



A STUDY ON THE EUROPEAN FOX HUNTING: FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF FABRIC THEORY —REFERRING TO THE EVOLUTION OF CIVILIZATION

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Abstract

Fabric theory, also known as "process theory", refers to the fact that the society consists of interdependent groups and their interacting network throughout history. The macro society and micro individuals are inseparable. In this paper, the author analyzed the Nobel Elias's "fabric theory" and the European fox hunting activity. The author shall use references, historical research, logic and other research methods, aiming to figure out the evolution process of civilization that European fox hunting implied. Besides, the author tried to the development of competitive sports and social sports in China. In this paper, through the study of the fabric theory to promote the development of civilization, fox hunting revealed the political violence of the British parliamentary system. Stokevis's critique of Elias showed that: European civilization has achieved rationality. 2. Based on the fabric theory, China's competitive sports and social sports are the outcome of civilization change. Thus, while reading Elias' representative work 'The Progress of Civilization', combined with the study on European fox hunting, we can get insights into the evolution of European civilization through the fabric theory. In addition, owing to civilization development, we may reduce violence in sports, which is conducive to the construction of Chinese social sports and competitive sports tradition. Thus, the research could make contributions to the development of civilization.

Keyword: Fabric theory, Fox hunting, Norbert Elias, Social civilization

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1. INTRODUCTION

Norbert Elias (1897-1990) devoted his whole life to the research of "human science", trying to integrate sociology, psychology, history and other disciplines, and using "morphological society" to consolidate problems ranging from micro sociology to macro sociology, "psychological" level and "social" level. Fabric theory, also known as process theory, holds the idea that throughout history our society consists of interdependent groups and their interacting network of. Norbert Elias posed the theory of construction. He asserted that interdependent relationship is the connection of construction, that is, a structure composed of people depending on each other and interacting with each other. He no longer view people and society separately, but regards people as comprehensive people, and the interaction is the synthesis of social relations. The essence of the construction theory lies in "Figuration", which is literally interpreted as "formation, shape". From Elias' perspective, "Figuration" is "a whole structure composed of people being interdependent and correlated, so "configuration" can better reveal the Elias's intention. He suggested that the interaction between

macro society and micro individuals shaped the route of civilization progress. Elias dabbled in many areas throughout his life, but almost all of them revolve around his famous concepts of "structure" and "process".

The early 18th century, due to a maritime climate, foxes in Britain were in large quantity, causing a state of the imbalance in the nature of the food chain, the farmers had to spend a fortune in protecting their farmland and plant, captive hounds, training horses., at the same time, in order to help them maintain their farmland and to satisfy his interest in hunting as well, the nobility had launched a campaign which was latter known as "fox hunting". Hunting has been a sports convention in Britain, and fox hunting even developed into a tradition in the upper society. When autumn comes, the nobles will go out in groups to hunt foxes, which they really enjoyed. With the development of civilization, people's sense of shame and guilt grew. Killing foxes by hand made people feel guilty. Therefore, to alleviate the sense of guilt and shame, with the development of sports civilization after the 18th century, there was a certain rule that fox hunters should not should not kill the fox directly, but using a proxy -- the hound. Nobel Elias carried out a specialised study on fox hunting as it implied the changes of human society. In terms of cutting back on violence in society, Elias put forward the fabric theory, which was an outstanding contributions. That theory inspired the social sports and competitive sports in China. So it's a topic worth discussing.

2. METHODS

This study analyzes Nobert Elias's "fabric theory" and the European sport of fox hunting by using the methods of literature, historical research and logical reasoning, in order to explore the development of the European sport of fox hunting refracted the evolution of civilization and the civilization of Chinese competitive sports and social sports from the perspective of fabric theory.

3. RESULT

3.1 How did construction theory boost the development of civilization

a. The evolution of European civilization from the perspective of fabric theory

Fabric is a process, elias suggested, "formation" can reflect the core of the fabric, and socialising is civilization, speaking of civilization, we prefer to look at the current civilization, but elias argued, "civilization" did not just emerge, it is not achieved overnight, civilization is a process, It underwent gradual evolution over hundreds of years, the result of consistent accumulation of standards over the years. Elias's book "The Progress of Civilization" was published and became a popular bestseller. The book consists of two volumes: the first dealt with social control of individuals (violence) and social etiquette; The second volume examines the formation of the state, social change, social system and other grand issues. In this book, Elias examines the evolution of Western European civilization, ranging from the Middle Ages to the 20th century, He believes that the society has been changing constantly in the process of evolution. In the process of social mobility, people's pressure increases, and they intend to control their emotions and behaviors. That is, people's sense of responsibility, shame and guilt will become stronger. In this case, certain principles are needed to carry out rules or norms, However, social principles are not designed, but took shape in the process of social change and social development. If humans want social rules to regulate their behaviors and emotions, they need to seek a balance between external environment and self-control. Therefore, people constantly internalize external social rules needs to balance and regulate their behaviors. When these social norms rise to the level of rationality, they naturally become a kind of social consciousness. For example, people's feelings of guilt, shame appear. Elias talked about the social control of violence along with the development of civilization and the of sport. He believed that human beings had enjoyed watching bloody and violent sports very much at the beginning, because bloody and violent sports can bring them visual pleasure and psychological satisfaction. In this way, physical violence becomes a symbolic statement. He believed that the body was a symbol, but with the development of society and civilization, people gradually began to dislike this bloody activities. Why

do people hate them? Elias argues that there are two reasons for this: first, society has begun to control the temptation to violence compulsively; The second is to internalize the taboo against violence into people's own consciousness. As a result, when people break this taboo, they will naturally feel guilty. This revulsion against physical violence has gradually expanded to social revulsion against verbal violence. As a result, society and people are equally averse to people who like to use filth or curse.

In our understanding, "violence" and "civilization" are opposed to each other. But Elias believes that in Western European civilization, the two are interactive and interdependent. They are inseparable, staggered fusion. He believed that Western civilization was born during the Middle Ages when people violently overthrew constitutional monarchy and aristocracy. During the struggle, a stable and effective social system gradually took shape. More specifically, the development of civilization in Western Europe was the process of eliminating old principles and achieving social stability and economic growth. So violence and civilization are inseparable, violence sparks civilization, civilization promotes violence.

In Greek society, there was a lack of physical security and a relatively low stage of civilization, so physical violence and people's sense of shame and guilt were relatively weak. In the special geographical and cultural environment at that time, bloody competitive sports such as gladiatorial competition, chariot competition, animal fighting and naval battle performance were bred and developed, endowing sports with cultural characteristics such as barbarism, bloodlust, viewing and entertainment, politics and war. With the continuous development of social civilization, violent behavior has been controlled gradually, people began to abandon the bloody and violent sports culture, and the attitude towards violence has also changed. Sports not only help people decompress from the stressful life, but also make people in a state called "struggle not hurt" that how to enjoy venting pressure, and at the same time can make themselves "struggle not hurt"? This requires a balance in the middle, that is, rules should be made for sports competitions, and the formation of the British parliamentary system promoted the emergence of "embryonic civilization", which laid a foundation for sports civilization. In Elias's opinion, the nobility who play a role in maintaining order at that time, took their part to prohibit those violent acts. That also promotes the process of de-violence and social civilization.

From the above analysis, it can be seen that the formation of civilization comes from the evolution of society, and society and individuals complement to each other. Under the theory of structure, The formation of civilization also seems natural in its process and formation

b. Using the constitutive theory to construct the evolution of Chinese social sports pattern

Civilization is composed of many parts, including consciousness civilization, system civilization and behavior civilization. When it comes to civilization, it cannot be separated from culture. In the book "The Process of Civilization", it is said that German civilization and culture are in opposition. However, in our country, the sports civilization and sports culture are complement to each other. Sports civilization is the intrinsic value of sports culture, sports culture is the external form of sports civilization, and sports culture and sports civilization are mutual. China is one of the five countries of ancient civilization. According to the archaeological proof, China's civilization is destroyed and rebuilt many times, finally, through the assembling of other civilizations and nations, Chinese civilization turned into an independent culture. Civilization is a special stage in global history. It is the stage when human beings are further away from the primitive and barbaric state after leaving the animal kingdom. For China, the evolution of Chinese civilization contains four stages, from hunting (stone civilization), to farming, to industrial age and information age. In the period of hunting, people made various tools to collect wild fruits and hunt wild animals to survive in order to solve the problem of food supply. Hunting indicated the dawn of human civilization. Hunting is an ancient and primitive way of life, which was the earliest form of human civilization and played a very important role in the progress of human civilization. As the Earth's environment changed, hunting civilizations reached a bottleneck, when prey became less and less available to meet basic needs. Therefore, people began to farm. It is said that in

ancient times, the war between the emperor Huangdi and Chiyu tribe represented the clash between hunting civilization and farming civilization. The emperor represented the farming civilization, while Chiyu represented the hunting civilization. Compared with the hunting civilization, the farming civilization was more advanced, so the emperor won, and the hunting civilization was consolidated by farming civilization. Just like Mulan Paddock, hunting aimed to solve the problem of survival or self-defense at the very beginning, and it gradually develop into a competition, which also reflects that our sports civilization is inclusive and extended.

While our country envolving from the period of hunting to farming to industrial age and finally information age, everything is not achieved overnight, but accumulated, and the core of the theory of fabric is formation, social network gradually took shape, and so did social sports pattern, from run, jump, trap and throwing stones while hunting, to track and field, the high jump and shot put, The evolution process can be explained by the fabric theory.

c. Using the constitutive theory to construct the evolution of Chinese social sports pattern

In China, there are six traditional skills, including ceremony, music, shooting, motoring, writing and calculating. Archery refers to shooting an arrow, motoring refers to horseback riding. Archery originated from hunting and self-defense in primitive society. In the Stone Age, arrows were made of stone, and then turned into metal. With the progress of civilization, archery took the form of etiquette. Before archery, people usually drink alcohol, hold ceremonies, and warm up. Then in the period of Southern and Northern Dynasties, archery competitions appeared. In 1904, archery was listed as an Olympic performing event, and in 1908, archery was listed as an Olympic event. Archery finally in competitive sports. It can be seen that archery is the most indispensable part of hunting. As archery rises from a method of hunting to an event of the Olympic Games, it fully explains that our competitive sports synchronized with the development of society, people's consciousness gradually changed, their purpose changed, from the material level to the spiritual level. The development of archery from killing prey to a major event in the Olympic Games can also be explained by the ideas of the construction theory.

3.2 Norbert Elias's study of fox hunting

As part of his research, Elias studied fox hunting, which is a form of recreation. In the 18th and 19th centuries, he argues, fox hunting began to change, from killing the prey to the enjoyment of chasing fox. So the purpose of fox hunting changed. As Elias said in the Works of Civilization, As civilization progresses, as society progresses, people become averse to violence. They want to use social norms to regulate their behavior, so there is a standard to be found, When someone breaks the rules, they are pissed off by the public, and fox hunting fits into this tendency. In the early days of fox hunting, there were no taboos, no rules, and the ultimate goal was to kill the fox, which was the goal of the British nobles. Killing foxes is a victory. During a hunt, the hunter is the protagonist of the activity, the shining point, and the so-called hound, but an auxiliary, can assist the hunter to kill the fox faster, so from "hunting" to "fox hunting", this is a process which reflected the process of civilization. He argues that after the 18th century fox hunting largely restricted violence. It turned out that the fox hunter should not carry a weapon, nor kill the fox directly. Instead, he should find an agent -- a hound. It also had its own organization and rules, so fox hunting became an recreational activity, and gradually became specialized, and not only foxes, but other animals come out during the hunt. But the hunter had to focus on foxes, so you need to train the hound, which increases its attention, and back again one rule, should see a fox appeared, and then in the process of pursuit, and also a fox appeared, If that happens, you can only hunt the first fox you found. which requires a lot of control. The hunter was required to have excellent self-control, so does his hound. He was required not to use weapons, and killing was not allowed for humans. Breaking the rules was considered an unforgivable fault. As a country with a gentleman's convention, rule violation can result in a serious punishment, so hunters can only assist the hounds, train the hounds, and let the hounds kill the fox. That showed leading factor shifting from humans to dogs. At the same time, the violence deceased after all, it is not

humans who kill the fox, but hounds took care of that, so that the feelings of guilt and shame decreased. In this regard, the shift in the style of fox hunting conform to the changes of human mind.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 Norbert Elias's study of fox hunting

Although Elias has improvised the pattern of civilization progress, Stokivis scoffs at Elias' work. In the field of sports research, Stokivis mainly criticized the construction theory from two aspects: First, he specifically criticizes Elias's study on fox hunting in Britain. As we mentioned earlier, Elias studied the fox hunting in Britain using the basic logic of civilization evolution. He believes that Elias simply concerned Britain when he studied fox hunting. However, in fact, the de-violence in fox hunting first occurred in France. By 16th century, France had begun to reform the way of hunting, such as opposing the slaughter of prey and advocating that the prey should not be killed while hunting. Stokivis argued that the French practice was similar to the changes of fox hunting in England in the 18th century, and he believes that in the time of James I, it was the introduction of the French style to England that prompted the change in fox hunting in England. So this is one of the oppositions of Stokivis against Elias, where Stokivis argues that the de-violence of fox hunting first occurred in France. It was in the 17th century that fox hunting spreaded from France to Britain, and then in the 18th century such kind of sport took shape in Britain. Because France was a world power and a great influence on other European countries in the 17th century, the lifestyle of French aristocrats became the model among European countries. So Stokivis argues that long before the Glorious Revolution, before the parliamentary system formed, the English gents and aristocrats had learned from France that violence should be restrained in recreational activities. Therefore, the development of fox hunting was not triggered by the de-violent reform of British politics. In Stokivis' opinion, Elias did not find the root of fox hunting in Britain due to a lack of reference, so he made a misleading derivation and analysis.

In addition, Stokivis believes that the issue of de-violence in sports is only one aspect of sports modernization, and does not represent the process of modern sports overall. De-violence is important, not the whole, we should make a distinction. He believes that the most fundamental feature of modern sports is the formation of international organizations and the unity of competition standards, rather than the simple de-violence. The emerging modern sports should be regarded as a mirror of social life, which shows the expansion of social life scale and the deepening complexity. Sports can reflect social problems, as well as some social phenomena. However, some scholars think that Stokivis' critique on Elias' construction theory are somewhat biased and harsh. While the construction theorists not only analyzed the degree of violence in sports, but also other aspects of the modern sports development, such as the structural differences between folk sports and modern sports. In particular, Dunning and Sheard list 15 criteria that distinguish folk sports from modern sports, only one of which is related to the level of violence, while the others are more about the form of organisation. For example, folk sports are mostly informal and inherited competitions, which more or less reflect the local social status. But modern sports are institutionalized games with strict rules. From the above research, it is true that construction theorists do not focus solely on violence while studying sports.

5. CONCLUSION

Norbert Elias believed that the fabric is a whole structure composed of interdependent people. Moreover, he believed that civilization did not form overnight, but a result of accumulation over time. And he elevates civilization to the point of social change, social principles. The perspective which he studied European fox hunting was macro. Because he believes that people were living under pressure and they need to vent, then violence appears. In the course of civilization, however, the sense of shame and guilt grew stronger, and there comes the need to restrain violence, which resulted in the formation of social standards, and fox hunting in Europe was born out of this process of civilization. In the beginning, the goal of fox hunting was to kill the fox, and later, it evolved into a chasing game.

With the development of civilization, there were social rules of fox hunting, and hunters could not wear weapons, so the main character changed from the hunter to the hound, and the hound became human's agent. Thus, violence in this sport decreased. Feelings of guilt and shame will become smaller. As fox hunting movement can properly reflect the civilization development in the perspective of fabric. However, violence could not be completely removed, Although Stokvis questioned and criticised Nobel Elias's theory and research, it has been a longstanding debate on how to keep balance in the process of civilization.

Through the above research, we find that civilization consists of consciousness civilization, system civilization and behavior civilization. Once China entered the farming era, hunting has gradually changed from the initial struggle of survival and self-defense into one of the public sports, and contained political and military feature. Therefore, Hunting began to serve as ruling method and a military training session. In this way, certain rules or norms were needed to maintain. As society changes, institutional civilization emerged. Through hunting, archery gradually changed from life needs to political and military needs, and then to competitive sports, indicating that people's consciousness gradually changed from the material pursuit to the spiritual pursuit. From the agricultural civilization to the industrial civilization, and now to the information age. Social changes are still going on, competitive sports and social sports are still evolving. With regard to current social sports. How to make a leap in developing competitive sports and social sports during the information age is the significant to sports research.

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