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Kuzmics, Helmut; Reicher, Dieter; Hughes, Jason

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# State, Emotion, Authority, and National Habitus. State-Related Problems of Our Time and Methodological Discourses in Sociology and Historical Sociology

*Helmut Kuzmics, Dieter Reicher & Jason Hughes\**

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**Abstract:** »Staat, Emotion, Autorität und Nationaler Habitus. Staatsbezogene Probleme der Gegenwart und methodologische Diskurse in Soziologie und Historischer Soziologie«. The central concerns of this HSR Special Issue – emotion, authority, and national character – are arguably among the most pressing issues facing social researchers in the current geo-political context. By contrast to the global political climate of the early 1990s – when the Eastern bloc was collapsing, when Europe was still in the euphoria of its expansion, and when a largely US-fuelled renewed wave of globalisation had not yet met with substantial nation-state resistance – the past few years have seen a growing number and range of counterreactions that are often characterised as undemocratic or even authoritarian. This article deals with two main topics. First, we stress the ongoing importance of the nation-state despite its analytical neglect by many social scientists since the 1990s. The paper discusses the weakness of concepts like “national identity” or of normative notions of “nationalism” that are commonly used in order to understand prevailing national we-feelings in the modern world. Instead we advocate a focus on historical long-term processes and on the various relationships between the formation of “survival units” like states and the make-up of the personality structure of its members in different nation-states. It will be argued that Norbert Elias’s concept of “national habitus” may be helpful in approaching these relationships. Thus, this approach will be helpful also for better understanding we-feelings in modern state-societies. Furthermore, methodological and theoretical problems that are related to the concept of “national habitus” will be discussed from the viewpoint of Historical Sociology. Second, this article summarises the arguments of the contributions that are assembled in this Special Issue. By doing so, these articles will be grouped in two different ways. The first type of grouping is related to the common characteristics of arguments found in all of the papers. They cover an area comprising Western, East Central, and Southeastern Europe–

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\* Helmut Kuzmics, Department of Sociology, University of Graz, Universitätsstraße 15, A-8010 Graz, Austria; [helmut.kuzmics@uni-graz.at](mailto:helmut.kuzmics@uni-graz.at).  
Dieter Reicher, Department of Sociology, University of Graz, Universitätsstraße 15, A-8010 Graz, Austria; [dieter.reicher@uni-graz.at](mailto:dieter.reicher@uni-graz.at).  
Jason Hughes, Department of Sociology, The University of Leicester, University Road, LE 1 7RH Leicester, United Kingdom; [jason.hughes@le.ac.uk](mailto:jason.hughes@le.ac.uk).

an countries, the Middle East, the US, and Japan. The second type of grouping is concerned with dissent in their approaches and arguments.

**Keywords:** National Habitus, Nationalism, Authority, Emotions, Historical Sociology.

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## 1. Introduction

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The central concerns of this special issue – emotion, authority, and national character – are arguably among the most pressing issues facing social researchers in the current geo-political context. By contrast to the global political climate of the early 1990s – when the Eastern bloc was collapsing, when Europe was still in the euphoria of its expansion, and when a largely US-fuelled renewed wave of globalisation had not yet met with substantial nation-state resistance – the past few years have seen a growing number and range of counter-reactions of a particular kind and character. Where in the 1990s sociologists were predicting an imminent end to the nation state, they now must confront a substantial shift in public opinion and in concomitant social developments, which together have brought the nation state back into sharp focus.

This renewed significance of the nation state and, in particular, of debates about “national identity,” can be witnessed in the struggles surrounding recent waves of mass migration which find particular expression in the increasingly bitter and polarised political discourses surrounding the reception, accommodation, assimilation, and integration of “outsider” groups by the “insiders” of destination nations throughout the “West” – in Europe, America, and Australia. Such conflicts characteristically pivot on the emotionally invested “we-images” of particular social groups; they have emerged not just within but between the states affected. Just as the successor states of the collapsing Eastern bloc deliberately reconstituted themselves as individual “nations” – as was the case also after the disintegration of Yugoslavia – the supra-national European Union is increasingly being positioned by some of its member-states as a tyrannical geopolitical monolith, a threat to national identity and character.

Similarly, the deeply penetrating and far-reaching economic and financial crisis of the last decade has undergirded conflicts within states (between elites and masses, winners and losers of globalisation), and between states. Public, mediated discourses have tended to focus on simplistic explanations of such conflicts, typically by means of focusing principally, sometimes exclusively, upon the personalities of the leaders involved (Trump, Erdogan, Putin, and so on) and their actions on the “world stage.” Such tendencies are compounded by collective stereotypes and hostile imagery – for instance, German Chancellor Merkel was depicted in mainstream Greek news media with a Hitler-styled moustache – which draw historical comparisons dating back to Second World War. In the case of the UK, debates surrounding “Brexit” have unreflexively

invoked similar historical recollections, here also tapping into a historically enduring vein of “splendid isolationism” and an imagined “golden age” of “greatness” predicated upon Britain’s colonial past (see Dunning and Hughes in this volume).

Additionally, the last decade in particular has witnessed the rise of nationalist parties in countries across Europe. In 2016, nearly 52 % of British citizens voted for Brexit<sup>1</sup>; 49.21 % of the Hungarians for Fidesz (2018)<sup>2</sup>; 43.6% for PiS in Poland (2019)<sup>3</sup>; 16.2% for the FPÖ in Austria (2019); and roughly 13% for rightist parties in the Netherlands and Sweden (Thorleifsson 2018). Despite the core significance of this resurgence of nationalism, populism, and authoritarianism, it is perhaps all the more curious that notions of “national character” or “national habitus” (and the terms are by no means entirely interchangeable) are afforded relatively little attention, and have attracted little scrutiny, in both sociological and lay discourse, even where whole states and their governments are to be judged. And yet the more intense and numerous interactions taking place between states and blocs have become, the more pressing the need has become to know something about the role of such differences. Crucial in this respect are the enduring sets of “we-feelings” – we-you-feelings or we-they-feelings according to Elias (2010 [1987]; also Elias 2012b [1970]) – which are frequently mobilised in the service of rational and/or legitimate national interests, forming thus a close, but fraught alliance. The acute influence of such feelings can be witnessed, for instance, in relation to debates of the past few years surrounding the treatment of refugees by Central European countries of the former Eastern bloc. These countries, and now also Italy, are portrayed as having failed to adapt to normative standards of empathy as these are defined (albeit not followed) in the model-setting centres of Western Europe: such actions are deemed less “civilised” than those of, say, Germany, France, and the UK. Within the crisis-ridden EU, accusations and counter-accusations now abound. Time and again, seemingly unchecked “we” and “they” feelings underpin much of the debate: Italians and the French complain of German “discipline” and “austerity”; conversely, the Germans bitterly oppose Romance “levity” and “sloppiness.”

Social and political theorists and researchers have tended to approach these developments in ways that correspond to their respective paradigmatic creeds, often involving implicit, extra-scientific norms that largely go unchecked. For example, a good deal of empirical survey research, with its pronounced tendency towards relatively short time spans, has typically involved the employ of

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<sup>1</sup> For the official results of the Brexit referendum, see <<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/who-we-are-and-what-we-do/elections-and-referendums/past-elections-and-referendums/eu-referendum/results-and-turnout-eu-referendum>>.

<sup>2</sup> See <[www.parties-and-elections.eu/hungary.html](http://www.parties-and-elections.eu/hungary.html)>.

<sup>3</sup> See <[www.parties-and-elections.eu/poland.html](http://www.parties-and-elections.eu/poland.html)>.

questionnaire items that infer a distinction between uncouth variants of crude “nationalism,” and forms of “patriotism” implicitly regarded as more palatable – but only just (see the argument developed in Höllinger, Fleiß, and Kuzmics 2012; cf. Hjerm 1998). This distinction – between patriotism and nationalism – has long been invoked in social scientific circles, with the former patriotic national pride understood to be grounded in an inner-directed “positive” identification with the institutions of a nation, and a more ethnocentric national pride or nationalism conversely understood as expressive of “negative” feelings of national superiority, directed outwards against foreigners (Haller 1996; Blank 2003; Cohrs et al. 2004; Davidov 2009; Höllinger, Fleiß, and Kuzmics 2012, 45). The same goes for empirical studies which juxtapose more or less “problematic” forms of ethnic national identity with a more positively evaluated civic national identity (see, for example, A. D. Smith 1991).

Similarly, normative undercurrents in social theory have long found expression through a striving towards the ideal imagery of peaceful and inclusive economic co-development, with the nation-state initially seen as its major guarantor. However, what was perceived to be positive for social inclusion at the level of the nation-state (Marshall 1992) later came to be seen as an obstacle to supra-national integration. Partly as a reaction to the wars conducted by a US-led coalition in the Middle East, partly also to formulate the contrast between American neo-liberalism and the model of European welfare-states, theories were formulated that treated Europe as a peaceful moral hegemon in the making (Rifkin 2004) and, in these analyses, European nation-states appeared as atavisms. For some time now, a plethora of sociological sub-disciplines and sub-discourses have tended increasingly to treat nations and nation-states as something approaching an empirical “taboo” – one that would be better avoided. Even where nation states were compared, for instance, in the varieties-of-capitalism approach (Hall-Soskice 2001), they were typically neither treated in a historical way nor considered in terms of we-feelings and habitus; the same might be said with regard of the comparative analysis of national welfare-regimes (Esping-Andersen 1990).

This neglect of national we-feelings presents a primary concern of this Special Issue. “The end of the nation-state” (Guéhenno 2000) was announced some two decades ago – not only for the European context, but worldwide – it was understood to be predicated upon the increasing salience of modern information technologies and their influence on the global division of labour. More recent developments, however, suggest this judgement was premature. Accordingly, this Special Issue comprises analyses that are able to explore state-generated sentiments and emotions in an historically informed processual manner: approaches that offer the potential to explore the role of “national character” and “national habitus” in ways that move considerably beyond current mainstream political debates and their frequent recourse to national stereotypes. Norbert Elias’s work can be seen as an exemplar in this respect (Elias 2013

[1989], Elias 2012a [1939], Elias and Dunning (2008 [1986]); as are some more recent extensions of this approach to such issue and concerns: e.g., Kuzmics and Axtmann (2007), Mennell (2007), or Kuzmics and Haring (2013).

Contributions to this Special Issue focus both on emotions whose sociogenesis derives from the inner dynamics of states and on such emotions that can be traced back to the inter-state level with influences also from outside. To the former belong the ups and downs of internal political currents and conflicts (where, for example, parties of the right might now profit from the emotions that once guided parties of the left); central to the latter are the external entanglements that arise in the competition and cooperation between states. The emphasis of these contributions is upon engagement with medium and longer-term historical processes in order to avoid what Norbert Elias once called *Zustandsreduktion* – the reduction of processes to static categories, with all their associated categorical mistakes.

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## 2. Conceptual and Methodological Problems

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### 2.1 Historical Sociology of State-Systems and Civil Societies in Europe

The fusion of history and sociology has generated, so far, numerous approaches which attempt to come to terms with the past in order to help address some important riddles of the present (see Abrams 1982; Smith 1991). The names of Weber, Marx, and Durkheim can, of course, be included in this respect. Their analyses did not focus primarily on emotions, although they played their role, each conceived in different ways. Weber's "Protestant Ethic" is related to a specific kind of habitus; alienation under capitalism cannot be understood without recourse to emotion and anomic suicide is not simply the outcome of a rationally balancing choice. However, common to all these developmental theories was a focus on institutions. When we narrow the scope of the explanatory puzzles under scrutiny to two – the dynamics of state-competition and the chances of a strong civil society that can limit the aspirations of central power within states – then we still face an overwhelming concentration on macro issues, typically at the expense of attention towards the emotional experience of the people involved. The following examples do not claim to be exhaustive but they aim at giving an idea of what is necessary to better understand the contemporary predicament dealt with in this Special Issue, and of what is lacking when we omit a consideration of emotions.

The two topics that we have touched upon above – the dynamics of European and later global state-competition and changes in the power-distribution within these states from largely aristocratic and princely domination to a participation of broader strata – are certainly interrelated. To make sense of such

developments, historians, political scientists, and historical sociologists alike have variously attempted to bind various strands of analysis and argumentation together. Broadly speaking, we might understand Europe as partitioned into three broad historical regions (Anderson 1974; Szűcs 1988): the West, as inheritor of the Roman Empire through a lineage linking late Antiquity and Christianity with Barbarian Germanic elements; the East, arising from a fusion between Byzantine theocracy with Slavic peasantry resulting in Eastern absolutism and serfdom, under the influence of Eastern nomadic hordes as long lasting threat; and Eastern Central Europe as involving hybrid variations of both structures in Poland, Prussia, and Habsburg Austria (including Hungary). Each of these historical regions has followed its own trajectory of development.

Such a model involves something of a synthesis both drawing upon, and developed in distinction from, a range of different analyses. Charles Tilly (1990), for instance, draws similar lines of distinction in his comparison of European continental states like France or Spain with their standing armies, exerting upon their subjects particular forms of “coercion,” with seafaring, trading states like Holland, England, or Venice with their strong navies that focused upon seizing the means of “persuasion” rather more than through direct means of physical violence to ensure the collaboration of their citizens. By contrast, Perry Anderson’s (1974) theory of state-development, following Marx, concentrated more on internal aspects of the state’s structures of domination. His categories include – besides the main cases of Western and Eastern Absolutism – the North-West European case of Scandinavia with its partial feudalism, due principally to the lack of Roman influence, and South-Eastern Europe, also devoid of feudalism but developed under the influence of Byzantine structures without slave-labour. To this we might add Immanuel Wallerstein’s (1974, 1980) also economically-centred account in which is correlated the strength of the state and its position in the larger world-system (centre, semi-periphery, periphery). Here, the power sources of physical violence and war are somewhat downplayed, or are conceived principally as epiphenomenon of economic domination.

Other authors, with whom we find a greater affinity, have avoided such reductionism. For example, Michael Mann (1986, 1988) distinguishes between military, economic, ideological, and political power, linking geopolitics to internal power dynamics as well. Mann avoids both the economic reductionism of Marxist authors and the idealisations of the rule of norms in structural-functionalism. Perry Anderson too, who, in a collection of essays on the “origins” and consequences of European integration (Anderson 2009), has sought to advance an attempt to adapt his previously developed insights to the situation as it was unfolding some three or so decades after he undertook his original analysis. Listing various accounts and explanations for the rise of the EU and trying to evaluate its effect on the development of capitalism and democracy, he distinguishes four different approaches: the “neofunctionalist” approach

(Haas 1958); a “neorealist” interpretation (Milward 1984) which also stresses predominantly the economic advantages open markets offer for each single state; his own theory of 1995 that aims at transcending the economic framework by stressing the subject of US domination and of French attempts to get rid of it; and finally approaches which have tried to come to terms with the unexpected breakdown of Soviet power and the extension of the influence of the European Community over Eastern Europe without using military means. Taken together, such approaches render Europe as a new, peaceful “Empire” with only Münkler (2005) discussing the relationship between the US as an empire and Europe as its subsystem.

Notwithstanding the significance of such contributions to enhancing our understandings of Europe, in order to better apprehend the dynamics of state-competition and empire-formation, at least two historically informed analyses can stand for a larger genre. Paul Kennedy’s seminal discussion of the “Rise and Fall of the Great Powers” (1988), and John Mearsheimer’s “Tragedy of Great Power Politics” (2001) as a plea for his doctrine of “offensive realism,” offer many insights into the constraints in which states typically find themselves caught when they are involved in struggles for the bid of mastery. However, even these analyses tend towards the portrayal of actors on the world stage (whole countries through, respectively, their political elites) as entirely rational. What is lacking in these narratives is sufficient consideration of the role of emotions beyond “rational” fears and, in certain limited cases, of a state- or nation-induced habitus that is understood to be related to success or failure in avoiding or managing wars or as arising from class-conflict and domination structures characteristic of power-balances within states.

The limitations of explanations that neglect the role of emotions can be illustrated by numerous examples. For instance, both Kennedy and Mearsheimer explain the decline of the Habsburg Monarchy in warlike state-competition between 1914-18 as principally the consequence of the behaviour of misguided elites. However, the decline arguably links to a far more complex nexus of developments. Ancient Austria did not only produce a quite specific, patrimonial-bureaucratic architecture of domination, resulting in a kind of partly benign, partly hesitating and unpredictable authoritarianism, but also a century-old military habitus of slowness, indecision, and hesitation that mirrored the relative weakness of the political centre against the centrifugal forces of estates and nations (Kuzmics and Haring 2013). Neither Kennedy nor Mearsheimer let any kind of “habitus,” or even emotions, interfere with the macro-structural constraints they consider to be causally relevant. The same goes for the explanations offered for the rise of an “authoritarian” absolutism by Anderson or Mann, and for the obstacles to a “civil society”: without any reference to the emotional experience of authoritarian rule, such analyses remain incomplete at best, and pale and hollow at worst.

## 2.2 Survival-Units

In his essay on “Changes in the We-I- Balance” (Elias [1987] 2010, 137-208), Elias developed the concept of a “survival-unit” in accordance with his process-sociological understanding of the development of human societies. According to Elias, survival units are human collectivities comprising, to greatly varying degrees, a combination of three key facets: 1) controls over violence, 2) control of nature by economic means and production; 3) and control of the means of orientation, principally knowledge and symbols (Elias [1983] 2009). Such units can be seen as protecting otherwise unprotected human beings by forming social bodies able to defend them, often in combination with their capability to attack other competing units. The development of survival units is but one stage in the process that culminates in the formation of what we call a “state.” In turn, “states” themselves do not develop alone, but inevitably in relation to one another: in “systems” of states, systems of competing “survival units.” At first sight, it might appear odd to think of nation states as “survival units”; that this is so is, for Elias, in and of itself significant – it relates to the complexities of figurations in contemporary societies. In employing the term, Elias has numerous senses in mind. First, Elias lists the needs members of survival units have for physical safety, including protection from war and natural catastrophes – such relative protections form the core of a unit’s survival-function. Second, he refers to military, economic and scientific development, and competition. Third, Elias mentions the function a survival-unit has for securing continuity and tradition in the memory of coming generations – the survival of a “way of life,” so to speak, and the strong emotional attachments that are developed in relation to anything that expresses this. That we always encounter we-I balances – that there can be no I without a we – means that, somewhat paradoxically, even in the case of the most altruistic and ostensibly “self-less” acts of individual sacrifice where people are prepared to risk their own lives for their group, such acts invariably involve self-love, narcissistic gratification, and collective devotion, since human beings are part and parcel of the groups towards which such feelings are oriented and from which constituent group members draw their sense of belonging. The disappearance of a state or tribe by integration into a higher unit can, thus, lead to a catastrophic depletion of meaning, the deeds and suffering of previous generations become senseless, a kind of “collective dying” occurs, generating deep feelings of mourning (Elias [1987] 2010, 137-208).

These different dimensions of the “survival”-function each have their effects on we-feelings, we-images, we-I-balances, forms of national habitus, and we-identities. Such effects, in turn, vary according to the character and development of the survival group in question. For instance, the we-component relative to the I-component is much stronger in individual European nation-states than in Europe as a supranational entity. It was, as Elias’s magnum opus *On the*

*Process of Civilisation* (2012a) documents in meticulous detail, the individual nation-states of Europe that brought about previously unthinkable adjustments to the personality structures of their members. For Elias, the formative primacy of the habitus-formation of national “survival” units, nation states, endures such that it typically “lags” behind the newly felt necessities of integration associated with more expansive survival units (such as those of supra-national groupings, perhaps even identification with humanity as a whole), and as such exerts a “drag effect” which makes adaptation more difficult.

For Elias, new and higher-level survival-units will rise to the extent that growing interdependence between units at lower levels of integration makes them useful and necessary, replacing the increasingly notional sense of autarchy or self-sufficiency of individual nation-states. The dominance of the nation-state is, according to Elias, a quite recent European phenomenon, historically speaking. It had, gradually, come to replace many centuries of older dynastic states with loyalties towards prince, king, or emperor and with bonds between aristocrats of several European states being, in key cases, stronger than those towards the lower classes of their own state. The “nationalisation” of these states went hand in hand with the growing power of the bourgeoisie, particularly as their language came to be transformed into the national language of France, Italy, or Germany.

In more recent times, a growing number of trans- and international networks called into question the state’s ability to secure protection and survival for all of its citizens such that not all of the three survival functions Elias identifies may consist in the domain of any particular state’s power machineries. For instance, small states may lack the ability to attack or to defend themselves with their means of military power drawn from a somewhat asymmetrical interdependence with super-powers or military alliances like NATO. Another example is the EU which enables each member state to increase its economic weight in the world. Above all, some groups in modern societies, like highly educated specialists, are less dependent on their state’s capacities than others in order to protect their interests and to gain knowledge and orientation.

The concept of “survival unit” is useful in as much as it serves as an alternative to approaches to historical sociology which exclusively focus on economic aspects of social developments. In understanding nation states as “survival units” (or as units which are going to lose some of their traditional survival functions), we come to recognise how the aspect of collective violence and power seems to follow – at least partly – its own logic partially independently from economic determinism. In contrast to geopolitical approaches – like Kennedy’s and Mearsheimer’s – the concept of “survival unit” allows us to accommodate both global economic, military, and political interdependencies, on the one hand, *and* state-internal affairs as well as the formation of habitus and patterns of emotions, on the other. Indeed, Elias’s approach permits a means of

containing these “macro” and “micro” foci within a coherent unified analytical scheme. We briefly explore some of the means how in the sections that follow.

### 2.3 Emotions

In the sociological literature on nationalism and related phenomena, one finds a number of concepts and constructs which relate to different aspects of an individual’s emotional attachment to his and her country: national identity, feeling of national belonging, national pride, patriotism, nationalism, chauvinism, ethnocentrism, and so on (Haller 1996; Hjerm 1998; Blank 2003; Weiss 2003). The reading of these and other works on the topic shows how difficult it is to separate different kinds of nation-related feelings from each other conceptually, to define them precisely, and to operationalise these concepts empirically (Höllinger, Fleiß, and Kuzmics 2012). Contrary to the assumption of a crude dichotomy between patriotism and nationalism, Dekker, Malová, and Hoogenboom (2003) assume that national orientations include several dimensions or aspects, such as “national feeling” (feeling of belonging to one’s nation), “national liking” (sympathy for one’s country and its population), “national pride” (pride in one’s country and its inhabitants), and “national superiority” (feeling superior to the population of other countries). According to them, these aspects do not constitute opposites, but rather steps on a cumulative, hierarchically ordered continuum. This means that reaching a higher level through, for instance, having feelings of national superiority, presupposes that the respective person has positive values of national identification on the lower levels (feels they belong to the nation or is proud of their nation). The problem of many attempts to capture nation-state based we-feelings is that there is an immense difference between those periods when the unit one belongs to is not challenged from outside – in peacetime, enjoying high living standards, not being threatened by enemies, other states, or supra-national federations – and very special times, when the survival unit is perceived to be under attack. In “normal” times, the rhetoric of nationalism sounds rather strange and can easily be seen as an “empty nationalism” (Billig 1995), devoid of all practical meaning. A close reading of war novels – as, for instance, during the First World War – makes overwhelmingly clear what strong emotions really look like. The second, often overlooked aspect is hidden in the term we-I-balance: modern societies develop a division of labour that gives room to an abundant individualism of private profit-seeking, pleasure-oriented, cosmopolitan “individuals” who feel threatened by too much state-interference and who do not experience the same sensation or need to feel protected by the nation-state as their traditional, working class, “local” counterparts. This is something of a paradox since such individualism is predicated precisely on belonging to a collectivity involving highly complex interdependencies. Such individuals, to frame the issue boldly, are for the “I.” Conversely, this self-same process of individualisation can also

fuel the longing of members of “suppressed” minorities to acquire their own state; but, at a very general level, in most European states of today, the formerly national upper middle-class segments of yesterday have to varying degrees given way to a tide of urban cosmopolitanism while, simultaneously, the lower social echelons have, again in very general terms, been more prone to develop a resurgent sense of national pride (though there are significant limitations to this general depiction, see Dunning and Hughes in this volume). The latter are more for the “we.” All in all, individualistic urban cosmopolitanism is also the social background that might have helped to shape the very critical judgement of several authors famous for their contribution to the study of nations and nationalism (even if they are Marxist, like Hobsbawm 1990; or not, like Gellner 1983, Anderson 1983, and Smith 1986) who see the corresponding emotions as “constructed” and the nation itself as “imagined” – they dislike nationalism, in particular its ethno-nationalist variation, but they tend not to study it empirically, opting instead to condemn it as a result of the cunning of powerful elites.

Of these, Anderson’s work serves as an exemplar in respect of its “culturalist” treatment of nation. Such an approach involves a degree of nominalist discursive reductionism, where nations and nationalism are conceptually rendered as little more than imaginaries, fictions, existing only in the minds of the individual members of any particular national group. Anderson writes:

It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. (Anderson 2006 [1983], 15)

Such a notion is founded, axiomatically, on the premise that relationships need to be directly experienced to be “real” in a material sense. Of course, to continue with Anderson’s own locutions, the idea that how nations are “imagined” is somehow entirely separate from the nexus of interdependencies, from the structure of how such social figurations shift and develop over time, is itself a kind of conceptual fiction. Elias’s term “interdependency,” and in particular “interdependency chains,” can be distinguished from conventional sociological equivalents “interaction” or “interrelationships,” precisely because it refers to how members of complex social groups such as those associated with nation states, are bound together into figurations with people *whom they might never meet or encounter directly*, and yet with whom they are at least partially interdependent in their day-to-day lives. Indeed, herein we might, historically speaking, be able to observe important shifts in the development of, and differences between, particular societies. For example, as Elias is able to show in *On the Process of Civilisation*, as the complexity of human figurations grows, as interdependency chains lengthen, as the division of social functions increases under the pressure of various forms of competition, so there is an increase in the pressure upon individuals to attune their behaviours to a greater range of

others, and with higher levels of foresight. This involves a shift towards regarding others in more reflexive, “psychologised” ways – in turn related to processes of individualisation – it also involves corresponding shifts in the self-consciousness of dominant social groups and the values, standards, and normative codes that accompany these.

Elias’s paradigmatic theoretico-empirical cases were of the distinctive developmental paths of Germany, France, and England. Through a painstaking observation of historical cases in time series, Elias is able to trace different trajectories of development which show precisely how each nation’s emergent sense of itself, each nation’s distinctive set of higher order values, each nation’s understanding of its own lineage of development, each nation’s “affect economy,” is more than simply an “imaginary,” but is rather tied in observable and concrete ways to the structure of the developments in the figurational nexuses in each empirical case. This, of course, does not mean that in each case, the values, narratives, normative codes, and so forth that express the self-consciousness of particular national groups in particular historical periods are somehow “factual.” Indeed, characteristically, Elias suggests, they have a high degree of fantasy content, serving as a focus for the emotional attachments contained in particular nationalistic “We-Images.” They are nonetheless “real” in respect of their development, and also “real,” to paraphrase W.I. and D.S. Thomas, in their “consequences.” They contain, *inter alia*, the stock of behavioural standards, of sources of common emotional identification and attachment, the models of “selfhood,” of citizenship, of social division and prestige, of ethnic lineage and descendancy, the collective memories, mythologies, triumphs and tragedies, and other components of “We-Imagery” from which the economies and alloys of identity – the “We-I” balances – are drawn, developed, and, to varying degrees and extents, effectively distilled into the individual habitudes<sup>4</sup>, the “second natures,” of the members of particular national groups.

There are, of course components of “nationalism” and “national identity” that involve *interested fictions*. As Stuart Hall (1990; 1992; 1996) has argued, ideals of nation form part of a system of cultural representation, one that typically involve ideas of ethnic origin (A. D. Smith’s “*ethnie*”), expressive of the interests of powerful social groups defined in opposition to a “*constitutive outside*,” typically another ethnic social group. At the core of this system of representation, then, are relational struggles and contests over the *narration* of national identities and their effective adoption and identification by members of a nation. While Hall’s arguments in this respect are predicated once more on the notion of nations as primarily discursive – as cultural imaginaries *a la* An-

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<sup>4</sup> We are here using the term “habitudes” to refer to habitus in the plural, and in preference to the rather inelegant “habituses.” Indeed, the everyday English usage of habitudes – connoting habitual practices, dispositions, and behavioural modes – has considerable congruence with our technical employ of the term.

derson – they serve to highlight those aspects of national identity involving more conscious, and consciously interested, mythologising and fantasy-making. Part of the issue relates to how we might distinguish between “identity” and “habitus” in this respect, and of the complex relationship between these concepts. We shall discuss these issues more concretely in later sections of this paper.

For the moment, however, we feel bound to state that we are acutely aware that acknowledging national “emotions” and “habitus” presents an array of sociological problems, particularly since nation states are highly organised, multi-layered, and multi-levelled entities with plural sub-centres. Furthermore, in the case of emotions, a pronounced empirical difficulty relating to data-collection and coverage is compounded by a more sociological tendency to accord primacy to the rational pursuit of self-interest and/or the compliance with norms of emotional control that lead to the hiding of affects and feelings.

## 2.4 Authority

It is only under the aegis of a pluralistic political order necessitating the self-control of the dangerous affects of hate and fear that “authoritarian rule” demanding obedience to commands from “above” has come to be seen as atavistic. Salient expression was given to this kind of politically relevant “authoritarianism” in the classical study of Adorno et al. (1950). Here, Adorno and his colleagues developed a concept to better understand the so-called “cyclists”-mentality of the German “Obrigkeitsstaat” (*nach oben buckeln, nach unten treten*) and was, then, adopted for the social-psychological analysis of quite different social conditions in post-war California (California F-scale of the “authoritarian personality”). This research instrument was designed to measure attitudes presumed to be associated with communist thinking, and so facilitate the so-called “McCarthy witch-hunt,” although, of course, the respective histories of Wilhelmine Germany and Tocqueville’s democratic, state-adverse America differed in many respects.

## 2.5 National Character and Habitus

The title for this Special Issue contains the term “national character,” which was chosen because it invokes more familiar connotations than the term “national habitus.” Here, however, we must draw an important distinction. The expression “national habitus” is employed here only as a scientific-technical term. While it might overlap with “national character” in certain respects, it is intended to be used in ways that avoid the associations with that phrase, particularly as it has been used by nationalistic groups that aim at a certain praxis and identity-politics. “National character” encompasses a complex array of quite different meanings varying in multiple contexts of usage. First, “national character” can mean that all members of a certain ethnic group –“people” (in Ger-

man “*Volk*”) – or a certain nation share the same physical and/or mental characteristics. Second, it can be used to define a “nation” or even nations in the plural as specific entities without referring to the qualities of individuals as members of a “nation.” It rather points to an abstract whole according to which there is the nationalist’s belief of a distinct quality compared with other “nations.” Sometimes, the expression “national spirit” is also used in a similar way. Quite in contrast to the nationalist’s terminology, the concept of national habitus refers neither to an abstract, essentialist, and unchanging, timeless substance of mythical blood-ties nor the mental or physical characteristic of all members of a “nation.” Both sets of connotations – that such commonalities are fixed and are shared by all – are problematic in respect of their determinism and statism. In order to avoid too static notions, for present purposes it is more adequate to use such terms of “national habitus formation” or “habitualisation” in order to orient thinking towards conceiving always of social processes when we use the term “habitus.”

It is only under specific circumstances that the social habitus of a group can form the basis for a “national habitus.” The term “habitus,” now frequently associated with the work of Pierre Bourdieu, was used by sociologists many decades before him (Elias among them) and has a history of usage that runs back to Thomas Aquinas and further to Aristotle’s distinction of “hexis,” referring to the observable aspect of behaviour, and “dispositio,” related to the “soul” (Rehbein and Saalman 2009). At the most basic level, Elias’s usage of the term refers simultaneously to embodied social learning and self-experience: the everyday locution “second nature” comes closest to capturing core aspects of its meaning. A paradigmatic example for Elias (2012a) was the transformation of warriors into courtiers in the French civilising process, later complemented in Elias’s writing by its English counterpart of parliamentarisation processes involving the transformation of warriors into “gentlemen.” Central to these examples is the idea that a simultaneously “psychic” and “social” habitus is formed when human beings experience their emotions or “affects” as shaped in particular ways through the necessities of the social conditions under which they are developed. Elias’s principal methodological conviction was to accord analytical primacy to process over structure; later stages in social development can only be properly understood by referring to their earlier phases. Elias stressed – like Max Weber – the importance of understanding particular historical processes as specific developments even if they result in effects on a global scale. In tandem with this orientation, Elias’s emphasis was upon the need to develop theoretical concepts according to the explanatory riddle researchers want to use these to address.

The meaning of the concept of national habitus is, therefore, closely related to the problem of understanding certain “state” or “class” habitus. This is the case because it is only through the consideration of the process of state-building (as a particular kind of “survival-unit”) that the concept of national

habitus makes any sense. Above all, “national habitus” can only be heuristically useful if treated as an instrument of comparative-historical research. In such a context only, it helps to contrast and compare characteristics of comparable social formations in different state-societies. Examples are state-elites, aristocrats, army-officers, senior civil servants, and so forth who are regarded by others – and above all, by themselves – as members of “good society.” These individuals are the bearers of distinctive standards of manners, speaking, and fashion and are models of self-control and self-expression: they typically symbolise the highest levels of status and distinctiveness within a nation.

Such standards and behaviours can be studied comparatively and historically since the levels of the dissemination of standards of socially desirable behaviour, or perhaps better, the imitation of manners of “good society,” differs between state-societies. There is typically a process of “social closure” involved in the demarcations between such social groups with modes of exclusion developed by established groups in order to omit rising new formations of people seeking to participate as power holders. It is the length and the intensity of chains of interdependencies which also trigger emotions of belonging or being excluded from “good society.” The processes by which behavioural standards were developed, and the gradual changes in how such standards and normative codes came to be expressed, has been documented at length both by Elias and Cas Wouters (1999; Wouters and Dunning 2019) in their discussions of “formalisation” and “informalisation.” Indeed, the balance of processes of formalisation and informalisation in socially prevailing behavioural standards varies considerably such that differences in the national habitus between state-societies can also be examined through a comparative consideration of the concept of the “formality and informality span of a society” (Elias 2013 [1989]).

Following Elias, it makes sense to distinguish two types of social institutions shaping national habitus: first, there are central power-institutions coining the habitus of elites (*Prägestalten*), like the royal court, the state administration and bureaucracy, Parliament, the army, elite schools and universities, or student fraternities. Second, we find institutions shaping the routines and the infrastructure of everyday life for larger parts of the population. Traffic has to be organised, markets, offices, schools and factories have to be institutionalised and controlled. Much of it may be quite standardised under social conditions characterised by global interdependency chains, nonetheless differences in “national” habitus between certain countries exist.

There is, thus, not only one singular national habitus. Indeed, there are always several established groups and outsider groups (Elias and Scotson 2008) of different kinds and formations within any particular national grouping. Elias contrasts the complex interplay of “group charisma” and “group disgrace” in the unfolding characteristics of members of different status-groups interrelated to each other and forming a certain figuration. The mechanisms may differ

from state to state with their special path-dependencies of state-formation. For instance, through the compound of geography and certain contingent social and political constellations, the role of the navy or the army may be more important in one country than in another (as Elias demonstrated through comparing the English case with that of absolutist regimes on the continent). These constellations also helped certain social formations to gain power-positions more easily in one country than in the other.

## 2.6 Obstacles to the Use of "National Habitus"

In sociological objections to the concept of habitus, there are at least five counter-positions: a) emphasis on "situations," b) the concept of "discourse," c) the unclear relationship between habitus and identity, d) the methodological problem of empirical (historical) sources, and e) normative resentment against the idea of a "national" habitus. We should like to consider each in turn as a means of further advancing the conception of national habitus.

In relation to a), there are approaches that attribute all explanatory power to the "situation," be it fluent or bureaucratically stable, and not to the "person" and personality "traits." Examples can be found in the sociology of violent emotions derived from symbolic interactionism (Collins 2008) or in Weberian ideal type models of state bureaucracy that are attributed to the creation of modern mass-violence (Malešević 2006). In Collins's theory of violence, for instance, there is no room for an explanation that focuses on a socially shaped "habitus," nor for that matter, any "national habitus." What Elias had called "constraints by others" (*Fremdzwänge*), has become instead rendered as the "situation" that is more or less the only causal agent responsible for the occurrence of physical violence. It is, to follow this line of reasoning, highly unlikely that we will be killed by a barber in a barber-shop. Even murderers do not kill all the time, but only in certain *situations*. There is evident truth in this finding – it may only appear trivial in many cases. But it is not banal in some other instances where the situation has originally been overlooked and can be identified as causally relevant – for instance, an aggressive nationalism may more often occur in a situation of major threats from outside the nation. Indeed, more stable behavioural patterns are dependent as much on the stability of social institutions as the stability of internalised traits. And yet, the non-trivial element of such an explanation will often be lost through the situational focus – that differences in habitus can generate a certain, distinguishable pattern in otherwise identical or at least similar situations. The idea of positing a genealogy of social processes, stretching over generations or centuries, and presenting this at the core of analysis is totally alien to Collins. Although he is not generally against macro-explanations, he employs a hierarchy of explanation which accords primacy to a focus on "situations" first. This implies that the meaning of a situation for an actor can somehow be separated from the larger "context,"

and should be open to direct empirical observation involving a focus on the individual.

The main advantage of Collins's description of situational violence is its empirical detail and its ability to accommodate complex, often contradictory logics. But this need not be lost if we incorporate into our analyses the affective experiences from previous "situations" that have, to varying degrees, become sedimented into a "habitus." Just as these "situations" are constituted relationally in space (through, for example, a division of labour), so they are processually: in time. Ignoring the processual dynamics of "situations" means neglecting what people carry with them into "situations" – the lessons learned from received histories; the implicit orientations, rules, and feelings towards others that flow from generations before them; the unnoticed affective consequences of collective pride, humiliation, triumphalism, injury, anger, superiority, etc. woven into the blame and praise narratives of popular historical record. A situationalist emphasis leads us to ignore how such feelings and modes of relating can become distilled into the psyche of those whose collective interaction comprises "the situation" – a problem experientially compounded by a central characteristic of social habitus: that, in the main, much of it defies conscious interpretation and awareness by social actors.

The focus on "situation" has also become central for the critique of "primordial" interpretations of national identities. Heather (2009) for example, advances an analysis of empire that challenges the assumption of unchanged group-loyalties since the barbarian "invasions" in late-Roman antiquity. Loyalties vary, following authors such as Barth or Leach cited by Heather, according to situations and, therefore, cannot constitute a habitualised basis for national identity. In particular, Heather stresses the push-and-pull factors of migration that have led to quite accidental coalitions and strategies of ethnically highly divergent Germanic or Slavic groups, so demonstrating how ethnogenesis is situationally fluid and open. While the accidental formation of tribes are certainly worthwhile historical cases to consider, such developments by no means obviate the possibility of more enduring social nexuses and their persistence over time: the millennial spans of, for instance, Bavarians, Scots, or Catalans with distinctive languages. How is it that, say, the languages of such groups could not preserve certain characteristics shared by members of the related cultures? Indeed, as Elias has argued, language, while itself part and parcel of unfolding social processes, can serve as an important layer of the "onion" of national habitus.

b) A second group of counter-positions involves approaches which prefer to talk of "discourse" (Leerssen 2000; Howarth and Torfing 2005) rather than of "habitus," since this permits an avoidance of penetrating beyond discursive contests and discursively fought social conflicts between social classes, interest-groups, and/or conflicts related to gender. Such approaches entail objections to the notion of a relatively enduring, "second-nature" type of personality

and habitus, stressing instead the fluidity of social conditions – that these might be, or should be, open to change, at best, open to permanent change for the “better” (and here such evaluations are typically based on normative frameworks centring around emancipatory politics). Here short-term political will is privileged above ontological adequacy such as in the case of certain positions in the sociology of migration which eschew the notion of “ingrained habitus” as avoidable cultural racism, or, for instance, positions relating to the sociology of the family where the focus on gender wilfully ignores the role of social habitus since its accommodation could entail a quasi-biological justification for sustaining the status quo of patriarchal dominance. The logical companion of such views is a kind of revolutionary voluntarism, an exemplar of which can be found in the work of the post-Marxist thinker Castoriadis (1984). An important consideration in this connection is whether “discourse” refers to patterns of discussions and arguments put forward quite overtly with a clear rational intention, or if such discourses refer instead to certain habits, following customs and practices of how to speak and what to speak, albeit that these are not reflected consciously.

c) A third set of objections, similar to those which favour an engagement with “discourse,” relate to the distinctions between “habitus” and “identity” with respect to degrees of individual reflection and consciousness. Of central importance here is the notion that habitus contains mainly unconscious, semi-conscious, or automatic aspects (we refer back to our earlier discussion of Hall). To the degree that individuals can start to become aware of those characteristics and bring them into attention, they will become more amenable to control and manipulation. Hence, the concept of (national) habitus is problematised when one conceives it instead as those aspects of identity which, as yet, have remained beyond the purview of individual self-reflection. Under the conditions of a relatively high degree of self-reflection and attention, questions about “who am I?,” “who are we?,” and “who belongs to my group and who does not?” can be understood to be synonymous with uncovering the normative codes enshrined in habitualised orientations in thinking and feeling.

It would, indeed, be misleading to understand “national identity” as something outside individual thinking and feeling. Malešević (2006) or Brubaker (1996) are right by warning that those conceptualisations of “national identity” may likely lead to reifying the term. However, it is also misleading to understand “national identity” as a stable “attitude” that can be researched without regard for the specific context in which it is formed. It would furthermore be misleading to understand processes of identification and de-habitualisation as only the task of isolated individuals. Instead, in most cases, reflection is embedded in a social “organisation of reflection.” Reflecting is not only an individual, but mostly a collective process. It may be the case that dramatic changes foster in individuals a sense of greater awareness and restlessness. The answers to such discomforts, however, will typically be collectively organised

(as in the case of organised nationalism), characteristically adopting the form of prefabricated we-images and social ideals. In this way, we might consider how such facets of identity are related to identity politics, ideologies, and utopian world-views.

It is thus important to be aware that “habitus” and “identity” respectively refer to different aspects of each other. They might fruitfully be conceptualised as oppositions to each other in respect of the degree of reflection and consciousness. “Habitus” – as a concept of practice – always involves a certain degree and level of reflection which is necessary for the successful performance of everyday routines. Conversely, what one calls “identity” will also often include areas beyond strict awareness or consciousness. Habitualised and internalised aspects of thinking, feeling, and bodily features are relatively more related to unconsciousness and semi-consciousness, whereas mental processes of identification become relatively stronger along with reflection. In this sense, processes of identification always involve simultaneous processes of de-habitualisation.

Following this argument, it becomes clear that process sociology does not lead to a deterministic point of view which only focuses on “habitus” as the unconscious internalisation of “society.” Elias himself always promoted the notion of dynamic inner tensions between those forces leading to habitualisation and routinisation and individual will and striving, with the latter irreducible to the forces of social environment.

d) A fourth set of objections is rather more source-oriented. Such positions suggest any claims about “habitus” must be predicated on the discovery of certain kinds of data such as, for instance, official files and documents (Lorenz 1997; Goldthorpe 1991; and Goldthorpe 2007 specifically against Bourdieu and the notion of cultural capital and habitus). If we follow the methodological advice of quantitatively-oriented social historians like Peter Laslett (1976), who dismisses all attempts to gain information from literary sources (which are more suited than others to give notice of emotions) as systematically unreliable, we are left with a huge void when it comes to analysing the development of something like a “national habitus.”

The solution to this dilemma, and the answer to this objection, demands two inter-related steps – one consists in the careful analysis of the pragmatic context in which “soft,” qualitative data were produced (etiquette books, novels, films); the other is the formation of theoretical syntheses and models that cannot be simply mapped to isolated measurement. Again, the work of Elias serves as an exemplar in these respects.

e) Finally, a fifth counter-position is aimed less at the idea of habitus itself (particularly since, a class-centric notion of “cultural habitus” *à la* Bourdieu has generally been met with broad sociological consent), but strongly opposes the notion of a national or state-based habitus. Many do not want to follow this idea because they regard it as the mere expression of a prejudice with the aim

of glorification or degradation. The line of critique insists instead upon variability: in all state-societies there are counter-examples; if we attribute to members of one particular nation a special “assertiveness,” you will also regularly find at least one person who incorporates the perfect antipode (Robins 2005; Terracciano et al. 2005). Against this position, Inkeles and Levinson (2014) have already argued for the studying of “modal personality” as being shaped by cultural systems in a stochastic manner; and following Elias, the affective experience of humans in specific “mints” can never be explained by looking at the individual alone. What we need is a theoretical model of the whole, and this is culturally specific. Added to these criticisms is the dominant sociological attitude of the last four or five decades that claims the nation-state to be an obsolescent unit of history and treating it thus as an atavism (Hoffmann 1966; Gellner 1983; Hobsbawm 1990; and more recently Habermas 2011). Such sentiments have found further nourishment both by a moral-entrepreneurial variant of cosmopolitan enlightenment and a neoliberal milieu oriented towards fostering economic globalisation. For these theorists, diverse as their political orientation might be, a national identity anchored in a kind of “habitus,” is – or should be – rather weak, the more so, as such authors stress what they prefer to posit as “identity” as a reflexive project (for instance, as conceived in Giddens 1991).

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### 3. Topics and Theoretical Choices in the Articles of this HSR Special Issue

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#### 3.1 Common Characteristics

The articles selected for this issue cover a broad range both geographically and in their emphasis on current problems nation-states face externally (referring to their embedding in systems of states under the auspices of globalisation, marketisation and European unification) and internally (referring to the development of inner-state power balances between classes – ruling elites and broader strata – and ethnic groups, in particular between indigenous majorities and recently arrived migrants). Geographically, the areas considered stretch from the Middle East (*Gad Yair* on Israel, *Behrouz Alikhani* on Iran, *Onur Kınlı and İrem Özgören Kınlı* on Turkey), South-Eastern Europe (*Nicolas Demertzis and Hara Stratoudaki* on Greece) through Western and Central Europe (*Lars Bo Kaspersen* on Denmark, *Dieter Reicher* on Germany) and the British Isles (*Steven Loyal and Stephen Quilley* on Ireland; *Michael Dunning and Jason Hughes* on the UK) to Northern America (*Stephen Mennell* on the US) on the one hand, and from Eastern Central Europe (*Miklós Hadas* on Hungary, *Marta Bucholc* on Poland) to the Far East, Japan (*Akira Ohira*) on the other. The historical depth of sociological analysis and length of period under scrutiny

differs for more than a millennium (Turkey, the Middle East) in the case of ancient centres of civilisation (to which Japan certainly also belongs) to the latest two centuries and, in particular, the decades since the Second World War in the case of Ireland, Denmark, and the US. In terms of the development of the system of modern states and their geopolitical entanglement, the focus is on the hegemonial, formally democratic power of the West, the US; on the former contenders and early parliamentary states of Britain relative to the less democratic and partly Eastern absolutist, formerly Prussian-dominated Germany. The analyses presented in this Special Issue also consider states located at the fringes of the European system of great powers, like Ottoman Turkey, formerly Habsburg Hungary, and semi-peripheral new nation-states like Greece and Poland that owe their re-appearance to the collapse of multi-ethnic empires in a manner similar to the successor-states of the ancient civilisations of Mesopotamia and Iran. These latter states, and also modern Turkey, can be seen as hybrids of the Islamic “Orient” in Said’s sense and the Western European model of the nation state, as mediated through a Romantic German historicism stressing the language and culture of a heroic past. The particular historical situation and circumstances that gave rise to the birth of Israel, also a new nation-state as the non-intentional offspring of European nationalism, form a separate case – here, the emphasis is laid upon the fraught relationship to Germany, a place where a civilisational catastrophe of huge proportions has still left traces in the memory both of the children of victims and of perpetrators alike.

Contributions to this special issue deal, *inter alia*, with:

- (a) Currently visible state-generated emotions, among them, in particular, nationalistic we-feelings towards members of the “own” survival-unit and equally nationalistic they-feelings against members of other states or minorities of their own state;
- (b) State-generated forms of social habitus (often subsumed under the heading of “national character”), in which emotions are shaped by institutions in long-term processes (typically lasting at least three generations);
- (c) Those aspects of national character that can be called “authoritarian” – not only or primarily referring to the submissive and respectful behaviour towards persons of senior rank or age, but rather to the tendency to prefer strong leaders over the often troubling and bureaucratically complex procedures characteristic for parliamentary societies and their rituals for a peaceful change of political power. In particular, in some of the state societies scrutinised here – Hungary, Poland, Turkey, and the Middle East – it is not only rule by parliament that can be seen in danger but also the rule of law.

It is important to have in mind that the pragmatic context of explanations needed for the analysis of societies as diverse as they are assembled here has serious

consequences for the formation of concepts like “nation,” “national habitus,” or “authority” because the related problems differ too. It makes a huge difference whether a nation-state has originally developed from the previous stage of a dynastic state, when the dominant ethnically or at least linguistically definable population group takes control from their aristocratic overlords and starts to see itself as a “nation,” or when, by contrast, the nation is radically formed from splinters of multinational empires that have lost in state-competition, possibly through wars. In this respect, the difference between a state like Denmark that has had ample time to develop its institutions, and a state like modern Iran that has relatively recently become reconstituted from remnants of old empires is huge. No simplistic or law-like notion of “nation” can suffice to accommodate the complexity of highly divergent, individually shaped forms of “survival units” within their specific contexts. In a similar way, the ethnic or religious pillar of state-hood (cf. Smith 1986) will also vary greatly – from Greek orthodox or Polish Catholic heritage to religiously undefined Denmark or from Celtic Ireland to the “Melting Pot” of the US. Equally important is the context in which nation-states are embedded – from the EU-point of view, no nationalism is entirely harmless and every single one is potentially dangerous: from Scotland or Catalonia, such nationalities are the object of long-lasting desire. From the perspective of a modern welfare-state, the focus shifts according to the interests and sentiments of (cosmopolitan) elites and (local) lower strata. In the case of a national “habitus,” this will be shaped by various layers corresponding to historically and processually definable stages of survival-units: some quite far from the contested present of Greece, Turkey, Hungary, or Poland, where the affiliation to the former composite-state might have had more shaping power than the still fresh existence as independent nation-state. In this respect, we-feelings and habitus can have little in common.

A number of distinct themes mark the distinctive contributions to this Special Issue:

*1. States and Emotion: Reactions to the threat from outside. We-feelings, nationalism, and supra-national associations – US, Israel, Poland, Ireland, Denmark, and Britain.*

As a closer look at the papers of this volume under the aegis of “emotion” shows, it is not easy or even useful to separate “emotions” from “habitus.” We can, nevertheless, classify contributions according to the emphasis they have placed on either the short-term or the long-term aspects of the respective formative processes. The papers of Yair on Israeli-German scientific collaboration, of Bucholc on Polish resentment against Europe, and of Mennell on the superiority-complex of the US are perfect examples of the relevance of strong emotions for the interaction between members of different nation-states embedded in state-systems. Yair describes the deep sense of uneasiness that befalls Israeli scientists cooperating successfully with their German counterparts

when they visit them in their homes or experience them in non-professional everyday interaction. Bucholtz reminds us of the Polish anxiety turning illiberal in the face of a troubling neighbourhood of European states with a colonising past. Mennell's paper deals with the unconscious arrogance that many US-citizens demonstrate towards the rest of the world. All three articles develop a processual perspective and see the actually experienced emotions as, in part, the produce of specific "mints" coining distinctive affective households (i.e., "habitus"). A nationalism with excluding traits against migrants is also described in two papers on Western state-societies – Loyal and Quilley's on Ireland and Kaspersen's on Denmark. In both cases it is the welfare state, created for indigenous nationals (formerly suppressed in Ireland, suffering a unifying defeat from Prussia in the case of Denmark), that denies access to ethnically diverse immigrants, engenders emotions of hostility towards foreigners, and contributes to the collapse of solidarity in Europe in face of the great migration-boom of 2015. Finally, Dunning and Hughes critically evaluate recent sociological explanations for the vote for a British exit from the EU or "Brexit," in particular those which seek to explain this in terms of the political, economic, and social abandonment of the white working class. Dunning and Hughes instead advance a longer-term analysis, linking the rift in British society over the vote to Leave or Remain as based upon a much longer-term set of processes involving a distinctively British tension in the duality of normative codes.

## *2. State development and national habitus: Germany, Japan, Turkey, Greece, and Iran*

A further category of contributions to this Special Issue refers to (national) habitus in a more indirect way and link its explanation to its long-term historical genesis. Reicher's and Ahira's papers deal with the development of a sport-related habitus in Germany with respect to Japan; both try to place it in the context of Western rivalry and influences. Kínlí and Kínlí stress the warrior-element of contemporary Turkish national habitus and its formation through a long period from the nomadic culture of the Steppe to the creation of a modern nation-state following European models. Demertzis and Stratoudaki deal with the complex relationship between ascribed they-images of Greek character from outside (shifting between the Byzantine and the Hellenistic stereotype) and the self-image of the Greeks as it has developed under the simultaneous influence of Western perceptions and Greek internal conflicts between state, elites, and masses. Alikhani points to the centuries of nomadic conquest of Persia and the inability to develop internal pacification via a legitimate state-monopoly of violence as a main, habitualised obstacle both to economic modernisation and to democratisation.

### 3. *State and Authoritarianism: Feelings attached to internal processes and social movements – democratisation and parliamentarisation: Hungary*

There are several contributions to this volume that focus on political authoritarianism, but avoid such simplistic generalisations and try to separate analytically between historically founded attitudes towards the state and the complex and situated emotions towards minorities either coming from outside or forming an ethnic group within the state. Hadas's analysis of Hungarian history of feudal rule and exploitation of rural masses, broken by massive, mostly catastrophic challenges from outside (Turkish and Habsburg conquest, defeat in the First World War, suffered by the Entente powers, German Nazism, and Soviet communism) and lacking a stable continuity of town-based middle classes, outlines an explanation for the contemporary backlash to political authoritarianism and to a xenophobic consensus hostile to minorities.

The contributions to this volume share the influence of Elias, most employing his insights as central to their analyses, with the exceptions of Yair (on the Israeli-German relationship) and Demertzis and Stratoudakis (on stereotypes of Greek national character). Common to all contributions is an extension of concepts of national we-feelings, we-I-balances, we-identities, we-images, and habitus to the explanatory context of present social problems and conflicts related to Europeanisation, globalisation, state-competition, and the political order within states (democratisation); and, as such, each attempts to avoid the dangers of essentialism. Nonetheless, contributors have developed their own, often highly original, interpretations of Eliasian concepts and have placed their emphasis accordingly on various aspects of them. It is worth identifying the most important points of creative divergence.

#### 3.2 Issues of Dissent

While most papers assembled here converge in the use of key concepts, they also differ in their understanding in some relevant points:

a) They find different solutions for the relationship between “discourse” as a politically fluent category and “habitus” as something relatively fixed. At the core of such divergence are different workings through of the relationship between a cognitively shared conscious sense of national identity, identity politics (attempts to influence national identity deliberately in the interest of some groups, by means of discourse, persuasion, or coercion), and a partly unconscious national habitus (or conflicting versions of national habitus).

b) The approaches collected here also vary according to the emphasis they put on the primordial *versus* constructed character of nations and/or other survival units that might have either preceded or followed them. In particular, this has implications for the role of language as a constituting element of nationhood.

c) Another key point of divergence relates to whether national habitus something is best understood as *ceteris paribus* the habitus of an elite, trickling down the social ladder, or whether it also comprises ascendant behavioural models of lower social classes. Such issues, in turn, relate to how the concept of a state-shaped habitus might be reconciled with the multiple layers of modern state-apparatuses. For instance, it is possible to elucidate and reconstruct the rise and failure of a Habsburg military habitus (Kuzmics and Haring 2013), culminating in defeat in the First World War, but the question remains concerning the extent to which this Austrian state-habitus also permeated the behaviour of the common foot-soldier, the officer-class, the commanders, or even in the central war-bureaucracy located far away in Vienna. The question of where and how any particular state habitus is formed, the degree to which it is pervasive, remains an open one. The papers of this volume vary in their approaches in this regard, too.

d) Contributors also differ in their emphasis on individual or on collective identities; the “We-I-balance.” If we treat “identity” as “self-identity,” we place more weight on the individual than on the group, whereas the notion of a “national identity” strengthens the role of the group. A we-identity might be balanced more towards the one side than the other under particular social conditions – migrants who leave their nation, cosmopolitans with two or more passports – they all might hold the “I”-aspect of their identity as being more relevant than the “we,” and the “we” component may involve multiple, complex layers and potential contradictions; simultaneously, their sense of “I” may be in flux, emergent, alloyed in different ways to new relational nexuses whilst anchored firmly in others. The contributions to this volume differ also in this respect.

e) Referring to the complex relationship between social memory, which is typically highly selective, and the case of different national habitus and identities, the contributions to this volume differ in important respects. In some cases, remembering is understood as an explicit/active process, allowing for deliberate decisions; as in b) emphasis varies between a more primordialist or a more constructivist notion of “survival units” like tribe or nation. In others, remembering is posited in a more implicit/passive manner: mediated through school education, organised nationalism, and state-institutions.

#### *a) Habitus versus Discourse*

Several papers approach “national habitus” as a socially shaped “affective household” (close to the Eliasian understanding) with a long duration of development, to a degree independent of discursive, fluid circumstances which might change it at any particular time. For instance, Kínlí and Kínlí see the “warrior element” of a Turkish national habitus, in spite of all discursive influences from the West or the interests of competing political factions within the survival unit (from Ottoman Empire to Turkey as a nation state), as a consistent

trait. In a similar way, Alikhani stresses the enduring formative shaping power of geopolitics on Iran, and Mennell, likewise, presents a similar account of the constitution of an American habitus of perceived superiority over the rest of the world as rooted in their fortunes in major wars, both bloody and economic ones. On the other end of the spectrum, Demertzis and Stratoudakis see the notion of a Greek habitus shifting not only as a result of historical circumstances and “mints” with the power to shape personalities, but also as refracted through the lens of foreigners and their discursive passions as expressing variously either oriental, “Byzantine,” or classically Western “Greek-Hellenic” qualities. While these perceptions also influence Greek self-images as auto-stereotypes, both are open to interests and can be mobilised discursively according to politics.

As we have touched upon earlier in this paper, these differences pivot on the problem of conceptualising the relationship between habitus and identity. Given that “identity” typically is used to refer to more consciously reflected we-images and we-ideals, there are two distinct possibilities of how to relate the two notions. In the first, national we-images and we-ideals are conceived as being principally the product of discursive phantasy, capturing little of the “real” habitus of the population they pretend to reflect (as in Hobsbawm’s and Ranger’s [1983] idea of “invented traditions,” intentionally and deliberately fabricated, as an “opium for the people”). In the second, national we-images and we-ideals are seen to grasp aspects of the real culture and habitus, albeit in highly distorted, but nonetheless partly realistic, images of a national we-group, with competing versions of “national identity,” some of these being more concretely ideological than others. Following Mannheim (1997 [1936]), both a “total” ideology and a “utopian” consciousness can be distinguished – the former supporting the existing political order, as in the “banal nationalism” (Billig 1995) of daily TV-weather reports with maps and national flags in front of official buildings; the latter, “utopian” variant promoting social action to change “reality,” through activities of organised nationalism. Our contributions vary with respect to the emphasis they put on their analyses of the conservative or “utopian” elements of national ideologies.

#### *b) Primordial versus Constructed*

The articles of this volume differ also in the degree to which they attribute to the nation-state a so-called “primordial” character, as a community of blood, kin, language, or “fate” (a *Schicksalsgemeinschaft*), or rather more a “constructed” character – a product of modernity and/or as a *Willensnation* that might change its attitude in daily plebiscites. Ohira’s study of a formerly exclusively Japanese “sport” that has come to transgress Japan’s contemporary borders is situated more towards the primordial end of this division, while the contributions of Alikhani (stressing the manifold tribes and empire-traditions of Iran) and Kínlí and Kínlí (a Turkish nation yet to be formed out of the multi-

national Ottoman empire) tend to its other, more “constructionist” pole. Some authors acknowledge the role played by language (Demertzis and Stratoudaki on Greece) and religion (Bucholc on Poland, Loyal and Quilley on Ireland, and again Demertzis and Stratoudaki on the role of Greek Orthodox Church). The language-issue is certainly not central to the demarcation of the US from other English-speaking states as Britain, Canada, Australia, or New Zealand. It is also scarcely problematised (indeed rather taken as evident) in the case of Denmark (Kaspersen), Hungary (Hadas), and Germany (Reicher).

*c) Elites versus Masses*

We might also classify the contributions to this volume according to their different emphases on the social locus of the “mint” that shapes national or state-related habitus – whether habitus is modelled more in and for elites (as in Elias’s courtly France) or lower down the social ladder. Such issues also extend to whether national habitus is developed firstly as an elite-habitus, and if so whether this form of habitus is understood to “trickle down” from the nobility to the working bourgeois, through to lower social strata. Conversely, these issues relate to the role, or potential role, of “trickle up” effects: whether and how a lower-class habitus also started to shape the behavioural standards of the upper-classes. Such questions are extremely difficult to address empirically and, in most of the cases presented, the issues remain implicit. The answers depend in part upon the explanatory context for which the assumption of a habitus is useful (in understanding obstacles to democratic rule, attitudes towards supra-national federations, the behaviour towards migrants, and so on), but also upon what is perceived as that layer of a stratified survival-unit that is most relevant for its “survival.”

For Hungary, Hadas stresses the importance of the “gentry” and nobility in forming a specific ideal of masculinity which trickles down to the masses, although under extremely discontinuous political conditions. In the case of Greece, Demertzis and Stratoudaki refer to the long-term dependence of the Greek lower and middle-classes on their Ottoman rulers. In a similar manner, Loyal and Quilley and Bucholc discuss the emancipation of the rural masses from their (English, German, Russian) masters and they do not refer to upper-class models. In the case of the US, Mennell focuses on the formative elite experience of dominance over all other nations, an attitude which has been plausibly also transferred to the broader masses who enjoy their high “global” rank (via Hollywood’s film industry or other socialising agents like schools and sport events in which the cult of the American flag is only one visible expression of deep seated we-feelings) and incorporate this into their own I-identity and self-esteem. Again, the diverse range of empirical cases considered offers a panoply of options for the adequacy of the corresponding models.

*d) We or I?*

The collective level (here, of the survival unit of the nation-state) creates one pole of emotions and habitus, the individual, personal level of experience, the other. Nowhere is the individual fully consumed by group-membership. Every human being lives in fluctuating we-I-balances, from family, kin, village, or town to tribe, nation, or even mankind. Very often, group-ties to units of a lower level can become loose only when membership to units of a higher level (state versus family) replace the survival-function of the unit at a lower level. Therefore, the paradox exists that a higher degree of individualisation goes hand in hand with a higher level of group-membership (since, as Georg Simmel has already noticed, dependence on many means that dependence on only one specific group or individual is reduced, thus giving room for individual freedom, which he saw guaranteed by the disposal of money). Elias once referred to this companion of individualisation as the “*gestiegene Impermanenz von Wir-Gruppen-Beziehungen*” (“greater impermanence of we-relationships”). In the case of we-feelings towards the nation-state, there is also always the possibility that individual interests (not paying taxes, migration to other countries, refusing to serve in the army), ego-centred emotions (sometimes dismissively called “narcissism”), and the habitus of *homo clausus* prevail over the commitment to state or nation and the emotions related to deep altruism. However, as we have argued above, following Elias,

The possibility that human beings may experience love for a group to which they themselves as well as others belong is one of the many instances which show that a simple polarity between feelings of self-regard and of regard for others, of egotism and altruism, or even of good and bad, may not always fit the observable evidence. (Elias 2007 [1983], 9)

The contributions collected here place different emphasis on either the “We” or the “I” of the respective balance. Japan (Ohira), Turkey (Kínlí and Kínlí), Poland (Bucholc), and Israel (Yair) tend to the first direction, while Denmark (Kaspersen), Ireland (Loyal and Quilley), and Germany (Reicher) rather to the other, with most other cases being somewhere in between.

*e) Memory and/or habitus*

There is a delicate balance between the concepts of “social memory” and “social habitus.” In collective remembrance, in particular of nations or states, the element of active, deliberate selection typically dominates over the unplanned, non-intentional imprint of former experiences. In collective forms of commonly shared habitus, the element of the unconscious has more weight than reflexive awareness. “Memory,” in this explicit sense, can thus be more easily steered towards a certain direction than “habitus” – a famous example is the Kosovo-myth of the Serbs in which remembrance of the battle between Christ and Devil in the year 1389 is still a highly selective topic of Serbian memory, celebrating Serbian sacrifice against European forgetfulness. In contrast, most

Austrians will not even recognise that their “affective household” was formed through centuries of feudal, clerical, patrimonial, and bureaucratic authority, a set of long-term processes which find expression in the characteristic of deep resentment against anyone who is self-assured to the point of arrogance, impudence, and insolence (a set of traits often seen, albeit erroneously, in German nationals). The papers assembled here differ markedly in this respect. In particular, Yair (for Israel’s memorisation of the holocaust) and Bucholc (in her focus on the past remembered through the lens of the Church) deal more with memory than with habitus, although both argue quite convincingly that these memories have also had their influence on habitus. The other pole is represented by Mennell’s account of American habitus: there will be scarcely one American who would be aware of it and even fewer would have any idea of its origins; the same goes for Turkey’s warrior-habitus or for the Hungarian inability to trust the state (a distrust which is even more outspoken in the case of Greece).

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#### 4. Conclusion: The Global and European Context

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In order to summarise the central insights of the papers assembled in this Special Issue, we return to the pragmatic context that makes them relevant. Most important in this respect are a series of major political and economic incidences. These include the global *movement of migrants* of the past decade, and the subsequent European drama of their reception; the economic crisis of 2007 and 2008 and its consequences in the decade afterwards – both developments, in different ways, partly paving the way for the rise of populism in Western Europe and North America and authoritarianism in some other regions (like Russia, Hungary, Poland, Turkey, or the Philippines). What do such developments mean for the explanatory contribution of national habitus, we-feelings, and political authoritarianism in coping with “situations” – namely macrostructural events – of this scale and character? Could it not be that an analysis of “situations” here has much greater explanatory utility than that of “habitus?”

Let us look at the examples at hand. In two countries – Hungary and Poland – the pressures related to migratory influxes were comparatively small, but national “we-feelings” and “they-feelings” against foreigners played, nonetheless, a major role. Bucholc and Hadas have shown that it was not only a certain habitus that is responsible for such developments (although the troubled past of these societies with mighty neighbours, aristocratic overlords, and missing middle classes had their indisputable influence), but also the choreographed identity-politics of a new political class, based on a highly selective social memory. In the case of Poland, at least, it was not simply migration itself that became the object of fear, but the invocation of an enduring emotional experience of being surrounded and also overwhelmed by stronger neighbours (what

Bucholtz refers to using the metaphor of colonialism and the “postcolonial syndrome”) that appeared to shape all Polish reactions to perceived threats from outside. These reactions can be correctly called “nationalist.” However, in such reactions, several aspects have to be distinguished: the “situational,” since they show themselves only when there are “stimuli” to react against; a particular we-feeling that is also partly situational, partly habitualised; a peculiar “national Polish identity,” which is developed as element of conscious strategy corresponding to certain national we-ideals rather more than authentic and accurate we-images; and, crucially, the drawing upon of deeper and unconscious levels of habitus developed through formative moments. Differing in significant ways from the Polish and Hungarian cases, Denmark and Ireland have developed their similarly restrictive policies towards migration on the basis of a welfare state-centred habitus that privileges indigenous nationals at the cost of foreigners against the background of a late nation-building process resulting from war (with Prussia) and rebellion (against the English). In other cases, we can witness the role of similar nationalist we-feelings, related to migration, playing a central role in political developments, including, most notably, the case of Brexit in the UK (Dunning and Hughes).

The second subject is that of political authoritarianism, perceived either as a dangerous lurch towards it (Poland, Hungary) or the companion of political backwardness – a sign of missing modernity. For the latter, the cases of Turkey and Iran are particularly telling. The study of national habitus undertaken here reaches far back to the history of a very complex survival unit (Kínlí and Kínlí on the Ottoman Empire, Persia) preceding any kind of nation state. This means that what constitutes a national habitus today has been formed in times before there was a nation. Here, national we-feelings and habitus can follow quite divergent pathways. In such cases, only some aspects of habitus are explanatorily significant. Here, as also in the case of Greece, national habitus and deliberately chosen aspects of national identity (difficult to develop) do not converge smoothly.

Third, there were several contributions that highlighted the complex relationship between national we-feelings, identity, and habitus from other angles. As a companion to American global dominance, Mennell has identified an enduring vein of ethnocentric feelings of superiority at the level of national habitus that runs counter to some sacred traits of American identity which coalesce around a national we-ideal of democratic modesty rather than a singular, correct we-image. Similarly complex is the relationship between identity and habitus in Germany and Japan, with sport at the foreground of the analyses of Reicher and Ahira. German “*Turnen*” was originally the peaceful complement to the more militant practices of the duelling fraternities (*Burschenschaften*) and their contribution to a German habitus. Its decline and eventual disappearance with the rise of modern “sport” has had probably more profound consequences for German national identity than for German national habitus.

The same might be true for Japan – that a sporting event with typical Japanese characteristics, but developed already under European influence, can shift to a Pan-Asiatic one, has more to tell about the changes of Japanese national identity than about habitus since it stands for a deliberate opening to the outer world.

Taken as a whole, our contributions attest to the development of greater European, or even global, webs of entanglement between nations-states, national we-images, and national identities, which serve to demonstrate not only the restrictive “lag effects” of national habitus, but also the concomitant countervailing pressures to homogenise habitus through changes in the respective national identities – a global process of functional democratisation that might one day come to restrict the power of its contemporary hegemon and its habitus of superiority.

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