

China in Zukunft die öffentlichen Ausgaben für diesen Bereich deutlich anheben, Maßnahmen für höhere Verteilungsgerechtigkeit ergreifen und angesichts steigender Hochschulgebühren alternative Finanzierungsmöglichkeiten durch Stiftungen und Wirtschaft fördern.

Abgerundet wird der Band mit einer zusammenfassenden Analyse des Direktors der Paris School of Economics, François Bourguignon, zum Zusammenhang von Wachstum, Ungleichheit und öffentlichen Finanzen aus historischer Perspektive. Seine Schlussfolgerungen für China unterstützen den Grundtenor des Buches, indem er sich für schnelle und drastische Schritte zur Umkehrung der steigenden Ungleichheit ausspricht: »A rise in inequality may cause irreversible changes. Wealth, education, and social relations are transmissible from one generation to the next; more inequality of incomes today may mean much less equality of opportunity tomorrow.« Als Konsequenz fordert er, die bestehenden Restriktionen für Land-Stadt-Migration zu lockern, die wirtschaftliche Entwicklung in ländlichen Regionen gezielt durch finanzpolitische Anreize zu fördern sowie die Umverteilungskapazitäten der Zentralregierung zu stärken und die dafür nötigen Ressourcen durch eine höhere Staatsquote zu finanzieren.

Die wenigen nennenswerten Schwächen des Buches liegen in der teilweise mangelhaften Kohärenz und Übersichtlichkeit. Laut Inhaltsverzeichnis ist das Buch in sieben größere Themenblöcke aufgeteilt, die sich inhaltlich teilweise nur sehr schwer voneinander trennen lassen (insbesondere die ersten drei Themenblöcke, die der Rezensent hier unter dem Begriff »funktionale Aspekte« zusammengefasst hat). In diesem Zusammenhang offenbart sich ein zweites Problem: Eben weil die Themen in enger Beziehung zueinander stehen, überschneiden sich die Inhalte einzelner Beiträge zuweilen stark, ohne dass eine klare inhaltliche Abgrenzung voneinander ersichtlich wird. Abgesehen von diesen Schönheitsfehlern ist der Band uneingeschränkt zu empfehlen, leistet er doch einen wichtigen und innovativen Beitrag zur Debatte um die sozial- und wirtschaftspolitischen Herausforderungen, vor denen die Volksrepublik China steht.

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**STEPHEN MENNELL:
The American Civilizing Process**

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Polity, 388 p.

That »civilization itself« had been attacked was one of the first popular exclamations after 9/11, and the following »War on Terror« led by the United States of America was justified as a war to »defend and save civilization.« It did not take

long before the question of whether the USA was a manifestation of civilization or rather its opposite became the object of a fervent debate among intellectuals and scholars from both sides of the Atlantic, and, of course, far beyond the Western world. But except as some highly emotional symbol of Western self-esteem enduring since the colonial heyday on the one hand and as a synonym for generally humane and peaceful relations on the other, it is not clear what the term »civilization« actually refers to, and what it means in regard to the USA. The American Civilizing Process by Stephen Mennell, Professor of Sociology at University College Dublin, provides a rare perspective on these questions.

At first glance the book seems to be just one more addition to the vast literature on the cultural and political history of the United States (in most cases compared to that of Europe), ranging from Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* (1836) to Robert Kagan's *Of Paradise and Power* (2003). But what makes Mennell's book exceptional is its theoretical framework building on the elaborate theory of civilizing processes developed by Norbert Elias (1897–1990), who elaborated his theory on European state-formation processes.

Elias's theory, though gradually becoming better known among social and political scientists, still seems to be underestimated in its applicability to international relations. Certainly it is seldom applied in that field. But its key concern, the interdependence and mutual conditioning of long-term sociogenetic and psychogenetic processes – often (mis)understood simply as »history« – could serve as a promising vantage point from which to reconcile realist with constructivist and institutionalist theories of social relations. To speak of »psycho-historical sociology« might sound a little exotic in times in which the dichotomy between the »subjective« and »objective« dimensions of social relations is still very common, but it is an adequate characterization of the theory of civilizing processes. It focuses on the development of the social and psychic structures of the human beings involved, and understands them as intertwined aspects of social processes that might be distinguished, but cannot be separated without getting only half the picture. Mennell's ambition in applying the theory of civilizing processes to the American case is clearly to get a more complete picture.

The observation and explanation of civilizing processes requires a long-term perspective. Consequently Mennell's book, after a short introduction to Norbert Elias's theory and its subsequent development, starts by taking a closer look at the situation of the Founding Fathers and its preconditions, of what was later to become the United States of America we know today. The expression »what was later to become« is important for Mennell's methodology. It emphasizes that people at an earlier stage of social processes cannot know what will result from their actions and more or less articulated intentions at a later stage. The United States at the end of the eighteenth century was quite different from what it became during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but it was not the result of an intended and planned process. However, the ideas of the revolutionaries who

would become the authors of the Constitution have been quite influential for the development of US society. Menzell mentions, for example, the belief that a »civilized« society is the outcome of enlightened political institutions and that, on the ground of an innate sense of justice and rationality, all people could be governed and govern themselves by reason. Ideas such as these have left a deep impact on American institutions and ideology (gun control, democratization of Iraq), but, as Menzell frequently points out, one misconceives the relationship between social structures and people's mindsets if one looks at it in terms of some free floating set of ideas that shaped history. Neither ideas nor people's character traits can be viewed separately from the development of their social relations in time.

The question of »American social character« is therefore a major thread running through the book. Even though since the middle of the twentieth century experts have pointed out that US society is far too complex to speak of a single »American social character,« Menzell reminds us of an important consideration here: unlike in many Western European countries there has never been a single model-setting elite, such as aristocratic courts or a »Bildungsbürgertum,« in North America, but rather a number of competing centers. Like other »Western« countries, the mostly agrarian North American states gradually turned into a capitalist market society, but with more rapidly growing large-scale industry and service companies and without meeting strong resistance from well established older elites (except in the Southern states). Being a comparatively egalitarian society, without strong class distinctions but with a multitude of ethnic and religious affiliations, with many immigrants, has left its mark on the varieties of social habitus of Americans in that they show peculiar forms of individualism and group affiliation and at the same time a strong patriotism, often with religious undertones, in a combination quite unfamiliar to European citizens. The fact that Americans' long-term experience has been one of (in the long run: unintentionally) becoming more and more powerful in relation to other states over the last two centuries further adds, according to Menzell, to a certain kind of alienation within the »Western community.« Observations such as these have been made before, but what makes Menzell's account worth reading is its firm roots in the social figurations that led to the shaping of such personality structures and their repercussions within the social process today called the »history of the United States.«

At the same time, Menzell's perspective might impede the reception of his book. It does not follow a specific question or thesis of pressing interest in today's politics and political science as they are; he seeks only to understand why the USA »is as it is.« Based on a broad array of literature dealing with various aspects of the topic and on empirical sources, such as books on manners or historical letters, its goal is rather to see the development of the United States and its people in a new light, in order to reveal connections between seemingly disparate aspects of the country within a processual and relational model, while taking into account how these connections change over time. At times the critical re-assessment of

Norbert Elias's theory of the civilizing process may be too lengthy for readers who are more interested in understanding the USA. Casual readers will surely miss a central story line: The book can be read like a series of essays, with topics ranging from »American Manners« through »Violence and Aggression« and »Integration Struggles« to »America and Humanity as a Whole.« They represent approaches to the same social process from different perspectives, which can sometimes give the impression of redundancy.

Nevertheless, Mennell's book provides useful insights even for those familiar with the history of the United States and its relations with the rest of the world. In particular, the comparison between the United States up until the First World War with the European Union as it is today (in the chapter »Integration Struggles«) brings to the surface some striking similarities. The (by now perhaps diminishing) prestige of the US federal government and presidency, the power of the United States' armed forces and of the US dollar today make it easy to overlook that just a century ago they seemed to be almost irrelevant in global international relations. The two World Wars played a major role in the United States' global ascent and fostered the functional and habitual integration of the people of its states into the federal union. The challenge for the European Civilizing Process and furthermore for the Global Civilizing Process then seems to be, if one follows Mennell's account, to install proper social regulations and a unifying feeling of identity without a major war or other kind of catastrophe. To meet this challenge, new perspectives are needed, to which Stephen Mennell's book about the American civilizing process could contribute.

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HEW STRACHAN:

Carl von Clausewitz, Vom Kriege

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Wenige Zitate sind so bekannt wie dieses: »Der Krieg ist eine bloße Fortsetzung der Politik mit anderen Mitteln.« Der Mann, von dem es stammt, Carl von Clausewitz, kann mit einigem Recht als einer der bedeutendsten, wenn nicht sogar als bedeutendster Theoretiker des Krieges bezeichnet werden. Seit dem Erscheinen 1834 hat sich sein Hauptwerk »Vom Kriege« zu einer der wichtigsten Schriften über Krieg und Strategie überhaupt entwickelt. Es zählt nicht nur zur Standardlektüre an allen wichtigen Militärakademien, gern bedienen sich seit Neuestem auch Unternehmensberater und Marketingexperten aus dem Ideenfundus des Preußen.