

Readers may ask how far the volume succeeds in demonstrating the significance of Elias's explanation of the European civilizing process for ongoing research on state formation. Major figures in that field such as Tilly, Mann, Skocpol and Giddens did not engage with Elias's study of the civilizing process (which was not available in a complete English translation until the early 1980s). A central question is why students of state-building who typically begin with publications by the authors just mentioned should now pay close attention to Elias's earlier writings.

In a short review it is possible to make only one observation about the relationship between this work and influential writings on state-formation that have appeared in the recent period. The volume does not mount a challenge, in line with Elias's original perspective, to the dominant literature. Studies of state-formation have provided a macro-sociological investigation of the transformation of political organisation. As Kaspersen argues on page 51, Elias constructed an intricate discussion of interwoven sociogenetic and psychogenetic processes (on the metamorphosis of state structures *and* on evolving personality traits centred on the emotions of shame and embarrassment). Kaspersen refers on p. 127 to the manners books that Elias used to discuss what he later called 'people in the round', but the relevant chapters do not develop the point in order to underline the originality of Elias's approach. Nor do they consider one major implication which is that students of state-formation can raise their game by exploring evidence of movements at the level of basic human emotions as well as in the realm of material interests that typically dominates empirical inquiry.

Kaspersen's discussion of webs of prerogatives and obligations is a major contribution to process sociology. But the exclusion of psychogenetic forces from that part of the analysis may lead some readers to conclude that *War, Survival and Citizenship* could have done more to defend and build on the bold changes of direction which were at the heart of Elias's exploration of the European civilizing process.

War, Survival Units and Citizenship could usefully have pointed the way to a more comprehensive examination of evolving patterns of privilege and responsibility in state-organised survival units. Elias emphasised the role of court ritual and ceremony in the formation of the modern European state. More recent reflections on court figurations have shown how public ritual and ceremony, monumental architecture and elite grand narratives contributed to the psychogenetic dimensions of power structures. Also crucial for Elias were the relations between the 'established and the outsiders' – between ruling groups that were convinced of their social superiority, and members of the lower strata who were persuaded to internalise feelings of inferiority with clear implications for the uneven distribution of prerogatives and obligations. Those overlapping research areas have much to contribute to the process-sociological perspective on survival units which is significantly advanced by Kaspersen's book. Eagerly awaited is the next stage in the process – the promised volume (co-authored with Norman Gabriel) with the provisional title, *A World of Survival Units*.

References

Kaspersen LB and Gabriel N (2008) The importance of survival units for Norbert Elias's figurational perspective. *The Sociological Review* 56(3): 370–387.

Eric Blanc, **Revolutionary Social Democracy: Working-Class Politics Across the Russian Empire (1882–1917)**, Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2021, pp. 456.

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It is difficult to offer a balanced judgment on this book documenting the politics and practices of socialists in Tsarist Russia, with particular emphasis on imperial borderlands. On one hand, Blanc's admirable amount of archival research enables him to make an original contribution to the underdeveloped field of multi-national perspectives on the revolutions of 1917. Blanc draws on sources rarely accessible to Anglophone scholars. On the other hand, the author has an ambitious political agenda: to retrieve "the lost tradition of revolutionary social democracy" and bring democratic socialism out of the shadow cast by Leninism and Social Democracy (p. 407; the latter obviously refers to the reformist version). Those who regard the idea of a return to revolutionary social democracy as a mirage,

for various reasons irreducible to the Russian experience, will not be converted by Blanc's message, however appreciative we may be of his scholarship.

For all his sensitivity to historical nuance, Blanc subscribes to Marxist orthodoxy: class struggle good, class collaboration bad; reformism wrong, revolution right. He repeatedly states that the Bolsheviks led the workers to power. Alternatively, if the view is taken that the Bolsheviks put themselves in power and harnessed the radicalized masses for a cultural and political project going far beyond the popular demands of the moment, the revolution's whole trajectory looks different. It is true that the "Russian revolution was far less Russian than has often been assumed" (p. 1); but if this applies to the pre-1917 background as to the whole revolutionary process, the other half of the truth is that the closer the revolutionary upheaval came to a final settlement, the more Russian it became.

That said, it would be unfair not to mention the book's strengths. Not the least of them is a rich portrait of the highly variegated Social Democratic movements in countries under Russian imperial rule, especially in the borderlands. This contributes to the history of Marxism during the period between the founding of the Second International and the crisis caused by WWI and to scholarship on Russia as a multi-national empire. Both topics merit more attention.

Another strong point is the balanced and nuanced perspective on the Marxism of the Second International. It was a more consistent and reflected body of theorizing than posterity has mostly believed, and more attentive to conditions in different parts of Europe. That applies, particularly, to Kautsky's work, and not least to his theory of revolution. Nonetheless, the vindication of the Second International also serves to defend the claim of continuity between Kautsky's version of Social Democracy and Lenin's founding definition of Bolshevism. Blanc rightly rejects the oft-repeated criticism that Lenin's conception of the party "implied a commitment to permanent tutelage of the proletariat by the intelligentsia" (p. 79). This is a misrepresentation, widely shared by critics and advocates of Leninism. The key question concerns Lenin's understanding of the role attributed to an organized vanguard in relation to a social class.

A similar point may be made about Blanc's discussion of the split between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks. He correctly stresses the anachronism of describing it as a prefiguration of later disagreements between Communists and Social Democrats, and that the division first visible at the second party congress in 1903 did not materialize until after the failed 1905 revolution. However, the analysis is one-sided: Blanc emphasizes the Menshevik preference for an alliance with the liberal and the Bolshevik discovery of the peasantry's revolutionary potential but does not address Menshevik awareness of the destructive potential inherent in a revolutionary upheaval under Russian conditions. He overemphasizes that the original split took place because of divided votes on the composition of an editorial board for *Iskra*, not as a result of Lenin and Martov disagreeing on the definition of membership. The traditional emphasis on the former seems justified because the controversy about membership reflected a broader difference of views on the identity of a revolutionary party. Having come to the fore in a specific but important context, it was bound to surface on other fronts with added force.

Blanc does not want to resurrect Lenin as the personified unity of revolutionary theory and practice. His commitment is to "revolutionary Social Democracy," including Bolshevism, not to the over-idolized leader. He makes several points that cast doubt on widely accepted views on Lenin's role in 1917, but not always in a sense that reflects creditably on Bolshevism in the broader sense of a political current and culture.

Another example of Blanc's inclination to defend Bolshevism while downsizing Lenin is the statement—quoted from David Mandel—that "October was first and foremost an act of defence" (p. 386). This would be a far-reaching observation if substantiated, but it conflates a pretext and a project. Kerensky's abortive move against the Bolsheviks enabled them to justify the seizure of power before the convening of the congress of soviets. However, to describe the whole October episode in such terms makes light of Lenin's repeated appeals for a revolutionary leap forward, supposedly linked to a rapidly maturing international crisis.

Blanc's critique of Leninism—as distinct from the older and more acceptable tradition of Bolshevism—is summed up by a rejection of "two interrelated myths" (p. 343). The first is the misconception that Lenin had to push the Bolsheviks to break with pre-war Social Democratic orthodoxy. The second is the belief that "soviet power should be fought for by socialists internationally, even in conditions of political democracy" (p. 343). The latter error concerns Leninist visions of the world revolution and their impact during the half-decade after 1917, discussed in the last part of the book (pp. 343–408, but the last section of the chapter on Finland, pp. 300–315, should also be included). This is a more perfunctory account of events than the chapters on conditions and developments before 1917, but the concluding section is also the context for the author's most emphatic political statements. They are, without exception, in the uncompromising spirit described at the beginning of this review.

Although Blanc does not claim that revolutionary forces in Russia's borderlands and neighbouring countries could have won, he thinks that their "failure was perhaps the single most important missed opportunity in twentieth-century socialist politics" (p. 393). However, nothing in Blanc's book casts serious doubt on the massive body of scholarship converging on negative judgments about the chances of revolution west of Russia. Blanc's emphasis on the borderlands and the responsibility of collaborationist moderate socialists in that part of the erstwhile empire is not backed by detailed analyses. Moreover, he is conspicuously silent on an important factor: for moderate socialists on the periphery, the ruthless reassertion of central power by the Bolsheviks, beginning with the closure of the Constituent Assembly early in 1918, must have looked like a drive to rebuild the empire. As for the revolution in Finland, for Blanc the closest thing to a model of revolutionary Social Democracy, I can only mention Risto Alapuro's more cautious and convincing account (Alapuro, 2020), which Blanc has read, but not fully taken on board.

Despite the aforementioned concerns, *Revolutionary Social Democracy* represents a strong contribution to the literature on Russian revolutionary politics that I recommend to students and scholars alike.

References

Alapuro R (2020) *State and Revolution in Finland*. Chicago: Haymarket Books.

David Lyon, **Pandemic Surveillance**, Cambridge, Polity, 2022, pp. 203.

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This book review has two layers of motivation. First, I agreed to review *Pandemic Surveillance* because I recently edited a 22-chapter volume titled *Det Epidemiske Samfund* [The Epidemic Society] (together with Nikolaj Schulz for Hans Reitzel in 2020). Furthermore, I also published a paper on coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and behavior in public spaces (Jensen, 2021). Hence, the theme of COVID-19 resonates with my research interests. Second, I was curious to see what one of the most important sociological thinkers within surveillance studies would make of the COVID-19 pandemic. David Lyon, a Scottish Professor Emeritus of Sociology and Law and former Director of the Surveillance Studies Centre at Queen's University in Canada, is primarily known for his many years of contributing to surveillance studies. He was the founding editor of the journal *Surveillance & Society* and has published extensively in the cross fields between technology, communication, and surveillance studies.

In the book's first chapter on "defining moments," Lyon takes readers through the plethora of manifestations that COVID-19 has had in relation to various themes of surveillance. In particular, we read about emerging surveillance practices and their different expressions across different societies. The chapter also introduces the discussion of "technological solutionism." Lyon argues that the notions of "pandemic" and "surveillance" belong together based on how societies have dealt with various diseases over the course of history. Nomenclatures, categories, data, monitoring, and surveillance have always been part of the toolbox. The novelty this time around, which Lyon indeed is cognizant of, is that we now live in an age of global digital network communication systems. Hence, we are looking at very different dynamics.

The theme of chapter two is "disease-driven surveillance." In this chapter, Lyon explores so-called "contact tracing," which for many has been COVID-19's most obvious touchpoint to systems of surveillance. The third chapter is dedicated to "domestic targets." Here, Lyon moves into the domestic spheres, exploring the many ways that the "stay at home, stay safe" mantra manifests itself in people's everyday lives. Simultaneously, many people experienced how the home became a node in a global surveillance network. In chapter four, the theme is "data sees all?" In this chapter, we are obviously prompted to reflect, as indicated by the question mark. Moreover, Lyon makes that case that thinking about data has become so culturally prolific that "having data" equals knowing. Data has a cultural value to the extent that lacking data equals lacking insight. However, Lyon also questions whether data automatically renders the world more transparent.