

The Sociology of sport actor: from Norbert Elias’ “de-controlled control of emotion” to Postmodern and Reflexive Sport Subcultures.
*Paolo Dell’Aquila**

How to cite

Dell’Aquila D. (2014). The Sociology of sport actor: From Norbert Elias’ de-controlled control of emotion” to Postmodern and Reflexive Sport Subcultures. [Italian Sociological Review, 4 (1), 117-131]

Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.13136/isr.v4i1.76>

[DOI: 10.13136/isr.v4i1.76]

1. Author/s information

* Ph.D. in Sociology and Social Politics, University of Bologna, (Italy)

2. Contact authors’ email addresses

* paolo.dellaquila@unibo.it

3. Article accepted for publication (*data*)

October 2013

**Additional information about
Italian Sociological Review**

can be found at:

About ISR - Editorial Board - Manuscript submission

The Sociology of sport actor: from Norbert Elias' "de-controlled control of emotion" to Postmodern and Reflexive Sport Subcultures

Paolo Dell'Aquila *

Corresponding author:
Paolo Dell'Aquila
E-mail: paolo.dellaquila@unibo.it

Abstract

In this paper I analyze the concept of sport actor, focusing on modern sport practices. In the first part, I examine figurational sociology, to describe the civilizing process and the development of individual self-control. This theory appears similar to the "repressive hypothesis" of Foucault's History of Sexuality.

Elias, however, seems to discover a form of reflexivity going further than the old "modern" practice, and underlining the dialogical processes, through individual, personal, self-construct of new images of the world.

Keywords: Sport, Reflexivity, Civilizing Process.

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to reflect about the concept of sport actor, focusing on modern changes of sport practices and using two theoretical approaches. In the first part, I will analyse figurational sociology to describe the process of sportivization, linked to the civilizing process. As in Elias and Dunning's Quest for Excitement, I will examine the development of individual self-control and self-discipline and the concept of sport as a balance between high level of combat-tension and the protection against injury. The controlled de-control of emotion is an important process linked, particularly, to modern ritualized play-fight sport, characterized, as asserted by Allen

* Ph.D. in Sociology and Social Politics, University of Bologna, Italy.

Guttman, by the ethos of record and by the weberian process of rationalization.

The analysis of the civilizing process appears similar to the “repressive hypothesis” of Foucault’s *History of Sexuality*. Foucault speaks about the creation of modern subject, about the regulation of sexuality, and the scientific study of sex. He explores the “Power”, which is a domination or subjugation exerted by a multiplicity of force relations immanent in society, in a way similar to figurational theory.

For Elias, on the contrary, the process of civilization allows advances in rationality and control. Foucault and Elias analyses both Velazquez’s painting *Las Meninas*, seeing it as an expression of contradictory self-reflecting rationality. Foucault believes that we must refuse the idea of subject as a modern, discursive formation, that involves a series of irreconcilable “doubles” or dichotomies.

Elias discovers contemporary people as capable of self-detachment and believes in the social science of the actor who acts with major self-evaluation, in a continuous process of becoming.

This reflects, for instance, the turn towards new sport practices as skating, climbing, body building. To understand better these new forms of “sport”, we must use a different conceptual framework.

Contemporary sport actor appears more reflexive and capable of self-regulation. Kevin Young, Michael Atkinson and other scholars examined different sport cultures, viewing the ways in which athletes construct their identities.

Its view seems to discover a form of reflexivity going further than the old “modern” practice, and underlining the dialogical processes, through individual, personal, self construct, new images of the world and sport.

1. The process of Civilization

Norbert Elias, in his work about *The Civilizing Process*, deals with the progressive diffusion of rules and behavior. The standard eating technique, the manner of using knife, fork, plate, serviette, the sentiment of embarrassment and repugnance, demonstrate the diffusion of self-regulation and of the rational, weberian habit. The birth of freudian super-ego started to control socially inadmissible impulses, separating libidinal drives and reflection.

“However, the human characteristic discovered by Freud in people of our time and conceptualized by him as a strict division between unconscious and conscious mental functions, far from being part of humans’ unchanged nature is a result of a long civilizing process in the course of which the wall of

forgetfulness separating libidinal drives and 'consciousness' and 'reflection' has become higher" (Elias 1939: 410).

Modernization is linked to the moulding of affects that makes possible the exercise of self-restraint. The rules of civil behavior, repressing instincts and aggressivity, reinforce the power and the aspirations of established groups.

Rationality allows the control over libidinal forces and acts in order to create a social functioning. The regulation of drives and impulses comes from major social interdependencies, linked to the process of state formation and to the development of market regulation.

The global change towards self-regulation, reflection and self-awareness transforms the entire society into an increased differentiation of affect control and into a to global interdependency of social relations.

This process appears similar to the History of Sexuality by Michel Foucault. In the three volumes (Foucault 1998, 1992, 1990), the French thinker deals with 'the repressive hypothesis', analyzing the 17th, the 18th, the 19th and the 20th centuries, underlining the link between power, knowledge, and sexuality.

The power is strictly interwoven with knowledge, because it is a multiple and mobile relational field, with unstable effects of domination. It is everywhere, because it is fragmentary, differentiated and dispersed.

As in Elias' representation, the social evolution relays on a network of heteromorphous, indeterminate, subjectless forces. Power is determined by norms, political technologies and discursive production of body and soul.

Foucault analyses the transition from 'ethics-oriented' to 'code-oriented' moralities, the development of a 'scientia sexualis' and the individualization.

The new technologies of domination produce an anatomo-politics of the human body; "its integration into systems of efficient and economic controls, all that was ensured by the procedures of power that characterized the disciplines" (Foucault 1978: 139).

As in Elias, we note that the civilizing process helps to construct a technology of domination of people's choice, and of development of the self. "The knowledge, institutions, and power relations that predate our individual lives make possible, but not determine, the form of our subjectivity" (Maguire 2000: 303).

Both Foucault and Elias underline the emergence of the self and of a self-regulatory ethics, which we recognize also in modern sports. So in next paragraph, I will analyse the application of theory of civilization to sport, in order to reach some general observations about contemporary culture. I will start from Quest of Excitement and then I will face the problem of modern reflexivity.

2. The “Quest for Excitement”

Elias and Dunning in their principle work demonstrate that the transformation of Assemblies of England into the Houses of Parliament is linked to a change in the personality structure of the English Upper Classes. These classes learn to refuse the cycle of violence, to temper their factional quarrels and fight each other through non-violent means, according to agreed rules.

The diffusion of Parliamentary Culture is parallel to the learning of self-control, of the ability to manage, delay, suppress elementary drives and spontaneous feeling (with the emergence of freudian “ego”, “super-ego”). While the stricter contain of violence favourites in English Parliament the peaceful handling over governmental power to the victorious faction or party, the greater self-control originates modern sport, in which tensions are evoked in the form of a controlled, well-tempered excitement.

Sport is a process of a controlled de-control of emotions, with a liberating, cathartic effect. Most sports resemble a real battle, in which people can act keeping under control the pleasantly de-control of emotions.

Sport has the character of a mimetic, non-violent battle, in which, after the phase of the struggle, there is a liberation of the battle-tension either in victory or in defeat. Tension of sport ends with a controlled release of affects and emotions.

“Thus if one asserts that the contest of Parliament or sports required more self-control than the less strictly regulated and often more violent political contests of the preceding period, ... one refers instead to human beings who form with each other figurations such as Parliament or cricket teams which were demonstrably more strictly regulated than those which preceded them” (Elias and Dunning 1986: 48).

The development of parliamentary regime in England during the eighteenth century demonstrates the birth of new forms of self-restraint, that allow the change of government and party.

In sport, this process is represented, for instance, by the evolution of fox-hunting, which became a ritual in which any direct participation of man in the killing was prohibited, to avoid violence. The new form of fox-hunting expresses the sensitivity of civilized gentlemen which limited their activity to assist the hounds to do their work. We see in this process the new balance between pleasure and restraint. The pleasure is much more in the expectation of the event, than in the consumption of the event.

“Conditions of strong individual excitement, particularly of socially shared excitement which might lead to loss of self-control, now became rarer and socially less tolerable” (Elias and Dunning 1986: 174).

New sport assured a sufficiency of reasonable excitement and the control of aggressivity, which inform the 'spirit of fair play', that prevents from injures and non loyal conduct.

The process of sportivization can be divided into two periods: "a eighteenth century wave in which the principal pastimes that began to emerge as modern sports were cricket, fox hunting, horse racing and boxing; and a second, nineteenth century wave in which soccer, rugby, tennis and athletics began to take on modern forms" (Murphy, Sheard and Waddington 2000: 95).

As noted by Allen Guttman (1994), there was a progressive rationalization of sport, with the codification of rules and the creation of the most important global sport organization (International Olympic Committee, National leagues a.s.o.). Time and space were measured with more precision, with the invention of the record. The diffusion of sport was linked to multinational corporations. "The emergence of modern sports represents the slow development of an empirical, experimental, mathematically Weltanschauung" (Guttman 2000: 256).

During the last two centuries, there have been a widespread globalization of sport, in which there is a worldly diffusion of mediasport complex and the 'fair play' ethos.

The recent studies of Dunning, however, demonstrates that also in contemporary society it might be a form of 'violent masculine style', that is structurally produced among some sections of lower working classes. This indicates that some parts of the social structure generate macho aggressiveness, such as in football hooliganism. These groups are therefore composed by less civilized persons, which tend to objectify and vilify women (see Elias and Dunning 1986; Dunning and Sheard 1979).

Recently, we had seen, however, a development of the sportivization process, with the diffusion of new types of sport practices (such as as skating, climbing, body building), in which there is less competitive habits and less aggressiveness (Roversi e Triani a cura di 1995; Porro 2001; Duret 2004). I think that new social actors can use sport to express their social life and to live in a free, dynamic way, with high capacity to construct body, identity, consumer cultures, according to the new ideology of fitness, healthism and performance. Elias gives us a conceptual description of these processes facing contemporary art and knowledge.

In the next paragraph, I will analyse that subject in modern age discovers that each knowledge (and social representation) presupposes the acquisition of a social funded knowledge (including language) from the other. Each representation depends on social constructs and is developed by a selfhood in changing hypothesis or theories. Social actors become aware of their self-constructing social identity and sport is a means to strengthen this identity.

3. Involvement and detachment: Elias vs. Foucault

Elias starts from weberian theory, reformulating his theory about value-judgement of the scientist. We are interested in it, also from the point of view of the evolution of social actor. Contemporary capacity for self-regulation is rooted in his work such as *Involvement and Detachment* and the modern process called 'psychologization'.

Modern art demonstrates a trend towards an effort of detachment to understand nature, its connections and regularities. The development of scientific knowledge gave birth to a perspectivistic representation of reality. Against the religious function, the aim of the painter became to face the expectation of the painter's potential public. The detachment from the world and from its event created, as in Velasquez, a perspectivist painting.

"In the seventeenth century, some painters - among them Rembrandt and also, in some paintings, Velasquez - recognized that the perspectivistic painters of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries did not really paint people as they saw them. They painted them largely as they saw them" (Elias 1987: lviii).

They use paintings as a means of self-distancing, of seeing themselves as they were from outside. In this way we recognize that new social identity is closely linked to social groups, but it is also well distinguished. Individual members can improve their capacity of detachment and self-regulation in producing and using their knowledge.

Also Michel Foucault analyses Velasquez painting: for him "the entire picture is looking out at a scene for which it is itself a scene. A condition of pure reciprocity manifested by the observing and the observed mirror... The function proper to knowledge is not seeing or demonstrating, it is interpreting... This relation enables language to accumulate to infinity, since it never ceased to develop, to revive itself and to lay its successive forms one over another" (Foucault 1998: 13).

Foucault considers *las Meninas* as a midpoint for the birth of a new episteme. "In this way analysis has been able to show the coherence that existed, through the Classical Age, between the theory of representation and the theories of language, of the natural orders, and of wealth and value... It is this configuration that, from the nineteenth century onward, changes entirely; the theory of representation disappears as the universal foundation of all possible orders" (ibidem: XXIII).

With Velasquez the classical, subject-based view on reality starts to disappear. According to Ogborn (1998: 55), for Foucault "what happens on the canvas is only part of the story. The rest is concerned with the

impossibility of representing the act of representation within the frame of Classical representation”.

The French thinker aims at discovering a complex apparatus, an historical a priori that represents the condition of the possibility of all knowledge and discourse of a certain epoch. He investigated the ‘discourses’, the way of speaking, and discovers that they are not “a slender surface of contact, or confrontation, between a reality and a language (langue)... These rules define not the dumb existence of a reality, nor the canonical use of a vocabulary, but the ordering of objects” (Foucault 1974: 48-49). Foucault appears to replace modern epistemological question about valid knowledge, with question about the forms and effects of power/knowledge and discursive practice. “Archaeology finds the point of balance of its analysis in *savoir* – that is in a domain in which the subject is necessarily situated and dependent, and can never figure as titular (either as a transcendental activity, or as empirical consciousness)” (Foucault 1978: 183). Social actor is fragmented in a plurality of discursive practices, of a corpus of knowledge, strictly linked to an episteme, to a set of relations and limitations to mental attitudes of a given period. The archaeology of power would not reveal ultimate truth of sexuality or knowledge, but only how prohibitions, exclusions, values, freedoms, are linked to discursive practices historically changing.

Elias goes beyond this post-subjectivist vision, because he believes in social science. “If one does not go beyond it, the subject-object hypothesis makes it appear that an individual person – oneself – can acquire adequate knowledge about objects alone and single-handed without learning knowledge from other human beings. It requires yet another step of self-distancing to integrate into theories of knowledge the awareness that every individual step of enlarging the social fund of knowledge presupposes the acquisition (...) of a social fund of knowledge” (Elias 1987: lxii). According to Elias, is possible to reconstruct a social science based on a reflexive approach. As written by Elias and Hughes (2012: 64), “However, we can see how, from a foucauldian perspective, Elias’s writings takes on all the rhetorical force of a science – its tight, precise, detached formulations render a world where fantasy, and imagination are little more than theology”.

Elias wanted to reconstruct a concept of sociology with greater detachment and thought that modern man achieved, as in *Las Meninas*, a higher degree of institutional autonomy. Foucault doesn’t believe in knowledge and sees only a dialogical discourse; for Elias, the openness of contemporary man gives him a higher level of autonomous evaluations. This ‘struggle for detachment’ conducts to a higher capacity of self-organization and self-orientation and not to the fragmentation of the self (as in Foucault). Elias sees an ongoing process of integration of individual members in social

groups, which needs a higher level of self-restraint and self-regulation in facing reality.

This involvement-detachment balance underlines the diffusion of self-reflexivity, owing to global interdependence of social groups. In painting, the detached representation of the world leads to a 'secondary involvement', because it arouses the feelings of the viewers. This feeling of aesthetic involvement of the audience appears also as a characteristic of modern social actor. In contemporary society, there is a pleasure in controlling the balance between involvement and detachment. The informalizing trend of the 1960's and 1970's is an expression of a less authoritarian kind of reflexivity, linked to the loss of stable, central point of view. These dynamics of social interweaving appear linked to the general sociology of Elias (1970, 1994), even if the concept of reflexive personality is typical of his late studies, linked to the art.

"It is highly plausible that these social and psychic developments have given rise to a different, more flexible (...) patterns of internal controlling and self-regulation (...). People generally, including sociologist, now have a higher capacity for self-organization and self-orientation than in the formalizing/disciplining phase" (Killminster 2007: 127). Cas Wouters (2007) asserted that in contemporary societies, full of dense networks of interdependency, ego becomes more flexible and sensible to shade and nuance in dealing with the others. The process of self-regulation is less based on authoritative conscience.

The widening of the circles of identification originates less rigid boundaries of nation, class, age, gender and so on. People must combine firmness and flexibility demanding strongly ego-dominated self-regulation. "As social and psychic dividing lines have opened up, social groups as well as psychic functions have become more integrated, that is to say, the communications and connections between social groups and psychic functions have become more flowing and flexible. (...) The term 'third nature' refers to the development of a more reflexive and flexible self-regulation" (Wouters 2006: 210). If Elias described the civilizing process, with the formation of the second nature personality that functions automatically, the third nature becomes more open to emotions and impulses. A new personality appears to balance better the de-controlling control of emotions, regulating the self not with external authorities, but relying upon himself and self-imposed rules, capable of discovering reflexively their identities.

4. Reflexive subcultures

Istat data (Dell'Aquila 2012: 42) demonstrate a great change in sport activities: from 2007 onward the most practiced sports become individual

activities, such as aerobics, fitness and physical culture (25.2%), followed by football (24.2%), swimming (20.8%), sport cycling (11.7%), jogging (11.3%), and winter sports (11.3%).

Traditional "modern" sports, based on competitiveness (football, volleyball, a.s.o.) loose their supremacy. It becomes important the search for fitness, for leisure, for a new self-identity. If we consider that the group of practicing dance and dance amounts to 6.3%, the total group of activities related to gymnastics, aerobics, fitness and physical culture rose to approximately 31% of athletes.

The increase of this group is mainly due to the spread of these practices among women (39.5% versus 15.3% among men). Women are also more present in sports such as swimming (26.6%), dance (13.5%) and volleyball (8%).

The reason for sport activities are clearly linked to the "search for the self" (Lasch 1981): it is mainly performed for passion and pleasure (63.8%), or to keep fit (53.6%), or for leisure (50.4%) or to relieve stress (30.4%), or to attend other persons (25%) or for the values it transmits (13.7%), or to be in contact with nature (12.7%) or for its therapeutic potential (11.5%).

There is a difference between males and females referring to the sport they practice: females do it to keep themselves fit (59.8%), and to give great importance to the therapeutic potential (15.7%). These reasons are clearly postmaterialistic and connect themselves to the area of fitness and mental well-being. Among men, the predominant reasons for sport activities are entertainment (52.5%), passion (71.5%), and closer contact with nature (14.6%).

People declare to practice any kind of sport for the lack of time (40.2%) for the lack of interest (30.3%), for age (24.1%), for the tiredness (16.2%), for health reasons (14.9%), for family reasons (12.7%) and for economic problems (7.1%).

This trend towards the search for the self is reflected also in the new sport subcultures, in which new trend towards a reflexive self are clearer.

The concept of subculture indicates a specific group, with a combination of factorable social situations (class status, ethnic background, regional or urban residence, lifestyles), forming a functional unit, with a high social impact on individual. People often detach themselves from the subcultural environment to reconstruct a new knowledge, belief and values in smaller groups.

Subcultural studies often describe a deviant behavior and propose form of counter-societies, with well-distinguished 'inner-circles', sects and cults. People, who take part to a subculture, feel a body of attitudes, beliefs and natural habits.

Following Elias' theory, we must underline that individuals in our societies live a multiple membership and involvement: they share more groups simultaneously and there is often a migration from one group to another. The reflexive personality tends to construct subcultures with 'fuzzy boundaries': dynamic realities ready to change, growing or diminish.

Sharing a subculture means to adopt a similar style of life, with attitudes, symbols and rituals; there are also several levels of integrity and exclusivity. People who form a subculture share similar values and a small social structure. There are different levels of integrity, separating from larger social structure.

According to Paul Willis (1978) the most important features of cultural forms are their constitutive relationships. They represented the way the social group is connected to other objects, artifacts, institutions. People share subcultural styles because they are intrigued by a symbolic dimension, to give the goods their unique meaning.

"As cultural groups mix-and-match cultural objects, images and practices as part of doing reflexive identity, traditional cultural practices definitive space and time are replaced by the crass and ever-changing aesthetics of everyday life" (Atkinson and Young 2008: 29). People reject ideological meta-narratives, to adopt endless self-invention through commodity consumption.

There are a lot of studies in sociology of sport in which we know how sport can explore a creative, autonomous and rebellious individuality that gives birth to counter-hegemonic subcultures. Skateboarders are, for instance, the new 'rebels' in this fields.

Deirdre M. Kelly, Shauna Pomerantz and Dawn H. Currie analysed recently the case of a skater girl group in California. These actors challenge conventional girlhood through cultural practices, negotiating a 'masculine' identity. The interviewed girls (20 from 13- to 16-years-old) adopt a transgressive bodily behavior, with high risk of injury. They want to be 'their own person', to 'stand out' or to be 'funky'.

They protest also for corporate consumption, adopting an alternative style, with neologisms, piercing, hair diving, deck decoration and a common background of films and music.

"We found that skater girls saw themselves as participating in an alternative girlhood (...). Alternative girlhood enable girls to maneuver within and against conventional notions of how girls should be and act, opening up space where none previously existed" (Kelly, Pomeranz and Currie 2008: 123).

This is another case, according to editors Giardina and Donnelly (2008), of the way by which young people challenge mass culture, creating new discourses and practices of social activism, also using sport commodities and symbols. New tribes selected their styles from the subcultural universe to create hybrid groups, without traditional boundaries. The subcultures are

strictly interwoven with social interaction, with emerging cultural spread that characterized the artifacts, behavior, norms and values of each group. There is often a link between cultures and deviance (often between dominant and subordinate part).

Dick Hebdige (1989) and Paul Willis (1978) demonstrated how the interpretation of cultural relations creates relationships and gives objects particular significances to distinguish a group, which refuses dominant mass culture.

Sport subcultures are less resistance subcultures, but, at the same time, they oppose themselves to mainstream symbols. It is important to look like a member of a different, particular group. According to Young and Atkinson (2008: 36-37), "Subcultural boundaries are now fuzzy, permeated by anyone able to draw upon a series of physical props, language and body movement to emulate an original subculture's style... In the contest of sport subcultures, youth immerse themselves in one or more extreme sport, adopt the commodified physical and ideological markers of resistance of the group, and then migrate to the next neo-tribe when it is culturally in vogue".

Youth group of skateboarders or snowboarders are transitory groups of non-commercial rebels. They are lifestyle groups, objects of a personal choices and construction. Sport participants often explore athletic practices in innovative ways, creating new form of leisure. Also David Kirk (2002) reads sport as "a site for constructing bodies" and shaping identities.

According to Stephen Lyng, "if risk taking is an integral part of daily living (...) then risk taking in extreme sports would not represent anything unusual" (Lyng 2008: 93). These sport subcultures develop both individual and social reflexivity. Sky diving, hang gliding, base jumping, mountain and cliff climbing, for instance, promote a higher sense of self-determination, because people take risk, confront an "other-world" experience where time passes faster or slower, spatial boundaries collapse and the "edge" is approached. This space and time implosion give an hyperreal quality to these activities and the self becomes more conscious of himself.

Sport subcultures – especially in extreme sports - are nowadays a source for a new, complex, form of self-identity. Recent sports, such as "Californian sports", tend to explore the limit of the body. Ferrero Camoletto (2005) describes some sport practices as a way to consolidate the self through sport, searching the true "self". Elias's controlled de-control of emotion can be viewed as a new lifestyle, more sensitive to the interrelation between the human and the natural environment, between the individual and the social: a sort of "ecology of consumption" which permits to construct more reflexive identities and new form of "well-being" (Lipovetsky 1992, 2006, Dell'Aquila 1997, Duret 2004, Secondulfo ed. 2012, Germano 2012). Also subcultural

neo-tribes express this trend and open to new forms, new styles of living, which give to subjects a 'ontological reflexivity', producing his interrelation with social and natural reality.

Conclusion

Today international sport is associated with a lesson about the respect of the differences. The Olympic Truce, for instance, demonstrates the existence of a "Olympic-style sport", in which different groups are helped to sink their differences. "As Kant ends Perpetual Peace with the Declaration that making a just and peaceful world is a duty, he adds though only through an unending process of approximation to it. In philosophy, peace is always an ideal - but worth striving for. What is remarkable about the Olympics and peace is that the two came to be associated with one another to all" (Reid 2009: 33). This lifestyle appears underlining the new form of self-reflexion typical of a post-philosophical and balanced athlete.

"We can see this most clearly in the case of team sports (...) in which individuals map their individual life projects and aims onto the common projects and aims of sports themselves and, in doing so, take those collective aims as their own (What we have here, then, is perhaps what can best be described as a process of self-enlargement by which an I becomes a we, the consequence of which is that it becomes next to impossible to tell where the agency of one individual leaves off and that of another begins)" (Morgan 2006: 178).

Sport communities help to construct a moral reflexive individual, who appreciate the value of fair play, peace, sport and can promote a work of self-reflexivity on his own thinking and agency. Apart from the aggressiveness, the competitiveness of global sport, there is also a possibility of a new moral man which can promote a we-community (see Isidori, Reid 2012, Dell'Aquila 2012).

In this reflections, we see the change from a post-modern point of view (which viewed sport as a symbolic edgework, fighting the limits of personal identity) to a more relational and reflexive sport. Here identity is conceptualized in relation to the 'other' and society is seen as a network of relations. Sport can be a vehicle of a better interrelation between internal and external structure, developing individual and social reflexivity (Donati 2011a, 2011b). Neo-tribes produce both a self-differentiating personality, closed in his narcissism (see, for instance Lasch 1981), and an attempt to ground a new, self-aware personality, conscious of individual and social being.

Sport could be a social means to reconstruct a new, relational society. Putting aside the voice of modern and post-modern self, sport membership

can construct relations based on suprafunctional meaning, becoming a vehicle of the ancient values of Olympics (peace, fair play, equality and so on).

Bibliography

- Atkinson M., Young K. (2008) *Introduction: A Subcultural History*. Atkinson M. and Young K. (eds.) *Tribal Play: Cultural Journeys through Sport*, Jai Press, Bingley, 1-44
- Atkinson M., Young K. (eds.) (2008), *Tribal Play: Cultural Journeys through Sport*, Jai Press, Bingley
- Bauman Z. (1998), *Globalization*, Polity Press, Cambridge
- Coakley J., Dunning E. (eds.) (2000), *Handbook of Sport Studies*, Sage, London
- Codeluppi V. (2008), *Il Biocapitalismo*, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino
- Dell'Aquila P. (1997), *Verso un'ecologia del consumo*, FrancoAngeli, Milano
- Dell'Aquila P. (2012), *La narrazione sportiva*, QuiEdit, Verona
- Donati P. (2011a), *Relational Sociology*, Routledge, London-New York.
- Dell'Aquila P. (2011b), *Sociologia della riflessività*, Il Mulino, Bologna
- Dunning E., Sheard K. (1979), *Barbarians, Gentlemen and Players: a Sociological Study of the Development of Rugby Football*, Martin Robertson, Oxford
- Dunning E., Hughes J. (2012), *Norbert Elias and Modern Sociology*, Bloomsbury Academic, London-New York.
- Duret P. (2004), *Sociologie du sport*, Payot, Paris
- Elias N. (1970), *What is Sociology?*, Hutchinson & Co., London [orig.ed. 1970, Was ist Soziologie]
- Elias N. (1986), *Introduction.*, Elias N. and Dunning E. (eds.) *Quest for Excitement: Sport and Leisure in the Civilizing Process*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 19-62
- Elias N. (1987), *Involvement and Detachment*, Basil Blackwell, New York [ed. orig. 1983, Engagement und Distanzierung]
- Elias N. (1994), *The established and the outsiders*, Sage, London
- Elias N. (2000), *The Civilizing Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations*, Blackwell, Oxford (revised ed.) [orig.ed. 1939, Über den Prozess der Zivilisation]
- Elias N., Dunning E. (1986), *Quest for Excitement*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford.
- Ferrero Camoletto R. (2005), *Oltre il limite*, Il Mulino, Bologna.
- Foucault M. (1974), *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Tavistock, London [orig. ed. 1979, L'archéologie du savoir].
- Foucault M. (1998), *The History of Sexuality Vol. 1: The Will to Knowledge*. London: Penguin [orig.ed. 1976, La volonté de savoir].
- Foucault M. (1992), *The History of Sexuality Vol. 2: The Use of Pleasure*, London: Penguin [orig.ed. 1984, L'usage des plaisirs].

- Foucault M. (1990), *The History of Sexuality Vol. 3: The Care of Self*. London: Penguin [orig.ed. 1984, *Le souci de soi*].
- Foucault M. (2002), *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, Routledge, London 2th [orig.ed. 1966, *Les Mots et les choses: Une archéologie des sciences humaines*]
- Guttman A. (1994), *Dal rituale al record*, Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, Napoli [orig.ed. 1978, *From Ritual to Record*].
- Guttman A. (2000), *The Development of Modern Sport*. Coakley J. and Dunning E. (eds.), *Handbook of Sport Studies*, Sage, London, 248-259
- Giardina D., Donnelly M. (eds.), *Youth Culture and Sport*, Routledge, London-New-York.
- Isidori E., Reid H.L. (2012), *Filosofia dello sport*, Bruno Mondadori, Milano
- Hebdige D. (1979), *Subculture: The Meaning of a Style*, Methuen, London.
- Kelly D.M., Pomeranz S. and Currie D. H. (2008), "You Can Break So Many Rules". Giardina and Donnelly (eds.), *Youth Culture and Sport*, Routledge, London-New-York, 113-125
- Killminster R. (1998), *The Sociological Revolution: From the Enlightenment to the Global Age*, Routledge, London
- Killminster R. (2007), *Norbert Elias. Post-philosophical Sociology*, Routledge, London-New-York.
- Kirk D. (2002), *The Social Construction of the Body in Physical Education and Sport*. Laker A. (ed.), *The Sociology of Sport and Physical Education*, Routledge, London-New-York, 79-91
- Lasch C. (1981), *La cultura del narcisismo*, Bompiani, Milano [orig.ed. 1970, *The Culture of Narcissism*]
- Lifton R. J. (1993), *The Protean Self*, Basic Books, New York.
- Lipovetsky G. (1992), *Le crépuscule du devoir*, Gallimard, Paris
- Lipovetsky G. (2006), *Le Bonheur paradoxale*, Gallimard, Paris
- Lyng S. (2008), *Risk-Taking in Sport: Edgework and Reflexive Community*. Atkinson M., Young K. (eds.), *Tribal Play: Cultural Journeys through Sport*, Jai Press, Bingley, 83-109
- Maguire J. (2002), *Michel Foucault: Sport, Power, Technologies and Governmentality*. Maguire J. e Young K. (eds.), *Theory, Sport and Society*, JAI, Amsterdam-New York, 293-314
- Maguire J. e Young K. (eds.) (2002), *Theory, Sport and Society*, JAI, Amsterdam-New York.
- Mennell S. (1998), *Norbert Elias: an Introduction*, UCD Press, Dublin.
- Morgan W.J. (2006), *Why Sports Morally Matter*, Routledge, London-New-York.
- Murphy P., Sheard K. and Waddington I. (2000), *Figurational Sociology and its Application to Sport*. Coakley J., Dunning E. (eds.), *Handbook of Sport Studies*, Sage, London, 92-106.

Paolo Dell'Aquila
*The Sociology of sport actor: from Norbert Elias' "de-controlled control of emotion"
to Postmodern and Reflexive Sport Subcultures*

- Ogborn M. (1995), *Michel Foucault and Norbert Elias on Las Meninas and the modern subject*. Pile S. and Thrift N. (eds.), *Mapping the Subject: Geographies of Cultural Transformations*, Routledge, London-New York, 52-70.
- Porro N. (2001), *Lineamenti di sociologia dello sport*, Carocci, Roma
- Reid H.L. (2009), *Olympic Truce: From Myth to Reality*. Georgiadis K. and Syrigos A. eds. *Olympic Truce*, The International Olympic Truce Center, Athens, 25-36
- Roversi A., Triani G. (ed) (1995), *Sociologia dello sport*, Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, Napoli
- Quilley S., Loyal S. (eds.) (2004), *The Sociology of Norbert Elias*, Cambridge, New York.
- Quilley S., Loyal S. (2004), *Towards a 'central theory': the scope and relevance of the sociology of Norbert Elias*. Quilley S., Loyal S. (eds.) (2004), *The Sociology of Norbert Elias*, Cambridge, New York, 1-22
- Secondulfo D. (ed.) (2011), *Sociologia del benessere*, FrancoAngeli, Milano
- Smith D. (2001), *Norbert Elias and Modern Social Theory*, Sage, London.
- Weil P. (1993), *A quoi rêvent les années 90*, Seuil, Paris.
- Willis P. (1978), *Learning to Labour: How working class kids get working class jobs*, Saxon House, London
- Wouters C. (2004), *Changing regimes of Manners and Emotion: from Disciplining to Informalizing*. Quilley S., Loyal S. (eds.) (2004), *The Sociology of Norbert Elias*, Cambridge, New York, 193-211
- Wouters C. (2007), *Informalization: Manners and Emotions since 1890*, Sage, London.