. At a cursory glance, the ethnicity of the Chinese communities in the UK seem to share a homogenous identity, but a closer look reveals diverse differences in culture, generations, or language. Thus, the research took a figurational approach to particularly follow the established–outsider relations. As a community largely consisting of immigrants and descendants, there remains an overlapping identity for the British Chinese, who simultaneously play the role of "the established" and "the outsiders" due to their interdependent network in the society. The ethnographic fieldwork conducted in a Chinese community center in Birmingham has revealed preliminary findings that the we-image of the Chinese itself creates "group disgrace" that affects the self-identity and prevents them from engaging in physical activity with the established British society. The findings of this research contribute to the policymaking and well-being of ethnic minorities in general and seeks to discover the social processes behind the health inequalities.

**Gordon J. Fyfe, Honorary Fellow at the School
of Museum Studies, University of Leicester**

MUSEUMS, GIFTS,
AND THE REALITY–FANTASY
CONTINUUM

The gift has long puzzled social scientists, especially since the early twentieth century, when anthropologists encountered the Kula ring of the Western Pacific and the potlatch of Northwest America. The problem emerged how to account for behavior, which by the lights of Western economics, meant wasteful consumption. By the same token, contemporary philanthropy is a puzzle for those who imagine that the calculating individual is the bedrock of human sociality. Altruism, generosity, and philanthropy are social facts that meld fantasy and reality. Think of museums and how they enroll citizens not just as visitors but as donors and volunteers. We find that the museum's manifest function of exhibiting objects is accompanied by a latent function of exhibiting altruism. And museum philanthropy incites fantasies about sociality and voluntarism which we encounter, for example, in the American Dream. Moreover, as museum donors, people are connected – however indirectly – with the power of the state. I read the birth of the museum as a symbolic revolution in which gift exchange economies were stigmatized as irrational, traditional elites denied the power to give at the state's expense and the gift itself socialized. Just as it does with other institutions the state colonizes the gift and sets the rules which govern it in a world of commodity exchange. Museums, it is argued, are significant for being institutions where the gravitational force of states is exerted over private generosity and over national fantasies that furnish our emotional economies. Museum giving, for example, in the UK and the USA, is a game of smoke and mirrors about how the tax burden of symbolic power is shared. Meanwhile the chickens come home to roost for some gifts were stolen goods and others given and received in bad faith. We must get real about the gift.

Dr. Norman Gabriel

IS THIS THE REAL LIFE?
IS THIS JUST FANTASY?
MECHANISMS OF DEFENSE

Although it is well known that Elias was influenced by Sigmund Freud, this paper will suggest that we need to turn to other theoretical perspectives in the psychoanalytic tradition to shed light on how Elias extended and integrated some of their concepts in his work. In an interview, Elias states that one of the books that profoundly influenced him during the Weimar years was Anna Freud's *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defence* (1936). In this book, Anna Freud explains how mechanisms of defense are used in different ways across the lifespan, with some defenses (such as splitting or denial in fantasy) associated specifically with very early stages of development and some (such as sublimation) more characteristic of later stages.

An important section of the book is where she clarifies the sources of anxiety that lead to defense. She distinguishes between fear of wishes in one's own "inner" world and "objective anxiety," fear of the anger of parents or dislike of unpleasant things. Her theory was "a more or less heretical revolutionary idea," giving equal status to different dangers – be it "internal or external" – by focusing on the affect associated with a threat. In doing so, she refocuses psychoanalysis' attention to "external" realities alongside the dangers associated with internal conflict, constructing a developmental view of defense by which human beings develop mechanisms such as "denial in fantasy" or "identification with the aggressor." The paper will argue that Elias used these ideas as an important touchstone to help guide and frame his work, for example through such key concepts as the social constraint toward self-constraint in *On the Civilising Process* or the internalization of the "inner ear" in the established–outsider relations.

Prof. John Goodwin, Prof. Henrietta O'Connor, Laurie Parsons, Doctoral Candidate

UNCERTAINTY: THE LIMINAL SPACE BETWEEN FANTASY AND REALITY

We previously used Norbert Elias's conceptualization of fantasy and reality in our writings on youth transitions and older workers' transitions to retirement. Others have subsequently extended our analyses to a range of concerns, including consumption, psycho-social adjustments, academic retirement, imagined futures, anxiety in women's transitions, biographical interviewers, and academy footballers.

Some fifteen years on from our original analysis, we aim to re-examine the analytical utility of Elias's conceptualization of fantasy and reality as we and others have used it. Second, while our original discussions related to the ill-fated 1960s young worker project, here we will extend our analysis to a later youth cohort who transitioned from education onto government training schemes in the 1980s. Experiences of these work substitution schemes – and the economic harshness of that time – challenge the original fantasy and reality dichotomy. For example, while for the 1960s cohort, "fantasy" was understood by Elias as a largely unconscious coping strategy used by young workers to offset their limited knowledge of the "realities" of work, the 1980s cohort *neither* had fantastical notions of work nor any realistic expectations. Instead, they were "stuck" in the liminal space of "uncertainty." Like in Turner, these "liminal individuals" were "betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremony." Yet this was understood by the young people themselves.

Based on this analysis, we will argue that repositioning uncertainty as part of the fantasy–reality continuum – rather than being merely the trigger for fantastical thinking – will extend the use of fantasy and reality as analytical devices.

Prof. Miklós Hadas

SCIENTIFIC FANTASY AND IMAGINATIVE DETACHMENT: THE CASE OF BOURDIEU'S POSTHUMOUS SKETCH FOR A SELF-ANALYSIS

I accept Paolo Giovannini's point that "elements of fantasy can foster the cognitive process if transmuted into imagination, harnessed by factual knowledge deriving from serious empirical research." Bourdieu's oeuvre is particularly noteworthy in this respect. By trying to bring the Eliasian "involvement and detachment" model to a climax, Bourdieu intends to practice a kind of "self-analysis by proxy," arguing that "reflexivity is a tool for more science, not less." Through a close reading of Bourdieu's posthumous *Sketch for a Self-Analysis,* I will show that some of his claims do not stand up to a test of validity and are not part of a thorough socio-analysis but of a self-apologetic discourse. Let us take his following statement: "I have almost always found myself on the opposite side from the models and modes dominant in the field, whether in my research or in my political position-takings, conspicuously Weberian or Durkheimian for example when it was imperative to be Marxist." I accept that as a newcomer from deep down, the young Bourdieu was at odds with the French sociological mainstream. But 40 years later, when formulating these thoughts, he was not only a world-famous sociologist but also a dominant and charismatic public figure in both the sociological and the intellectual fields. However, I think it would be unwise to throw the baby out with the bathwater. In other words, I would like to argue that self-analysis by proxy – as far as it is practiced properly – is a promising method with which the fantasy–reality continuum model can be improved.

Prof. Johan Heilbron

WHY IS SCIENCE UNDER ATTACK?

There seems to be a fairly widespread fear that "science" is under attack, that populist revolts represent a threat to the hard-won authority of scientific knowledge, and we may be entering a regressive phase of more fantasy-based involvements among large parts of the population in western countries. However, the empirical evidence about skeptical attitudes toward science seems to suggest that, in reality, two different and in many respects opposite processes have occurred over the past decades. On the one hand, the increasing power of a small number of large firms and their main beneficiaries (the "super rich") have waged campaigns against public regulation, among others by systematically casting doubt on the scientific evidence about issues that potentially harm their business interests, namely fossil fuels, effects of environmental degradation, and health risks of smoking, alcohol, and sugar consumption. Publicly orchestrated as well as privately pursued, these campaigns have found political support most notably in the Republican Party in the USA, thus diminishing the expressed "trust in science" on the political right. The other – in many respects opposite – mode of skepticism is related to democratization and is carried by educated younger people, who do not increasingly question "science" in general, the soundness of scientific methods, or the relative validity of scientific results, but rather the undisputed authority of scientific institutions, unwarranted privileges of scientists, and specific uses of scientific results in state policy.

Dr. Alon Helled

THE RESILIENCE OF NATION-STATES: BETWEEN SOCIOGENETIC FANTASY AND JURIDICO-POLITICAL INSTITUTIONALIZATION

The modern nation-state finds its origins in the combination, and construction, of the fantasy–reality continuum. The sociopolitical figuration conceptualized as a collectivizing survival unit (Elias) refers to both the invention of traditions and the positivistic research on ethno-national mythologies, forming a kinship-people-nation triad, as well as to the secularization and routinization of powerholders, providing material representation of polity-based society. Nationalism inherited and used much of the dispositions belonging to religion (solidarity networks, communities of faith, spiritual guidance, etc.) and reinterpreted them in presumably scientific terms. Either labelled as political or sociological, the structural perseverance of the nation-state model "grounded" the irrational and emotional sentiments into a bureaucratized organizational reality. In this sense, the nation-state has been a source of habitus production (psychosocial behavioral norms, codes of conduct, patterns of social life) with a remarkable capacity to resist and adapt to societal and geopolitical changes via legal and political institutionalization.

The paper will tackle the twofold structure of the nation-state in its processual development by offering a novel interpretative key – namely national resilience – based on interdisciplinary theorization and historical examples. Inspired by studies on nationalism and Eliasian figurational sociology, the paper will position fantasy and myths in the construction of kinship and nationhood as sources of resilience for the nation-state model, alongside and beyond the institutional and legal systems of regime. The analytical endeavor will consider various nation and state relationships in terms of survival units, which aggregate and collectivize society in different contexts.

Philip Højme, Doctoral Candidate

FROM SCIENCE FICTION TO TRANSHUMANISTIC NECROMANCY: HOW FANTASIES ABOUT THE FUTURE REVERT TO ARCHAIC THINKING

This paper will interpret transhumanism as engaging in fantasies that it shares with those who practice the art of necromancy, while the overall aim will be to show how these techno-optimistic attempts at transcending the bodily condition through mind-transfer can be interpreted as a return to a much older tradition of necromancy, thus making mind transfer and transhumanism a kind of modern-day necromancy. By alluding to magical and ritual notions of necromancy, the paper will show how the rationale behind transhumanism's infatuation with mind transfer is premised on the desire to overcome life itself by gaining immortality. By reinterpreting transhumanism in this manner, the paper will show how the ritualistic, magical, or mythical foundations of premodern life are still alive and well in the most techno-optimistic traditions of contemporary thought.

The paper will first outline how the transhumanists' fanciful imaginations about immortality can be found in a wide array of literary works of science fiction, such as *Frankenstein* (1818), *To Live Forever* (1956), and *Mind Transfer* (1988). Next, the paper will show how the contemporary techno-positive quest for the capability of transferring human consciousness into a computer shares central characteristics with the more ritualistic/religious traditions of necromancy.

Prof. Lars Bo Kaspersen

THE PAPACY: THE RISE AND FALL AND RISE AGAIN OF A SURVIVAL UNIT?

When we consider global history, we find many communities that most often have been seen as religious communities, so these have mostly been objects of investigation for scholars interested in religious matters. We can mention the Jewish community from Abraham (approx. 2100 BC) to the defeat by the Babylonians and later the Roman Empire. Another example is the Papacy from the year 800 to the nineteenth century. Others to be mentioned is the Knights Templar in the Middle Ages and, more recently, Al-Qaeda. This paper will discuss one of these apparent strong religious communities. We will present, analyze, and discuss the rise and development of the papacy following Norbert Elias's ideas to argue that the papacy is not a religious community only. For more than 800 years, the papacy should be characterized first and foremost as a "political community" or – following Elias's conceptual apparatus – a survival unit. Elias develops a set of important and controversial concepts to uncover and characterize "survival units" with whose application he is very consistent. By using Elias' s conceptual "lens," we can highlight a strong analytical distinction between survival units (political "communities") and religious communities. By looking into the long history of the papacy, we shall see how it emerged and developed as a survival unit, but also how this survival unit changed over time, because the dynamics in the European system of survival units changed, and new constellations of power emerged. The "survival unit" is particularly useful, because it demonstrates how religion is intertwined with politics (and economics), revealing how politics and the military often become integrated into the religious aspect of this "community." The final question to be discussed concerns the notion of court society. Is the papacy a survival unit but not a court society? Or, is the papacy a survival unit and a court society because these two concepts are interdependent?

Krzysztof Katkowski

LOCALITY: TAKEN AND... RESTORED? REGIONAL, HISTORY-BASED FANTASY AS AN ELEMENT OF ELIAS'S CIVILIZING PROCESS

A specter is haunting Europe – the specter of medieval warriors and regionalisms. However, perhaps for the first time in a long time this is not a division based just on ethnic or national origin as in the case of movements in Catalonia, Occitania, Scotland, or Silesia. Given the sudden popularity of the Vikings, Seljuk tribes, or heroes of Kievan Rus', we encounter an interesting phenomenon for Norbert Elias's idea of the civilizing process. We should consider the connotations that this social phenomenon – often appearing independently in various European countries – connects with the possibility of searching for roots other than those offered by Christian heritage.

The paper will present the phenomenon of returning to early medieval history from the perspective of figurative sociology. I believe that this returning fascination with the early Middle Ages – visible both in video games, tv series, TikTok shorts, or postulates of some political and regional movements – should be treated as a fantasy in the sense that emerges from Elias' writings. Using examples from various ranges, this paper will present a brief interdisciplinary cross-section of this phenomenon. It will also be an opportunity to reflect on Marta Bucholc's statement that Central and Eastern Europe would be a space of forgetting. Are we confronted above all with a "return of the repressed" traditions of Northern and Eastern European countries? Or, is it the aftermath of nationalisms – or their revival – in the face of capitalism's transition into a new phase?

Addressing these problems with Eliasian sociology of knowledge may provide us with a completely new understanding of these seemingly often distant phenomena.

Prof. Jarosław Kilias

EUROPEAN SCHOLARS VISITING THEIR IMAGINARY AMERICAS

The paper will deal with books written by three intellectuals who are today considered to be sociologists – two Frenchmen and a Czech woman – Alexis de Tocqueville, Jean Baudrillard, and Irena Dubská. Their works – *Democracy in America*, *America*, and *Americký rok* (American Year) were intellectual products of their travels to the United States of America. Created over a 150-year period, these works appear to be completely different from each other. Baudrillard's book is a dreamlike, impressionist essay, de Tocqueville's book appears to be a systematic scholarly treatise, while Dubská's text is a reportage record of a yearlong scholarship.

This paper will show that the America described by all three authors was composed as much of observation as from fantasy, but by no means unrestrained. Their fantasy originated from a twofold source. It partly was a product of exoticization, typical for the genre of travelog, which usually exaggerates the extraordinary features of a foreign land and its inhabitants. On the other hand, that particular country – the USA – was a figure that represents for the three authors the near future; maybe only a potential one but possibly one that had already begun. All three authors present their America in an ambivalent way, neither as utopias nor dystopias, and their visions are charged with a variety of feelings, ranging from hope through anxiety to fear and aversion. This paper will reflect on the nature and intriguing persistence of these visions of the USA as the country of the future.

Milena Kojić, Doctoral Candidate

CREATIVITY, FANTASY AND HUMOR: A COMMENTARY ON NORBERT ELIAS'S UNPUBLISHED NOTES IN THE "LECTURE ON HUMOR AND WIT"

Norbert Elias's unfinished manuscript "Essay on Laughter" is available by permission of the Norbert Elias Foundation and is stored in the "Laughter" folder at the Deutsches Literaturarchiv in Marbach am Neckar. The manuscript consists of three plans for an essay, handwritten notebooks, a lecture, and newspaper clippings. It was written between 1950 and 1956, mostly while Elias was working at the University of Leicester. Fragments of the manuscript were published in 2017, but parts remain unpublished – mainly drafts about humor titled "Lecture on Humor and Wit." This paper will sketch a figurational explanation of humor in relation to Elias's theory of leisure. The key point of connection will be the metaphor of "thinking millipede" that can no longer move naturally, when asked to "move leg no. 83." In Elias's "Spontaneity and Self-Consciousness," this metaphor describes the possible destruction of spontaneous experiences and intensity of emotions – otherwise possible in simpler societies – under the conditions of reflexive modernity. Elias offers a solution in "controlled decontrolling," namely re-entering the pre-reflexive paradise *through* and not against reflection. Elias mentions this point in his notes on (good) humor. The basic idea is that "laughter producing situations" always represent some deviation from accepted social norms. In other words, humor is based on a "sudden and unexpected transition" to a context that forms a contrast to socially approved standard of conduct. Moreover, "the creative character of laughter producing piece of wit or humor" creates an "atmosphere of a fairy tale, or a ghost story" that paints a "perfect picture which tickles our fantasy."

Prof. Maciej Kowalewski

FROM DATA TO PROMISE: POLITICAL WORK WITH FUTUROLOGY AND SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE

The reason why data and its presentation are so important today has to do with something more than mere pressure placed on science. Science and politics were never separate spheres, so their nexus is a classic theme in the sociology of knowledge.

This paper will scrutinize the intersection of expert and political narratives, albeit in relation to specific tools (such as maps and data visualizations) and fields (such as urban studies and urban policies). By referring to examples on geospatial technologies, the paper will demonstrate how scientific narratives are present in political declarations of the urban futures. In fact, data visualization is a *disenchanting gaze*, appealing to the power of numbers. A reminder that someone is constantly watching cities and their inhabitants, using big data to show the present, and design the future.

What will be of particular interest to this paper will be the issues of losing and regaining control over reality and the related Eliasian category of neutrality.

Dr. Aurélie Lacassagne

MASS MIGRATION MYTHS AND THE GREAT REPLACEMENTCONSPIRACY THEORY IN FRANCE AS PHENOMENA OF A DECIVILIZING PROCESS

Since the 2014 so-called migrant crisis provoked by the Syrian war, the discourses on migration have switched. A new rhetoric became mainstream – from media to politicians – and focused on the notions of "crisis" and "mass migrations." In a spillover effect, extremist discourses like the Great Replacement conspiracy theory, surfaced from the dark net to be circulated in the open net, adopted by a growing number of people. Any researcher of migration studies can only be puzzled by such perceptions. These changes are visible in all EU member states as well as in Canada and the USA. By using Norbert Elias's conceptual toolbox, this paper will shed light on the case of growing irrational drives that foster hatred and fear on the example of France. I will argue that these fantasies around migrations constitute a decivilizing process. First, the paper will deconstruct the fantasies around "mass migrations" by outlining key figures relevant to migrations. Then, I will analyze how this irrational fear and rejection of otherized migrants are in fact established in the process of longue durée, namely a rhetorical twist on the same idea (the barbarian invasions; the construction of the Moorish figure (Spain), Orientalism, today the Great Replacement). I will attempt to link these established–outsiders dynamics with the notions of crisis and an enduring colonial habitus.

Prof. Tatiana S. Landini, Prof. Enio Passiani

BRAZIL UNDER BOLSONARO ADMINISTRATION: CHALLENGES TO FIGURATIONAL SOCIOLOGY

Between 1964 and 1985 Brazil lived under a violent military regime that sponsored media censorship, torture, and murdering of opponents. With its end, the country breathed an air of democratization with the hope for a more robust civilizing process, which the 1988 Constitution – also known as the Citizen Constitution – seemed to symbolize. At the federal level, national politics have since been conducted by successive social-democratic governments with a strong sense of social justice and the aim of fighting the many forms of inequality that persist in the country. We refer to Fernando Henrique Cardoso of the Brazilian Social Democracy Party (1994–2002), Luiz Inácio "Lula" da Silva (2002–2010) and Dilma Rousseff (2010–2016), both of the Workers' Party. Dilma Rousseff's second presidential term was interrupted by a questionable impeachment process in 2016, eroding the young and fragile Brazilian democratic institutional fabric, thus erupting in a process of rupture that ended up with the election of a populist far-right government in 2018, led by Jair Messias Bolsonaro. Bolsonaro is a former retired captain of the Brazilian Army and former deputy for the State of Rio de Janeiro (for almost three decades) linked to extremely conservative evangelical sectors. His presidency has led to a dismantling of the Brazilian state, producing increased inflation, unemployment, corruption, violence, and hunger. What also prospered under Bolsonaro's presidency were constant attacks on the environment, science, universities, and human rights, thus reviving and legitimizing racist, homophobic, misogynist, and xenophobic practices and discourses throughout all social strata, which seemed successfully vanquished in the post-dictatorial period.

Analyzing this situation from a figurational perspective imposes at least two critical challenges, which this paper aims to face: (1) the attempt to discuss the process – be it civilizing or decivilizing – even before trends and consequences are solidified; 2) the need to "translate" the language of both democracy and the population's socioeconomic conditions into Eliasian concepts, beginning with concepts of "(de)civilizing process" through "civilizing offensives" and "decivilizing offensives" to "the established–outsiders."

Prof. Annette Langner-Pitschmann

CRAZY ABOUT IDENTITY: SECULARIZATION, HUNGER FOR MEANING, AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF FANTASY

Identity is a necessary condition for persons or societies to relate to themselves and others in a consistent way. From the inner perspective of the subjects concerned, this necessity is experienced as a desire for a grand narrative that vouches for the meaning of one's own and one's social existence.

The figure of thought of the continuity between fantasy and reality offers an illuminating heuristic for understanding this desire more precisely. In my paper, I explore the potential of this heuristic using C. Taylor's analyses of the transformation from pre-modern to modern as an example. The essence of this account of secularisation is that while pre-modernity sees the world as a book written by God, from which the meaning of individual as well as collective identity can be extracted, modernity demands that people become authors of their identity.

With regard to this account, the figure of continuity between reality and fantasy can be used as a category of analysis in at least two different respects. First, the two phases of the transformation depicted in Taylor can be reconstructed as two modes of fantasy use. Whereas pre-modernity assumes the idea of a legibility of the world to be a generally shared fantasy, modernity calls for the development of individual fantasies.

Secondly the human longing for identity thematised in Taylor's thesis can be critically examined for its ideological slant. In the perspective of Cornelius Castoriadis' radical theory of democracy, the paper reflects on the idea that a truly autonomous view of social reality necessarily entails recognising all metanarratives as imaginary creations. In this field of tension, it shall be discussed how to deal with the actual hunger for meaning without falling back into heteronomous forms of thinking.

Dr. John Lever

FANTASY, TECHNO UTOPIAS, AND MULTIPLANETARY FUTURES: SCIENCE FICTION AS A SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS STRATEGY?

Elias argues that low levels of control over social processes fixate human knowledge at a high fantasy level, and that this *double bind* slows the ascent of human knowledge to a higher-level synthesis. This is seen to be evident in the work of H.G. Wells, whose preoccupation with discovering the future found expression in science fiction dystopias such as *War of the Worlds*. In the early twenty-first century, techno-billionaire Elon Musk imagines attempts to save humanity from world-ending disasters through utopian visions of extraterrestrial capitalism and multiplanetary futures. In the light of Elias's thought, such visons can be viewed as fantasy-images that act as a means of orientation toward what kinds of futures that are feared *(fear images)* and desired *(wish images)* at specific moments in time by *more or less* powerful individuals and groups. Drawing on the work of historian Jill Lepore, in this paper we explore the emergence of science fiction as a business strategy, and the extent to which Musk's utopian visions for the future counter one type of social oppression by implying another.

Dr. Katie Liston, Dr. Gary Sinclair

SOCIAL MEDIA, SELF-REGULATION, AND ONLINE HATE

Technological developments such as the new social media like Twitter increase the pressure toward growing interdependence and present humankind with a civilizing task: The collective learning process about changes in the social standard of self-regulation. A related challenge is the effectiveness of legally enforced regulation for online and offline social spaces. Twitter and other new and participatory social media set in motion a forward spurt of a civilizing process, but also triggered a decivilizing movement. For many people today, having a social media account has become a part of themselves, an adjunct to one's personal and professional life (sociologists included!) that broadened the freedom of communication for everyone. This paper will draw on Norbert Elias's work on technization and civilization to make preliminary observations about the case of online hate on Twitter on the example of global discussions about soccer. Insights will be presented from work underway within a UK-Irish funded research project – Tackling Online Hate in Football (www.tohif.com) – on the figurational dynamics and their implications for the social standard of self-regulation.

Dr. Dominic Malcolm

SPORT, BRAIN INJURY, AND POST-TRUTH SOCIETIES

This paper will explore the interface of science and culture in sport, with special reference to debates about the immediate and long-term consequences of brain injury. Building on a previous Eliasian analysis of post-truth societies, the paper will focus on the roles of evidence management, emotion, conspiracy, and community polarization in structuring current debates. Moreover, it will explore conflicts between different scientific communities, between scientific communities and lay campaigners, and the emergence of a "pseudoscience" sector that seeks to commercially exploit the fears and anxieties these relations generate. This paper will identify how fantasy-laden beliefs in relation to the "sport-health ideology" are mobilized to defend current practice and how to similarly speculative accounts of the "legacy" of brain injuries. It will explore the rhetorical techniques used to generate emotive accounts of the potential benefit and damage incurred because of sport and the role of social media as a forum, in which knowledge is disseminated and communities are polarized.

Dr. Barbara Markowska-Marczak

HISTORICAL POPULISM AND THE PLAGUE OF FANTASIES: TRANSFORMATIONS OF COLLECTIVE IMAGES OF THE PAST

The psychoanalytic approach provides social sciences with many tools without which we cannot imagine the analysis of phenomena such as nationalism or populism. The approach's effectiveness is achieved by managing impressions and collective fantasies about the community's status quo (nation/people attributes). As writes Gustave Le Bon – the precursor of the psychology of crowd research and populism as such – "crowds have always undergone the influence of illusions." Therefore, analyses of social behavior or collective perceptions have little to do with rational thinking and much more to do with the technique discovered by Freud in *The Interpretations of Dreams*. Thus, we should learn to decipher the meanings of images of the world, which are in the form of collective projections or daydreams.

For Ernesto Laclau, author of *On Populist Reason* (2005), this is the main reason why populism belongs to the core of political logic. As a category of political analysis, populism confronts us with very specific problems of the image and symbolic representation. Every articulation of a "we" refers us to imagined communities and collective agents in the presence and the past. However, what is the status of this primary fantasy in the current historical discourse? Can we find strategies of articulation that we may interpret as part of historical populism? My paper will analyze the genealogy of populism with a psychoanalytical approach, focusing on the discursive devices elaborated by Laclau. My goal will be to show that social science must "disenchant" the notion of fantasy and accept that collective fantasies about the past are a relevant part of social facts: social reality as such.

Anna Maria Mullally, Doctoral Candidate

VEILED THREATS: THE BURKINI AS AN OUTSIDER EMBLEM

Summer 2022 in France brought more controversy around the burkini as the preferred beachwear for some Muslim women in France. Their choice of beach-clothing – widely read through religious connotations – again challenged the fantasy of an enduring, stable, secular French state, along with the cultural understandings of idealized French femininity and desired female habitus. Power struggles over both religious ideology and gendered citizenship played out through demonstrations of legislative authority, amplified and challenged by media in France and elsewhere. Though accounting for the largest Muslim population of any European state, French Muslims remain outsiders – in the Eliasian sense – with the power balance always tipped in favor of the established Christian patriarchal majority, which hides behind its fig leaf of *laïcité.* Consequently, French Muslim women's bodies are even more stigmatized than those of French Muslim men, as demonstrated by the previous ban on the hijab as an "Islamist emblem." However, the burkini as a symbol of "what we are not" also signifies the interdependent nature of the relationship between the dominant and the minority group.

For Elias, nation-states are "survival units" in which people are permitted to use physical force to guarantee that survival. The purported preservation of social order may also include the forced removal from a leisure space – such as a beach – of a woman in a burkini while a topless bather goes unremarked. I would like to explore here how relations of domination and subordination – as they pertain to the bodies of Muslim women in the leisure space of the beach – have been continuously negotiated as the claim to power is restated and reenforced by the established white Christian majority. Notwithstanding the strategic exclusion, stigmatization, and stereotyping deployed in the quest for dominance, Muslim women contest the power ratio as they seek harmonious and equal access to public space.

Dr. John O'Brien

JAMES JOYCE'S NIGHTTOWN: DECONTROLLING, BARBARITY, AND CREATIVITY

The paper will examine the Nighttown episode of James Joyce's Ulysses, the historical context of the novel, and its subject matter to understand the complexities of the fantasy–reality continuum. The subject of the episode is drunken disorder in a red light district, and the psychological integration thus experienced by the protagonists. The episode could be considered an achievement in reality-congruent knowledge, as it conveys the experience of intoxication in terms of restricted horizons, loss of control, and hallucination, which allows readers to intersubjectively experience the event set in a novel dedicated to depicting interdependence and the emotional experiences underlying such interdependencies. The Nighttown episode is simultaneously a multi-layered analysis of interaction, public morality, subjectivity, and emotional desires and fears. It appears that openness to fantasy facilitates the reality-congruent depiction of subjectivity. Furthermore, the episode was constructed from Joyce's personal experience of districts characterized by "dyscivilization" – and his artistic ability to reconstruct them – in which more barbarous treatment of others was permissible. Such districts are characterized by "liminal incivility," where the presence of multiple key institutions of modernity based on speed, commerce, and the monopolization of violence – such as ports, barracks, markets, and the mobility of capital – resulted in the creation of the largest red light district in Europe at the time: the Monto. The Monto grew thanks to unlicensed alcohol consumption and the sexual exploitation of economically vulnerable women. Of course, supreme detachment and self-control were necessary to produce this artistic product. Joyce understood his talent as resting on his alienation and need for abandonment, the instability of his circumstances, and his licentiousness. Thus, this paper will shed light on the veracity of the pervasive hypothesis that decontrolling and decontrolled environments are necessary facilitators of artistic truth.

Prof. Željko Pavić, Emma Kovačević, Doctoral Candidate

VACCINE HESITANCY: CAN RELIGIOSITY DISTORT THE IMPACT OF KNOWLEDGE AND MEDIA INFORMATION?

Despite the scientific consensus on the effectiveness of vaccines in preventing infectious diseases, vaccine hesitancy is a growing global phenomenon. In the attempt to understand the phenomenon, two approaches derived from the public understanding of science studies are usually implemented. The first one highlights the scientific or health literacy as a predictor of attitudes toward science and toward vaccines. The second approach highlights the range of sociocultural variables that can dampen or amplify the public acceptance of scientifically produced and proven knowledge. Following such an assumption, studies show that religiosity might act as a "filter" that can strengthen or weaken the relationship between adopted scientific knowledge and attitudes toward scientific facts when dealing with specific scientific topics. In other words, religion can act as a moderator of knowledge and vaccine hesitancy relationship. Thus, this paper will analyze religion's role as a moderator of the relationship between knowledge, (positive) media information, and vaccine hesitancy by presenting results from an online survey research. The data were conducted within a research project funded by the Croatian Science Foundation. All constructs were measured using previously validated scales, with vaccination attitudes measured by means of two independent scales. The results will be discussed in the context of the role of religion in contextualizing knowledge and public attitudes toward science.

Myagmarjargal Purev, Doctoral Candidate

NOMADS IN THE CITY? EXPERIENCES OF RURAL-URBAN MIGRANTS IN ULAANBAATAR

As urbanization accelerates, Ulaanbaatar, the capital city of Mongolia, faces prominent social and environmental issues, such as unemployment, alcoholism, lack of schools and health care facilities, traffic jams, and air pollution. In popular narratives, some of these urban issues are attributed to the nomadic qualities of the rural-urban migrants. Serving the fantasy of outsiders and the need of Mongolians for cultural demarcation, Mongolian herders have become a symbol through which the portrayal of Mongolia as a "nomadic nation" is widely constructed and perpetuated. This leads to two completely different and contrary representations of rural-urban migrants in the urban discourses: (1) the rural-urban migrants disrupt the urban economic and cultural development as the backward nomads; (2) nevertheless, they are also representative of the glorified nomadic identity of Mongolians. Taking up on Orhon Myadar's concept of "imaginary nomads," I analyze the rural-urban migrants' experiences in Ulaanbaatar under the collective fantasy of nomads in the city.

Prof. Dietmar Schloss

CHUCK PALAHNIUK'S NOVEL FIGHT CLUB (1996): ON FANTASY AND DISCONTENT

The last decade of the twentieth century saw the emergence of a new type of social novel that combined depictions of acts of violence with detailed descriptions of modern consumer and media society: Bret Easton Ellis's *American Psycho* and Chuck Palahniuk's *Fight Club* being the most well-known examples. The novelists were obviously interested in studying the connection between the (male) protagonists' violent desires and the social and cultural restraints of late-modern society; in fact, we may read these novels as psycho-sociological studies of late-modern processes of decivilization. Interestingly, both novels draw on the technique of unreliable narration: the reader can never be quite sure whether the first-person narrators really commit the acts of violence that they report or whether they experience them only in their imagination. Ellis and Palahniuk seem to suggest that the decivilizing tendencies in late-modern societies do not only result in a return of violence but also in a loss of "reality congruence" and an increase in fantasy activity.

In my talk, I will focus on Chuck Palahniuk's novel *Fight Club*. I will consider the action of the novel as a kind of mind movie created by the narrator to relieve himself of the emotional pressures under which he is placed in his professional and private life. His experiments with violence and death originally take the form of what Elias and Dunning call "mimetic play activities," in which the protagonist engages only in his leisure time. However, from a certain moment on, the fantasies of violence and death develop a dynamic of their own and take over his whole life. Palahniuk seems pessimistic about the compensatory power of leisure-time activities of late modernity; the protagonist's fantasies and violent desires eventually become so powerful that they can no longer be contained by "mimesis" and make their way into reality. Palahniuk provides us with a sense that the narrator's discontent is what a whole generation of men suffer, thus suggesting the that the loss of reality congruence and the increase of desire for violence will result in a political crisis.

Prof. Reza Samim

STUDENT READING CIRCLES AS SPACES FOR THE PRODUCTION OF SCIENTIFIC FANTASIES: AN ANALYSIS OF A NON-WESTERN EXPERIENCE

Student reading circles in my home country of Iran are formed outside the official university structure with the aim of collective reading of classical texts or some references in a specific academic field. Students indicate two main reasons for the formation of such circles. First, the insufficiency of official education at the university and, second, the subjugating official relations at university classes, which prevent them from freely expressing their ideas about different subjects in class. What encourages them to form such circles is their desire to escape the controls existing at the university as a modern social organization. The freedom resulting from escaping such controls allows students to participate in discussions that are otherwise impossible at the university (for different reasons). The paper will consider the effects of this freedom of students' discussions in student reading circles. By studying how scientific discussions are organized at one of these circles – a circle of fifteen students from the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tehran, reading Marx's *Capital* – I will show that these discussions are nothing more than a free exercise of fantasy. Throughout these discussions and by using mechanisms presented in this article, students produce scientific fantasies. More than producing inter-subjective knowledge, they engage in symbolic and conceptual polemics, which resemble ideological conflicts rather than activities aimed at the democratization of knowledge production and dissemination.

Emilia Sieczka, Doctoral Candidate

IMAGINED POLISHNESS AS EMOTIONAL REGULATION OF SCHOOLCHILDREN: A STUDY OF NATIONAL SOCIALIZATION THROUGH THE TRANSMISSION OF SHAME

The paper will analyze literary texts published regularly in the school magazine *Zeszyty Jagielloń- skie* (Jagiellonian Papers) between 2008 and 2021. The magazine's editors and mentors view their activities as building a "community of resistance" against the moral decline of the modern world through the socialization of youth into "authentic" national norms. The analysis of narrative structures present in the works of high school students will serve to reconstruct the national dimension of Polish emotional culture, in which bond with Polishness is regulated by shame. We can distinguish three channels of the shame, mobilized by the ideal of imagined Polishness instilled in youth, which activates self-deprecation of the schoolchildren in their narratives against (1) a generational (civilizational), (2) class, and (3) sexual background. The hypothesis that I will test through this case study is that idealization of the past (imagined Polishness) used as a main pedagogical tool in socialization of the schoolchildren serves the purpose of embedding cultural hierarchies through emotional regulation, in which of crucial importance is the fantasy of the authentic historical incarnation of national norms. In other words, the paper will discuss shame as a perception of own deficit in the authenticity of one's habitus that should be compensated through techniques of emotional management, including artistic literary activity.

Dr. Aleksejs Šņitņikovs

COGNITIVE SELF-CONTROL AND DISTRACTION IN THE LEARNING PROCESS USING DIGITAL MEDIA

Digital technologies changed various aspects of education and learning. Studies show that the character of students' learning with the use of networked computers has changed compared to more traditional learning based on printed texts. Personal computers that students use in the learning process serve two contradicting purposes. On the one hand, the computers are intellectual technologies and tools for calculation and data processing. On the other hand, the computers are the means for the simulation of reality used for the purpose of immersing viewers in virtual worlds. Both functions are often performed by the users simultaneously on one screen. The technologies of hypertext and hypermedia have changed how young people search, perceive, and assimilate information. There are indications that students' ability for quick search of information improved but their ability for deep and reflective reading deteriorated. Students are routinely distracted by notifications of their digital devices and become increasingly unable to focus their attention for longer periods. Many students become fast and unreflective consumers of information, which leads to the fragmentation of their knowledge and superficial learning. We may argue that networked digital media change the balance of involvement and detachment in the learning process. Students' cognitive processes seem to be more "involved" due to their immersion in the virtual world of the Internet. The crucial problem under these conditions is cognitive self-control, which is necessary to ensure one's successful learning while using digital media. The paper will be based on empirical material obtained in the research project "The Impact of Internet Usage Patterns on the Development of Youth's Cognitive Styles," implemented by Riga Technical University, which includes interviews with experts in cognitive psychology and computer sciences and focus group discussions with university and school teachers in Latvia in 2022.

Dr. Jiří Šubrt, Markéta Minářová, Doctoral Candidate

FUTURE AND UTOPIAN THINKING

The transition from paganism to Christianity engendered a significant change in the structure of temporal ideas among inhabitants of Europe. Christianity conceives of historical time as a continuous line of events leading from the creation of the world through the brief decisive action of Christ on earth to the end of the world in the Last Judgment. Thus, Christianity approximates time and imbues it with a linear, vectorial character. This understanding of time has an eschatological character, and it relates to certain ideas about the end of the world and history. Religious eschatology has influenced European thought for a long time, inspiring the philosophy of history. However, since the Renaissance, secularizing tendencies have become evident in this way of thinking. These culminated in the Enlightenment, which replaced the perspective of salvation with the idea of progress. Besides eschatological thinking, the atmosphere in which the theory of progress was shaped was also influenced by utopian ideas, which to one degree or another, also had religious roots; suffice it to consider the monastic environment that was very inspiring for the creators of utopias. However, what already began to appear by the eighteenth century were anticlerical utopias, which removed the monastic inspiration into the background, and in the further development of utopian thought, ideas of a secularized nature prevailed.

Dr. Krzysztof Świrek

FANTASY OF ORIGINS IN MODERN POLITICAL DISCOURSE

This paper will use the psychoanalytic understanding of fantasy to highlight the paradoxical character of political discourse and its phantasmatic character. According to one understanding, fantasy is a scenario that the subject constructs to explain its own appearance: fantasy can be understood then as revolving around the central question of the child: How did I appeared in this world, what brought me here? In this context, the kernel of a phantasmatic scenario is the paradoxical situation of the subject witnessing the scene of its own conception, the traumatic primal scene.

The paradoxical time frame involved in a fantasy scenario can be found in various political discourses, most notably in the nationalist discourse, in which the nation is always already "here:" it is present since time immemorial and yet must be politically "conceived" to appear on the political stage and play the part envisioned by nationalist ideologues. This paper will analyze similar phantasmatic time loops and paradoxes also in other political discourses: conservatism, liberalism, and Marxism. In all those political languages, the emergence of the political subject and the relationship between preferable conditions for political action and the action itself demand a paradox to be placed at the heart of discursive mechanism – just as is the case in fantasies of the individual's conception analyzed by psychoanalysis.

Radosław Szymański, Doctoral Candidate

FANTASY AND POLITICS IN ROUSSEAU'S "CONSIDERATIONS ON THE GOVERNMENT OF POLAND"

One of the most persistent axes in the history of European political thought is constituted by the discussion on the nature of justice. The thesis that the criteria of justice are not natural but instead wholly human-made and conventional – variously denoted as voluntarism, Thrasymacheanism, Hobbism, or Nietzscheanism – routinely encounters accusations of immorality and political subversiveness. By contrast, its proponents argue that to maintain that the norms of justice are objective and directly accessible by human reason in virtue of their link to divine wisdom amounts to engaging in a fantasy conducive to bellicose and repressive politics, which often legitimizes violence in the name of such norms. This paper will consider the status of fantasy in the theory of a thinker who marks a turning point in the long history of this debate, namely Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Rousseau's affinity with Hobbes, Pufendorf, and Montesquieu – as well as his will-based theory of popular sovereignty – place him as one of the most vocal eighteenth-century proponents of the thesis about the conventional nature of justice. At the same time, Rousseau did not propose to simply unmask the metaphysical fantasy of natural justice but rather to sustain a reflection on what kind of new fictions the modern state must manufacture. The paper will focus on one particular instance of the role of fiction in Rousseau's political theory – often understood as the theoretical birth of modern nationalism – contained in his essay "Considerations on the Government of Poland," considering its broader implications for the history of modern European political thought and the relationship between modern institutions and the creation of fiction. To that end, the paper will engage with the recent book by Michael Sonenscher on the role of imagination in Rousseau's political theory.

Grace Tang, Doctoral Candidate

REALITY AND FANTASY AT WORK: DESIGN PRACTITIONERS AS SUBJECTS OF LATE SOCIALIST NEOLIBERALISM

This paper explores the work practices of China's design practitioners by shedding light on the reality–fantasy tensions in their creative work. Following Glynos and Howarth's logics approach inspired by psychoanalytic and Foucauldian theories, this paper will argue that the subject's attachment to fantasy can sustain and reproduce dominant norms in realities of work. However, this can also lead to deviation from these norms, reflecting resistance and suggesting moments of truth in which oneself can live a life that is "reality-congruent," as described by Norbert Elias.

In an analysis of the design practitioners' modes of engagement with norms, this paper will first examine how collective fantasies about state ideologies – such as the revival of the Chinese culture of civilization and the utopian visions of city-building and "going global" – sustain dominant work forms and relations by considering the discourses and ideological identification of design companies. Then, this paper will show how design practitioners turn to alternative practices to live with the dominant work norms that emphasize efficiency, along with values of space, profitability, and employability, yet evoking anxiety. This mode of engagement often involves paradoxical self-identification, as design practitioners simultaneously identify with and counteract the dominant work norms to live out their personal and corporate fantasies.

Therefore, this paper will argue that reality–fantasy tensions are inherent in creative work in China, foregrounding the contingency and open-endedness of relations and individual identities, but also revealing the problem of identity that articulates human experience of reality and produces meanings as they are situated in a specific professional and social domain.

Emma Tillich, Doctoral Candidate

MEDIA AND CULTURAL REPRESENTATIONS OF THE FEMININE DESIRE TO HAVE A CHILD: BETWEEN FANTASIZED FEMALE NATURE AND THE MOBILIZATION OF SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE (FRANCE 1960–2020)

Like many Western countries, France has been the scene of a major social transformation since the 1960s: women's access to efficient control over procreation. Women gained the power to postpone or even refuse motherhood. This constitutes a radical change in women's life horizons and relationship with time: women are no longer narrowly assigned to motherhood, as they were before.

This paper will analyze how this change in social fertility practices was accompanied by a change in social representations. What is the meaning given to female reproductive activity? How does the idea that women are naturally inclined to want to have and raise children change among women in terms of social representations and norms?

Counseling manuals on childbearing as well as extracts from women's and parenthood magazines will be analyzed. They provide access to commonly shared social representations in a sociocultural context. Moreover, they contain women's testimonies useful for identifying women's perspective on the matter under scrutiny.

The discourses on the desire to have a child situate between the fantasy of a feminine nature and the mobilization of scientific discourses. There has been a tendency to increase the use of scientific knowledge (in natural sciences or humanities) both in support of the thesis that there is a maternal instinct or to refute it. Thus, this paper will emphasize the penetration and reinterpretation of psychoanalytical theories in the media space as a support for collective representations of female predisposition to motherhood. Then, I will question the survival of a fantasized feminine nature, including through the mobilization of scientific discourse.

Prof. Robert van Krieken

PSYCHOANALYSIS, THE SOCIAL UNCONSCIOUS AND CIVILIZATION: ON MARIO ERDHEIM, POWER, AND COLLECTIVE FANTASY

This paper will discuss how the work of Swiss ethnopsychoanalyst Mario Erdheim on "the production of unconsciousness," as well as that of various other scholars engaging with the concept of "social unconscious," can illuminate the role of fantasy in power relations and the civilizing process. The general concern will be how the psychoanalytic understanding of unconscious mental life can contribute to the improved understanding of the civilizing and decivilizing processes. One focus of Erdheim's writing is the problem of the continued unconscious operation of aggression despite its "taming," namely the "dark side" of civilizing processes in which aggression directed upward against "the King" (or "the System") is displaced horizontally or downwards, when it becomes aggression against various manifestations of "the Other:" the devil, Jews, witches, liberals, and so on. Erdheim argues for the need to link state-formation and, indeed, the civilizing process to accompanying cultural and psychological processes, such as witch hunts and other forms of persecution of "outsiders," informed by a theory of collective fantasy and the social unconscious. From this perspective, the civilizing process involves the historical production of not just new forms of consciousness but also new forms of unconsciousness. In discussing the constitutional role of fantasy in engagement with reality, this paper will conclude by canvassing the idea that fantasy and reality do not lie on a single continuum but constitute two separate axes or dimensions.

Prof. Eran Viezel

WHEN DID MOSES COMPOSE THE DIVINE TORAH? DOGMATIC TRUTH AND PEDAGOGICAL FANTASY

Traditional Jewish religious belief speaks of a divinely revealed Torah, authored by Moses. However, when and how exactly did Moses write the Torah? Did he compose it all at the same time or over the course of several years? And did he write the Torah in divine dictation? This paper will examine the various answers proposed by the Jewish tradition over the generations. It will address the (unconscious) preference of the believers to formulate the principles of their faith in a dogmatic and general style, and to distinguish between myths and fantasy used as pedagogical tools and "reality" and "truth."

Prof. Philip Walsh

EMOTIONAL REPERTOIRES AND THE FANTASY–REALITY CONTINUUM

Emotions play an important role in Elias's figurational approach to several questions, including the civilizing process, the quest for excitement, and the role of detachment in the fantasy–reality balance. He also dedicated an article, published in 1987, "On Human Beings and Their Emotions: A Process-Sociological Essay," to explicating a theory of emotions. The text opposes both dualistic and reductionist approaches, exemplified primarily in psychological and biological approaches, respectively, seeking to bring the sociology of emotion under a figurational framework. However, Elias encountered a relatively undeveloped field at the time, the sociology of emotion having barely emerged as an explicit area of focus for most sociologists.

While that situation has been corrected, much of modern sociology of emotion still lacks a process perspective, tending to work with static conceptual vocabulary (often symbolic-interactionist). This paper will bring some recent developments in the sociology of emotion under a figurational account by focusing on the phenomenon of emotional repertoires. These can be understood as clusters of related emotions, manifested in structurally similar circumstances. Shame, pride, and guilt are, for example, related but distinct emotional responses to actions and to self–other relations. The paper will examine the variety of emotional repertoires and the various classification schemes that have been proposed to understand their groupings, with a view to demonstrating the need for a figurational and processual framework for understanding them. Then, the paper will focus on the importance of two related emotions, those of resentment and contempt, which many deem to have proven of enduring importance in sustaining self-conceptions of superiority and inferiority between groups. The paper will explore the role of such emotions in sustaining political fantasies of dominance while also addressing the more general relationship between emotions and the fantasy–reality continuum.

Selim Yilmaz, Doctoral Candidate

THE ESTABLISHED–OUTSIDER RELATIONS: GOSSIP AND STIGMATIZATION IN THE GREAT POWER-RISING POWER RELATIONS

Do states behave similarly to humans? Does Norbert Elias's theoretical explanation of stigmatization in the established–outsider relations apply to states? This paper will argue that great powers employ stigmatization as a tool and means to maintain power and prevent a power shift. The established–outsider theory is based on the observation of a town consisting of three zones, yet similar lessons can be drawn on the competition and relation between states in the international system. States stigmatize for the simple reason of survival and security that is linked to the perception of threat inspired by neorealism. The synthesis of figurational sociology and neorealism creates a unique lens for a different view on world politics. Two levels of historical analyses will be employed to examine the power competition of great and rising powers from 1900 to 1945 and from 1945 to 2010. Findings suggest that the effort to promote soft power is crucial, and the increasing importance of soft power confirms that reputation and stigmatization are means to maintain power. Furthermore, great powers do not use stigmatization on all weaker states, meaning the higher the level of perceived threat, the more likely the great powers stigmatize the rising power to prevent the latter from growing. This paper will conclude by recommending rising powers to, first, expect stigmatization by the great powers, and secondly, to preemptively work on soft power development to prevent aggressive confrontation.