

Title: The Development of Markets: Marketing, Marketisation, and Irish Golf

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Declaration

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of PhD is entirely my own work, and that I have exercised reasonable care to ensure that the work is original and have conformed to the regulations on the use and declaration of Generative AI, and does not to the best of my knowledge breach any law of copyright, and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work. **I hereby certify that no Generative Artificial Intelligence (Gen AI) tools have been used in the creation of the thesis.**

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Acknowledgements

Where to start?

This PhD has been a long, convoluted and occasionally soul-destroying journey. Somewhat ironically, it ended up resembling the very processes I set out to study. It has been complex and non-linear, shaped by shifting webs of interdependence and only vaguely intelligible when viewed from a safe historical distance!

I have never been so challenged, so invested, pushed so hard, or come so close to breaking in all my life. And yet, I wouldn't change a thing. I've often heard the PhD process described as a lonely or isolating experience, but this was not a journey I took alone. Far from it. I owe everything to the people who walked beside me, who supported, endured, laughed, and carried me through to the end.

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I gave this PhD everything I had and more.

I dedicate it to you.

Table of Contents

Table of Contents

Title: The Development of Markets: Marketing, Marketisation, and Irish Golf i

Declaration ii

Acknowledgements iii

Tables of Contents vii

Abstract x

1. Chapter 1 – Introduction 1

1.2. Research Context – An Overview 6

1.3. Research Questions 10

1.4. Methodological Approach 13

1.5. Structure Going Forward 15

2. Chapter 2 – Figurational Sociology 17

2.1. General Introduction 17

2.2. The Figuration Concept 20

2.3. The Civilising Process 29

2.3.1. Habitus and the shift from Social to Self-Restraint 30

2.3.2. Shame & Changing Thresholds of Repugnance 36

2.4. Power Balances - Established & Outsider Relationships 45

2.5. Markets, Consumption, and Civilising Processes: A Figurational Perspective 49

2.5.1. Figurational Theory & Markets 49

2.5.2. The Quest for Excitement: A Catalyst for Sport 57

2.5.3. Sportisation as Civilising Process 59

2.5.4. From Play to Product: The Marketisation of Sport 62

2.5.5. Excitement, Order, Exchange: An Attempt to Understand Golf's Transformation 65

3. Chapter 3 - Literature Review 69

3.1. General Introduction 69

3.2. The Market: A Look at the Concept 70

3.3. Economics 74

3.3.1. Neoclassical Economics 74

3.3.2. Heterodox Economics 76
3.3.3. The IMP Group 78
3.4. Sociology 102
3.4.1. The Sociology of Markets 102
3.4.2. Actor-Network Theory 106
3.5. 'Networked' Approaches – Comparing IMP, ANT, & Figurational Sociology ...127
3.6. Literature Review Conclusion 133
3.7. Comparison of Theoretical Perspectives Considered in Chapter 136
4. Chapter 4 - Methodology 138
4.1. Introduction 138
4.2. Sampling & Sources 138
4.3. Working with Documents: Justification and Value 139
4.3.1. Figure 2. 146
4.3.2. Figure 3. 147
4.3.3. Figure 4. 149
4.3.4. Figure 5. 151
4.4. Elias & Methodology: Core Theoretical Commitments 152
4.5. Involvement & Detachment – The Pursuit of More Reality Congruent Knowledge 155
4.6. Analysis & Synthesis. 160
4.6.1. Figure 6. The Resrearch Process Ilustrated. 166
5. Chapter 5 – Findings & Analysis 168
5.1. Section 1 – Introduction. 168
5.2. Section 2 – The Quest for Excitement and the Making of Modern Irish Golf: Sportisation, Marketisation, and Social Transformation 168
5.2.1. Military Origins and Emotional Appeal: The First Phase of Irish Golf 170
5.2.2. From Garrison to Gentleman: Civilian Adoption and Early Market Dynamics ..176
5.2.3. Monopoly Mechanism and Market Formation: Elias and Irish Golf. 181
5.2.4. Infrastructure, Interdependence, and Influence: Railways in the Irish Golf Economy 183
5.2.5. Beyond the Clubhouse: Railway Monopoly and Destination Golf. 196
5.2.6. Economic Instrument to Independent Entity: The Emergence of Club Autonomy 200
5.2.7. Power Dynamics and Shifting Interdependencies 202

5.2.8. Competitive Play and the Quest for Excitement 205
5.2.9. Sponsorship and Power: From Patronage to Partnership 215
5.3. Section 3 - Democratisation 219
5.3.1. Introduction: Golf, Class, and Social Change in Ireland.....219
5.3.2. Manners, Sophistication, And The Civilising Process 221
5.3.3.The Role Of The Elite: Patronage And Power Retention 224
5.3.4. The Struggle For Access: Etiquette And Exclusion.....226
5.3.5. The Shift: From Exclusivity to Marketisation.....235
5.3.6. Professional Middle Classes And The Reconfiguration Of Power.....240
5.3.7. Elites & Professionals: Interdependence And Eventual Integration 248
'5.3.8. Lady Golfers' and the Fight for Equality 250
5.3.9. Religious Democratisation – Sectarian Issues and Golf's Development North & South 267
5.3.10. In summary.....288
5.4. Section 4 – Pacified Social Spaces & Conditions of Scarcity, Marketisation during War Times.....289
5.4.1. Marketisation and the Removal of Pacified Social Spaces – Direct Impacts....292
5.4.2. Marketisation and the Removal of Pacified Social Spaces – Indirect Impacts.....307
6. Chapter 6 - Conclusion.....326
6.1. Significance & Implications 351
6.1.1. Conceptual and Theoretical Positioning 351
6.1.2. Implications for Broader Theory 355
6.1.3. Practical and Policy Implications 357
6.1.4. Future Research 360
7. Chapter 7 – Bibliography.....362

Abstract

PhD Title: The Development of Markets: Marketing, Marketisation, and Irish Golf

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This thesis aims to explain, both empirically and theoretically, the process of market formation and marketing's role in this regard. Conducted through the theoretical lens of figurational sociology, the study analyses data from the late 1800s to the early 2000s in Ireland, focusing on the Irish golf market. It contends that processes typically considered outside the market mechanism not only contributed to the development of Irish golf but ultimately shaped the market as we know it today. The most significant of these were examined under the following headings: *The Quest for Excitement and the Making of Modern Irish Golf, The Democratisation of Irish Golf,* and *The Importance of Pacified Social Spaces.*

The research found that golf's original association with Ireland's social elite was a key determinant in the rising appetite for the sport, particularly among the ascendant middle class, who used golf to legitimise their social status. The upper classes' reluctance to share access heightened golf's appeal and drove demand. An established/outsider figuration emerged, and shifting power dynamics led to class democratisation and increased marketisation. Religious and gender

democratisation were similarly impactful.

The need for pacified social spaces was also identified as integral to marketisation. The study found that both inter- and intra-state conflict disrupted this process, and that broader social processes connected to such disruption, including intergroup dynamics and identity formation, could have lasting effects on market growth.

Regarding the relationship between marketing and marketisation, the research found that marketisation was shaped by broader social processes, such as the quest for excitement and sportisation, and occurred in an unplanned fashion. Initially, its development was not the intent of golfers or club officials. Early marketing was undertaken not by golf clubs themselves, but by third parties, most notably railway companies.

The study concludes by reiterating the importance of considering how figurational interdependencies at different levels of social integration shape market formation. It also explores how the figurational perspective connects with Actor-Network Theory (ANT), the Industrial Marketing & Purchasing (IMP) Group, and economics, and how it can contribute to a more holistic understanding of social and economic processes.

1. Chapter 1 – Introduction

To consider golf in Ireland, one must recognise that it has a history that is both far-reaching and complex; indeed, as will be established throughout, it has been caught up in everything from changing social class dynamics to sectarian conflict and even outright war. Whilst today the sport occupies a central place in a billion-dollar tourism and leisure economy (Hudson & Hudson, 2014), its origins, particularly in Ireland, are comparably humble. Indeed, the earliest record of the sport here dates to the seventeenth century, when a small course was established on a plantation in the Ards Peninsula. This was a short-lived affair, as the plantation and course were soon destroyed in a local uprising against the colonisers and, by extension, the sport they introduced (Gibson, 1988). This was not the auspicious start that those familiar with the sport in Ireland today might assume that it had here. In fact, after this, it was to be approximately another one hundred and fifty years until, in the eighteen fifties, golf could be found in Ireland again. As was the case with its first arrival, this time, golf once more accompanied colonisers from Great Britain. On this occasion, its primary champions were members of the British military, particularly Scotsmen emanating from the officer classes. The sport at this point was first played on the grounds of The Curragh, which was located in Co.

Kildare and was the largest military base in Ireland at this time (Menton, 1991). Golf spread slowly from here; however, it remained confined to military base for much of its early expansion. It is this expansion that this thesis is chiefly concerned with. Or more accurately, it is the growth of the sport from its early days as a non-codified or commercialised leisure practice into the economised, formalised, and codified sport that we are familiar with today that it is concerned with. That is to say, this thesis seeks to explain, both empirically and theoretically, the process by which the Irish golf market was formed and also the role that marketing played in this process.

In this regard, the study contends that social processes contributed significantly to the sport's marketisation. Although many social processes can be said to be relevant in this regard, those identified by the study as most significant were examined under the following headings: *The Quest for Excitement and the Making of Modern Irish Golf, The Democratisation of Irish Golf*, and *The Importance of Pacified Social Spaces*. The research found that golf's original association with Ireland's social elite was a key determinant in the increasing appetite for golf here. This increase emanated from the ranks of the ascendant middle classes and occurred intermittently throughout golf's development. Notable periods in this regard were the early 1900s, the 1920s, and the 1960s. Here, the middle classes perceived golf as a way to cement their newfound status and grant themselves a degree of social legitimacy. The demand for, and

indeed, golf's appeal in general, was increased by the reluctance of the upper classes to allow members of the middle classes access to clubs. An established/outsider figuration existed here, and shifting power dynamics led not only to increased democratisation but also to an advance in marketisation processes.

The need for pacified social spaces was also identified as integral to the marketisation process. The study determined that both inter- and intrastate conflict are disruptive in this regard and found that broader social processes were also of note here. That is to say, the data indicated that beyond the practical realities of conflict, things like intergroup dynamics and the process of identity formation can have lasting impacts on the growth of a market.

When it came to the relationship between marketing and marketisation, the study found that marketisation was shaped by multiple broader social processes and occurred in a very unplanned fashion. That is to say, at least initially, marketisation took place beyond the desires of the typical golfer. Evidence of this is clear even at golf's very beginning, at which point marketing was carried out not by the governing bodies of golf clubs but by other organisations, most notably railway companies. Individuals in these companies were interested in golf for much more economic and commercial reasons than the typical golfer of the day and regularly promoted golf in accordance with their goals. The research found that the most significant social processes in this regard were the

quest for excitement and sportisation.

One of the most illuminating ways to understand this shift is by considering the interplay of emotional, structural, and economic processes, as captured in Elias and Dunning's (1986) concept of the quest for excitement. The interplay between the quest for excitement, sportisation, and marketisation follows a clear progression, with each stage reinforcing the last. Elias and Dunning's (1986) theory of the quest for excitement explains why individuals seek structured outlets for emotional release in increasingly restrained societies. Sportisation mediates this need by transforming chaotic folk practices into rule-bound competitions that preserve emotional intensity while aligning with modern civility. This codification heightens engagement through fairness and drama, making sport both respectable and thrilling. As such, sportisation sets the stage for marketisation, turning emotionally charged, socially sanctioned practices into appealing commodities. It is not that market forces merely adopt sport, but that sport's development through sportisation prepares it for commodification. This process, shaped by broader figurations of interdependence and shifting power balances, originates in human emotional needs and the social structures that mediate them.

In addition to the above, having established how golf's marketisation took place, the thesis sought to establish the merit of adopting a figurational research perspective in this context. Not only this, but also, to consider how doing so

compares to other, more typically deployed theoretical approaches in this area. Notably, those emanating from the disciplines of Economics, Sociology, and Marketing, such as Heterodox and Neoclassical economics, Actor-Network Theory, and the work of the Industrial Marketing and Purchasing group. Although, as will become clear, this research ultimately adopts a figurational sociological lens, it is important to note that this was not a priori decision. That is to say, utilising the figurational perspective was not chosen automatically at the outset. Rather, the case for using this approach developed incrementally as the research progressed through its early conceptual stages. Before arriving at figurational sociology, rigorous engagement with a range of alternative theoretical perspectives was undertaken, and it was found that each offered different insights into the nature of markets, marketisation, and the role of marketing within these processes.

Indeed, it was only following this deep immersion in existing literature and theory, wherein work from within economics, sociology, and marketing was all considered, that figurational sociology was proven to be the most appropriate means of examining the Irish golf market and the broader social processes which influenced its development. In this way, the adoption of Eliasian theory is presented not as an a priori choice but as the outcome of sustained theoretical reflection and critical evaluation, the reasons for which will be explored in greater detail in a following section.

1.2. Research Context – An Overview

As established above, this research focuses on the relationship between marketing and the development of markets. Stylistically, the research first begins by establishing the empirical context of what went on; this is then followed by theoretical exploration and explanation. Throughout, several different social processes were examined. These included democratisation, sportisation, social class tensions, lengthening commercial interdependencies, inter-state relations, leisure processes, and broader civilising processes. Despite this, the core focus remained the connection between marketing and marketisation, specifically, the role marketing plays in the formation of markets. This approach was chosen in response to a notable gap in the existing literature, which I will now address.

In contemporary society, the term “market” is widespread and deeply ingrained in both the public consciousness and vernacular. It is an important term, the complexity of which is often underestimated. Markets are of paramount importance to practitioners and academics alike and are often key areas of study for those concerned with economics, finance, sociology, and, as one would assume, marketing. At present, there exists a multitude of conflicting theories, perspectives, and interpretations concerning what markets are, how they operate, how they come into being, and even how they ought to be defined (Rosenbaum, 2000). For those studying markets, this may seem surprising,

especially given the widely cited claim that “the primary observable phenomenon for any theory of marketing is the hard-practical fact of the market” (McInnes, 1964, p. 62). Yet, closer inspection reveals this is far from the case. As Venkatesh et al. (2006, p. 252) note, “the term market is everywhere and nowhere” within the marketing literature. Consistent with this, academic engagement with the sociology of markets remains limited (Slater & Tonkiss, 2000), and even less attention has been paid to the relationship between marketing processes and the construction of markets. The limited theoretical work that does exist often draws on Michel Callon and actor-network theory (see Moor, 2012). Strikingly, this lack of engagement is also mirrored within marketing itself, where, despite growing interest in recent years (see Connolly & Dolan, 2012, 2017; Slater & Tonkiss, 2000), the relationship between marketing and marketisation continues to receive comparatively little attention. However, in this context, within neither domain (sociology or marketing), is a figurational approach widespread or typically deployed. Consequently, it is the specific relationship between marketing and marketisation which is the focus of this thesis, and the theoretical lens adopted is that of figurational sociology.

One might be surprised to find that in Ireland, the use of promotional strategies by various commercial enterprises to attempt to attract golfers goes back as far as 1893, when domestic railway companies were said to have ‘assiduously

courted' contemporary golfers (Gibson, 1989). Indeed, by the late 1880s in Ireland, golf was beginning to become a more widespread leisure activity, mainly for the gentry, the elite of the commercial classes, and those drawn from the senior and officer ranks of the military. However, shortly after this point, an expanding Irish middle class came to dominate the sport. This research traces how these changing social class dynamics were interwoven with other social processes at this point, how they affected market development, where marketing fits within this equation, and how it came to be understood as more functionally important.

As established, this research was conducted through the theoretical lens of figurational sociology. Figurational theory, or "figurations", is a branch of sociology that champions the processual development of society. It was originally put forward by Norbert Elias, and those who follow his teachings argue that all social development is processual; it is dynamic, there is no beginning or end, only continued 'processual' development. Figurational sociology is also concerned with the study of long-term planned and unplanned social processes, explaining how and why these manifest, and how they relate to human interdependency networks. In this vein, Elias himself went so far as to suggest that the development of all society is the product of the interdependencies that exist within human figurations; figurations being the name that he attributed to these interdependency networks. The concept of

figurations is one of the key elements of Eliasian theory, and as such, warrants at least a brief definition at this point. This will be explored in much greater detail in a subsequent section; however, for now, suffice it to say that the term itself, figuration, refers to an interdependent group of people. Elias originally put it forward to dispute the assertion that human beings could be studied as individuals separate from society. On the contrary, Elias maintained that they were constituent parts of a complex whole. It was this same reason that led Elias to believe that when considering such social constructs, academics often underestimate the importance of people. That is not to say that considering these social organisations as figurations is something of an added hindrance; rather, quite the opposite is true. Indeed, there are numerous benefits inherent in doing so, not least of which is the ability to account for and explain the way that figurational interdependence imbues these social organisations with life and influences their development. If it is not clear by now, at the heart of this research is the belief that markets are one such social organisation.

The above notwithstanding, that is not to suggest that figurational sociology was the only theoretical lens that could be deployed here; indeed, when one considers how pervasive markets are throughout academia, it would be remiss not to consider other approaches. In this regard, as established above, the disciplines of Economics, Marketing, and Sociology have been identified as highly relevant. As regards Economics, the Neoclassical and Heterodox

approaches to markets were considered. Whereas, within the Marketing discipline, the work of the Industrial Marketing & Purchasing (IMP) Group, who examine marketisation in terms of relationships, networks, and interaction, was also considered. The final academic discipline discussed was sociology. In this case, we began by examining the sociological approach to marketisation in general before narrowing our focus to Actor-Network Theory (ANT) in particular. The key elements of ANT in this regard were Economisation and Marketisation, Assemblages and Agencements, Performativity & the Marketisation Program, and finally, Non-human Agency. The intricacies of these approaches, their merits and failings, will be discussed in greater detail in a subsequent section; however, suffice it to say that for numerous reasons, figurational sociology was chosen as a more appropriate theoretical lens for this given research context. However, that is not to suggest that there is no merit in the other approaches considered. Indeed, as will become clear in a later section, there is a significant overlap between fundamental elements of these disciplines. But, for the reasons suggested above and throughout this body of work, the figurational approach can be seen to be a more appropriate means of examining our current research context. And, as such, it was at the heart of the formation of our chosen research questions.

1.3. Research Questions

To that end, it is prudent at this point to illustrate our adopted research questions. These are as follows –

1. How has the game of golf become marketised in an Irish context?

2. To what extent have social processes influenced this marketisation?

3. And Finally, what is the relationship between marketing and the development of this market, and indeed, how has that relationship changed over time?

These research questions, when used in conjunction with my methodology and choice of theoretical lens, will set my work apart from much of what has been published academically in this context. As established, figurational sociology is renowned for its focus on processual development as well as the strong emphasis it places on the interdependent relationships of people and social groups. As such, it is in contrast with most notable and mainstream marketing theories, which are, for the most part, inspired by the teachings of neo-classical economics or are philosophically deterministic in nature. Figurational sociology distinguishes itself from other approaches by offering a more comprehensive lens through which to understand societal dynamics, providing a holistic, macro-level perspective from which more focused, micro-level inquiries can be meaningfully developed (Sinclair, 2015). Elias (1970, p. 96) supports this orientation, asserting that “actions and ideas cannot be explained and

understood if they are considered on their own; they need to be understood and explained within the framework of [inter-dependency networks].” In other words, social change cannot be examined in isolation but must be situated within the broader webs of interdependence from which it emerges. In relation to this body of work, this suggests that whilst the golf market in Ireland is the context of this research, equally important are the processes it allows us to examine, for example, although answering the above research questions will illustrate the various dynamics of the Irish golf market, it will also illustrate how applicable figurational theory is to the study of marketing and, more importantly, it will highlight the role played by marketing practice in the formation of markets. That being said, in addition to what is discussed above, an examination of the above research questions will contribute to knowledge of the following fields:

- Contemporary consumer culture around golf and leisure in general, including how and why practices have changed and are changing.
- The role of changing emotional valences in shaping market structures.
- The role of marketing in the development and structural dynamics of the golf market.
- And finally, the enabling and constraining effects of market structures.

The answers to these questions were ascertained via the research process

outlined in the section below.

1.4. Methodological Approach

As is typical of much of figurational research, in this study, a socio-historical approach was adopted. Given that data analysis covered the period from the late 1800s through to the early 2000s, the sources identified as most important were historical documents. Defining the research sample and identifying relevant data sources is an important first step in any research project. Research is much more than simply collecting data; it is an intricate, iterative, and often unpredictable process. As Bloyce (2004, p.161) observes, "the research process is rarely, if ever, as clean and straightforward as various research methods texts might have us believe". Selecting historical documents as a data source adds further complexity. Bryman (2001, p.370) notes that the "search for documents relevant to your research can often be a frustrating and highly protracted process". It becomes clear, then, that research is frequently far less straightforward than it is often portrayed, particularly in its early stages, where a degree of trial and error and 'finding your way' is inevitable. Because of this, when carrying out this present research, an attempt was made to avoid approaching the data with too narrow a focus. That is to say, at the outset, whilst answering our established research questions was always considered to be of paramount importance, in the beginning, familiarisation with the data and the research context was the goal.

In addition, because of the temporal distance, documents were chosen because they pertain to the time in which they were created and can be used as evidence of events, practices, and ideas. Moreover, when considered sequentially, they can construct a “narrative of change” and, by extension, grant an insight into the types of changes that occurred within figurations and why (Dolan, 2009, p.185). As previously established, the data examined was socio-historical in nature and consisted largely of what are commonly regarded as secondary sources. These included historical monographs, membership records, club histories, tourism annals, newspaper articles, and a variety of promotional materials relating to both amateur and professional aspects of the golfing context. The overall aim of this was to provide a holistic illustration of the social processes at play within the golfing context and a detailed explanation of their impact on marketisation processes. Historical monographs proved particularly valuable in this regard, often offering insight into the broader social dynamics that influenced the development of golf. Club centenary histories, meanwhile, provided a closer view of everyday club operations at the local level. Other data sources were used primarily to supplement this core material and to deepen understanding of specific events or themes. Data collection followed an iterative process, continuing until key social processes were identified and the central research questions could be addressed. These processes were drawn from recurring elements within the data and refined through repeated engagement with the

material. Initially, all recurring events, themes, or factors were recorded. Over time, and with increasing familiarity with the context, these were refined and narrowed to those most relevant to the research questions. Once a list of significant processes was established, the researcher identified the overarching or higher-order processes that most effectively addressed the study's core concerns. These were captioned as follows: The Quest for Excitement and the Making of Modern Irish Golf, The Democratisation of Irish Golf, and finally, The Importance of Pacified Social Spaces. Following on from this, an appropriate structure for the research project began to emerge, the layout and justification for which will be discussed in the following section.

1.5. Structure Going Forward

In many ways, when it comes to the structure and layout of a PhD thesis, there is, oftentimes, a degree of homogeneity; however, in the case of this particular project, there were certain aspects of the approach that warranted a slight deviation from the norm. Because of the theoretical lens adopted, or more accurately because of how rarely deployed it is within this particular research context, a section discussing its origins and establishing its central theoretical elements was needed. That section follows this one and will not only consider the ins and outs of figurational Sociology but will also illustrate why it was chosen as the theoretical lens for this project and how it influenced and informed the approach going forward. Following on from this, the research will

become more traditional in terms of its structure and will launch into a literature review. Here, literature relevant to the research context and theoretical approaches typically deployed within it will be examined. In this regard, we will look first at defining the market concept and subsequently consider how it is approached by academics from the Economic, Marketing, and Sociological disciplines. In particular, the work of those concerned with Neoclassical Economics, Heterodox Economics, Actor-Network Theory, and the Industrial Marketing & Purchasing group will be considered. Following on from this, as is typically the case, the methodology will be considered. Here, the approach taken will be outlined, and the impacts of a figurational approach in this regard discussed. After this, one will find the findings and analysis section, which has been structured very much by the research findings and in accordance with the key social processes discussed in the methodology section. The research will finish with a conclusions section wherein the answers to the research questions will be discussed and their significance to future research considered. The section we will move on to next is Chapter 2 - Figurational Sociology.

2. Chapter 2 – Figurational Sociology

2.1. General Introduction

Figurational sociology, also known as Process Sociology, is a research tradition based upon the works of eminent sociologist Norbert Elias and, as illustrated at the outset, is the theoretical lens through which this study has been conducted. To that end, its key elements and core concepts, and how they relate to other academic theories of markets, will be discussed hereunder. Elements pertaining directly to methodology will be discussed in a subsequent section, whereas the elements which have been identified as relevant for discussion at this point will be examined under the following headings, *'Figurations' – The Concept, The Civilising Process, Power Balances – Established & Outsider Relationships, and, finally, Markets, Consumption, and Civilising Processes: A Figurational Perspective.*

By way of introduction, figurational theory (or "figurations") is a branch of sociology that emphasises the processual nature of social development. Eliasians argue that society is never static; there is no clear beginning or end, only continuous development over time. Figurational sociology is principally concerned with long-term, planned and unplanned social processes and their relationship to networks of human interdependence. In this respect, Elias shared common ground with academics like Comte and Marx. Indeed, all three

asserted that “current social relations are only one moment in a long-term process, which leads from the past through the present and beyond it into the future” (Elias et al., 1997, p. 357). However, Elias was critical of what he saw as key limitations in the work of his contemporaries. While acknowledging Marx’s pioneering role in understanding social development, Elias objected to the Marxist tendency to assign excessive causal weight to economic factors (Mennell, 1989, p. 65). Similarly, Newton (2001) notes Elias’s resistance to the economic rationality and dualistic thinking often found in Marxist theory. In pursuit of a more reality-congruent understanding of social phenomena, figurationalists examine how such phenomena evolve over time and emerge from interdependency networks. Yet, as Newton (1997) observes, these networks are often overlooked, even though they shape not only social structures but also elements of individual identity. And, moreover, traits that may appear purely biological are, in many cases, the product of “the interweaving of human interdependencies across numerous generations” (Newton, 2001, p. 468).

Indeed, Elias goes so far as to suggest that the development of all society is the product of the interdependent exchanges that take place between human figurations. It was for this reason that he was highly critical of research that considered its subject matter in isolation; instead, he championed the interdependence of all social processes. Moreover, Elias has often been praised

for his ability to draw data from a wide range of seemingly unrelated and disconnected empirical sources and meld them into a workable, repeatable, and testable model of human interdependency (Goudsblom, 1997; Kilminster, 2007). This was in stark contrast to many of Elias's fellow sociologists, whom he believed were prone to viewing tensions and conflicts from a one-sided perspective and often inadequately dealt with unintended social processes.

Indeed, when discussing the situation, Elias et al. suggest that other academics usually "explain unplanned and unintended social structures and processes in terms of the mistakes and faults of others, the opponents to whom we are bound" (1997, p.360). They further suggest that "at the level of human society, then, we rarely transcend black-and-white voluntaristic explanations" (1997, p.360). Of course, Elias recognised the failings of voluntaristic explanations and was vocal in his criticism, highlighting that contemporary society is the result of both planned and unplanned processes. And, that as a result of its neglect of the unplanned or unintended, the voluntaristic approach is invalid. Similarly, Elias was critical of any rationalistic approach and often used empirical evidence to quash such arguments. Much like in his criticism of voluntaristic approaches, Elias proffers that when examining society, a holistic, all-encompassing approach is more appropriate and methodologically sound. Such an approach can be seen throughout Elias's work. Kilminster (2007, p.76) captions this as follows: "Elias's work is written in a theoretical empirical idiom, in which

theoretical reflections and concept formation are developed continually in relation to empirical materials". Indeed, his approach is one I have attempted to emulate in this body of work. In light of the above, it is clear that figurational sociology is a comprehensive and comparatively difficult ideology to come to grips with. To that end, and to accurately understand all that is at play within the theory, and indeed, how these dynamics pertain to marketisation, we must expand upon and engage more deeply with the headings mentioned above. We will begin by discussing the concept of figuration.

2.2. The Figuration Concept

The concept of social figurations is one of the key tenets of Eliasian theory, and as such, will now be discussed in detail. The term itself, figuration, refers to an interdependent group of people. Elias (1978) originally put it forward to dispute the assertion that human beings could be studied as individuals separate from society; in fact, he maintained that to do so was an 'intellectual aberration'. In this regard, Elias was challenging much of contemporary academic thought on the subject, which, at the time, broadly speaking, was split into two camps. The first championed society and its impact upon individuals, whereas the second ascribed primacy to the individual and their ability to impact upon society. The resulting dualism became deeply entrenched in academic minds and, in some disciplines, is still pervasive to this day. The Eliasian rejection of this duality

stems from the fact that it underscores what Elias(2007) captioned ‘homo clausus’, the idea of man as distinct and separate from society. Elias categorically refuted this position and, in fact, believed that considering people as figurations was key to transcending such fallacies. It was in this vein that Elias suggested that figurations serve “as a simple conceptual tool to loosen this social constraint to speak and think as if the ‘individual’ and ‘society’ were antagonistic as well as different” (1978, p.130). Rather, Elias maintained that they were constituent parts of a complex whole. Indeed, if we consider even the most rudimentary group of people, Elias himself uses the example of a card game to illustrate this point; even these people constitute a figuration, and their actions are bound in interdependence. When considering this interdependence, it is all too easy to be guilty of reification, to ascribe an existence of its own to the card game and assume that the interdependence of the individuals in question manifests as a result of the game “itself”. Rather, a more reality-congruent assumption is that the game is made manifest and its outcome is dictated by the individual’s interdependence. To consider the game as an ‘entity’ that exists independent of the people playing it is to attribute to it a quality that simply isn’t there; it is people that breathe life into it, and without them, it ceases to exist. Indeed, it is for this very reason that Elias proffers that “sociological analysis can never justifiably use dehumanising substantives as tools of investigation” (1978, p.131). Furthermore, it was this same reason that led Elias to believe that

when considering such social constructs, academics often underestimate the importance of people. As a result, he suggested that "such concepts as structure or function, role or organisation, economy or culture, often fail to convey that they refer to particular figurations of people" (1978, p.131). That is not to say that considering these social organisations as figurations is something of an added hindrance; rather, quite the opposite is true. Indeed, there are numerous benefits inherent in doing so, not least of which is the ability to account for and explain the way that figurational interdependence imbues these social organisations with life and influences their development.

For example, Elias (1978) argues that if we consider any social grouping, organisation, or system, its development may be examined as a sequential series of vectors. For the sake of simplicity, Elias captioned these A-B-C-D; here, these letters are representative of figurations at a particular point in time. Each figuration gives birth to its successor, and thus the flow from A to D can be charted, and the necessary preconditions that lead to D's development established. Each stage in this process is important; A is a necessary precursor to B, and so on and so forth. Moreover, when their development is examined in this manner, the nature of the dynamics inherent in a particular figuration becomes clear. That is to say, people's positions within certain figurations and the ways in which they are bonded to one another become evident. So too do the drivers of their interdependence and the broader social processes that influence

their behaviour. Building upon this, Elias argues that –

> Without referring back to the figurational flow which produced them, it would be impossible to understand or explain the interdependence of all the positions in a figuration at a particular time, or the disposition of the people whose socially regulated mutual directedness gives these positions their significance (1978, p.161).

What Elias calls "socially regulated mutual directedness" is perhaps another step towards understanding the way in which social institutions become dehumanised, the way in which they are ascribed a life of their own, independent of people. It is important that we recognise here that this 'dehumanisation' can refer to more than the simple card game mentioned earlier. Indeed, it often manifests in relation to much more complex figurations and can occur at any level of social integration, be that at the level of familial groupings, organisations, or even at the level of nation-states. These figurations are all made up of individuals, each of whom has varying desires and aspirations unique to him or herself. Although how these desires manifest is often dictated by the dynamics at play within a particular figuration, it is incorrect to consider the figuration itself in the same fashion. This is because "it", the figuration, cannot possess desires or aspirations; at best, it can be said to be representative of an amalgamation of the desires of the individuals who populate it, and any development that occurs in this regard should be attributed

to the nature of their interdependence. When considering this in relation to larger-scale figurations, Elias states that although the –

> figurations are composed of interdependent groups of people, organised into national states, and not of single interdependent individuals… here, too, the units to which people refer in the first person - not only the singular 'I' but also the plural 'we' - are experienced by them as if they were completely autonomous (1978, p.29).

This, when considered in light of what we have discussed above, simply cannot be the case; these figurations, despite their size, are still only representative of the individuals who compose them.

That being said, there is much to be gained from an understanding of the interdependency networks that are inherent within a given figuration; however, the concept of interdependence can at times appear somewhat unclear. It is fine to suggest that the individuals within a figuration are all interdependent, but what does this actually mean? How does it affect these individuals, and how does this interdependence manifest? Put plainly, interdependence occurs as a result of the particular relationships between people within a figuration and the power differentials within those relationships. On the surface, it may seem that power differentials are not a universal characteristic of relationships; however, they are inherent in all relationships in one way or another. Elias(1978) himself uses the example of a master and slave relationship to emphasise this point. One

would be forgiven for assuming that in such a relationship a power differential is non-existent, i.e. that given the master's position relative to the slave, there is no power scale here. That the master is in complete control and the slave must simply obey. However, whilst admittedly the power chances are skewed dramatically in favour of the master, the slave has power that corresponds to the degree that his/her master relies upon them. What is being suggested here is that in so far as the slave performs a function that the master requires, the slave is needed by, and holds a degree of power over, the master. Elias accounts for this as follows: " whether the power differentials are large or small, balances of power are always present wherever there is functional interdependence between people" (1978, p.74). Interestingly, this statement holds true for even the fiercest of enemies; these, too, are bound in interdependence by the nature of the function one performs for the other. In the case of more traditional relationships, functional interdependence can often be accounted for in relation to the division of labour; in this case, it is the actions of the enemies and how they move in response to one another that forms their interdependence. It is noteworthy here that functional interdependence is not one-directional; it is reciprocal in nature. Indeed, if we consider once more the example of the master and the slave, we can see that, even in this uneven relationship, as much as the slave serves a function for the master, the master also serves a function for the slave. That is to say, here the master is dependent on the slave for labour, and the slave is

dependent on the master for food and lodging, etc. It is because of this reciprocity that Elias insisted that –

> It is impossible to understand the function A performs for B without taking into account the function B performs for A. That is what is meant when it is said that the concept of function is a concept of relationship(1978, p.78).

In saying this, Elias is suggesting that relationships are not as static or as one-directional as they may at first appear; they are temporal processes that evolve and develop in line with the figurations in which they are embedded. One benefit of this is that they are akin to any other sociohistoric process in that their development can be charted and explained. An understanding of the function each member of the relationship performs for the other, and the power dynamics inherent within the relationship, is a key step in this regard. Elias proffered that when examining relationships in this way, power must be thought of as a structural characteristic, one without which it would cease to exist. Indeed, when considering how power influences relationships, Elias summed the dynamic up as follows –

> We depend on others; others depend on us. In so far as we are more dependent on others than they are on us, they have power over us, whether we have become dependent on them by their use of naked force, or by our need to be loved, our need for money, healing, status, a career, or simply for excitement(Elias, 2012b/2013, p.66).

The key consideration here is how we conceptualise power. Elias argues that often power is regarded as a one-dimensional possession, something that one person, or group of people, has that another lacks. However, the truth here is much more complex, as Elias suggests, “Power is not an amulet possessed by one person and not by another: it is a structural characteristic of human relationships - of all human relationships” (1978, p.74). Moreover, to compound matters, the ways in which people are bound to one another have come to take increasingly diverse forms; that is to say, the type of functions that individuals provide for each other has diversified considerably. Elias accounts for this by suggesting that it is caused by increasing specialisation, a process referred to as ‘functional democratisation’, whereby those who specialise are endowed with added power by virtue of their more unique functions. One may wrongly assume that because of this increase in power, those who specialise have a greater degree of control over how relationships play out. Whilst that may well be true in the case of particular relationships, it is certainly not the case when considered in relation to broader figurations. If we consider the relationship between two individuals, one of whom has a high degree of power over the other, it quickly becomes clear that the outcomes of that particular relationship can be controlled by the more powerful actor. However, figurations are not made up of just two people forming one relationship; they are much more complex in nature. They are often comprised of multiple people who form

multiple relationships and who are embedded within multiple broader figurations concurrently. What's more, all of these individuals are subject to similar constraining interdependencies and power differentials. The result of this is that, in reality, none of the people, regardless of the position that they occupy within the figuration, can dictate the outcome. Rather, the result of the process manifests from the interweaving of the actions and desires of all the members of the figuration. When explaining this, Elias suggests that, despite the best-laid plans, from the –

> interweaving of innumerable individual interests and intentions - be they compatible, or opposed and inimical - something eventually emerges that, as it turns out, has neither been planned nor intended by any single individual. And yet it has been brought about by the intentions and actions of many individuals (1969, p. 221).

It is this dynamic that encapsulates all that is figurational development and, in fact, building on this, Elias goes on to suggest that “this is actually the whole secret of social interweaving - of its compellingness, its regularity, its structure, its processual nature, and its development: this is the secret of sociogenesis and social dynamics” (1969, p. 221). To truly understand the scope of this statement must now move on to discuss the civilising process.

2.3. The Civilising Process

The civilising process is another core tenet of figurational sociology, one which Elias conceptualised as a shift from social to self-regulation. This shift was wound up in a dynamic and interdependent web of figurations. At first glance, the civilising process, as the name suggests, refers to the process through which members of our society came to embody what we today classify as "civilised" behaviour. Indeed, Elias first illustrated the Civilising Process by referencing the development of medieval table manners and how proponents of specific table manners viewed them as a means to differentiate themselves from those they viewed as "uncivilised" and of lesser social standing. However, to assume it can only be viewed in such a fashion is extremely limiting. Indeed, the Civilising Process transcends the singular context of its origin and can be found throughout the fabric of society. It is more than the process through which we become "civilised"; rather, it is the process through which we become "socialised". It is the process through which the markers of what is perceived as "civilisation" are established, disseminated, and internalised.

When considering markers of civility, one is often drawn to the intricate and varied forms of self-expression used to denote civilisation and superiority. Although such forms of expression are worthy of investigation and will undoubtedly be discussed within this body of work, the types of expression that contravene established modes of civility, that is to say, those that members of

the so-called elite find repugnant and shameful, are also worthy of investigation. Moreover, their changing perception/position within society is important. The fact that modes of expression, which at one point in time are perceived as indicative of high class or civility, may eventually come to evoke feelings of disgust from contemporary elites is truly fascinating, and it is symbolic of the dynamic and temporal nature of the civilising process. It is important to note that the "civilisation" that Elias refers to does not have a starting point, i.e. society, and indeed the individual, does not simply change from "uncivilised" to "civilised"; this too is a process that develops and changes over time. In fact, throughout Eliasian thought is the prevailing assertion that behaviours and modes of emotional restraint and expression, both those of which we are conscious and those which occur subconsciously, are modified, passed on and inherited intergenerationally by virtue of the civilising process. Nowhere is this better illustrated than in the process of habitus formation and the shift from social to self-restraint

2.3.1. Habitus and the shift from Social to Self-Restraint

As highlighted at the outset, the civilising process is an integral element of figurational sociology. Moreover, it stems from the recognition of what Elias considered to be one of the major failings of his contemporary sociologists, which was, of course, their inability to reconcile their conceptualisations of society with those of the individual. As established, Elias contended that such

an approach was, at its core, flawed. As a salve for this issue, Elias introduced the concept of sociogenesis. Sociogenesis deals with the way in which human interdependence at the societal level influences the development of the individual. Newton (1999, p.418) defines sociogenesis by suggesting that it relates to "the way in which Western (supposedly) 'civilised' emotions and behaviour, tacit and conscious, have been learnt across the changing figurations of different epochs". Suggesting that these behavioural elements have been passed on from generation to generation. Indeed, Elias himself (2000, p. 52) proffers that –

> The 'civilisation' which we are accustomed to regard as a possession that comes to us apparently ready-made, without our asking how we actually came to possess it, is a process or part of a process in which we ourselves are involved.

Noteworthy here is that we ourselves are involved in this process; that is to say, the dynamics inherent in contemporary figurations contribute to and alter the 'civilisation' being passed on. Building on this, Dunning & Hughes (2013) suggest that Elias used the term sociogenesis to describe the process of social production/generation and that, in doing so, he sought to ascertain the degree to which choice or compulsion influenced the development of social concepts, practices, or structures. In essence, questioning the degree to which individual choice can influence society as a whole. To consider this 'influence', Elias

coined the term Psychogenesis, which, according to Dunning & Hughes (2013, p.81), is “the part played in certain processes by ‘psychodynamics’ - that is, processes at the level of the psyche, personality or habitus that have lasting social ramifications”. Noteworthy here is that sociogenesis and psychogenesis are interdependent processes; there is no grand divide between the two. They are both closely related and play vital roles in habitus formation. The origins of the term habitus can be traced back to the days of Aristotle; indeed, it has been used sociologically in a variety of different ways by a variety of different authors. In the contemporary sense, the term is perhaps most synonymous with the work of Pierre Bourdieu; however, Elias’s use of the term predates this and can be found as early as 1939 in The Civilising Process, long before it was adopted by Bourdieu (Dolan, 2009). From the Eliasian perspective, habitus is a key element of the Civilising Process. Elias uses the term habitus to denote the way in which a particular form of social behaviour or affectation ‘crystallises’ into a “psychological individual habitus” (Elias, 2010, p. 41). That is to say, when considering habitus, Elias refers to the way in which socially produced emotional responses and behaviours become ingrained in the consciousness of the individual. Whilst the concept is explained quite matter-of-factly above, in actuality, habitus formation is a complex and extremely important process that has many far-reaching effects. Not least of which is that in many ways it dictates the ways in which individuals, and by extension, society, function. That

is to say, habitus formation is the process by which the manifestations of the civilising process (i.e. the particular social cues, behaviours, and skillsets produced) become learned and internalised by individuals. This process begins in infancy but continues to be modified throughout one's life, acting as an ordering mechanism for the individual's actions and ensuring that they are aware of the boundaries of what is defined as socially acceptable behaviour.

Indeed, Elias argues that an individual's habitus becomes so deeply ingrained in their psyche that it acts as a form of powerful self-restraint or self-steering mechanism. That it, in essence, develops into something akin to what Freud termed the 'superego'. What this entails is a shift from social regulation to self-regulation. Here, a transition occurs, and what happens is we move from 'society' dictating and enforcing acceptable behaviour to the individual, internalising and upholding these standards autonomously. Elias summarises this process as follows –

> This self-restraint is ingrained so deeply from an early age that, like a kind of relay station of social standards, an automatic self-supervision of their drives, a more differentiated and more stable "super-ego" develops within them (Elias, 2000, p. 374).

In fact, it has been suggested that the level of control exerted by the habitus becomes so powerful that in some circumstances it abstracts the individuals' drive impulses and places them beyond the realms of individual consciousness

(Elias, 2000). What this implies is not that individuals no longer experience these biological drives, but rather that the ways in which they were traditionally fulfilled have been altered and that they now find expression through socially designed and approved means. When considering this transition, Elias suggests that “the battlefield is, in a sense, moved within” and, further, that "Part of the tensions and passions that were earlier directly released in the struggle of man and man, must now be worked out within the human being” (Elias, 2000, p.375). Moreover, the importance of this internalised self-control cannot be underestimated. Indeed, to function correctly in contemporary society, even the most rudimentary elements of social life require individuals to exercise high levels of self-restraint and possess a highly attuned habitus. Elias even goes so far as to suggest that a lack of self-restraint may prove dangerous not only for the individual but also for others they may encounter. He illustrates this point by using modern-day traffic as an example. If we consider contemporary traffic, admittedly, the complexity of which can be taken for granted, it quickly becomes clear that the activity requires a high level of self-control and that strict adherence to established social parameters is required. Any deviation from these parameters or even a momentary lapse in self-control is enough to land one’s self or others in mortal danger (Elias, 2000). As stated previously, contemporary traffic is quite a basic example. However, it serves to illustrate not only, just how intricate elements of individual habitus are, but also the ways in which it

relates to human interdependence within particular figurations. Elias himself describes the situation as representative of "the formative pressure on the psychic habitus of 'civilised' people". He further suggests that "their constant undifferentiated self-constraint is connected to the growing differentiation and stabilising of social functions and the growing multiplicity and variety of activities that continuously have to be attuned to each other" (Elias, 2000, p.369). In this sense, Elias is suggesting that with an increase in societal complexity comes both an increase in interdependence amongst individuals and an increasingly sophisticated habitus. Elias goes so far as to suggest that for individuals living in such a society, "it trains them to eliminate all irregularities from behaviour and to achieve permanent self-control" even to the point where individuals are willing to subordinate their own "monetary inclinations to the overriding necessities of interdependence" (Elias, 2000, p. 380). Indeed, Elias (2000) contends that evidence of this development, the development of an internalised self-steering mechanism or what on this particular occasion he referred to as a 'more stable super-ego', can be first observed in small functional/social centres. He suggests that it is by virtue of the interdependence of processes (such as the monopoly of violence, taxation, and greater degrees of functional democratisation – all of which will be discussed subsequently) that these observable changes in conduct, and ultimately individual personality, begin to expand to other functional circles and eventually come to be seen

throughout the West. In fact, when considering these changes in collective behaviour and personality structures, it is argued that these shifts did not occur as the result of some preordained harmony or collective enlightenment; rather, Elias maintained that they occur in response to "changes in the way in which people are bonded to each other" (Elias, 2000; p. 402). Indeed, when discussing the changes that occurred, Elias argued that "this is why their behaviour changes, and why their consciousness and their drive economy, and, in fact, their personality structure as a whole, change" (2000; p. 402). A key element of this process is the concept of shame and advancing thresholds of repugnance.

2.3.2. Shame & Changing Thresholds of Repugnance

Thus far, we have examined the Civilising Process in relation to its origins and the various social processes such as sociogenesis, psychogenesis, and habitus formation that contribute to its development. However, we have yet to consider the markers of this process or their broader societal significance. To that end, we now turn to shame and shifting thresholds of repugnance. As previously noted, it is striking that behaviours once associated with the upper classes may later be viewed with disgust by contemporary elites. More than a historical curiosity, this reflects how increasing interdependence and functional democratisation can drive emotional and behavioural change, often beyond the control of any one individual. Elias goes further, suggesting that these developments reshape not

only emotional expression and behaviour but also people's very ways of life. As he states, "the question why people's behaviour and emotions change is basically the same as the question why their forms of living change" (Elias, 2012a, p.199). Perhaps the clearest example of this can be found in relation to violence. To grasp the scope of this transformation, one needs only consider how violence previously featured not just in state conflict but also in everyday life. Elias charts how it shifts from a central and accepted element of social life, including within the family, to something that evokes strong aversion among more 'civilised' members of society. His example concerns the historic norm of men using violence to control their wives, a practice once socially accepted but now widely condemned (Elias, 1996). More broadly, Elias uses this to trace the changing markers of civility and the transition from social regulation to self-restraint. This shift is tied to the state's increasing control over the use of violence. In what he describes as a sociogenetic process, greater state monopolisation leads to changes in personality structures, embedding a deep aversion to violence within the individual habitus. The driving force behind this, as Elias (2000, p. 268) notes, is the "Monopoly Mechanism".

When considered in its simplest form, the monopoly mechanism deals with the interdependencies that exist between smaller social units within a broader figuration. That is to say, it is concerned with the competition for opportunities that takes place between people and the dynamic that results from this conflict.

Elias maintained that what happens here is that opportunities, be they economic, social, or biological, in nature, eventually come to be controlled by a dominant party, oftentimes a centralised ruler or government. By virtue of their position, the dominant party removes or controls the potential for individuals to seize opportunities and fulfil these needs. When summarising the conflict that takes place, Elias suggests that –

> The probability is high that some will be victorious and others vanquished, and that gradually, as a result, fewer and fewer will control more and more opportunities, and more units will be eliminated from the competition, becoming directly or indirectly dependent on an ever-decreasing number. (2000, p.269)

This dynamic has several implications, the most important of which are the following. Firstly, as weaker groups/people are eliminated, the number of opportunities open to the remaining increases and reinforces their position. Secondly, although eventually one individual, or group of individuals, will come to monopolise all the available opportunities, this does not imply that they occupy a position of absolute power or that they will occupy such a position forever. Indeed, by virtue of the figurational interdependence discussed previously, "control over the centralised and monopolised resources tends to pass from the hands of an individual to those of even greater numbers" (Elias, 2000, p.276). Elias (2000) illustrates this process particularly well using the

example of a king and his subjects. Having emerged victorious from the conflicts that allowed him to attain his position, the king inevitably finds himself reliant on other people/groups within that given figuration to maintain it. That is to say, he finds himself reliant on administrators, those who control his army, merchants, and so forth, to orchestrate his rule and coordinate his kingdom. As the king becomes increasingly dependent on these functionaries, their influence grows.

Moreover, as his kingdom grows, so too does the cost to maintain it. As a result of this, "the absolute ruler with his apparently unrestricted power is, to an extraordinary degree, governed by and functionally dependent on the society he rules" (Elias, 2000, p.272). Indeed, in a somewhat ironic turn of events, power over the monopolised resources passes from the dominant party back to the other members of the figuration during the next stage of this process. In this sense, eventually, a " 'private' monopoly becomes a public one" (Elias, 2000, p.276). This occurs only when, as Elias puts it, a "monopoly of force exists over large areas" and when we begin to see "competition for means of consumption and production…without the intervention of physical violence" (2000, p. 303). Because of this, one could argue that the monopolisation of physical violence by a central power and the process described above (by which that power eventually becomes functionally dependent on the figuration in which it is embedded) gives birth to the formalised marketisation and economisation

processes we know today. That is not to suggest that these processes did not exist in the absence of a monopoly of physical violence, only that it was a prerequisite for them to have developed into their current guise.

If we once more consider how violence typically manifests in society, this dynamic becomes clear. Elias(2000) cites the restriction of access to military weapons as an early example of how states begin to limit opportunities for individual violent expression. This is one of the first steps in the process discussed above, wherein violent expression is eventually transformed from an approved, and even positively perceived, element of regular social life into the repugnant and widely condemned act it is thought of as today. Summarising what happens in this process, Elias states that "the pacification of the state, the constraint from others, has been transformed into a self-constraint, only when one becomes aware of this far-reaching self-activated taming of spontaneous violent impulses"(1996, p.176). However, it must be noted that the 'pacification of the state' was not the only contributing factor in this process. In fact, Elias held that the changes in habitus discussed hitherto occurred in tandem with broader social changes, specifically state formation. The two elements of which he afforded primacy were the monopoly of violence, as illustrated above, and the monopoly of taxation. In fact, Elias (2000) viewed these processes as two sides of the same coin and as being essential for centralised rule, with one often being a prerequisite for the survival of the other. Moreover, as with the

monopoly of violence, the monopoly of taxation also brought about changes in individual habitus. With the process of state formation came an increase in the division of labour that took a myriad of different yet interrelated forms. This, in turn, led to greater social differentiation and the amplification of social interdependency networks. Moreover, as the monopolisation of violence and taxation intensifies, the degree to which habitus influences our behaviour and various forms of expression increases. As well as this, the variety and complexity of the 'markers of civility', to which we must become attuned, change and broaden. It was this fact that led Dunning and Hughes to state that the civilising process brought with it –

> an increase in the social pressure on people to exercise stricter, more continuous, more even, more moderate, and more nuanced self-control over a growing number of aspects of their feelings and behaviour in more and more social situations (2013, p. 88).

Elias himself accounts for this increased self-regulation by suggesting that –

> this transformation of conduct in the form of an increasingly differentiated regulation of impulses is determined by the direction of the process of social differentiation, by the progressive division of functions and the growth of the interdependency chains into which, directly or indirectly, every impulse, every move of an individual becomes integrated (Elias, 2000, p. 368).

As illustrated above, this can be seen in the early days of our society; it was only after undergoing intense civilising spurts that we developed into a more civilised and more differentiated society and that our collective attitude toward violence shifted. Indeed, one could argue that this is the very nature of a civilising process, in that, as we develop in society, our individual habitus becomes more acutely attuned to what has been referred to above as 'the markers of civility'. Having thus far discussed the civilising process, the ways in which its development is influenced by both socio and psychogenesis and how the processual interweaving of these processes results in habitus formation, it is logical at this point to discuss one of the more noteworthy by-products of this process, which are, of course, greater degrees of calculation and an increase in rationalisation processes. In earlier sections, the role played by sociogenesis in habitus formation was outlined in detail, and the way in which socially constructed markers of civility, social queues and skillsets, 'crystallise' into an internalised, individual habitus was discussed. However, the degree to which this process brings about psychological changes within the individual and the impacts of these changes were given but tertiary consideration; it is these which will be explored hereunder.

If one considers the process of habitus formation, the immense scale of the formative pressure experienced by individuals quickly becomes apparent. It is a process that begins in early childhood; from this point on, the individual

embarks on a journey wherein they develop an internalised and increasingly complex and intricate self-steering mechanism. The power of this mechanism is so strong, and its influence so pervasive, that it governs the individual's actions and behaviours, compelling them to behave in a socially established manner regardless of their individual desires. Moreover, as we grow as individuals, so too does the level of our social integration, and with that, the level of our figurational interdependence. As a result of this, the pressure to conform to societal norms becomes so great that the habitus is cast beyond the conscious remit of the individual and begins to operate automatically. In other words, the individual begins to conform to social etiquette without being aware that they are doing so, and it becomes second nature to them. Taking this into account, it becomes clear that for Elias, the civilising process, and by extension greater degrees of rationalisation, does not merely result in changes to the collective consciousness. More accurately, it results in changes to the collective consciousness of people and structural changes to their subconscious libidinal drives. With this in mind, it is perhaps easier to conceptualise the role played by individual habitus in the sense that not only must it become highly attuned to ever-increasing social regularities, but it must also manage the internal conflicts that may arise from the subordination of individual psychic drives that infringe upon those regularities. What's more, the habitus does this all whilst simultaneously changing the way that those psychic drives manifest over time.

Building on this, Elias himself suggests that –

> It is these relationships within individual people between the drives and affects that are controlled and the socially instilled agencies that control them, whose structure changes in the course of a civilising process, in accordance with the changing structure of the relationships between human beings, in society at large (Elias, 2000; p. 408-409).

The interdependent nature of the processes mentioned by Elias here should at this point be clear, and, as with the other interdependent social processes discussed thus far, their interdependence dictates that they must be considered in tandem. Indeed, Elias maintained that –

> The form and structure of the more conscious and more unconscious psychological self-steering functions can never be grasped if they are imagined as something in any sense existing or functioning in isolation from one another. Both are equally fundamental to the existence of a human being (2000; p. 411).

Moreover, Elias argued that in order to understand civilising processes, in general, any imagined duality between socio or psychogenetic processes must be removed and the "transformation of both the personality structure and the entire social structure" (2000; p. 411) investigated. It is with this in mind that we will progress to discuss established & outsider relationships and how power

influences this dynamic.

2.4. Power Balances - Established & Outsider Relationships

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of Established/Outsider relationships and we/I identity balances is that they can be used to examine changing patterns of interdependence amongst social groupings. To illustrate how this can take place, Elias uses the example of how schoolchildren experience their country of origin. He suggests that for the children, the 'I' as well as the 'we', the individual and the nation-state, are considered as completely autonomous and "possessed of unlimited sovereignty" (Elias, 1978, p.29). In other words, he suggests that the interdependency networks in which these social units are embedded are not recognised. In pursuit of greater reality congruence, when considering social units in this manner, Elias & Scotson (1994) proffer that the social groupings that make up broader figurations should be considered as diametrically opposed on a power scale. The 'established' is the group in the ascendency and holds the majority of the power, whilst the 'outsiders' are those who occupy the weaker position. There are several processes inherent in this dynamic that must be considered. The first is that the established group, by virtue of its dominance, casts a negative perception upon the outsider group and often isolates what are perceived as the most negative attributes of its most poorly perceived members and imposes these qualities on the group as a whole. In a similar fashion, the

established group builds their own self-image upon what are perceived to be the most positive attributes of the group's archetypal members; as before, these are imposed on the group as a whole. What's more, Elias & Scotson suggest that it is the adoption/enforcement of this "pars pro toto" collective self-image that allows the established group to prove, to themselves and wider society, that their group is superior, or 'good', and the outsider group is inferior, or 'bad'(1994, p. xix). The dynamic in this type of figuration is driven by power asymmetries and the tensions that these cause between social groups; moreover, it is because of this power asymmetry that established groups can stigmatise and exclude outsider groups. Indeed, as was illustrated with regard to individual relationships within figurations, power differentials are present within all relationships, even those that take place between figurations themselves. When examining established/outsider relationships and power differentials, a key consideration is the level of cohesion that a particular group may or may not have; the greater the level of cohesion, the greater the power possessed. Indeed, it is by way of this cohesion that Elias & Scotson (1994) suggest established groups can reserve powerful social positions for their members whilst at the same time excluding members of outsider groups. By excluding outsider groups in this fashion, the established group reinforce their position of power and maintains their social superiority. However, if the balance of power begins to shift, established groups are said to lose the ability to stigmatise their

counterparts, and as a result of this, outsider groups are able to gain power.

Elias and Scotson explain this process as follows: “as soon as the power disparities or, in other words, the unevenness of the balance of power, diminishes, the former outsider groups, on their part, tend to retaliate” (1994, p. xxi). This dynamic is best illustrated in relation to social class and the civilising process; in this regard, the established group tends to perceive itself as socially superior to the outsider group. They consider themselves to be of a higher social class and, as such, more ‘civilised’ than their counterparts. Indeed, members of established groups often adopt various self-restraints as a means to differentiate themselves from the less ‘civilised’; these restraints may take the form of heightened manners (as illustrated in Elias’ The Civilising Process) or stricter moral codes (such as the use of etiquette in the case of golf). However, regardless of the form they take, these affectations serve to assert their power over and superiority to the outsider groups. Moreover, members of established groups go to great lengths to adhere to these emotional restraints, the reward for which is said to be –

> pride in the incarnation of one’s group charisma in one’s own person, the satisfaction of belonging to and representing a powerful and, according to one’s emotional equation, uniquely valuable and humanly superior group (Elias & Scotson, 1994, p. xxiii).

As with group cohesion, these affectations tend to reinforce the dominance of

the established group. Such efforts of suppression are always met with resistance from the outsider groups and manifest in veritable balance of power struggles. These struggles vary in the form they take and may range from what Elias & Scotson (1994, p. xxxvii) describe as –

> silent tugs-of-war hidden beneath the routine co-operation between the two groups, within a framework of instituted inequalities, to overt struggles for changes of the institutional framework which embodies these power differentials and the inequalities that go with them.

Regardless of the form that they take, power struggles often manifest as a result of the competitive struggles between groups, in this case, the combination of the outsider group's efforts to rise above the inferior status attributed to them and the efforts of the established group to keep them in their 'place'. This dynamic is also well illustrated in relation to nation-states and the struggles that take place between them. Indeed, Elias maintained that, despite our perceived increase in civility, the nation-states that we are familiar with today face many of the same issues that ancient tribes would have encountered in the past. These manifest in a fashion similar to the social class power struggles discussed earlier and are proposed to have a deep and meaningful impact on the individuals involved. Indeed, Elias suggests that their collective national habitus is "very closely connected with the particular process of state formation they have undergone" (1997, p.2), and that, as with individual habitus, this has a

significant impact on how they, collectively, interact. In light of this, it becomes clear that established/outsider relationships and we/I identity balances, and the power dynamics within them, can have an impact far beyond the boundaries of a particular individual or interstate relationship; indeed, they can even affect broader civilising processes.

Thus far, established/outsider relations and balance of power struggles have been discussed generally, and regarding their impact on social class and nation-states; however, the idea that these theories can be considered in relation to markets has not been broadly acknowledged. In this vein, figurationalists contend that such inter-group dynamics impact the formation of markets and can be used to explain market development (Smith-Maguire, 2017), and, to that end, will be discussed in the subsequent section.

2.5. Markets, Consumption, and Civilising Processes: A Figurational Perspective

2.5.1. Figurational Theory & Markets

When approaching markets for the first time, figurationalists are best served by Menell's work on the American Civilising Process. Here, Mennell puts forward an account of America's formation and, amongst other things, considers the role that 'the market' played in this process. Moreover, Mennell goes beyond the context of America and provides valuable insights into the inner workings of

markets in general. In doing so, he is quick to highlight the failings of contemporary academics and practitioners, suggesting that despite assertions to the contrary, the "self-regulating market is, and always was, a myth"(2007, p. 308). Mennell adopts a position here contrary to much of what is said about markets, arguing that they require a host of social and political institutions to function well and that by virtue of figurational interdependence, markets are subject to the same power dynamics as these institutions. Mennell captions this as follows: "in modern economies, the economic footprint of government– taxation, transfer payments, employment, contracts-is such that there is no conceivable way in which it's [the market's] functions can be 'neutral'"(2007, p.318). Indeed, even moving beyond Mennell, much of what has been written figurationally concerning markets stands in stark contrast to most of what will be discussed in the literature review section of this project. This is because, as well as being built upon the principles outlined above, it contends that feelings of individuality are socially produced. That is to say, figurationalists maintain that the wants and desires of consumers, which are considered to be of paramount importance by marketing academics, do not organically form within individuals. Indeed, figurationalists also contend that they are not a form of innate psychological instinct. Rather, they are formed socially, i.e. they are a product of the social environment from which they emerge (Elias 2012 [1939]; 2012 [1991]; Connolly & Dolan, 2017). In that sense, consumer behaviour and market processes, more

broadly, can be seen to be formed and shaped by social processes. This is illustrated particularly well in Dolan's (2009;2014) work on consumption practices and Smith-Maguire's (2017) work on the Chinese wine market, each of which will be discussed in turn.

From a figurational perspective, consumption practices are considered dynamic and in flux. Figurationalists contend that changes in consumption stem from larger planned and unplanned social processes. Indeed, it is held that because of this, how consumption manifests, and the types of artefacts that are consumed cannot be written off as simply the latent desires of individual consumers or the product of particularly powerful individuals. Rather, they are said to be "produced and transformed through the changing dependencies and power relations between social classes" (Dolan, 2009, p.721). What's more, not only are the objects consumed a product of these social processes, but they have the potential to take on a social significance in their own right. That is to say, they can be adopted by social groups and, in a fashion similar to the emotional restraints and behavioural affectations discussed previously, be used as markers of social class and mutual identification. In this sense, discourses surrounding consumption practices and products can be considered as being a part of the figurations from which they originate and, by extension, established/outsider relations. That is not to say they operate with any kind of internal agency, as would be suggested by ANT & IMP theorists (who will be considered in a

subsequent chapter). Rather, they are imbued with life by the social groupings that adopt them and define the meaning they are attributed. Indeed, in The Civilising Process, Elias himself illustrates how discourses surrounding table manners are linked to social class. He illustrates that discourses are not intangible, abstract, and unquantifiable entities. Rather, they are simply part of broader social processes. Dolan (2009, p.721) illustrates this well in relation to social class tensions, and the ways in which discourses surrounding luxury and living standards are "vital aspects of the growing identification and empathy between classes". Here, Dolan discusses the ways in which changing discourses surrounding living standards and luxury are influenced by changing power balances and how, as a result of these power shifts, the meaning of objects is changed over time. Moreover, Dolan also illustrates that even when power differentials become more equal, consumption practices surrounding living standards and luxury are still used as a means of class differentiation (Dolan, 2009, p.724). Indeed, Elias himself suggests that, in general, rises in living standards are caused by the diffusion of what are perceived to be markers of civility to those in different social classes (Elias, 2000). This is particularly interesting as it illustrates how a fundamental market process like consumption, or exchange as it has been captioned within other disciplines, can be directly shaped by social processes, processes that are traditionally considered to be outside of the market mechanism. Beyond this, it also illustrates how markets

themselves can be thought of as figurations and considered to be representative of the power struggles inherent within them.

Indeed, if we consider markets, it becomes clear that they embody much of what Elias himself would call a figuration. They are made up of multiple interdependent people/groups; they evolve and change over time, and their development is driven by the planned and unplanned interactions of those people. Indeed, Smith-Maguire (2017, p.38) suggests that by considering markets this way, we can conceive of them as "networks of interdependent actors deploying resources" and that we can do so without fear of "slipping either into relativism or into reification". That is to say, we can transcend relativistic dogma and avoid reifying markets. We can view them as the interdependent amalgamation of human figurations that they are. Indeed, building upon Elias's game-play analogy, Smith-Maguire uses established theory to account for the inner workings of markets. Elias introduced the example of game-play to account for figurational interdependence and suggested that, for example, in a simple one-on-one game, players are interdependent. The moves of one player dictate the response of the other and so on and so forth. He maintained that the relative power of the players dictates the outcome. If one player far outmatches the other, the outcome is fairly certain. However, if players are evenly matched or if there are multiple players, the outcome is more difficult to predict (Elias, 1978). If we consider this in relation

to market dynamics and the process of exchange, we can see that this metaphor holds weight. For example, the outcome of exchange negotiations between a buyer and seller is easier to predict if one party has significantly more power than the other. However, suppose we are to apply game models to more reality-congruent markets. In that case, it becomes clear that the interaction is rarely one-on-one, markets are more complex, and they are indicative of broader social figurations in that there are multiple players. And, as with class figurations discussed previously, players inevitably hold varying degrees of power that will influence the outcome of market processes. In this vein, Smith-Maguire accounts for the market dynamics as follows –

> If players operated with relatively similar resources and capacities to impact on the course of the game, then the flow of the game will necessarily involve, to an even greater degree, the impact of unanticipated consequences, to which players will then need to respond (2017, p.38).

Thus, it becomes clear that conceptualising markets as figurations will allow one to examine the role that power relations play in their development. Moreover, it allows one to examine how group power differentials shape markets and to examine the positions of power in particular markets. Finally, it also allows one to examine the means of holding positions of power and how these change over time.

Indeed, in pursuit of such an understanding, Smith-Maguire (2017, p.39)

suggests that we consider, firstly, “how might we characterise the relative positions of groups within figurations?”, and, secondly, “what are the tools or resources through which groups seek to consolidate or challenge the relative position?”. To answer these questions, figurationalists can turn to the work of Elias and Scotson and their conceptualisation of established/outsider relations. In doing so, power imbalances within market figurations can begin to be assessed, and the ways that these imbalances are signified and made manifest are illustrated. Indeed, when considering a figurational approach to examining the Chinese wine market, Smith-Maguire (2017, p. 42) describes the examination of this process as follows –

> The approach invites a long-term historical examination of markets to appreciate how codes of civility are enshrined in the repertoires of good taste of the dominant group, diffuse outwards in a diminishing of contrast between groups, and in turn provoke a response on the part of the challenged or declining established groups to shore up their dominance via new varieties of status behaviour.

In this sense, although great power asymmetries exist within markets and conditions of inequality are often generated, they also exert considerable “pressure towards standardisation, conformity and adherence” to social norms (Mennell, 2007, p.121). Indeed, Mennell (2007) argues that markers of civility, social standards, and taste are all formed via market mechanisms in a market

society. In light of this, it becomes clear that figurational sociology provides the researcher with a means to understand contemporary market dynamics that goes beyond the economics-inspired ideals of exchange and supply and demand.

What's more, it also becomes clear that adopting a figurational perspective when considering markets allows us to examine them in more depth and to account for the impact of planned and unplanned processes on their development. Mennell (2007) likens such processes to the economic notion of externalities, which he describes as side effects, that is, the unintended impacts that result from a particular action. Mennell (2007) argues that although these cannot be foreseen or planned for, they are closely related to the distribution of power chances within a given figuration. Therefore, by considering established/outsider relations, we can begin to analyse how planned and unplanned processes impact market processes and the role they play in the formation of particular markets. In this sense, by adopting a figurational perspective, we will be better placed to establish the relationship between marketing and the marketisation process.

That being said, a figurational perspective does more than just extend our understanding of how markets function; it provides a useful framework for examining specific social contexts where emotional drives, consumption patterns, and civilising processes are closely interconnected. This is particularly relevant to the world of sport, a domain that Elias and Dunning explored in

considerable depth. Through their concept of the quest for excitement, they demonstrated how sport functions not only as a site of leisure but also as a structured outlet for emotional expression within an increasingly regulated and pacified society. In light of this, sport becomes a key space where shifts in social behaviour, interdependence, and economic activity intersect, offering a vivid illustration of how figurational dynamics play out in real-world market formation. We will explore this in greater depth below.

2.5.2. The Quest for Excitement: A Catalyst for Sport

The Quest for Excitement is a term coined by Elias & Dunning (1986) to describe the somewhat paradoxical pursuit of heightened tensions by both sporting spectators and players alike; here individuals seek an escape from 'normal', societally imposed, self-regulation. Ironically, they achieve this escape not through a release of tension but rather through a heightening of tension and excitement. Sport is a good example here. Indeed, in this context, that is, through the medium of sport, individuals are afforded the opportunity to experience what Elias & Dunning (1986, p.96) called a "controlled decontrolling of emotional controls". What this means is that sports allow people to forgo societally imposed self-restraint and express themselves in an unrestrained manner that, whilst contradicting 'normal' behaviour, is still socially acceptable. Elias & Dunning suggest that the quest for excitement is of paramount importance for individuals

as, in somewhat of a cathartic fashion, it often results in “the restoration of normal mental ‘tonus’ through a temporary and transient upsurge of pleasurable excitement” (1986, p.89). Significantly, individuals don’t even have to be involved in the sport to experience tension and excitement; they can achieve this by virtue of what Elias (2000, p.170) captions –

> “the pleasure of the eye”, that is to say, simply by watching sporting activities (Elias & Dunning, 1996).

In light of this, we can say that in modern society, sport serves an important function by reintroducing drama, uncertainty, and tension into the lives of people whose existence is otherwise codified, civilised, and routinised; it fulfils a deep-rooted psychological need. Perhaps, it is this ability that most accurately explains sport’s popularity and appeal in modern society. Indeed, if we consider the origins of contemporary sports, and in particular, their processual development, a clear pattern emerges. That is to say, as societies grew more orderly and peaceful in terms of daily life, sports evolved to provide excitement through structured, rule-governed competition. How this took place becomes clear when we consider the evolution of folk games right the way through to the professionalised sports we know today. Elias and Dunning (1986) point out, for example, that many violent medieval games, like football & boxing, were gradually ‘civilised’ and codified into the rule-based modern sports we know today. This process is known as sportisation and is closely related to the quest

for excitement, particularly as it pertains to the marketisation process, which we will discuss hereunder.

2.5.3. Sportisation as Civilising Process

When examined at the surface level, the complexity of the sportisation process may not be immediately apparent. Ostensibly, sportisation refers to the long-term transformation of traditional folk pastimes into structured, codified, and increasingly regulated sports; however, the process is also deeply connected to what Elias (2000) described as a broader "civilising spurts,". As established above, what happened during these spurts was that as societies became more complex and more differentiated, they developed heightened expectations around self-control and discipline. Because of this, we can suggest that sportisation reflects not only a formalisation of play but also mirrors evolving social norms. For example, in the beginning, folk games were communal events that were typified by violence, but far from being simple pastimes, these events were collective spectacles that fed the human appetite for tension and unpredictability, offering communities a shared space for emotional release. As society evolved, such needs were not removed, but with the emergent emphasis on civility and self-restraint, the ways in which they were fulfilled changed accordingly. Indeed, central to Elias and Dunning's (2008) argument was the idea that the pacification of society necessitated that such pastimes either be

suppressed or restructured. Sportisation was the process through which such informal and unruly games were gradually ‘civilised’.

That is not to suggest that such sports suddenly became something fundamentally different overnight; this transformation occurs gradually and in processual shifts. Speaking generally, how this happened was that in the beginning, typically under the influence of elites and the upper classes, games were standardised, rules and regulations were instituted, and the space for violence within them was reduced. How this progressed was that these newly codified sports soon came to be spread through schools, clubs, and broader society. This dynamic can be seen clearly in the formalisation of football and rugby by the mid-19th century (Elias and Dunning, 2008). In contemporary society, the more recent manifestations of this process have resulted in the global diffusion of these sports and their increasing professionalisation and commercialisation (Dunning and Sheard, 2005; Maguire, 1999). It is important to note here that although sportisation reduces violence, it does not eliminate excitement; it reshapes the form that excitement takes and how it is experienced. Elias & Dunning (2008) suggest that this transformation is, in part, a response to the enduring human quest for excitement. Indeed, rather than abolishing dangerous or thrilling pastimes, societies mould them into safer, rule-bound formats that can still provide intense emotional experiences. Because of this, we can say that, in this sense, sportisation functions as a civilising solution to the

problem of excitement, modifying its intensity without eliminating it altogether.

Indeed, it is with the introduction of structured rules that modern sports manage to strike a balance between regulation and unpredictability. Ironically, rather than limiting excitement, these rules actually help to produce it. They create a sense of fairness, sustain tension, and ensure that the outcome remains uncertain. Thereby supplying the tension and excitement needed by humans. In boxing, for example, weight classes ensure that bouts are contests of skill rather than sheer force. Whilst in football, offsides and free kicks help to keep the play competitive and outcomes in doubt. What might seem like increased control and the imposition of safety constraints actually works to preserve the emotional intensity of the game. Paradoxically, it is often through more regulation that sports become more exciting. This is because the rules create a space where uncertainty and competition can flourish without the threat of descending into real violence. Indeed, perhaps this helps explain why sports have become so culturally central in modern societies. As traditional leisure activities declined in the face of advancing civilising processes, sports offered a reliable, sched uled form of communal excitement. Weekly matches and annual championships institutionalised emotional highs and lows, offering both participants and spectators a structured outlet for tension and release. As Elias and Dunning (1979) showed in works such as Barbarians, Gentlemen and Players, this desire and need for excitement was spread across social classes, and moreover, it

helped to broaden the reach of modern sport. In fact, even today, the process of sportisation continues. New types of games or leisure pursuits emerge, be they traditional sports, extreme sports, or even esports, and these too are subject to the sportisation process. That is to say, they emerge in their original form; if this form contravenes social convention, the institution of rules and regulations makes the activity more acceptable and palatable, and eventually, a safer yet still exciting version of the sport gains broader acceptance. In this sense, sportisation is the perfect example of how the quest for excitement manifests in society, that is to say, how the psychological need for thrill and tension is eventually met within a socially acceptable framework. It brings order without eliminating intensity, and control without making activities boring. What will be discussed hereunder is how, in doing so, it also contributes to the marketisation processes.

2.5.4. From Play to Product: The Marketisation of Sport

Marketisation is inherently complex (this will be discussed and illustrated in much greater detail in the literature review section); however, suffice it to say at present that, broadly speaking, it deals with the transformation of non-market entities into commodities subject to market forces. The development of folk games and rituals into modern sports is a good indicative example in this regard. However, such a description risks oversimplifying the nuanced reality of the process. Marketisation does not unfold along a linear path; rather, it is shaped

by the people/groups involved and the relational dynamics between them. A more robust understanding emerges when the process is viewed through the lens of Elias's monopoly mechanism; as such, we will do so hereunder.

As discussed above, at its core, the mechanism describes how social units compete within a given figuration for finite opportunities. These opportunities may be economic, social, or biological, and over time, competition tends to favour a few dominant individuals or groups of individuals. Elias (2000) argues that social development often results in a situation where a small number of people/groups gain increasing control, while others become more dependent. This becomes especially important when a monopoly of violence is established (typically by a state) across a given area. In such cases, individuals begin to self-regulate, leading to the formation of a pacified social space. Only under these conditions can competition over production and consumption unfold more freely. As interdependence grows, processes of economisation and marketisation become more embedded in daily life. Thus, in this sense, we can say that in this way, monopolisation, especially of violence, creates the conditions that make formal market activity possible. A key stage in this is the phase of free competition, where elimination contests take place. Here, individuals or groups gradually accumulate more resources until monopolies form. These contests are driven by more than just economic aims. As Elias (2000, p. 437) argues, "neither is the acquisition of 'more' money… the actual

goal… nor the acquisition of greater political and military power merely a mask." Instead, control over both violence and economic resources is deeply intertwined, each shaping the other. When these interdependencies are stable, market processes function. But when tensions rise too high, the pacified space can collapse, and markets may become unstable or suffer degradation (more on this later). What is important to note at this point is that monopolies don't always form as expected. Here we must once more remember that, as Elias(2000, p. 74–82) suggests, power is not absolute; it is relational, fluid, and often fragmented. In many historical contexts, no single actor gains dominance. His analysis of medieval Europe, for instance, shows how fragmented principalities coexisted for long periods without a central monopoly (Elias, 1982). These weren't anomalies, but rather constituent parts of the monopoly process. Importantly, in such balanced power structures, interdependence alone can provide enough stability for markets to function. This typifies most contemporary markets, and as a result, it becomes clear that are we to consider market development, the monopoly mechanism provides us with the perfect way to conceptualise and understand market dynamics and the exchanges that take place between market players and, by extension, the drivers of the marketisation process.

The monopoly mechanism will be considered again later, but for now, suffice it to say that what this suggests is that we can acknowledge the fact that it doesn't

always produce a single dominant power but also that it is central to understanding how marketisation unfolds. Sometimes, markets emerge and operate with multiple dominant players. Over time, these may consolidate, but they also may not. Either way, monopoly formation and marketisation remain tightly linked, shaping each other in complex and contextually variable ways. In light of this, we can say that it, being a part of the marketisation process, is also pertinent to the relationship between the quest for excitement, the sportisation process, and the marketisation process. How these come together will be discussed hereunder.

2.5.5. Excitement, Order, Exchange: An Attempt to Understand Golf's Transformation

When bringing together the above analyses, it quickly becomes clear that the interweaving of the quest for excitement, the sportisation process, and the marketisation process follows a clear order, with each stage building on and strengthening its predecessor. The foundation of this dynamic lies in Elias and Dunning's (1986) theory of the quest for excitement, which explains why, in modern societies, individuals are drawn to activities that provide structured and

safe opportunities for tension and emotional release. As societal expectations around civility and self-restraint have intensified, sports have become one of the few socially acceptable outlets through which people can satisfy this need. The process of sportisation has come to play an important mediating role here. It transforms violent or chaotic folk games/rituals into codified, rule-bound competitions that retain the emotional intensity of earlier pastimes whilst also aligning with modern standards of order and civility. By virtue of sportisation, activities that might once have been deemed uncivilised are reframed as respectable and acceptable pursuits. Importantly, as the analysis above demonstrates, this transformation does not diminish excitement; rather, it reshapes and preserves it. The implementation of rules and the introduction of formal structures paradoxically heighten emotional engagement by creating fairness, unpredictability, and drama within controlled parameters. It is precisely this dual function of sportisation, to civilise but also to intensify emotional engagement, that sets the stage for marketisation. As sports evolve into universally engaging and legitimised social practices, their capacity to attract spectators, participants, and investment increases dramatically. Indeed, a sport's capacity to satisfy the quest for excitement renders it inherently appealing on a near-biological level. When this appeal is transformed by virtue of the sportisation process, it then becomes a socially approved pursuit and thus ideally positioned for commodification by those involved with the marketisation

process. That is to say, sports become marketable not merely because they are enjoyable, but because they offer a reliable, emotionally fulfilling ‘product’ within a marketised setting that society embraces.

Because of this, we can argue that it is not simply that market forces or actors discover or embrace sport and push it toward marketisation; rather, it is that the sportisation of emotionally compelling practices, driven by the human quest for excitement, positions and shapes those practices for marketisation. It amplifies their popularity, aligns them with dominant social values, and provides a structure within which market mechanisms can operate efficiently. This process does not occur in isolation; it unfolds within broader figurations shaped by interdependency, pacification, and, as Elias’s monopoly mechanism shows, shifting balances of power. Despite this, it is fair to say that the journey from informal pastime to routinised and marketised commodity begins with the emotional needs of individuals and the social processes that shape how those needs are met.

Taken together, the figurational accounts outlined above offer a coherent and historically grounded perspective on how emotional drives, civilising processes, and structural interdependencies contribute to the shaping of both consumption and market dynamics. Whether through consumption practices or the codification of sport, the interplay between power, emotional restraint, and interdependence is central to understanding how markets emerge, evolve, and

function. In viewing markets as figurations, this perspective allows us to conceptualise them not simply as economic structures but as socially embedded processes shaped by relational dynamics and historical shifts. That being said, the value of this framework becomes all the more apparent when contrasted with other dominant theoretical approaches. As such, the literature review that follows will critically examine alternative perspectives in an effort to highlight what figurational theory reveals that they often overlook or obscure.

3. Chapter 3 - Literature Review

3.1. General Introduction

In this section, literature relevant to our research context will be examined and considered in relation to the theoretical lens of figurational sociology. In this vein, Economics, Marketing, and Sociology have been identified as essential and will be discussed in detail below. As regards Economics, the Neoclassical approach to markets will be established, and its merits and failings discussed. Building on this, the Heterodox Economics approach is considered, and the ways in which it improves upon the neoclassical perspective are addressed.

From here, we will progress to consider Marketing, in particular, the work of the Industrial Marketing & Purchasing (IMP) Group, who examine marketisation in terms of relationships, networks, and interaction. The final academic discipline discussed is sociology. Here we will begin by examining the sociological approach to marketisation in general before focusing on Actor-Network Theory (ANT) in particular. The key elements of ANT in this regard are Economisation and Marketisation, Assemblages and Agencements, Performativity & the Marketisation Program, and finally, Non-human Agency. Of course, all of the above will be compared and contrasted with figurations

continually throughout. However, before doing so, it is prudent to begin by looking at markets in general.

3.2. The Market: A Look at the Concept

"In the beginning, there were markets" – Williamson (1983, p.20).

In contemporary society, the term "market" is widespread and deeply ingrained in both the public consciousness and vernacular. It is an important term, the complexity of which is often underestimated. Markets are of paramount importance to practitioners and academics alike and are often key areas of study for those concerned with economics, finance, sociology, and, as one would assume, marketing. At present, there are a plethora of conflicting theories, ideas, and opinions about what markets are, their dynamics, how they are formed, and indeed, how to define them as a concept (Rosenbaum 2000). The academic disciplines for which the market is most important are economics, sociology, and marketing. Within these disciplines, many academics have observed the absence of an adequate definition of the market. Indeed, Nobel prize-winning economist Douglas North goes so far as to suggest that "it is a peculiar fact that the literature of economics and economic history contains so little discussion of the central institution that underlies neoclassical economics – the market"(North, 1977). This is somewhat paradoxical in nature and appears all the more so when one considers that "the primary observable phenomenon for any theory of marketing is the hard-practical fact of the market" (McInnes, 1964, p.62), and moreover, that, in principle, theories of marketing should explain "how markets work"(Alderson, 1965). However, this is simply not the

case, and we are forced to acknowledge that “the term market is everywhere and nowhere” in marketing literature (Venkatesh et al., 2006, p.252). Many academics suggest that the cause of this can be traced back to the 1960s and 70s, wherein the field of marketing reassessed its purpose and objectives and changed direction (Araujo and Kjellberg 2009). At this juncture, it is proposed that marketing research moved towards the management of marketing. Here, researchers adopted the perspective of the producer/seller/organisation and began analysing the various practices involved in the management of the market and maximisation of sales(Samli and Bahn 1992; Verdoorn, 1956; Borden, 1964). Snehota (2004) suggests that this shift in direction caused a broadening of the remit of marketing as a concept and led academics to forgo viewing markets as institutions and to adopt a supply perspective that is ‘obsessed’ with the management of exchanges. The result of this was the relegation of markets to one-dimensional aggregations of buyers and sellers that warrant no more than a routinised definition in a textbook (Sissors, 1966; Barnhill & Lawson, 1980: Samli & Bahn, 1992). Slater and Tonkiss (2001, p.12) argue that such an approach is extremely inadequate. They suggest that here “the apparent

democracy of the market is often belied by the hierarchical differentiation of shopping spaces”. In this, the pair go some way to illustrating the complex social processes that are inherent in markets, which they caption as

"differentiated spheres of exchange" (2001, p.12). In light of this, it becomes clear that to ignore the intricacies and subtle dynamics of markets is a huge injustice, as by not at least attempting to engage with the concept of markets, academics are, in essence, treating the effect whilst ignoring the cause. Further exacerbating this issue is the fact that when considering markets in general terms, academics often rely on the conceptualisation of the 'perfect' market traditionally put forward by economists. Considering markets in this fashion is straightforward in nature and lends itself to uncomplicated, yet elementary, levels of analysis. That is to say, studies conducted in this fashion consider a highly complex subject in a superficial manner. To illustrate the failings of such an approach, we must first examine what constitutes a 'perfect' market. Jackson (2006) suggests that theoretical accounts of the 'perfect' market dictate that a market should possess seven distinct features –

1. The transactions within markets should take a monetary form and be based on a shared and mutually accepted currency.

2. Exchanges should be two-way transfers, money for goods/services, that leave no doubts about future payments.

3. Transactions are voluntary, and participants in the exchange process can withdraw should they wish; no transactions are compulsory.

4. Transactions should be repeatable.

5. Goods should be standardised, and clarity about prices should allow consumers to compare alternative sellers.

6. Markets should be open to new entrants, and trade should not be restricted to an established or set group of traders.

7. The final feature is that price is the key driver of exchange and the only factor that influences buyers and sellers.

The above features are indicative of what some economists refer to as the model of perfect competition. It has great emotional appeal and is the economic equivalent of the ideological view of liberal politics (in which citizens form their opinions on the basis of fact and are independent of manipulation), and like said ideological view, it lacks symmetry with the modern world (Mennell, 2007). That is to say, whilst these features are relatively numerous, with only slight consideration, one can see that they are quite limited in their scope and, in actuality, come into conflict with much of what is apparent in existing markets. Similarly, the features offer no insight into how markets originate and result in more questions than answers when considered in relation to market dynamics.

For example, the above features suggest that money is required for trade to take place. They also suggest that markets should be open to new entrants. However, if we look at global economies throughout history, it is clear that markets existed in the absence of currency (at least in the contemporary sense) and,

indeed, governments, monarchies, and guilds often had monopolies on trade (Davies, 1992). Similarly, the assumption that price is the deciding factor in trade does not hold true. It has been well documented that oftentimes traders engage in relational trade, whereby the deciding factor in the decision-making process is based upon the relationship between the parties involved and not the price of the product/service (Macaulay, 1963; Goldberg,1976, 1980; Macneil, 1982). In fact, if we look at most markets in contemporary society, it is clear that the majority of them contradict many of the features suggested above.

Moreover, given that "marketplaces exhibit a concrete and public sociality in which exchange is embedded in localised cultural, social and political relationships" (Slater and Tonkiss, 2001, p. 13), it is, therefore, reasonable to assume that markets can be at least as varied and diverse as the societies from which they emerge. With this in mind, and in the interest of a deeper and more accurate understanding of how they are formed and how they function, we will now examine other, more comprehensive theories of markets. As established, the academic disciplines that deal most closely with the market, and, indeed, marketing, are Economics, Marketing, and Sociology, each of which we will now discuss in turn.

3.3. Economics

3.3.1. Neoclassical Economics

Economic theory remains the dominant framework in contemporary business

studies. Neoclassical economics argues that markets arise naturally when specific conditions are present, such as trade and property rights, liberalised prices, and a functioning currency (Aslund, 1995; EBRD, 1996). These assumptions are grounded in equilibrium theory, which holds that markets spontaneously form at the intersection of supply and demand curves, absent of social, spatial, or institutional characteristics (Debreu, 1959). In this model, markets serve purely to allocate goods and determine price, with interpersonal relationships viewed as barriers to efficiency (Debreu, 1959; Jackson, 2006).

Marginal Utility theory develops this further, suggesting individuals act to maximise pleasure and minimise discomfort based on ranked preferences within a context of scarcity (Slater and Tonkiss, 2001). Yet, while it explains demand in relation to price, it fails to address why people value certain products in the first place. As Slater and Tonkiss (2001, p.50) contend, utility theory "is not a theory of 'usefulness': it does not explain why people subjectively value certain goods, only how value comes to be expressed as price." This focus on outcomes over causes is a significant limitation. Surprisingly, despite early acknowledgements by economists like Alfred Marshall of the importance of social and institutional factors, such elements were later excluded from core models (Marshall, 1980, Book V; 1919, Book II). Critics argue that neoclassical economics offers a theory of price rather than a theory of markets (Snehota, 2004). Its assumptions that markets can exist independently of social relations

and require formal trade rights do not hold when viewed historically. Markets long preceded state-enforced property rights, and trade has flourished for centuries without formal regulation. Social bonds such as trust, loyalty, kinship, and religious ties have always played a central role in market activity (Greif, 1989; 1984). These realities contradict neoclassical definitions and render Paul Samuelson's attempt to separate economics from sociology based on rational and irrational behaviour (1955, p.90) both illogical and misleading. It becomes clear that neoclassical economists have overstated the role of rational, price-driven behaviour and underestimated the foundational importance of social relationships in shaping market dynamics.

3.3.2. Heterodox Economics

Heterodox theory is in many ways an evolution of traditional neoclassical economic thought; during this evolution, heterodox economic theory has taken stock of the failings of neoclassical thought and endeavoured to address these issues. From a heterodox perspective, markets are no longer assumed to spontaneously develop, and what's more, they are no longer simple mechanisms of exchange devoid of social constructs. Rather, markets are themselves constructs of the social environment and are made up of social relationships and structures. Also, in contrast to the neoclassical perspective, markets do not self-regulate or organically pursue efficiency or equilibrium; they must be organised (Jackson, 2006). This perspective attributes paramount importance to the role of

the market in social life and vice versa. Many heterodox economists have suggested that market processes are embedded in wider social structures, networks, and meanings (Granovetter 1985; Polanyi 1992; Zukin and DiMaggio 1990). Moreover, they contend that market processes are complex and temporal and not simply based on objective price-driven interactions; rather, they are economic processes that are enabled by the "mobilisation of resources through social networks" (Granovetter and Swedberg 1992, p.18).

Some early sociologists conformed to the neoclassical view of markets and were of the opinion that markets were unsuitable fields of study because social relationships would be disruptive to assumed market processes (Granovetter, 1985, p.504). Indeed, following neoclassical economists, early sociologists believed that market participants engaged in price-driven, impersonal, unsocial, and almost mechanical 'roles' of buyers and sellers within markets. What's more, they assumed markets were uninfluenced by social factors. In fact, many of the early sociological accounts of markets consider buyers and sellers as merely acting out abstract market roles (Fourie, 1991; Swedberg; 1998, ch.2; Swedberg, 2003, ch.5). Admittedly, much of contemporary sociological thought has advanced from the above perspective and embraced the social aspects of markets. However –

The basic intuition that markets are socially embedded, while containing an important insight, has led economic sociologists to take the market for granted.

As a result, economic sociology has done scarcely better than economics in elaborating the concept of the market as a theoretical object in its own right (Krippner, 2002, p. 776). It is because of this that we must look elsewhere to find more theoretically developed engagement with markets. In this regard, the work of the IMP group, who operate within the field of marketing, is more comprehensive.

3.3.3. The IMP Group

Founded in 1976, the Industrial Marketing and Purchasing Group (IMP) aimed to promote international collaborative research in industrial marketing and purchasing (Ford, 2004). One of its early contributions was to shift focus toward the role of the consumer, in contrast to the dominant emphasis on sales and product development at the time (Paliwoda, 2011). This shift enabled IMP scholars to explore how individuals and their relationships influence market processes. They were among the first to recognise the central role of relationships in business. Early empirical evidence of enduring and meaningful business relationships was largely overlooked by mainstream management scholars until the 1980s (e.g. Arndt, 1979; Astley, 1984; Hakanson, 1982).

Within IMP circles, this earlier neglect is often attributed to the limitations of dominant management theories in explaining relationship dynamics. Hakansson and Snehota (1995) argued that understanding such dynamics requires

rethinking existing theory and gaining insight into how relationships evolve and the forces that shape them. They proposed two ways to conceptualise relationships. The first sees a buyer-seller relationship as a self-contained, longitudinal exchange between two parties. The second, more complex view introduces a network element, where relationships are embedded within and shaped by broader interdependencies across other relationships. This network perspective closely mirrors Elias's concept of figurations, where understanding one relationship depends on analysing the wider interdependent structure in which it sits.

The IMP group champions this network approach as a more realistic and nuanced way to analyse the business relationships that form markets. More than a framework for studying relationships, it also reflects the group's broader dissatisfaction with mainstream theory and represents a challenge to the basic market model itself (Ford and Hakansson, 2004). From this perspective, IMP scholars argue that markets should be studied in terms of three interrelated criteria: relationships, networks, and interaction, each of which will now be explored in turn.

3.3.3.1. Relationships

As stated above, members of the IMP group take a relationship-centred view of markets, focusing not on individual transactions but on how repeated interactions evolve into relationships over time. This can be challenging due to

the complexity of relationships, which often involve multiple individuals on both sides. Business relationships may include over ten actors, all influencing one another (Hallen, 1986). Moreover, there is no typical transaction; each varies depending on the individuals involved and evolves over time (Hakansson & Snehota, 1995). This perspective resonates with Elias's concept of figurational interdependence, which accounts for the development of social processes.

Within the IMP group, some disagreement exists over how to conceptualise relationships. A minority of researchers adhere to mainstream management views, treating relationships as tools to be 'managed' via strategies like CRM or Relationship Marketing. However, most IMP scholars reject this as reductionist. Ford and Hakansson (2004) argue that since relationships involve mutual interaction, supplier-led practices such as 'relationship marketing' are fundamentally flawed. Instead, they highlight the critical role relationships play in shaping broader market processes (Ford & Hakansson, 2004; Hakansson & Ford, 2002). When combined with the concept of interdependence, this perspective shows how the actions of a single actor can influence wider networks.

Capturing what constitutes a relationship is no easy task. Rather than drawing on Eliasian concepts such as established–outsider relations, the IMP group suggests analysing relationships through the dimensions of 'substance' and

‘function’, which help reveal formal and structural characteristics (Hakansson & Snehota, 1995). Yet, the terms ‘formal’ and ‘structural’ can be misleading. Although contracts formalise relationships, they are often ineffective in resolving relational issues. Instead, informal bonds built on trust prove more durable. Likewise, ‘structure’ may imply stability, but business relationships typically combine cooperation and conflict. Hakansson & Snehota (1995) argue that continuity, not stability, is the more accurate lens through which to assess relational dynamics. That notwithstanding, IMP theory proffers that there are three layers of relationship substance – the Activity Layer, the Resource Layer, and the Actor Layer.

The first of these, the activity layer, deals with the actions that link the internal dynamics of the parties involved in a relationship. These links typically refer to the internal commercial, administrative, and technical activities that emerge, as the relationship develops, over time. How these activities transpire has a direct effect on the outcome of a relationship (Hakansson & Snehota, 1995). The second layer, the resource layer, concerns itself with how a relationship impacts the resources of the parties involved. It deals with both the resources under the parties’ control and also those that they desire but have no control over. Perhaps more importantly, it also deals with the way in which relationships bring together both the tangible and intangible resources of the parties involved, and how they, the relationships, eventually become resources in and of themselves.

The third layer, known as the actor layer, is concerned with how actors in a relationship are bonded to one another, the dynamics of the process that bonds these actors, and how these bonds affect how actors behave in a relationship.

The belief amongst IMP researchers is that these three 'substance layers' can be taken as the variables that make up, and by extension, determine the outcome of a relationship (Ford & Hakansson, 2004; Hakansson and Ford, 2002; Hakansson & Snehota, 1995). As with 'substance', discussed above, the IMP group also considers the 'functions' of business relationships in three ways. The first function takes place within what Hakansson & Snehota (1995) caption as the 'dyad itself', i.e. within the conjunction or interaction of the parties involved in the relationship. It is within this 'dyad' that the foundations/'substance' of a relationship are produced. What this suggests is that it is here where the activity links, resource ties, and actor bonds are established. The second 'function' is concerned with the following: firstly, the ways in which a given relationship affects and is affected by the parties involved (this is likely to manifest in different ways for each of the parties). Secondly, the products of the relationship (how they are utilised and the effects of this), and finally, it also focuses on the idea of relationships as resources (which will be expanded on in greater detail in the following paragraph). The third function of a relationship is similar to the second in that it is concerned with the product of relationships. However, in this case, the focus is on how this product affects the larger network of

interdependent relationships; this, too, will be expanded on in greater detail later. By examining a given relationship in terms of the layers of substance and functions illustrated above, the IMP group maintains that they can gain a thorough and comprehensive understanding of its internal dynamics and an insight into the ways in which it can impact the broader network of relationships (the market). Conceptualising relationships thus also introduces the idea of the relationships being thought of as resources; this is a complex process and a core tenet of the IMP research perspective and, as suggested earlier, warrants further discussion.

When one typically considers resources from a management perspective, they often take on very tangible forms; indeed, raw materials, manpower, finance, and facilities are usually to the fore of one's mind. However, it is important to remember that less tangible elements, such as trust, company image, and goodwill, are of equal importance (Itami, 1987). It is also crucial one remember that resources have 'meaning' only within the network and context in which they are embedded. That is to say, they are only considered valuable by those who know their use. Similarly, a resource only has value when used in conjunction with other resources; for example, raw materials are virtually useless if not combined with manufacturing skill. In light of this, the IMP group argues that the relationship between the two companies can be thought of as a means to connect their respective resources. This again is similar to Eliasian

thought on the matter, in particular, Smith-Maguire's (2017, p.38) conceptualisation of markets as "networks of interdependent actors deploying resources". From the IMP perspective, this connection oftentimes manifests in the form of the exchange or transfer of resources from one company to another, but it can also be seen in the combined, mutually beneficial use of shared resources (Hakansson & Snehota, 1995). However, if we acknowledge the group's contention that the relationships themselves are in fact resources, there are certain considerations that must be made. The first of which is the fact that relationships contradict much of what is traditionally thought about resources.

As opposed to more tangible resources, relationships cannot be 'used up' and their value doesn't decrease with use; quite the opposite is true. Indeed, the 'value' of a relationship is often increased by extensive use; i.e. a relationship is a resource for as long as it exists between the parties involved (Hakansson & Snehota, 1995). What's more, given that relationships can be thought of as resources, we can begin to consider them in much the same way, i.e. relationship resources can be considered in relation to the dimensions of 'substance' and 'function' outlined earlier. More specifically, the IMP group suggest that, in a fashion similar to how Elias uses figurational interdependence to account for unplanned social processes, we can begin to examine how the function (produced resource) of a 'dyad' (business relationship) develops in relation to how the companies involved establish connections in the activity,

resource, and actor, layers of the relationship. Interestingly, as with the outcome of unplanned social processes, it is suggested that the 'substance'/resource (the result of the relationship) will be qualitatively different from simply the sum of the two parties involved, and may well be something different to what either party intended. At this point, the IMP group maintains that the relationship itself takes on the status of a 'quasi-organisation'. This has been described as a 'team effect' wherein the companies involved act as one to perform activities that they could not achieve individually (Alchian and Demsetz, 1972). However, this is not a guaranteed outcome, and whilst the potential is always there, the quality of the relationship dictates whether or not this 'team-effect' ever manifests. As one would assume, resource ties have been noted as particularly important in this regard; they directly account for what a company can achieve. Indeed, some IMP academics go so far as to argue that resources, as opposed to market opportunities, are the basis for long-term strategy (Nelson & Winter, 1982). By way of summary, the importance of relationships, especially when considered from this perspective, cannot be underestimated. When doing so, members of the IMP group suggest the following three points must be considered. Firstly, by their nature, resources are not a fixed variable; their value changes over time, and it is their development, as opposed to their availability, which should be considered. Secondly, resources are heterogeneous in their value and use; that is, they must be used in conjunction with other resources, and they only have

value in the context/network in which they are embedded. And finally, relationships are not simply a means to acquire access to resources; the nature of the relationship itself changes and influences the nature of the resource in unique ways (Hakansson & Snehota, 1995). To that end, it can be said that the IMP group considers relationships in a fashion similar to that of figurational sociologists; however, there are some important differences. The first is regarding their conceptualisation of relationships themselves. From the IMP perspective, it is assumed that actors in a given relationship act in tandem for the 'greater good'; power imbalances are not adequately considered. In this situation, figurationalists recognise that the actors in a given relationship are rarely equals; to some extent, one has power over the other and can skew the outcome of the engagement in their favour. Building on this, figurationalists would take umbrage with the IMP conceptualisation of the 'team-effect'. Moreover, they would contend that it runs the risk of slipping into reification and fails to consider relationships as the amalgamation of human interdependencies that they are. That being said, the differences between the two ideologies are perhaps not as great as one would imagine; indeed, more similarities can be found in how the IMP group considers networks.

3.3.3.2. Networks

The IMP perspective on networks, whilst complicated, is in essence built upon its' conceptualisation of relationships '; it is a furtherance of the idea that relationships do not exist in isolation; they are embedded in a larger 'network'.

In the context of modern business, this ‘network’ equates to the market wherein the previously discussed concepts (relationships, connectedness, & interdependence) are readily apparent. What’s more, when the ‘network approach’ is embraced, the group contend that when examining a single relationship, evidence for the dynamics at play can be found in the broader network of relationships in which it is embedded. That is to say, processes influencing the relationship are often external to it. The group also maintain that seemingly unrelated relationships are in fact connected, and may even impact each other, by virtue of this network (Ford, 2004). The group captioned this the ‘network function’ and suggests that it is inherent in all relationships. They describe the process as manifesting when changes in the ‘substance’ (activity links, actor bonds, and resource ties) of a single relationship affect companies other than the two involved (Hakansson & Snehota, 1995). The network, which facilitates these dynamics, is itself worthy of examination; indeed, networks considered in this fashion are quite difficult to quantify in that they lack an apparent centre and have ill-defined boundaries. Moreover, although the actors in a given network are connected and interdependent, they share no common goal; as a result, network dynamics can be extremely difficult to explain. To circumvent this, the IMP group suggest networks be thought of as a kind of ‘organisation’ in that they have an ordering effect on actors. That is, they affect how actors are connected, how they are positioned, and how they behave within

the network. The group explain this with reference to the concept of path dependency, which is characterised by "historical sequences in which contingent events set into motion institutional patterns or event chains that have deterministic properties" (Mahoney, 2000, p. 507). Simply put, this suggests that developments within the network often follow a path set by prior events; in that sense, the 'organisation' exerts a certain control on network dynamics. The implication of this is that as soon as relationships develop, they are subject to the constraints of the network in which they are embedded (Hakansson & Snehota, 1995). Again, those familiar with the work of Norbert Elias will see significant similarities here. That is to say, barring the imposition of the term 'organisation', this is highly comparable to Elias's conceptualisation of figurational interdependence and his explication of the interplay between the civilising process and the process of habitus formation. In this regard, one could argue that if figurationalists and members of the IMP group could forgo issues surrounding terminology, they could share a considerable amount of common ground.

Thus far, we have discussed the IMP group's conceptualisation of networks and their actors in a broad sense, having only identified companies as the actors within relationships and, by extension, networks. However, the IMP group contends it is vital that we remember that it is people who make up organisations, and therefore it is people who endow networks with life. That is

to say that although the relationships discussed thus far have been firmly rooted in the business realm, and thus deal with business-related behaviours, they are carried out, first and foremost, by people. Therefore, the bonds that make up business relationships are often personal in nature and contradict the deterministic and perfunctory relationships which, one could assume, make up business networks. Indeed, it has been suggested that business relationships are best conceptualised as social exchange processes wherein the individuals involved are bonded together via personal relationships that go beyond the boundaries of the business relationship (Hakansson & Snehota, 1995). What's more, these interdependent personal relationships are said to be a prerequisite for the formation of inter-organisational links between companies (Hakansson & Snehota, 1995). Put simply, without personal relationships, there would be no business relationships. It is noteworthy that one of the key factors in this is the development of trust. Trust develops over time and between individuals in a given relationship; however, it is said to strongly influence the dynamics of intercompany relationships (Dwyer et al., 1987). The key takeaway here is that trust first forms amongst individuals but then can be seen to influence broader business relations. This leads us to another key tenet of the IMP research perspective, which contends that we must also consider how an individual's personal network can influence business processes. If we consider personal networks, we see that individuals are often involved in a host of different and

seemingly unconnected relationships. Indeed, they are bonded by familial ties, friendships, locations, sporting clubs, religious organisations, professional associations, etc. However, we must realise that these separate relationships are connected by the individuals that form them and, further, can be used in various ways to develop other relationships in which the individual takes part (Hakansson & Snehota, 1995). What's more, it has been suggested that personal networks can become so entrenched in business networks that they make it difficult for those not 'connected' to perform effectively. This has been captioned by some as a 'clan' structure and can be seen particularly well in industrial networks (Hamfelt and Lindberg, 1987). Building on this, the IMP group suggests that 'connectedness' can not only affect individual performance but, by virtue of the interdependence of business and individual relationships, can affect the performance of entire businesses as well. When studying this phenomenon from an IMP perspective, the term 'connectedness' is sometimes used (more commonly, ' bonds' are discussed) to denote not only the ways in which specific relationships are connected but also the ways apparently unconnected relationships can affect each other. For example, the ways in which a company's relationship with one customer can affect its relationship with another customer (Hakansson & Snehota, 1995). The consensus amongst IMP researchers is that this 'connectedness' must be managed by businesses as it can be directly related to the development of relationships and the overall

performance of a company (Blankenburg, 1992; Hakansson & Snehota, 1995). Furthermore, it is held that ‘connectedness’ plays a key role in binding companies to the network constraints discussed earlier; indeed, ‘connectedness’ or ‘bonds’ have implications for all network dynamics. Noteworthy here is the fact that the idea of ‘bonds’ strongly contradicts much of economic theory, wherein actors are proposed to interact freely with other actors. The main determinants of this interaction are price and the availability of resources as opposed to ‘connectedness’. However, the concept of ‘connectedness’ does come close to how Eliasians account for figurational interdependence at different levels of social integration. And, moreover, the ‘clan’ structure mentioned above mirrors the interdependent nature of established and outsider relationships and the power dynamics inherent within them.

That being said, the IMP conceptualisation of ‘connectedness’ is complex when considered at the level of the individual company employee. Indeed, the notion that a single personal relationship can influence entire markets is particularly difficult to conceive of. From a practical standpoint, this complexity makes market dynamics very difficult to examine. One of the ways that the IMP group propose getting around this is by ascribing an identity to companies and perceiving them, the amalgamation of numerous individuals, as actors in and of themselves. Put plainly, the group suggests that by virtue of the fact that companies are essentially a grouping of individuals, they, the companies, take

on a quasi-identity representative of the group as a whole. Moreover, they contend that not only are companies subject to the same previously mentioned constraints that bind individuals to network functions, but that these 'bonds' are also the determinants of a company's identity. In essence, they suggest that the bonds dictate how the organisations are perceived by, and interact with, other network actors (Hakansson & Snehota, 1995). This is a complex concept and will be discussed in greater detail in the following paragraph.

Combining the concept of an 'actor' with that of a company is a big step with numerous repercussions. To do so, in essence, requires one to attribute a form of sentience to a social construct; it is to ascribe aims and intentions to that construct and to accept that it acts in a deliberate fashion. Ironically, it is through the recognition of the role of individuals that the IMP group holds this contention. As has been established previously, a key tenet of the IMP research perspective is the importance of individual actors to overall network dynamics; they contend that to perceive companies as actors is not to diminish the importance of this. Rather, it is to accept that these individuals do not act in isolation; they interact with each other, and this dynamic becomes 'organised' under the guise of company relationships. Indeed, it has been suggested that network dynamics stem from the actions of individuals. These individuals imbue organisations with their interpretations and intentions, which they, the organisations, in turn, act upon. What's more, as this action is informed by

individuals, by virtue of the path dependence discussed earlier, the companies find themselves bound to the same network constraints and dynamics as individuals (Hakansson & Snehota, 1995). It is important to note here that conceiving of companies as actors is not exclusive to the IMP research perspective. In fact, this conceptualisation is quite common within the management discipline; however, there are a few key differences here that warrant discussion. From the general management perspective, the perception of companies as actors is based upon the assumption that individuals within companies act in pursuit of shared goals and that these goals dictate their behaviour. Further, the general management perspective assumes that this behaviour is solely the result of the actor's own unique characteristics and capabilities, and is not influenced by the context or network in which they operate. Considering companies as actors from the IMP perspective is quite different. Here, as opposed to the idea of companies having commonly accepted goals and ideas to which their employees ascribe, the IMP group contend that companies can be considered actors because of the identity that they acquire through interaction with others. This sentiment is echoed by certain schools of organisation theory wherein it is purported that to achieve some goals, individuals must act as a collective, or company. (Within organisational theory, the degree to which this takes place on either the conscious or subconscious level is debated hotly (for example, see Weick 1969; Brunsson 1982) but need

not be discussed here.) From this perspective, the role of bonds between actors is of paramount importance; contrary to the management perspective outlined above, actors are attributed an identity by those with whom they interact.

Therefore, identity is not simply the result of inherent characteristics and capabilities; rather, it is the result of the interpretation of others. Hakansson & Snehota (1995, p. 209) summarise this by suggesting that companies should –

> be treated as actors not because of them having some unitary goal that makes monolithic the behaviour of the various individuals belonging to the company but mainly on the ground that in business relationships, companies are attributed identities by those they interact with

Again, this shares certain parallels with Eliasian theory; indeed, figurationalists would agree with the above assertion that the behaviour of individuals within a company cannot be made 'monolithic'. However, they would contend that this has less to do with the identity attributed to the company and more to do with power dynamics within a given figuration. Similarly, Eliasians would take issue with the very idea of considering a company as an actor, and would caution that to do so is to be in danger of slipping into reification, and, also, to risk missing the fact that the company is simply a group of people.

By way of summary, having accepted companies as actors, the IMP group suggests that doing so has the following impacts on broader network processes.

Firstly, the group contends that when considering a company as an actor, one must treat it in the same fashion as any other actor, i.e. it is an individual with its own unique identity. Secondly, one must accept that this identity is formed by the bonds that make up intercompany relationships. And thirdly, that a company's identity is in the eye of the beholder; that is, because the way in which companies are bonded varies greatly, a company's identity can be different things to different actors. Consequently, it can also be said that companies' identities are the result of broader network processes, how they are bonded together, and the way in which they interact (Hakansson & Snehota, 1995). What's more, it is in light of the above that IMP theorists can counter the neoclassical market concept and suggest that, because of the processes outlined thus far, the network (market) is never neutral; its dynamics are linked to the actors at play within it (Ford, 2004; Ford & Hakansson, 2004).

3.3.3.3. Interaction

Thus far, interaction, which could, in many ways, be considered the glue that binds the IMP conceptualisation of relationships and networks together, has been considered only in passing. To that end, in this section, the group's perspective on the role played by interaction in the formation and maintenance of business relationships, and its subsequent impact on the broader network system, will be discussed. As outlined previously, relationships are processual in nature and they evolve and change over time. The IMP group contend that

this development is driven by the interaction of the parties involved. That said, whether or not a relationship evolves and grows or eventually decays and dies is directly related to the interactions of those involved (Hákansson & Snehota, 1995). When looking at relationships over time, IMP academics have suggested that those involved must make 'mutual adaptations' of one kind or another and that these adaptations are a prerequisite for the development and evolution of a relationship; without them, the relationship fails (Hallen et al., 1989). These adaptations occur on both sides of the relationship and are born from a need to coordinate the activity of those involved, i.e. to produce the eventual outcome of the relationship. Adaptation occurs almost continuously and tends to manifest in changes to the products or services exchanged as well as to the terms of engagement between the relationship counterparts. In facilitating these mutual adjustments, interaction not only enables coordination but also lays the foundation for deeper interdependencies between the actors involved. Beyond the coordination of exchange, interaction creates a number of interdependencies between the actors involved, and by extension, affects their behaviour. The reasons for this were discussed in detail in the previous sections on Networks & Relationships. It was suggested there that one could argue that this interdependence is both a positive and a negative in that although it creates opportunities for those involved, it also limits what they can do and how they may act. A key consideration here is the fact that this occurs over time. If we

again consider activity links (i.e. the internal commercial, administrative, and technical activities that develop in a relationship), which are, of course, a form of interaction between actors, it becomes clear that these links change and are modified over time. The IMP contention here is that by virtue of this temporal interaction, interdependencies are formed which, as well as affecting their behaviour, lead to the binding of the activities and resources of those involved and, the subsequent, creation of something unique that otherwise could not have been produced (Hákansson & Snehota, 1995), the 'team effect' we discussed earlier. Yet interaction does not operate in isolation at the level of individual relationships. For the IMP group, its effects accumulate and reverberate throughout the wider network structure., Indeed, although the interaction discussed thus far has been at the level of a relationship between two businesses, it can also be observed at the wider market level. The IMP group contend that markets are made up of multiple connected actors and, as above, with relationships, the ways in which these actors interact are dictated by interdependence and developed over time. Indeed, IMP academics suggest that markets are made up of active and mutually dependent buyers and sellers and that within markets, products are not fixed or standard. Rather, they are ever-changing, complex in nature, and have been developed as a result of the interaction between buyers and sellers (Ford, 2004). Indeed, the group holds that all market processes should be seen as interactions and that eventual market

outcomes are the result of these engagements. Given that these interactions shape not just transactions but also perceptions and expectations among actors, in this regard, the IMP group's approach to identity is particularly relevant.

It is important to note here that they maintain that identities are often shaped by prior experience and what is known, or believed to be known, about the company. Indeed, it has been suggested that because the process of identity formation takes place in light of previous experience, identities are learned as opposed to constructed. Furthermore, once formed identities affect and are continually affected by interaction, thereby continually modifying the relationship between the two actors. This reciprocal shaping of identity and behaviour creates a feedback loop. The IMP group contend that this process is similar to that of collective learning and that, as this 'learning' continues, it leads to 'experimentation' and further changes to the relationship and how actors interact (Hákansson & Snehota, 1995). Perhaps more interesting in this regard is the group's contention that this interaction not only changes the relationship but also has an organising effect on the overall structure of the network in which it is embedded. This moves the focus from interaction as a relational tool to interaction as a structural force within the network itself. The implications of this are easy to miss at first glance; however, it could be argued that this interaction is how the IMP group accounts for changes in market dynamics and structure. Indeed, the group contend that changes within a

network are ‘exogenous’ of a single actor, i.e. market changes are initiated/influenced by the interactions of actors in a single relationship (Hákansson & Snehota, 1995). Yet again, one familiar with the concept of figurational interdependence can see the similarities here; however, figurationalists would be quick to point out that this is a two-way street. That is, in the sense that people in a given relationship have the potential to influence the broader network (market), the network also influences the behaviour of people within a relationship. Whilst this is alluded to by members of the IMP group, it is a point that is somewhat underdeveloped in terms of its theoretical justification. Figurationalists, by contrast, embed interdependence within a broader historical and structural framework. While the IMP group focuses on the way interaction shapes relationships and networks, Elias insists that these very patterns of interaction are themselves shaped by long-term figurations of power and constraint. In figurational terms, people are not only bound by mutual adaptations but are also positioned within historically rooted figurations, the interdependence inherent in which can limit their room for manoeuvre. This implies that while IMP emphasises emergent coordination through interaction, figurationalists emphasise asymmetries and the directional flow of power embedded in those interactions. Where IMP offers a relational logic of change, figurationalism provides a more comprehensive explanation of why and how those relations are constrained, routinised, or resisted across time.

Having thus far examined the theoretical underpinnings of the IMP Group's approach to understanding marketisation processes, it is prudent at this point to consider how these come together when practically considering market development. That is to say, how IMP researchers use these elements of theory to explain how a particular market has formed. In this regard, many IMP scholars deploy a relationship-centred approach wherein the relationships between contextually specific actors are examined in order to establish how a particular network functions. Considered generally, such studies appear to vary greatly in terms of not only the context being examined but also the methodological approach taken. However, by and large, they adhere to what could be described as the IMP Group's magnum opus in this regard, the Network Model of the Organisation–Environment Interface.

Put forward by Hakansson & Snehota (2006, p. 259), this model stems from "casual observations that business organisations often operate in environments which include only a limited number of identifiable organisational entities (actors)". Moreover, it is built upon the core IMP beliefs discussed thus far, chief amongst which is the idea that these actors are embedded in a network and that they are made interdependent by virtue of the relationships in which they are involved (Hakansson & Snehota, 2006). Developing these beliefs further, the Network Model puts forward the following four assertions. Firstly, the behaviour of an individual actor is conditioned by the other actors that operate

in its environment (in its network). Secondly, actors within such networks engage in continuous interaction; it is this interaction that establishes the framework for exchange, and, moreover, it is this interaction which allows actors to access and exploit the resources of other actors within their network. Thirdly, an actor's innate capabilities and, indeed, its very identity are established via its engagement with others. And, finally, an actor's performance is conditioned by the interdependencies that exist in the network in which it is embedded (Hakansson & Snehota, 2006).

The similarities between these four points and the IMP theories discussed thus far should be abundantly clear, and indeed, although it can be said that they are very similar to, and even achieve some degree of consensus with figurational sociologists, they are subject to the very same criticisms that have been highlighted throughout this section. First and foremost is the suggestion that organisations are actors in their own right. There is an inherent irony in the IMP Group's acknowledgement of the fact that the behaviour of an actor within a network can be influenced by other actors within that network. This is because they do so whilst at the same time ignoring the fact that the same can be said of individuals within an organisation. Indeed, to assume that an organisation made up of multiple individuals behaves in some unified fashion, uninfluenced by the needs and desires of those same individuals, is inherently wrong and undermines the very network concept on which they place so much emphasis.

This assumption is particularly problematic when contrasted with figurational sociology, which maintains that all group behaviour, including that of organisations, emerges from the dynamic interdependence of individuals. Elias's work repeatedly emphasised that what may appear to be a unified actor is, in fact, a figuration; a fluctuating pattern of tensions, negotiations, and mutual dependencies between individuals. As such, the idea of the organisation as a single actor glosses over the internal figurations that drive behaviour. By failing to account for this internal complexity, the IMP Group's model risks reifying organisations, attributing to them a coherence and autonomy they do not, in practice, possess.

In light of this, one can argue that whilst the network model provides a useful framework for mapping external interdependencies, it lacks sufficient nuance when applied internally, particularly where actor formation and behavioural change are concerned.

3.4. Sociology

3.4.1. The Sociology of Markets

The contemporary sociological perspective of markets, though varied, is, in essence, born from a rejection of the neoclassical view. This, many sociologists would suggest, is "shorn of social relations, institutions, or technology and is

devoid of elementary sociological concerns such as power, norms and networks" (Lie, 1997, p.342). Against such a perspective, Shields (1992) suggests that, by virtue of what he dubs the social centrality of the marketplace, markets act as focal points for the diverse range of interests and desires pursued by individuals. Furthermore, the repeated exchanges facilitated within these social spaces (markets) can be linked to a multitude of social processes and social developments. With this in mind, Slater and Tonkiss suggest that "modes of exchange are therefore central to reproducing particular patterns of relationships, and coordinating social identities, functions and actions" (2001, p.8). However, perhaps the most interesting aspect of sociological thought is that markets, like social relations, are evolving processes. Indeed, criticism has been directed at sociologists who refer to "the market" and fail to recognise the sheer variety of different markets out there and the sheer multitude of different dynamics that are at play within those markets (Mennell, 2007). That being said, thus far in the literature review, numerous theories on market dynamics and development have been illustrated, and it has been shown that markets are dynamic, fluid, ever-changing, and inherently social institutions. However, the idea that markets can be influenced, shaped, and even created by planned or unplanned social processes has not been discussed in any detail. That said, one only has to consider new and emergent technology to see that marketing teams can influence the development of markets around such products. Indeed, some

academics have long acknowledged this fact, suggesting that in contemporary society developers and marketers can contribute to the development of markets that couldn't or wouldn't have formed on their own (Fligstein, 2001, ch.2; White,1981, 1988; Galbraith, 1972, ch.18). In fact, it is argued that in some cases this process goes beyond simply supplying consumers with information about new products, to actually creating a desire for the product and altering consumer preferences and behaviour (Slater, 2002; Bowles,1998; Fine & Leopold, 1993, ch.14). This is indicative of the sociological contention that consumers, and by extension social processes, also play a role in market formation. What's more, the objects within those markets are also of social significance, or perhaps more accurately, how people engage with those objects is also of social significance. Indeed, many academics suggest that objects can have a substantial impact on society as a whole. In this regard, Bruno Latour suggests that material objects can be considered sociologically in three ways: firstly, as invisible and faithful tools, secondly, as determining infrastructure and finally as projection screens. When thought of as tools, objects reproduce the intentions of their user, while considered as infrastructures, objects become a staging ground on which self-governing social worlds can develop and when considered as screens, objects can indicate social status (Latour, 1996, p.235). Some scholars argue that individuals' symbolic relationships with objects can extend to the markets that produce them. As Araujo (2010, p.15) states,

"Dematerialised objects contribute symbolically to an individual's extended sense of self and identity. By extension, markets become symbolically malleable entities". This view draws attention to the interplay between structure (social forces shaping behaviour) and agency (individual autonomy). Though widely debated in the social sciences, many market theorists favour a Parsonian structural functionalist stance, which seeks to reconcile the two (Layder, 1994; Mouzelis, 1995; Lopez & Scott, 2000). This results in a dualistic model where roles are structurally defined but enacted by agents.

Not all agree, however. Bhaskar (1979, ch.2; 1986, ch.2) posits that structure and agency operate simultaneously through 'positioned practices'. Yet this may go too far. A more widely accepted view sees such practices as expressions of interdependent social roles (buyers require sellers and vice versa), making markets fundamentally structural (Jackson, 2008). Recognising this, some suggest that while market processes may resist prediction or control, they remain open to regulation and intervention (Slater & Tonkiss, 2001). This is similar in sentiment to what Latour (1987) put forward when he suggested that markets are the outcomes of organising efforts and that, contrary to the quote used at the opening of this literature review, markets are in the making rather than being ready-made. While the justification differs, this assertion mirrors Elias in suggesting that studying these processes can offer insight into the role of marketing in market formation. Figurationalists, however, would argue that

Latour's focus on structured and deliberate efforts overlooks the significance of the unplanned in marketisation. From this perspective, a figurational approach, grounded in the analysis of interdependent networks within market contexts, offers a more illuminating framework. The basis for this divergence will be explored in the following chapter, where Actor-Network Theory (ANT) is addressed in greater detail.

3.4.2. Actor-Network Theory

Actor-Network Theory (ANT) was originally put forward by Bruno Latour, Michel Callon, and John Law. It proffers that the world is made up of dynamic and ever-changing networks of actors. Moreover, it asserts that no aspect of social, human, or natural action exists independently of these networks. As well as this, ANT includes a principle of generalised symmetry, which attributes agency to both human and non-human actors. That is to say, it considers networks as being made up of active human and non-human entities (such as organisations, institutions, and artefacts) and ascribes these equal importance in terms of network function (Callon, 1986a). Through the work of Bruno Latour and Michel Callon, amongst others, ANT has been developed as an iconoclasm and used to critique much of contemporary social science, most notably sociology, philosophy, and economics (Latour, 2005; Latour, 1993b; Callon, 1998; Callon and Muniesa, 2005; Callon, Milo, and Muniesa, 2007). In this regard, ANT challenges numerous well-established theoretical approaches.

Noteworthy in this is that although ANT largely dismisses conventional realist constructs, it does see itself as a form of realism (Latour 1999c, p. 7; 2004b, p. 231; Law 2004, p.140). And, as such, it is primarily focused on empirical analysis (Elder-Vass, 2015). Most interesting in regard to this empirical focus is ANT's aforementioned emphasis on interdependent networks and insistence on seeing outcomes as the result of multiple, equally important, interacting influences. Indeed, Latour contends that to achieve this, ANT theorists must "re-forge the concepts that the modern settlement has given us…to study such events" (Latour, 1999c, p.145). In this Latour is proposing that ANT theorists must transcend dualisms (which he captions "the modern settlement") that he asserts are inherent in all contemporary thought, and, in essence, approach research in a new and more appropriate fashion; a fashion that requires nothing less than a complete ontological reinvention (Elder-Vass, 2015). There is, however, a striking irony in this claim. From the outset, it is evident that ANT shares significant ontological similarities with both figurational sociology and the core assertions of the IMP group. Moreover, Latour's call to "re-forge" the conceptual foundations of modern thought seems curiously belated, given that Elias had already begun to do so (albeit in a different idiom) decades earlier. This conceptual overlap and Elias's prior challenge to the assumptions of the modern settlement will be examined in greater depth in the sections that follow.

A central construct in ANT's new ontology is the concept of an assemblage; this

concept is pervasive throughout the theory and often referred to by many different names. Notable amongst these are agencements, actor networks, networks, and articulations. For Latour, an assemblage is a unique event that happens at one time and in one place (Harman, 2009) and that is granted stability and repeatability by virtue of the concept of performativity (Law, 2008). Put simply, an assemblage, for all intents and purposes, can be thought of as a section of a network made up of interacting and interdependent actors (not entirely dissimilar to the concept of figuration). It is argued that markets can be considered in such a manner. The following aspects of ANT theory have been identified as most important to the market concept these are the relationship between economisation and marketisation, assemblages and their impact, performativity and the marketisation program, and finally, non-human agency, each of which will now be discussed in turn.

3.4.2.1. Economisation and Marketisation

From the ANT perspective, economisation and marketisation are intrinsically linked. Indeed, marketisation is considered to be a modality of economisation. That is to say, one of the ways in which economisation takes place is by virtue of the marketisation process. The term economisation itself is significant in that it implies that the economy is not a fixed entity or construct. Rather, it is one that develops as the result of a temporal process or processes. The ANT rationale for this development is that it is driven by the action of actors in the

network of interdependent relationships that make up assemblages. It is this dynamic to which the term economisation is attributed. Callon (2015, p.18) captions this as follows –

> Economisation refers to a set of actions aimed at transforming and formatting institutions, behaviours, objects, affects, and feelings so that they become economic, that is, so that they match a certain idea and a certain conception of what economy is.

Noteworthy here is that from an ANT perspective, the economy conforms to the idea of an assemblage as a 'unique event', i.e. it pertains to a certain point in time and is the result of the actions of the actors which influenced the economisation process at that time (Caliskan and Callon 2009, 2010). Indeed, it is held by ANT theorists that by acknowledging the fact that economisation processes hold this inherent temporal characteristic, we can begin to identify the "historical and therefore variable and evolving dimensions of economic activities" (Callon, 2015, p. 18). In doing so ANT theorists contend that we can acknowledge Braudel's baseline assertion that in the 'beginning' "economy per se obviously does not exist" (1985, p.10). They further suggest that we can acknowledge that nothing is intrinsically economic, but importantly, we can also recognise that through the process of economisation, everything can become economic (Callon, 2015). This process, by virtue of which 'things' become economic, is quite complex, as suggested previously, it "can be seen as

the substantial outcome of a longstanding process in which conflicting institutional, material and cognitive forces are engaged" (Çalışkan & Callon, 2010, p.22). Moreover, ANT theorists contend that it can be said that without these forces, economisation could not occur. Indeed, Çalışkan & Callon (2010, p. 22) state that there would be no economisation "without either economics or the institutional assemblages that act as socio-cognitive prostheses to ensure the coordination of agents". And furthermore, that "Economisation is equally impossible without the active participation of materialities or of practical and cognitive competencies in valuing agencies". What the pair are suggesting here is that when creating an economy, the process of economisation is reliant on the actors that make up economic assemblages to coordinate economic activity, to dictate the modes of function, and to dictate the rules of engagement amongst actors; to define the economic 'modus operandi' if you will. What's more, the pair also contends that academics who are concerned with the economic realm are, in fact, involved in this process. They assert that by virtue of the discourses in which we engage concerning the operation of the economy and the economisation process, we too play a role in its development (Çalışkan & Callon, 2010), and by extension are part of the economic assemblage.

In light of the above, it is clear that the ANT conceptualisation of the economy and the function it performs in society is far-reaching. To that end, by way of understanding these dynamics, it is suggested that they must be considered in

relation to the wider societal movements which influence and make up economisation; in this regard, marketisation is of paramount importance (Çalışkan & Callon, 2010). At the beginning of this section, it was suggested that marketisation was the primary modality of economisation. Put plainly, that marketisation is a process that "'leads to the establishment of economic markets' (Çalışkan & Callon, 2009, p. 369). However, ANT researchers contend that there is more to the process; indeed, marketisation has been recognised as a mechanism by which the influence of markets is extended (Callon, 2015). ANT theorists maintain that by virtue of marketisation processes, market forces and economic value systems can impact upon elements of social life in which their influence was not previously felt. The ANT perspective suggests that the above increase in marketisation is the result of the action of the actors embedded in the market assemblage, and its continuation is the result of the concept of performativity (Law, 2008) (which will also be expanded upon later). Therefore, they argue that to understand the process of marketisation, one must first identify "the forces participating in these networks and…understand how they interrelate" (Çalışkan & Callon, 2010, p.23). This bears an uncanny resemblance to how Eliasians suggest we understand society in general, i.e. by understanding how individuals in a figuration are interdependent and examining the nature of that interdependence. An important distinction here is the use of the term 'individuals'. From a figurational standpoint, this is used to exclusively

refer to humans, whereas this may not be the case if adopting an ANT perspective.

In regard to ANT, Michel Callon contends that one of the ways ANT theorists can develop an understanding of the drivers of marketisation is by considering markets in relation to competition. From the ANT perspective, Callon suggests that by examining market competition, markets can be described in two ways, which differ in relation to how they conceive of products and innovation (Callon, 2015). They are captioned interface-markets and market-agencements. In interface markets, the neoclassical economic law of supply and demand is still considered to have merit; as such, price is championed. What's more, innovation strategies are simply seen as a means to reduce competitive pressure; the creation of products and goods is very much a secondary consideration.

Whilst this approach is said to extend market activities (Callon, 2015), it does so without considering the role of products in people's lives and gives scant consideration to why one product is chosen over another. In this case, the choice of products is not considered in relation to market decisions; rather, it is considered external to the market mechanism. And, it is said to be "relegated to the political or moral spheres, which are supposed to (sometimes) debate and decide (or rather dictate) what can be bought and sold" (Callon, 2015, p.34). Market-agencements stand in stark contrast to this; they are said to "organise the design of goods, profile innovations, shape identities, and format bilateral

transactions" (Callon, 2015, p.34). Furthermore, when considered in relation to market-agencements, products, and indeed innovation, are considered to be at the very heart of competition; they are said to be the drivers of interaction between market actors. ANT researchers contend that this conceptualisation is truer to life and assert that it has several implications for how the process of marketisation is viewed. In this vein, they contend that facilitating exchange and continuous product innovation results in the expansion of markets. Moreover, they maintain that doing so places the process of marketisation as the primary remit of market function (Callon, 2015). What's more, contrary to the situation in interface markets, here moral, political, and social factors are not assumed exterior to the market; rather, they play a role in its function. In summary, it can be said that for ANT theorists, economisation and marketisation are inherently linked. What's more, it can be said that marketisation and market-agencements are central constructs capable of bringing about social change, and as such, warrant further discussion.

3.4.2.2. Assemblages and Agencements

In this section, the aim is to build upon what has been said above concerning the power and importance of market-agencements. Therefore, it is important that we acknowledge that agencements exist within ANT far beyond the context of markets. Indeed, to truly understand the limits of their function, we must acknowledge that the concept of agencements is central to ANT in general. It is

to this end that we will first discuss the origins of agencements, in a broad fashion, before discussing them more acutely concerning markets. That said, an agencement is not merely a grouping of actors, it is an intricate and structured network that exerts an ordering force on the world around it, and as Latour suggests, is "what is made to act by a large star-shaped web of mediators flowing in and out of it. It is made to exist by its many ties" (2005, p.217). There are several things that we must consider here. Firstly, from an ANT perspective, a mediator can be thought of as an influencing actor, that is, one that plays an active, as opposed to passive, role in a process. For example, in light of what we have discussed above regarding the ways in which products and innovation shape identities, we can say that they are mediators in the market process. Secondly, we can say that agencements are made to function by the mediators that form them. More specifically, we can say that they are made to function by the action and interaction that takes place between mediators.

Thirdly, we must also acknowledge that mediators themselves may not always play a visible or readily apparent role in the action of assemblages; indeed, oftentimes the influence of some mediators can be largely ignored. This is particularly apparent in relation to the influence academics have on their subject matter. Latour illustrates this using the example of Louis Pasteur's discovery of yeast. The realist perspective would assert that Pasteur simply discovered yeast and that it existed prior to his engagement with it; however, the ANT

perspective would contend that by virtue of Pasteur's engagement, yeast became something qualitatively new and different. When discussing the change, Latour's rationale for this is as follows: "Why not the same thing? Because it is not made out of the same articles, the same members, the same actors, the same implements, the same propositions" (1999c, p.150). Here, Latour is suggesting that by studying and commenting on yeast, Pasteur becomes a mediator. Latour proffers that he is fundamentally changing it, and the discourses he creates around it are not simply independent observations made about it; rather, they become part of the yeast assemblage, and by extension, when they change, so too does the entire assemblage (Elder-Vass, 2015). The same can be said of human assemblages; indeed, Latour suggests that "any study of any group by any social scientist is part and parcel of what makes the group exist, last, decay or disappear" (2005, p.33). This is particularly interesting when considered in relation to Law's (2008) assertion that individual people are assemblages and that they too can be thought of as, and subject to the influence of, mediators.

This is illustrated well when Latour discusses how the actions of an individual may be perceived in contrasting ways. Latour states that a subject –

> may speak for all French people, or for DATAR, or for one of DATAR's departments, or for a member of one of its departments, or in his own name, either as a transportation specialist or as a private individual. He may speak solely in the name of his own imagination (1996, p.44).

Here, the subject, in this example a transportation specialist, is not perceived as simply an isolated individual. Rather, he is conceived of as an "actor-network of variable influence depending upon the web of mediators that happen to be flowing through him on any particular occasion" (Elder-Vass, 2015, p.10).

While this bears a superficial resemblance to Elias's concept of figurational interdependence, important differences remain. From a figurational standpoint, individuals are always embedded within structured webs of interdependence (figurations) that evolve over time and are shaped by changing power balances. Unlike ANT, which views agency as emergent from networks composed of both human and non-human elements, figurational sociology centres on human relationships and the shifting dynamics of power within them. Figurations are not temporary or situational; they are enduring and evolving patterns of interdependence. In this view, individuals are not transient nodes or mere conduits for external forces; rather, they occupy specific positions within these broader, dynamic social processes, positions that both enable and constrain action. Thus, while both perspectives reject methodological individualism, Elias places greater emphasis on the long-term development of social structures and how agency is produced relationally within evolving configurations of human interdependence. Nevertheless, ANT's treatment of individual action introduces a compelling question regarding agencements. If variability is inherent to mediators, why do they often function in stable ways? In the context of market-

agencements, stability suggests that some force directs participant behaviour. Considering ANT's view of innovation as central to market activity (driving the creation and exchange of goods), it is clear that such processes are consistently reproduced over time. For this to happen, action must be coordinated. In fact, ANT theorists might argue that coordination alone is insufficient; rather, actions must be oriented toward a shared goal. Within markets, this goal is the transaction itself, and the rationale for this lies in the structure and function of agencements.

At the beginning of this section, agencements were described as having an inherent ordering force on the world around them; it is by virtue of this force that the coordinated action of individual actors can take place. Callon captions this as follows, "The term agencement denotes a form of arrangement that acts and at the same time imposes a certain format on the action" (2015, p.29).

Indeed, he goes on to account for this dynamic within markets specifically when he states –

> Saying that an agencement is a market agencement (as opposed to agencements that can be, e.g. qualified as altruistic, political or scientific) means specifying that it is structured to direct the collective action towards the establishment of bilateral commercial transactions (2015, p. 29).

Whilst illuminating vis-à-vis the purpose of market-agencements, this doesn't

give us an insight into how this coordinated action actually takes place. To that end, Callon suggests that it is achieved by virtue of specific 'framings' that "contribute to giving collective action the specific format that it should have" (2015, p. 29). These frames, also referred to as socio-technical agencements (STAs), manifest in relation to a number of fundamental market mechanisms such as the design of products, the pricing of these products, and facilitating the consumer purchasing process (Çalışkan & Callon, 2010; Callon, 2013; Callon, 2015). This suggests that none of the above can be understood by solely examining the subjectivity of an individual actor; any examination must include the actors and STAs that play a role in shaping its development (Çalışkan & Callon 2010; Pellandini-Simányi, 2016), a role in which, for actor-network theorists, performativity plays a part.

3.4.2.3. Performativity and the Marketisation Program

The concept of performativity in ANT can trace its origins to the field of economics and is chiefly concerned with the impact of economic discourse on the economy. In this sense, it echoes what was discussed above in relation to how academics come to influence the objects of their study and how this influence changes the subject. For ANT theorists, inquiry in this regard is conducted under the banner of what is known as the economic performativity program. Indeed, research in this area is primarily focused on how the observations made in economic discourse are manifested in reality (MacKenzie

2007; Pellandini-Simányi, 2016). It is by building on the concept of performativity that ANTs account for the role of market frames in the development of markets and, by extension, the ordering power inherent in market-agencements. However, whilst the concept of performativity is widely accepted amongst ANT theorists, the economic performativity program is hotly debated, and its validity is contested. This controversy stems from the fact that the economic performativity program somewhat contradicts the ANT raison d'être in that it deals with an economics-inspired conceptualisation of the market as opposed to its empirical reality. Indeed, even ANT founder Michel Callon has been criticised in this regard. It has been claimed that Callon is guilty of "focusing on "economists" model of a framed and abstracted market against empirical evidence that contemporary exchange rarely if ever works according to the laws of the market' (Miller, 2002,p. 218), and that he often mistakes "a representation of economic life for its practice" (Miller, 2002, p. 219). This sentiment is echoed by Mirowski and Nik-Khah (2007), who also argue that the economic performativity program only deals with economists and suggest that, as a result, it neglects the fact that real markets are formed by other actors. It is concerning the marketisation program, which, as mentioned previously, is arguably ANT's most significant contribution to the study of markets, that the implications of these failings become most apparent. The economic performativity program predated Çalışkan & Callon's marketisation program

and played a large part in its formation; as such, many theoretical holdovers can be found. That is, many of the theoretical constructs inherent in the economic performativity program have been passed on to the marketisation program, and as a result, it has been subject to much of the same criticism. Indeed, it has been suggested that because of these holdovers, the marketisation program uncritically accepts economic conceptualisations, even in the face of empirical evidence that suggests otherwise (Aspers 2011; Miller 2002). More specific critics have suggested that, as with the economic performativity program, its over-emphasis on the exchange process has resulted in a neglect of other processes that shape markets (Pellandini-Simányi, 2016). Indeed, although still an admirer of the marketisation program, Blok (2011, p. 456) suggests that it "remains wedded to an "economics-centric" perspective, failing seriously to challenge the relative power of economic agents vis-á-vis other anthropological programmes". What's more, academics have questioned the ability of the marketisation program to account for the "role of private, lived experience" in the market mechanism (McFall, 2014, p.10). In a similar vein, Muellerleile (2013, p. 1626) calls for the inclusion of broader institutions in the marketisation program and justifies this by suggesting that –

> Rigorous analysis of financial markets requires that we analyse both their inside, or their internal operations and logic, and their outside, or the broader context within which they reside and from which they depend for

their reproduction.

At the heart of these criticisms is the suggestion that whilst the marketisation program can account for how exchange takes place and how market-agencements can shape markets, it cannot account for broader processes that go beyond 'traditional' market focuses but still impact upon markets. That is it cannot account for many of the more social, or qualitative, aspects of markets; it cannot say why consumers value one product over another or why certain products go in or out of fashion. Similarly, it cannot account for the operation of NGOs or the elements of relational trade that are so abundant in markets. These are all vital to market function and have been proven time and time again to impact their success or failure. However, the marketisation program only ever considers them in relation to how they impact market exchange and never truly considers them in their own right (Pellandini-Simányi, 2016). In this regard, one cannot help but think that by conceptualising markets as figurations, in the manner outlined in the previous chapter, the Eliasian perspective transcends the above issues.

There has been much debate amongst ANT theorists regarding the cause of these failings and the ways in which they can be rectified. Blok (2011, p.456) suggests the issues stem from inadequately defined "analytical priorities" and that the program merely needs to be extended to address this issue. However, other academics take a more extreme view and suggest that the entire program

is fundamentally flawed and not fit for purpose. Moreover, it has been suggested that there is a logical fallacy at the core of the program. It is said that this fallacy is caused by the fact that the theoretical toolbox of the economic performativity program has been fully incorporated into the marketisation program, but that the tools themselves have not been amended to suit the new, and fundamentally different, research objective. Indeed, with only tertiary consideration, it becomes evident that these research objectives do in fact differ, as suggested above, the aim of the economic performativity program was to examine how economic theory and discourse can impact reality. Whereas, the aim of the marketisation program is to understand how markets are formed, how they change, and what drives this change. This difference in objectives means that, although the programs share certain theoretical and analytical tools, the ways in which they are applied must differ. Pellandini-Simányi captions this as follows –

> In contrast to the research strategy of performativity, which starts from a theory and traces its effects, the research strategy implication of this question (marketisation) is to work backwards, starting from a market and tracing the processes that enabled it to happen and the heterogeneous networks that make it up (2016, p. 574).

Whilst this approach appears much more logical and practical, and indeed is much more in line with the traditional ANT research approach as proffered by

Latour (2005) (wherein actors are followed and their relevance is assessed depending on their impact upon the phenomena under study), it has not been adopted as the dominant ANT approach to marketisation. Moreover, whilst it is widely acknowledged that there are issues inherent in the marketisation program (for more on this debate, see McFall 2010, 2014; Ouma 2015, Callon, 2009; Pellandini-Simányi, 2016), a consensus amongst ANT theorists as to the best way forward has, as of yet, not been reached. Some of the language used above has a distinctly 'Eliasian' tone, particularly that of Pellandini-Simányi (2016, p.574), who urges researchers to "work backwards…tracing the processes that enabled it to happen and the heterogeneous networks that make it up". In light of this, one could argue that at their core, ANT and figurational sociology share some common ground; however, the area in which they diverge most severely is in relation to the ANT conceptualisation of non-human agency.

3.4.2.4. Non-human Agency

The final aspect of ANT that is relevant to the context of markets is that of non-human agency, as outlined at the beginning of this section. ANT is built upon the principle of generalised symmetry. When considering assemblages, this entails recognising that they are made up of both human and non-human actors and attributing these actors equal importance within a given network. That is not to suggest that actors remain equal, but that the difference that may or may not develop between them is not the result of any a priori distinction between the two. Indeed, Callon and Latour (1981,p.279) contend that any resulting difference in

power or importance is ‘the result of a battle or a negotiation’ between actors. Moreover, the pair suggest that it is by virtue of this dynamic that “an actor or force takes, or causes to be conferred on itself, authority to speak or act” (1981,p.279). That is, therein, whether human or non-human, the actor develops agency. It is when considering the role of cultural intermediaries that this becomes most significant to markets and the process of marketisation. Viewed from the ANT perspective, it has been argued that not only can we consider marketing practice as a cultural intermediary but also as an actor in its own right. This has been illustrated with reference to social marketing, which is considered by some as more of a behavioural intervention than a communication or advertising technique (Moore, 2012). Indeed, when positing social marketing as a cultural intermediary, Moore (2012) suggests that it made its ‘own market’. That is to say, it, as suggested by Callon and Latour (1981) regarding emergent markets, established new market-agencements and thus aligned the action of actors towards a coordinated goal. In pursuit of these goals, Latour identifies two particularly important types of actors these are intermediaries and mediators. Latour qualifies an intermediary as something that “transports meaning or force without transformation: defining its inputs is enough to define its outputs’ (2005, p.37). As opposed to this he suggests that mediators should “transform, translate, distort, and modify the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry” and further asserts that they “may lead in multiple directions which will modify all the contradictory accounts attributed to

its role" (2005,p.39). Put plainly, as discussed earlier, they are said to exert an ordering force and are possessed of inherent agency. From a figurational perspective, however, this attribution of agency to non-human actors is deeply problematic. Figurational sociology maintains that what ANT describes as non-human "actors" cannot meaningfully possess agency in their own right. Instead, it is the evolving interdependencies and power relations between people, in figurations, that shape the social world. Agency, in this view, is never located in objects but in the web of human relationships and their long-term historical development.

Noteworthy here is that although Latour's quantification of these two types of actors lends itself to a more thorough examination of cultural intermediaries (for more on this see Moor, 2012), it does so at the risk of introducing an element of confusion into the process. That is to say, Latour uses the term 'mediator' as a synonym for cultural intermediary, whereas he uses the term intermediary in an almost contradictory fashion. In considering both human and non-human agency, Latour builds on Foucault's (1980, p.194) concept of the dispositif, which encompassed not only material beings but also "discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, (&) philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions." Latour advances this idea by moving beyond identifying actor types to exploring the varying degrees of influence they may exert (Moor, 2012). This approach, central

to ANT, enables a more nuanced analysis of intermediaries and invites scrutiny of the relative power of non-human actors. As Moor (2012, p.573) notes, such an approach allows research to account for how entities like buildings, theories, and technologies can transcend their human origins, adopt new roles, and generate unintended outcomes along multiple trajectories. The above is a fairly extreme case even for those within the ANT community.

Indeed, the degree to which non-human actors influence agencements is still debated and somewhat amorphous. However, amongst ANT theorists there is consensus surrounding the fact that "whether they might just help (in a minimalist, instrumental version) or force (in a maximalist, determinist version), devices do things … [they] articulate actions; they act or make others act"(Muniesa et al., 2007, p. 2). This is precisely where figurational sociology draws a sharp line of distinction. To ascribe independent agency to an object is, from a figurational standpoint, to misplace the locus of social change. Such a view neglects the structured and interdependent relationships through which objects derive meaning and power.

Contrary to the above, from a figurational perspective, it is not the object that "acts" but the ways in which people interpret, engage with, and mobilise that object within specific social configurations. Change occurs not through the object itself but through shifts in the relationships and power dynamics of the people interacting with it; shifts that unfold over time, and are deeply rooted in historical

processes of interdependence. In this light, Moore's (2012, p. 573) claim that objects may "outrun their human 'authors'" and take up "new roles and functions in new contexts" is more accurately understood as a reflection of evolving interdependencies rather than any inherent agency of the object. This point is reinforced by Elias, who reminds us that, "We can never understand any social phenomenon in isolation: it emerges and acquires meaning only within the figuration of interdependent human relationships" (Elias, 1978, p. 41). And moreover, that "social institutions and structures are not 'things' outside people… They are ongoing processes woven from the actions and interdependencies of people" (Elias, 1978, p. 111). Figurational sociology thus offers not only an ontological counterpoint to ANT but also a more historically sensitive account of how meanings, practices, and institutions (including markets) emerge through the dynamic and unfolding interplay of human relationships.

3.5. 'Networked' Approaches – Comparing IMP, ANT, & Figurational Sociology

Although the above subsection ended with the ANT and figurational perspectives at odds, it should be clear at this point that they actually share a significant amount of common ground. The same can be said for the work of the IMP group. Indeed, despite the fact that one may be tempted to drive a wedge between the approaches taken by these disciplines, there is also merit in considering the similarities that exist between them, the first of which is their shared origins.

All three of these approaches were born of a rejection of existing theory and a desire to find a more appropriate way forward. Whether it be Latour, who contended that to achieve this, ANT theorists must "re-forge the concepts that the modern settlement has given" them (Latour, 1999c, p.145), or Hakansson & Snehota (1995), who suggested that understanding the impact of individual consumers and the relationships between them required a reimagination of existing theory, or even Elias, who maintained that to study individuals as separate from society was an 'intellectual aberration', all three noted the failings of existing approaches and suggested, amongst other things, a greater emphasis on actors in interdependent networks as a solution. Indeed, not discounting the fact that each approached the topic in a unique way, it is arguably around the idea of networked interdependence that they achieved the most significant degree of consensus. Whether we consider networks, assemblages, or figurations, a high degree of overlap is present. This is best illustrated by considering each of the conceptualisations in turn.

From the IMP perspective, this interdependent group of actors is simply referred to as a network. Networks are considered to be amorphous with no clear beginning or end and are made up of interconnected actors. Within ANT, they speak of assemblages and consider them to be an intricate and structured group of interacting mediators. They conceptualise these as dynamic "star-shaped web[s]" of connected actors (Latour, 2005, p.217). From the Eliasian

perspective, figurations are considered, and these are made up of groups of interdependent people at various levels of social integration. In essence, all three frameworks centre the idea of interconnection, but their emphasis differs significantly in terms of how agency and structure interact. Although all three approaches place importance on the networked interdependence of people/groups/actors, where we first begin to see divergence is in accounting for how these behave within these networks.

In this regard, IMP theorists argue that although actors are connected and interdependent, they each have their own intrinsic motivations and goals. Because of this, they maintain that network dynamics are inherently difficult to quantify and explain. As a way around this, the group proposes that we consider networks as a type of organisation and accept that they have an ordering effect on actors. They account for this ordering effect by virtue of the concept of path dependency, which, as previously established, simply suggests that they believe that the behaviour of actors within the network often follows a path set by prior events or by the previous actions of other actors. In this sense, the 'organisation', the network, exerts control over how actors behave.

This is an important point. Indeed, networks certainly do play a part in how actors behave. However, ANT and figurational theorists account for this part differently. For example, assemblages are considered to function via the interactions of the mediators embedded within them. That is to say, contrary to

the assertions of the IMP group, it is the interaction of actors that determines network dynamics and functions as opposed to the other way around. Building on this, ANT theorists suggest that assemblages are afforded stability and continuity via the concept of performativity. In other words, the actor's observations and discourses surrounding contemporary network interactions influence future network function. Noteworthy here is the fact that from the ANT perspective, individuals can be considered assemblages in their own right (Law, 2008). Indeed, as established, ANT theorists maintain that an actor may be perceived as an individual embedded within a network. However, depending on the context, they may also be perceived as an "actor-network of variable influence depending upon the web of mediators that happen to be flowing through him on any particular occasion" (Elder-Vass, 2015, p.10). In this sense, the individual is considered to be the network as opposed to being embedded in and subject to it.

This notion stands in contrast to Elias's conception of individuals within figurations, who are always embedded in evolving structures of interdependence. Setting this last point aside momentarily, fundamentally, ANT and figurations approach networks in the same fashion. They contend it is the actors and their interaction, or, put figurationally, the people and the nature of their interdependencies, that breathe life into the network, assemblage, or figuration. That is to say, contrary to the network imposing order, as IMP

theorists would suggest, network processes arise from the interaction of interdependent people/actors. However, whilst agreeing on this, ANT and figurational theorists are at odds concerning how this comes to be.

In this case, ANT practitioners place an overt focus on network interaction outcomes but do so at the expense of a proper understanding of the drivers of said outcomes. They neglect social context and fail to recognise the impact of power dynamics and preexisting cultural or historical phenomena on relationship dynamics and, by extension, the outcomes of these relationships. This is so prevalent within ANT research that some critics have come to suggest that it "risks describing endless chains of associations without ever arriving at an explanation for the reasons and differences in network formation processes" (Muller, 2015). Such criticism cannot be levelled at figurations. As suggested above, Elias argued that to consider the individual as separate in any way from society is fundamentally wrong. Because of this, Eliasians champion social processes and their impact on figurational dynamics.

As discussed at length in chapter two of this body of work, issues such as race, ethnicity, and social class are all addressed when conducting research from a figurational perspective. Relationship dynamics in this regard are accounted for with reference to the power differentials that exist within particular relationships and the various reasons for these. That is to say, Eliasians maintain that by examining the power dynamics that exist between the interdependent people

that make up figurations, one can explain how and why a particular figuration (network) functions and how it has developed. Unlike ANT, which tends to treat all actors, human and non-human, as analytically symmetrical, Elias places the relational dynamics between human beings at the centre of social explanation.

Whilst the ANT perspective cannot account for relationship dynamics in this fashion, the IMP group suggest that we can gain insight in this regard by considering relationships in terms of substance and function. As established earlier in this chapter, they propose that the substance of a relationship be considered in three ways. These deal with the Activity, Resource, and Actor layers of a given relationship. Relationship function is also considered in three ways. In this respect, they first suggest we consider the interaction between the parties involved. Secondly, they suggest we consider the outcome or the product of this interaction. And finally, they suggest we consider the impact that this outcome has on the broader network. Noteworthy here is that the IMP group are putting forward this rationale in a comparatively focused fashion. That is to say, they specifically put it forward in reference to business relationships that exist between organisations. Whilst, on the one hand, championing the importance of the individual, by and large, they do not try to apply this approach to relationships outside the business context or even to individual relationships within it. Because of this, it is difficult to deny that their approach has merit when applied to this setting.

Indeed, at the very least, it is contextually informative and can shed light on inter-organisational relationship dynamics. However, in conceptualising how interaction occurs within these relationships, they deviate considerably from the figurational perspective. In essence, the IMP group maintains that by virtue of their interaction, organisations develop an identity of 'their' own and that the actions of individuals within organisations are conducted according to or in line with this identity. This attribution of agency to the organisation itself risks reifying abstract social constructs, treating them as though they possess independent will. Figurationalists take umbrage with this conceptualisation for several reasons. Foremost among which is that, as opposed to championing the role of the individual, which IMP theorists suggest they are doing, such a perspective subjugates the individual to an abstract and reified social construct that lacks inherent agency. Moreover, such an approach is highly reductive in that even if it is solely applied to the business realm beyond neglecting the actions of individuals, it also fails to account for interdepartmental dynamics within organisations. Figurational sociology transcends these issues by recognising that figurations exist at different levels of social integration and is thereby able to account for how a single relationship, indeed a single individual, can impact upon the broader organisation and beyond, which, of course, the IMP perspective cannot do.

3.6. Literature Review Conclusion

This review has considered a wide range of disciplinary perspectives, each of which provided a different vantage point from which to view the concept and constitution of markets. From the neoclassical reduction of markets to abstract mechanisms of price allocation, through heterodox and sociological critiques that emphasise social relations and embeddedness, to the nuanced explorations of the work of the IMP group and Actor-Network Theory practitioners. One thing has become increasingly apparent, that is, that, contrary to the quote used at the beginning of this chapter, markets are not 'ready-made' neutral spaces of exchange. Rather, they are processual, dynamic, relational, and interdependent social formations.

What unites many of these perspectives, despite their differences, is an emergent consensus that markets are constituted through interaction, networks, and forms of organisation that exceed individuals. Yet, whilst both the IMP and ANT frameworks offer valuable conceptual tools for thinking about such processes, they remain, in key respects, theoretically underdeveloped. Most notably, they tend to overlook the asymmetrical nature of interdependencies and the role of power in shaping market configurations. Where IMP leans toward functionalist assumptions of coordinated action and mutual benefit, and ANT attributes agency to a broad constellation of human and non-human actors, both fall short in accounting for the structural inequalities and the long-term social, political, and economic developments that condition those engagements over

time.

This is where figurational sociology offers a more conceptually robust alternative. By foregrounding long-term social processes, asymmetrical interdependencies, and shifting balances of power, it enables a more nuanced theorisation of how markets emerge, persist, and transform. Unlike perspectives that prioritise coordination or material agency in isolation, figurational sociology situates market dynamics within networks shaped by long-standing social and institutional arrangements. It draws attention not only to the patterned relationships between individuals and groups but also to the underlying configurations of constraint, habitus, and social structure that condition their actions.

In sum, this literature review has illuminated both the strengths and limitations of prevailing theoretical approaches to market formation. While these perspectives yield important insights, they frequently overlook the long-term dynamics through which power, identity, and social structure are maintained and reshaped across time. Figurational sociology addresses these issues by integrating processual, relational, and historical dimensions into a coherent analytical lens. The following chapters will develop this perspective further, illustrating that adopting such a perspective can advance our understanding of marketisation as a networked process governed by social interdependence, unequal influence, and historical context.

3.7. Comparison of Theoretical Perspectives Considered in Chapter

The following table has been included to summarise and clarify the distinctions between the theoretical perspectives reviewed. While the chapter develops these comparisons in detail, the table offers an explicit representation of how each perspective conceptualises markets, actors, and market dynamics, as well as the limitations identified in the preceding sections. This provides the reader with a clear and distilled summary of the chapter's analysis.

3.7.1. Figure 1.

Dimension	Economics (Neoclassical & Heterodox)	IMP Group (Marketing)	Actor–Network Theory (ANT)	Figurational Sociology
Core View of Markets	Neoclassical: Markets emerge naturally, self-regulate, and function as price-allocation mechanisms. Heterodox: Markets are socially embedded constructs shaped by relationships, institutions, and networks.	Markets are networks of relationships, interactions, and interdependencies.	Markets arise from assemblages and agencements formed by heterogeneous actors.	Markets are figurations that are historically formed, dynamic webs of interdependent people.
View of Actors	Neoclassical: Rational individuals seeking utility maximisation. Heterodox: Socially embedded individuals shaped by networks and institutions.	Individuals and organisations whose identities emerge from interaction.	Human and non-human entities treated as actors with agency.	Humans only; actors occupy positions in evolving figurations shaped by power relations.
What Drives Market Dynamics	Neoclassical: Price, competition, equilibrium. Heterodox: Social relationships and resource mobilisation.	Interaction, mutual adaptation, resource ties, actor bonds.	Performativity, socio-technical agencements, mediators.	Long-term processes, interdependence, shifting power balances.
Role of Social Relations	Neoclassical: Minimal/ignored. Heterodox: Central to markets.	Foundational; i.e. relationships constitute markets.	Present but treated symmetrically; less attention to power.	Fundamental; structured by history and power.
Power & Inequality	Neoclassical: Ignored. Heterodox: Acknowledged but under-theorised.	Under-theorised; assumptions of sharded orientation mask asymmetries.	Downplayed due to symmetry between actors.	Central; power dynamics shape behaviour and market formation.
Historical / Process Orientation	Neoclassical: Weak. Heterodox: Moderate.	Moderate; relationships evolve over time.	Strong short-term process focus; weak long-term structuring.	Very strong; emphasises long-term social development.
Key Limitations	Neoclassical: Reduces markets to price theory; ahistorical. Heterodox: Does not fully theorise markets; risks taking them for granted.	Risks reifying organisations; insufficient attention to power and internal dynamics.	Overextends non-human agency; neglects power, inequality, and history.	Less focus on material artefacts compared to ANT.

4. Chapter 4 - Methodology

4.1. Introduction

In this section, the methodological approach adopted during this research will be outlined. Here, we will not go over old ground by examining the various facets and intricacies of figurational sociology as a discipline and school of thought, as was done extensively in Chapter 2. Rather, in this section, we will go beyond this and illustrate, firstly, how adopting a figurational perspective influenced the development of this research methodology and, secondly, the merit of such an approach.

4.2. Sampling & Sources

As Bloyce (2004, p.161) puts it, "the research process is rarely, if ever, as clean and straightforward as various research methods texts might have us believe". That being said, choosing historical documents as your data source can add an extra degree of difficulty to the process. Summarising this, Bryman (2001, p.370) suggests, the "search for documents relevant to your research can often be a frustrating and highly protracted process". Indeed, research is simply not as straightforward and 'sequential' as many suggest. It is a more back-and-forth process, rife with what could be described as 'trial and error', at least initially.

In light of this, when carrying out this present research, an attempt was made to acknowledge the above and to avoid approaching the data in an acute fashion, or with too narrow a focus. That is to say, at the outset, familiarisation with the research context was the goal. To achieve the desired level of familiarity, Gibson's (1989) *Early Irish Golf* and Menton's (1991) *The Golfing Union of Ireland* were consulted. In particular, Gibson's work was highly enlightening, containing detailed accounts of Ireland's early clubs, their founders, and the island's early competitions. By examining these texts, the researcher was able to establish where and when golf was first played on the island, when the first clubs were formed, and the types of people who first played the game. But more importantly, the researcher came to understand the rate at which golf spread throughout the island.

4.3. Working with Documents: Justification and Value

Documents were chosen because they pertain to the temporal epoch in which they were created and can be used as evidence of events, practices, and ideas. Moreover, when considered sequentially, they can construct a "narrative of change" and, by extension, an insight into the types of changes that occurred within figurations and why (Dolan, 2009, p.185). The specific data targeted was

socio-historic in nature and was made up of a wide range of what would be

commonly known as secondary sources. These include historical monographs, membership records, club histories, tourism annals, newspaper articles, and a host of promotional communications relating to both amateur and professionalised elements of the golfing context. The overall aim of this was to try and identify the social processes at play within the golfing context and to develop a detailed explanation of their impact on marketisation processes. The most significant and influential sources are identified below in Figures 1,2,3 & 4. These include seven club centenary histories, thirteen historical monographs, twelve academic studies, and multiple newspaper articles sourced from the databases listed in Figure 4.

In general, historical monographs provided the researcher with an insight into broader social processes that impacted golf's development on the island as a whole. Whereas the club centenary histories afforded the researcher an insight into the day-to-day club operations that occurred at a more local level. By and large, the other data sources were used in a supplementary fashion to further enhance the researcher's understanding of specific events or topics. Newspaper articles were particularly illustrative in this regard. Whilst the use of such a diverse range of data sources may seem strange to those unfamiliar with figurational sociology, the practice is well established within the discipline. Indeed, Elias himself has often been praised for his ability to draw data from a wide range of seemingly unrelated and disconnected empirical sources and meld

them into a workable, repeatable, and testable model of human interdependency (Goudsblom, 1997; Kilminster, 2007).

Data collection was ongoing, and oftentimes one source would organically lead to another. Indeed, data was pursued in this manner until key social processes were established. This, too, was an iterative process. In the beginning, all recurring events/factors/themes/processes were noted, and then, eventually, with added familiarity and experience with the research context, the researcher was able to refine these and exclude those not relevant to the research questions.
From here, having established a list of relevant processes, the researcher was then able to discern the master or higher-order social processes, those which would answer the proposed research questions most appropriately. These were captioned as follows: *The Democratisation of Irish Golf, The Importance of Pacified Social Spaces*, and finally, *The Quest for Excitement and the Making of Modern Irish Golf.*.

The advantage of using documents in a figurational research project is that they pertain to a specific point in time during the processual development of whichever organisation or social group that crafted them. Indeed, it is held that documents are somewhat unique in the external verifiability that they afford the researcher. This external verifiability stems from the fact that, as opposed to some other sources of research data, for example, interviews, in most cases, the researcher does not have a hand in their development and therefore has a greater

level of detachment. Moreover, because, as Dolan (2009, p.186) suggests, documents are often "produced by people working together to facilitate interaction, and as a means of making requests, specifying requirements and outlining different responsibilities". It could be argued that any document can offer significant insight into the lives of the individuals who crafted it. And by extension, insights into how they differ from those of people in other temporal epochs. Indeed, in relation to the above, May (2001, p. 176) suggests that documents can be used to illustrate the "aspirations and intentions" of the people of the time and, further, that they can be used to "describe places and social relationships at a time when we [the researchers] may not have been born, or were simply not present". That being said, it is clear that documents represent an invaluable resource for the contemporary researcher. However, perhaps more significant is the realisation that documents are more than mere descriptors. That is to say, they are not 'passive' in the sense that they can be used within figurations to have specific effects that alter human behaviour. Dolan goes so far as to suggest that "certain documents are explicitly prescriptive; they are written in order to change or sustain the behaviour of workers and managers (think of work manuals, rosters, timetables, rulebooks)", and that in some cases, they can "actively shape the practices and conduct of people" (2009, p.186).

What's more, the use of documents in this regard is not limited to the realms of small social settings such as organisations. Rather, they can have a similar

impact on society at large. When considering this, it is important to acknowledge the fact that documents, in general, are not truly objective, at least not in the positivist sense of the word. Although often independent of the researcher, documents are not independent of the people crafting them, i.e. they have been crafted with a purpose or agenda in mind. Because of this, documents may only be understood in relation to their social purpose and the reason for which they were produced (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). This is particularly interesting when one considers newspapers and how they relate to social processes. Dunning et al. (1988, p. 10) argue that the media play a role in shaping "the attitudes and perceptions of … the general public". Building on this, Bloyce (2004, p.160) argues that newspapers can be thought of as more than a source of descriptive material. They can be used to illustrate the "position of the press" and help to explain why certain sports seem to "capture the public's imagination". Again, it is essential to note here that, as Dunning et al. (1988, p. 8) stress, the press are not "neutral agents [who] simply report events". Instead, as Fenton et al. (1995, p. 95) suggest, in generating their offerings, they, the press, "exercise value judgments in selecting and filtering the information they receive" and "are active participants in the production process".

Despite some limitations, newspaper articles are widely regarded as valuable data sources. As Bloyce (2004) notes, their proximity to events often justifies

treating them as primary sources. He further argues that, when acknowledging the inherent subjectivity of journalists, figurationalists can use such articles to reconstruct the ‘we’ perspectives of established groups and shed light on their beliefs and behaviours, an approach this researcher believes applies to most documents. Similarly, Finnegan (1996, p.38) highlights how articles can reveal indirect information, such as prevailing ideals, language norms, social evasions, or imagery tailored to specific audiences. In this vein, May (2001, p.185) contends that such sources “do not simply reflect, but also construct social reality and versions of events.” For these reasons, the documentary sources listed below were selected as the primary data for this study.

4.3.1. Figure 2.

Centenary Club Histories			
Title	**Publishing Date**	**Location**	**Author**
Galway Golf Club 1895-1995	1995	Co. Galway	MacSweeney, M., O'Riordan, K., & Cunningham, J.
100 years in Shortgrass	1996	Naas, Co. Kildare	Costello, C.
Clandeboye 2000	2000	Clandeboye, Co. Down	Millennium Committee, Clandeboye Golf Club
Bangor Golf Club - 100 Years	2003	Bangor, Co. Down	Stanley, J. & Campbell, P.

100 Years of Golf at Sutton	1990	Sutton, Co. Dublin	Guiney, D.

Malone Golf Club 1895-1995	1995	Belfast, Co. Antrim	Hanna, J.
The Knock Golf Club Limited: A History 1895-1982	1982	Dundonald, Co. Antrim	Hendren, J.

4.3.2. Figure 3.

Historical Monographs (Books)		
Title	**Publishing Date**	**Author**
The Golfing Union of Ireland 1891-1991	1991	Menton, W.
Early Irish Golf: The First Courses, Clubs, and Pioneers	1989	Gibson, W.
Sport and the Irish	2005	Bairner, A.

Sport in Ireland	2017	Rouse, P.
A Social and Cultural History of Ireland	2018	McElligott, R. & Hassan, D.

The Golfer's Handbook	1975	Munro-Barr Publications Ltd
Golf Tourism	2014	Hudson, S. & Hudson, L.
Golf Greens of Ireland: A Nostalgic	2002	Hanna, J.
Golf and the Railway Connection	2003	Nalder, I.
The Big Book of Irish Golf	1997	Redmond, J.
Sport and Society in Victorian Ireland	2007	Hunt, T.
Gaelic Games in Society	2020	Connolly, J. & Dolan, P.
A History of Women’s Golf in Ireland	2018	Morris, I.

4.3.3. Figure 4.

Journal Articles			
Title	**Publishing Date**	**Journal**	**Author**
A Gift from Scotland: Golf's Early Days in Ireland	2006	History Ireland	Mulhall, D.
An Approach to the History of Golf	2010	Journal of Sport and Social Issues	Ceron-Anaya, H.
Developing Consumer Subjectivity in Ireland: 1900-80	2009	Journal of Consumer Culture	Dolan, P.
Figurational dynamics and parliamentary discourses of living standards in Ireland	2009	The British Journal of Sociology	Dolan, P.
Established-Outsider Relations Between M & F in the Field Sports of Ireland	2005	Irish Journal of Sociology	Liston, K.
Nationalist Attitudes to Golf	2007	History Ireland	Maume, P.

No Women (and dogs) Allowed	2007	W.U. Global Studies Law Review	Song. E.
Sport in Ireland, 1600-1840	2015	Irish Studies Review	Griffin, B.
Sport, the Northern Ireland peace process, and the politics of identity	2003	Journal Of A, C, And P Research	Bairner, A.
Sport: The Irish Soccer Split	2015	History Ireland	Moore, C.
Terrorism and the abnormality of sport in Northern Ireland	2012	I.R. for the Sociology of Sport	Hassan, D. & O'Kane, P.
The Early Development of Golf in Irish Society.	2013	Eire-Ireland	Higgins. R.

4.3.4. Figure 5.

Newspaper Databases
ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *The Irish Times* and *The Weekly Irish Times* (1850 - Present Day)
Irish Newspaper Archives (circa 1850 - Present Day)
UK/Ireland Reference Centre
Irish Golf Archive

4.4. Elias & Methodology: Core Theoretical Commitments

Decisions surrounding methodological theory often play a pivotal role in data collection and, indeed, overall research design. Because of this importance, contemporary academia is plagued by debate and dispute regarding which approach should be afforded primacy. In some cases, these debates can span decades and can become heated and relatively bitter. Indeed, Elias was bold in his treatment of even the most prominent debates within methodological theory, engaging with the issues surrounding epistemology vs ontology and inductive vs deductive research head-on (Kilminster, 2004; Van Kriekan, 1998). In fact, as regards epistemology & ontology, figurationalists, following Elias, rebuke the issue in its entirety, suggesting not only that once again it represents a false dichotomy, but also that, because epistemology and ontology are fundamentally interdependent, to consider them in any other fashion is nonsensical. Moreover, Elias was critical of philosophy in general and took particular issue with researchers who failed to acknowledge the processual nature of all research. Summarising this, Elias once suggested that "the idea that people can discover a method or a tool of thought, independently of their conception of the subject matter about which knowledge is to be gained, is, however, a product of the philosophical imagination" (Elias, 1978, p.57).

Despite what could be described as the comparatively radical treatment of the

above issue, it could be suggested that Elias's most significant contribution to methodological theory came in relation to inductive vs deductive research strategies. The act of testing existing theory versus the act of generating new theory. Concerning this particular issue, Elias (1984, p.58) maintained that "the separation of theory and method proves to be based on misconception". That is to say, Elias maintained that framing the debate in terms of 'inductive vs deductive' research is an oversimplification. Elias contended that research is both, at times, inductive and, at times, deductive and that overall, it should be considered a combination of both. It is because of this that Bloyce (2004, p.152) argues that the "inductive/deductive approach is a formalistic, simplistic, and distorting characterisation of this [the research] process". Indeed, Maguire (1988, p.188) suggests that conducting research figurationally is more appropriate as it "commits researchers to … work on the empirical without dominating it with theory and, at the same time, develop theoretical insights firmly informed by evidence". For figurationalists, research is a process in which theory guides and is engaged with at multiple points throughout.

However, it is also tested. As Bloyce (2004, p.152) puts it, the goal is not to sustain "pre-formed views". Rather, as he argues, the goal is to understand and explain, and, as such, figurationalists "are more likely to want to test as opposed to confirm theories" (2004, p.152). This is a back-and-forth process that requires continued engagement with theory throughout the research process.

The term ‘process’ used above brings us to another important contrast between Elias’s approach to research and more mainstream methodological theory. One constant in Elias’s approach was his acknowledgement of the need to account for processual development in society. Elias (1987, p.223) was highly critical of what he captioned “the retreat of sociologists into the present”. Elias rejected the notion of studying the present in isolation, insisting (as outlined in Chapter 2) that understanding the present requires an understanding of the past. For figurational researchers, society is viewed as dynamic and ever-changing, encompassing the “social structures, attitudes, values, beliefs, traditions, and practices” that shape it (Dolan, 2009, p.190). As Dolan puts it, “every ‘thing’ in the social world is treated as ‘in process’, simply because these ‘things’ have histories” (2009, p.190).In this sense, ‘things’ as we come to know them are not constants throughout the ages. More accurately, they are the result of changes and developments that have taken place over time. If we are to understand and explain these changes and their causes, we must consider them in relation to broader social processes. To illustrate this point, Dolan (2009, p.187) uses the example of contemporary organisations and summarises the concept thusly –

> Obviously, particular organisations have not always existed. They were established by particular people at a particular point in time. Perhaps less obviously, once established, they continue to change. Through the competitive dynamic between other organisations, and through various

> shifting relations with other groups that the organisation depends upon…the owners and managers of the organisation must adapt its structures, functions, corporate culture and conduct.

The result of this ongoing adaptation is an organisation that is qualitatively different from the organisation formed at the outset. To understand the causes of these changes, the object of inquiry must be considered temporally. This, again, highlights the Eliasian assertion that what occurred in previous societies can shed light on the dynamics of contemporary societies (Kilminster, 2007). As well as this, it has been said that in many ways, Elias's approach is a critique of many standardised methodological approaches. For Elias, "the discovery, not the method, legitimises research as scientific" (Elias, 1986, p.20). Indeed, Elias altogether refrained from adopting standardised methodological approaches and was quite fluid in this regard, often varying it according to his research topic (Kilminster 2004). However, elements of the figurational approach to research in which Elias was particularly exacting were achieving a balance between involvement and detachment and pursuing more reality-congruent knowledge.

4.5. Involvement & Detachment – The Pursuit of More Reality Congruent Knowledge

To those unfamiliar with figurational sociology, the terms 'involvement' & 'detachment' may, on the surface, seem quite simplistic. On the face of it, one

may be considered as being either involved or detached. However, involvement and detachment are complex issues wherein the two must be considered as being positioned on opposite ends of a scale, with the researcher being located somewhere between. That is to say, one may be considered in terms of degrees of detachment and degrees of involvement, but always resting on that scale and by extension, never truly detached or fully involved. Indeed, whilst in pursuit of more reality-congruent knowledge, Elias(2007) maintains that one should seek to find a balance between the two.

Developing more reality-congruent knowledge involves mitigating potential researcher bias and ensuring that the researcher is suitably detached from the research subject. This is done in an effort to create research that is as true to life as possible. As suggested above, this can only be taken so far, and it is, perhaps, more appropriate to consider research as having, as Bloyce (2004, p.147) put it, “greater or lesser degrees of adequacy”. Indeed, when captioning Elias’s thought in this regard, Murphy et al. (2000, p. 104) suggest that

> Researchers can realistically only aspire to develop explanations that have a greater degree of adequacy than preceding explanations. Notions such as "ultimate truth" and "complete detachment" have no place in his approach.

Such a conceptualisation of involvement and detachment transcends many of the dichotomies that are inherent in the contemporary social sciences (Elias, 1991; Kilminster, 2014). As well as this, Bloyce argues that simply the recognition of

these concepts (involvement & detachment) creates awareness within figurational researchers and "is, specifically, enough to sensitise the researcher"(2004, p.150). And, by extension, improve the reality congruence of the work. That is not to suggest one can simply 'choose' to be detached. Indeed, Connolly & Dolan (2020, p.10) argue that "involvement and detachment are not polar opposites, nor are people predisposed to one inclination or the other". What this suggests is that, even in the case of the figurational researcher, detachment is a processual development that must be pursued. Elias himself illustrates the processual nature of detachment by suggesting that "one cannot say of a person's outlook in any absolute sense that it is detached or involved…Normally adult behaviour lies on a scale somewhere between these two extremes" (Elias, 2007, p.68-69). Kilminster (2007) described this as a kind of 'involved detachment' and argued that the researcher must be passionate about and committed to scientific discovery. And not, as Connolly & Dolan (2020, p. 10) put it, "diffident" and possessed of an "indifferent emotional staleness to the process". What this implies is that the figurational researcher must be aware of their own involvement in the social arena. And in generating this awareness, they strive to distance themselves, insofar as possible, from any preconceived notions or beliefs. This will lead to a better, "more reality- congruent understanding of the issues related to our area of research" (Bloyce, 2004, p.148). However, in doing so, the researcher must bear the following caveats in mind. Firstly, scientific

detachment cannot be achieved by sheer force of will. It is a process. Secondly, Elias always maintained that attaining complete scientific detachment is impossible (Elias, 2007); the researcher will always have some pre-existing bias. The best we can hope for is to mitigate these biases to the fullest extent possible. Adopting a long-term perspective can help in this regard. Indeed, many figurationalists argue that by grounding the proposed research topic in the past and examining it through a socio-historic lens, greater levels of detachment can be achieved (Maguire, 1988; Bloyce, 2004). This secondary involvement is often referred to as a 'detour via detachment' (Dunning, 1992; Elias, 2007). Moreover, it has been suggested that doing so allows the researcher not only to compare different 'we' perspectives but also that the analytical distance gained facilitates the employment of 'they' perspectives and offers a more "adequate view of how the intentions and actions of the various groups are interlocked" (Dunning, 1992, p.252). Again, there are certain considerations to be made here. For instance, when embarking on a 'detour via detachment', Connolly & Dolan (2020, p.11) suggest that researchers are required to reduce "the distance between past and present by locating such events and practices within the figurations, standards of conduct, and traditions of the past". Indeed, Kilminster (2011) expressed a similar sentiment when he proposed that researchers shelve their political, religious, and moral ideals until after research has been completed.

The final element of figurational theory that holds relevance to one's

methodological approach is its emphasis on groups of interdependent people and its assertion that understanding the nature of this interdependence can explain social developments. Speaking broadly, one could argue that, for the most part, much of contemporary social scientific research focuses primarily on the individual. However, as established from the figurational perspective, the key to understanding is to consider groups of individuals bound in interdependence. Indeed, Dolan argues that "behaviour cannot be explained by traits or attributes that are somehow imagined to be innate properties of the individual" (2009, p.191). Rather, by analysing figurations, we can consider the behaviour of numerous different groups of people at different levels of social integration. Building on this, Dolan goes on to suggest that –

> We can use the concept of figuration to examine particular groups, like families, youth subcultures, spectators, social classes, ethnic groups, and gender. We can use figuration to correspond to various levels of social integration from a married couple, a housing estate, a suburb, a city, through to a nation-state and the globe itself. All of these levels are interrelated, such that changes in one level affect others. (2009, p.191).

In light of this, it becomes clear that adopting a figurational approach, by its very nature, transcends the problems of methodological individualism and allows a fuller examination of any given research context.

4.6. Analysis & Synthesis

Having gone through, or more accurately, become immersed in, data collection, the issue of analysis quickly comes to the fore. In this regard, Elias's assertion that the core purpose of all research is "to find out in what way perceived data are connected with each other" (1987, p.20) is deceptively straightforward yet undeniably helpful in terms of the clarity it provides. The figurational researcher does more than simply gather facts. They "trace and analyse the significance which specific events have in time and their conjunction with other events" (Maguire, 1988, p.191). This allows the researcher to engage with both specific events and their broader significance within the phenomenon being studied (Maguire, 1988, p.191).

It was with this in mind that the identification and development of themes began. During the initial familiarisation stage, recurring events, relevant interdependencies, and potential processes were noted across the initial data set, generating a wide-ranging list of possibilities. To work systematically through these, each potential process was physically written onto a large blackboard in the researcher's office. This visual arrangement allowed relationships, overlaps, and contrasts between processes to be identified more clearly. Seeing these processes laid out together made it possible to evaluate their relative explanatory

power and determine which were central to the development of Irish golf. Through repeated comparison and refinement, broader, more significant processes gradually emerged from the initial list. Indeed, once these higher-order processes were identified, a second blackboard was used to organise the analysis further. Each significant process was written as a heading, and as the researcher re-read documentary sources, relevant data excerpts were assigned by hand to the process or processes they illuminated. Physically "handling" the material made it easier to visualise temporal patterns, contradictions, and points of change within and across processes. It also facilitated the iterative narrowing of focus, as less relevant themes naturally received little supporting data while central processes accumulated substantial evidence. In this way, the democratisation of Irish golf, the need for pacified social spaces, and the relationship between the quest for excitement, sportisation, and marketisation were established as the core social processes guiding the subsequent analysis.

Having identified these higher-order processes, other sources were then incorporated into the analysis, and the process of coding and analysing began again. That is to say, eventually, the researcher became familiar enough with these core data sources and the empirical context to which they pertained to begin extending the sources initially focused on and augmenting the existing analysis with new data and further testing. At each stage in this process, the same iterative examination technique was employed to ensure elements of the data

were not decontextualised and that they were understood in what Dolan (2009, p.196) describes as a “more relational manner”. The broader processes identified were made up of a combination of prominent elements that were found in the data and the previously illustrated research questions. Again, it should be stressed that each of these was continually refined in relation to the data and that what Elias(1987) and Maguire (1988) captioned “constant two- way traffic” took place. This ‘two-way traffic’ is indicative of the dynamic relationship that exists between theory and research. One in which it is argued that in a kind of ‘iron sharpens iron’ fashion, theory is treated “as a sensitising agent, one that is open to modification if it is found to be relatively unproductive or too limiting” (Bloyce, 2004, p.153). The overall aim of this process was to produce what Dunning et al. (1988, p. 267) captioned “theoretically grounded empirical work”. During this time, the researcher was keenly aware of the fact that theory will, in a sense, guide research and influence methods. In short, the research was approached in a very deductive manner, with theory acting as a guiding and sensitising agent.

That being said, when working with historical documents, models of interdependent social relationships are not always available. More often, one encounters empirical descriptions pertaining to events and individuals (Dolan, 2009). As a result, researchers must often construct the figuration from this. This is only possible upon identifying relevant broader social relationships, the

social dynamics at play within said relationships, and the extent to which interdependencies are developed. However, after prolonged engagement with the data, keywords, and subsequently, social processes pertaining to the research context began to emerge. Marketisation was identified as a central theme early on, and how this process evolved was examined through time. The examination ranged from the early provision of the game of golf through to its overt promotion and positioning as a 'product'. This was derived from an examination of attitudes towards, and approaches to, what we would today refer to as marketing. It necessitated a protracted analysis and the fluid coding of sources as meanings and approaches changed and continue to change through time. Other relevant social processes that were identified include *colonisation, democratisation, urbanisation, industrialisation, sportisation, codification, sport and social class, the quest for excitement, established/outsider relations, state formation, interstate relations, functional democratisation, lengthening chains of interdependence, the need for pacified social spaces, technological innovation,* and finally, *the perceived importance of marketing*. To that end, historical monographs were initially used to establish a type of 'descriptive– context', to provide the researcher with a broad stroke and tertiary understanding of the research site. However, as familiarity with the data grew, evidence of social norms, behavioural cues, and codes of conduct became apparent within these sources. These were then used to illustrate the processual development and

changing dynamics of contemporary figurations. The processes mentioned above were identified as significant in terms of explanatory merit and data sources relevant to these processes, and the established research questions were considered particularly relevant. What constituted relevance in this regard was informed not only by its occurrence in the data but also with reference to theory. Maguire's (1988, p.188) aforementioned "uninterrupted two-way traffic" took place, and, in some ways, figurational theory acted as a guide here. This helped to separate irrelevancies from viable avenues of inquiry and helped to produce what Dunning et al. (1988, p. 267) captioned "theoretically grounded empirical work". Moreover, the processes mentioned above were then cross-referenced and further honed in relation to the other historical monographs and club centenary histories listed in Figures 1 and 2. Following on from this, the other data sources listed were integrated into the analysis. The researcher was then better positioned to decide which of the themes/processes identified above were relevant or warranted further discussion. At this point, somewhat of a cull took place. The following were chosen as the most significant social processes: democratisation and sport's position as a marker of social class, interstate relations and the need for pacified social spaces, and finally, the relationship between the quest for excitement, sportisation, and marketisation.

From here, on a case-by-case basis, all data sources were re-examined and coded in accordance with these processes. The codes were then mapped visually under

headings pertaining to each process and ordered sequentially according to date. This made it easier for the researcher to visualise how the process developed and identify any key points or changes that occurred during this time. Data were also coded in relation to other relevant demographic variables such as club, geographic locations, class make-up, promotion type and origin, and so on and so forth. This multiple coding was done in an effort to identify "patterns and contradictions, which can often be explained by other differences" (Dolan, 2009, p.197). Any changes that occurred were considered figurationally, and their impact was used to illuminate how shifting power relations between groups and the subsequent changes in market processes manifested over time.

The researcher followed Elias and his proponents in this regard, who would suggest that with the help of empirical evidence relating to specific points in time, one can observe definite societal changes, be they planned or unplanned, and go about explaining what motivated or caused these changes. Indeed, Eliasians would further suggest that in examining societal changes, a research perspective that first deals with the "how" and the "why" is a better approach, and that only after understanding why such changes occur can we begin to assess their wider implications. This is captioned in the following lines –

> Only after questions of this sort are brought closer to solution are we in a position to judge whether, in what sense and for which human groups' observable transformations in social and personality structures, seen in

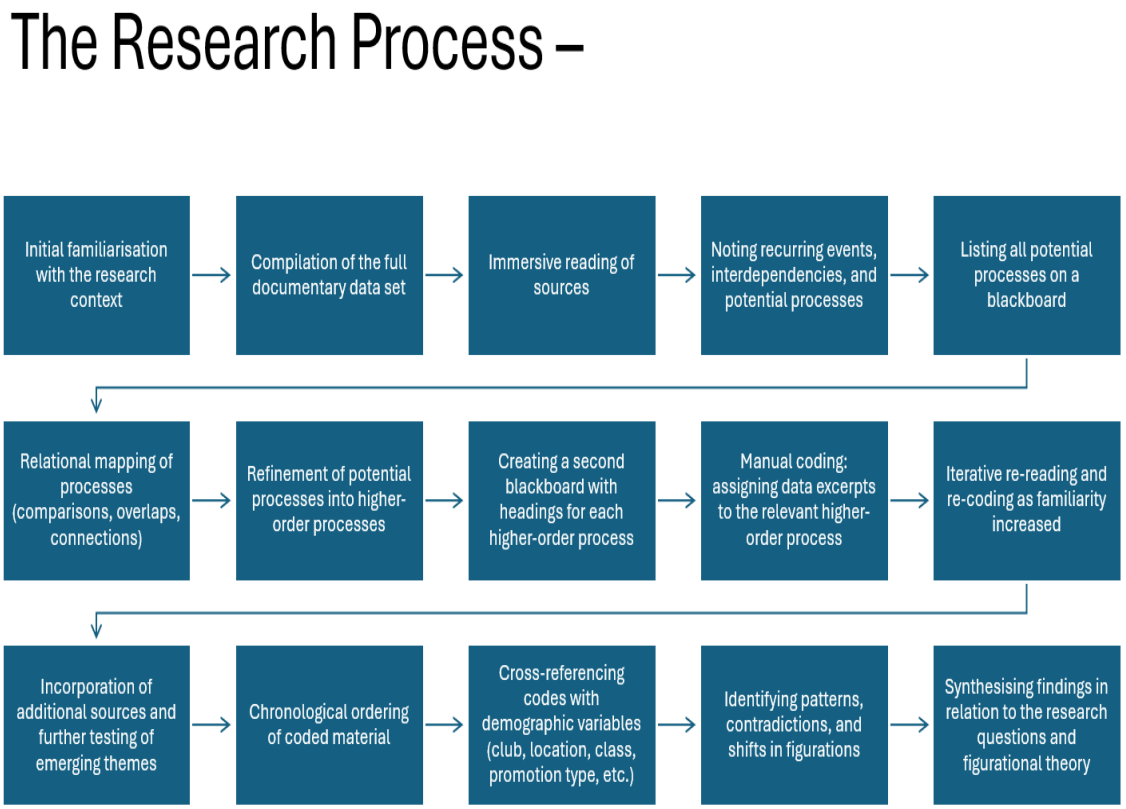
> long-term perspective, produce more advantages or disadvantages, that is, transformations for better or worse (Elias et al., 1997, p.369).

In conclusion, this type of approach is not new to Figurational sociology. Indeed, Maguire (1983) applied this type of approach to the context of the commercialisation of basketball in the United Kingdom (UK). Maguire identified rule changes and the transformation of basketball into an entertainment product as markers of commercialisation and shifting values. He mapped the interdependent relationships among players, coaches, clubs, spectators, sponsors, and media, highlighting how their mutual dependencies drove the sport's commercial development. Dunning and Sheard (1989) adopted a similar methodological approach in their study of rugby's split into amateur and professional forms, arguing that this division can only be understood within broader social and economic contexts. Their analysis extended beyond rugby, using it to explore underlying social and class tensions. This current study was approached similarly, with the most important social processes identified above being selected to illustrate golf's marketisation in Ireland and answer the previously mentioned research questions, an account of which will take place in the following section.

4.6.1. Figure 6. The Research Process Illustrated

To enhance transparency and to demonstrate the coherence of the analytic

approach adopted, the following diagram outlines the principal stages of the research process, from initial familiarisation through to theme development and coding.



5. Chapter 5 – Findings & Analysis

5.1. Section 1 – Introduction

This section presents the findings of the research and discusses their significance. The aim of the study was to examine how markets form and the role marketing plays in that process. Three processes were identified as vital in this regard: *The Quest for Excitement and the Making of Modern Irish Golf*, *The Democratisation of Irish Golf,* and *The Importance of Pacified Social Spaces.* We will begin by considering *The Quest for Excitement and the Making of Modern Irish Golf.*

5.2. Section 2 – The Quest for Excitement and the Making of Modern Irish Golf: Sportisation, Marketisation, and Social Transformation

In this section, we will consider the ways in which the quest for excitement contributed, not only to golf's transformation into a routinised and codified sport, but also how it contributed to its eventual marketisation. In doing so, three interwoven social processes and the ways in which they influenced each

other will be considered. These processes, the quest for excitement, sportisation, and marketisation, are complex and significant in their own right, underscoring the intricacy of what follows. However, their development was further shaped by broader social forces, and this added yet another layer of complexity.

As established, Elias and Dunning's (1986) concept of the quest for excitement provides a valuable lens for understanding sport's role in modern societies. They argue that in increasingly regulated environments, individuals seek socially sanctioned outlets for emotional stimulation. Sport offers such an outlet, enabling a "controlled decontrolling of emotional controls" (Elias, 1986, p. 96), where tension and emotional expression are permitted within structured settings. In doing so, sport reintroduces drama and uncertainty into routinised lives, fulfilling a deep psychological need. This development aligns with Elias's civilising process. As social interdependencies intensified and behavioural norms became more stringent, so too did the ways in which people satisfied emotional drives. Through sportisation, violent folk games were formalised to meet emerging standards of civility (Elias & Dunning, 2008). And the structured rules that accompanied this formalisation recalibrated, rather than reduced, tension, thereby making sport both emotionally engaging and socially acceptable. This codification also made sport suitable for commodification. That is to say, it was not simply discovered by economic actors, but was shaped into a market-ready product by virtue of the sportisation process. Indeed, sport's popularity and

economic value, therefore, stem from its function as a regulated and socially endorsed source of emotional stimulation.

Understanding sport's marketisation, therefore, requires us to consider it as part of and subject to a wider figuration. Sport, like any social domain, exists within a web of interdependencies shaped by fluctuating power dynamics. Elias's monopoly mechanism (2000) helps show how these power dynamics shape both the way these sports become socially acceptable and how stable markets form around them. Golf's journey from informal pastime to professionalised, commodified spectacle exemplifies this relationship. It reflects not just a commercial trend but a broader socio-historical shift in how emotional experiences are managed; a shift that, in Ireland, enabled railway companies in particular to commodify the emotional appeal of a structured leisure practice through packaged tourism and infrastructural investment. How this manifested will be discussed hereunder.

5.2.1. Military Origins and Emotional Appeal: The First Phase of Irish Golf

Golf first emerged in Ireland as a loosely organised, non-institutionalised form of leisure that was characterised by the absence of codified rules and standardised environments. What we can also say is that at this stage in the

game’s processual development, people were driven to it by the quest for

excitement, but, importantly, sportisation, and indeed, marketisation, had yet to impact Irish golf in any significant fashion. As previously noted, the earliest records of golf in Ireland date to the 1700s; however, this was a short-lived affair (Gibson, 1988). It was to be approximately another one hundred and fifty years until, in the eighteen fifties, golf could be found in Ireland again. On this occasion, its origins can be traced to members of the British military, particularly Scotsmen, emanating from the officer classes. Indeed, although throughout the world golf is often referred to as a 'gift from Scotland', nowhere is this description more appropriate than in Ireland. At this time, the island was a part of the British Empire. Golf's development here was inextricably linked to, and bound up with, the British colonisation of the island.

Evidence of golf in Ireland at this time can be almost exclusively linked to military personnel. These military men were no different to ordinary people in the sense that they, too, were subject to the quest for excitement. That is to say, they too were subject to a deep-rooted need which they felt compelled to satisfy. In this instance, golf was the channel through which they sought fulfilment.
Guiney (1990, p.4) suggests that golf "was then extremely popular with, and regularly played by", members of the officer class. Military golfers became the leading pioneers of the game in Ireland at this time (the early 1850s). Proof of this can be found in the rudimentary military 'clubs' in Dublin, Belfast, and Kinsale, which were set up by officers from the Blackwatch, the Gordon

Highlanders, the King's Own Borderers, and the Highland Light Infantry (British military regiments) respectively (Gibson, 1988). The term 'clubs' is used loosely above because these early golfing figurations did not conform to contemporary understandings of the term. Nevertheless, these courses are an important early element of the processual development of Irish golf and evidence of its position as the pastime of choice for military officers. Moreover, golf's use in these individuals' quest for excitement would only increase from this point onward, and, as a result, so too would the game's popularity.

As evidence of this, we can look once more to the Curragh military base. Where, at this point, in the late 1850s, we can begin to see trace elements of sportisation appear, that is to say, it was here that golf was first played in what approximated a regular and structured manner in Ireland. It was still army officers who championed the game during this period, but importantly, on this occasion, they were at times joined by guests drawn from the upper classes and the landed gentry (Mulhall, 2006), who also began to view the game as a legitimate and socially acceptable means of satisfying their need for excitement. The social class of the individuals involved here would also prove significant to golf's marketisation; however, this will be discussed in greater detail in a subsequent section. That said, this pattern of semi-casual and semi-codified yet socially exclusive play persisted at the Curragh until, in circa 1883, elements of marketisation and sportisation began to become even more prominent.

However, during the intervening period, between 1850 and 1883, the early degree of relative stability at the Curragh proved to be somewhat atypical, and by and large, golf was played in a much more informal and unorganised fashion at other military bases throughout Ireland at this time. Early examples of where golf was played in this ad-hoc and sporadic manner include the military bases in Kinsale, Fota, Woodenbridge, Cavan, Mornington, Tullamore, and Galway (Gibson, 1988; MacSweeney,1995). Indeed, during this circa 30-year period, golf was, for the most part, very much still an unorganised leisure practice in Ireland; it had not, to any significant degree, felt the effects of sportisation and by extension, elements of marketisation were few and far between. As a result, until the early 1880s, it grew quite slowly and spread scarcely beyond the groups/types of people who were playing it in the 1850s.

It wasn't until the beginning of what Clarke (2001) described as an 'explosion' of clubs in Ireland and Britain that we saw golf substantially increase in popularity. Of course, one of the reasons for this was that growing numbers of people turned to the sport to satisfy their quest for excitement. That is to say, a growing number of people came to view it as a socially acceptable way to balance and restore what Elias dubbed their 'mental tonus'(Elias, 1986). At this time, elements of sportisation and marketisation slowly began to emerge. This new increase in clubs again owes much to Scottish military men, and, in fact, Dublin, the island's capital, was introduced to the game by a young Scottish officer named David

Kinloch (Browning, 2018). The creation of Kinloch's course and its later development into a civilian club offers a clear example of how this next iteration of golf began to take root in Ireland. Up to this point, it was typically Scottish officers, seeking to satisfy their quest for excitement, who established courses on or near military bases. However, by the 1880s, something had changed; it was no longer just courses being created, but clubs resembling those we might recognise today.

The difference between these new clubs and the courses of old was that they were regularly played upon by a large number of enthusiasts, whereas the original courses were played but sporadically and by a comparatively small number of military officers. A good example of this new type of club can be found in Co. Galway, wherein a Colonel Jourdain of the Connaught Rangers, then billeted at Renmore, had a course constructed adjacent to the rifle range on the local military base. By all accounts, this was an active and strong club, regularly played, but "exclusively by military personnel and their close personal friends" (MacSweeney, 1995, p.12). Other notable examples of these early clubs include Ballycastle in Co. Antrim and Athlone in Co. Westmeath. The Ballycastle course, established in 1891, owed its existence to one man, Commander Alfred Malcolm Causton of the Royal Navy, then stationed in the area (Hanna, 2002). This contrasts with the club in Athlone, set up by a committed group of officers stationed there. Records date the club to 1885; although initially reserved for

military use, it soon attracted high-ranking members of the Royal Irish Constabulary and later, the upper classes (Hunt, 2007).

While golf's popularity was clearly growing during this period, it remained largely casual and amateur. Within these military clubs, the sport was still largely absent from the codification and commercial structures now associated with it. Yet, this period marked a key transition. Golf began to move beyond military bases and elite circles toward the formation of clubs more recognisable today. Though some remained exclusive, many became increasingly accessible to the general public, signalling the early stages of wider sportisation and marketisation.

5.2.2. From Garrison to Gentleman: Civilian Adoption and Early Market Dynamics

As the game gradually moved beyond military bases and into the hands of civilian elites, the figurational structure of Irish golf began to change. New people entered the field, bringing with them new forms of organisation, values, and economic potential. The formation of Ireland's first official golf club, the Royal Belfast, represented a significant step forward in this regard. Royal Belfast is somewhat unique in that it was the first club in Ireland to go against the military trend in the sense that it was originally set up by a group made up of

civilians. The significance here is that this is indicative of golf being viewed as a socially acceptable means to satisfy the quest for excitement by people outside of military circles, by civilians in general, and it is also significant because it is at this point where we see elements of marketisation become more prominent in Irish golf. Royal Belfast was established by three civilians, the Right Honourable Thomas Sinclair, Dr William F. Collier, and George Baillie, a Scottish teacher then working in Belfast (Gibson, 1988, p. 39). This is not to suggest the absence of military involvement; indeed, military figures were prominent among the early membership, as shown by club records and the election of Captain John Harrison, the Laird of Belfast, as the club's first president (Gibson, 1988). However, the course was not on a military base, nor was access controlled by the military. High-ranking roles were held by civilians, such as Mr J. Brown and Mr G. Baillie, who served as Treasurer and Honorary Secretary, respectively (Irish Golf Archive, n.d.). Given the lack of a prior military course in the area, it is likely that Captain Harrison was chosen more for his position as Laird than his military background. This constituted a significant divergence from the norm at the time and began the formation of civilian golf clubs throughout the country. An early stage in this process was the transformation of military clubs into civilian clubs. Indeed, Ireland's second and third golf clubs, the Curragh and the Royal Dublin Golf Club, are good examples of this.

The situation in the Curragh could be described as quite a gradual process, with members of the military playing the game, inviting members of the upper classes to join them on occasion, and this, in turn, leading to the eventual formation of a club and subsequent admission of high-class civilians as members. However, the process of change as regards Royal Dublin happened much more quickly. Officially founded in 1885 by Scottish banker John Lumsden, the club began playing in Phoenix Park, where it absorbed a military club that had been established there in 1884 (Gibson, 1988). This was a smooth and amicable process, with the club growing rapidly and accruing upwards of eighty civilian and military members in its first year (Charles, 1885). Moreover, the club is a good example of how, having found a socially acceptable way to regulate their 'mental tonus' (Elias, 2008), members of the gentry and the upper classes enthusiastically took to the game. This is evidenced by the fact that the club captain, treasurer, secretary, and membership committee at Royal Dublin were all civilian members of the upper classes (*Irish Times*, 1885). Similar examples of this enthusiasm for the game can be found in the cases of the Westmeath County Club and Dublin's Island Golf Club, wherein military involvement in the clubs' establishment was almost non-existent. In Westmeath, the founders were described as "important members of county and professional society", and the initial members were suggested to be drawn from a "limited number of socio-economic groups", including the aristocracy, the landed gentry,

county administrators, county and district RIC inspectors, and commercial men

(Hunt, 2007, p.88). At the Island Golf Club, members of the professional classes were similarly important. In fact, a brewery proprietor, a solicitor, and two bankers were amongst the club's founding members (Mulhall, 2006).

As established, it was through growth rooted in the quest for excitement that trace elements of marketisation became more visible in Irish golf. Alongside this transformation, features of contemporary economic life not only emerged within the game but became central to its operation. Consumption, production, and exchange were all present and increasingly significant. One could argue that by this point, not only had a market developed around golf, but golf itself had become the product. Historically, until the 1890s, individuals in Ireland largely played the game outside formal economic exchange; this was no longer the case. Membership fees, equipment, attire, and admission to social events now all came at a cost (Gibson, 1988; Menton, 1991). Moreover, having been subject to the quest for excitement and the sportisation process, golf was now primed and ready for adaptation by market-oriented individuals. Royal Belfast exemplifies this shift. Although the land was initially granted freely by Captain John Harrison, the Laird of Belfast, the founders were responsible for cultivating it. Not motivated by profit, they set the annual membership fee at 1 guinea. However, members were also required to pay for access to clubhouse services and social events (Golf's Missing Links, 2012; Gibson, 1988).

5.2.3. Monopoly Mechanism and Market Formation: Elias and Irish Golf

The rise of civilian clubs laid the groundwork for a new stage in golf's development, one increasingly shaped by economic competition, institutional ambition, and strategic positioning. To understand this, we now turn to Elias's monopoly mechanism and its application to emerging market dynamics in Irish golf. As suggested above, it was in the early 1890s that, in conjunction with sportisation, we first came to see elements of marketisation become established in Irish golf. Indeed, monetisation in the form of membership fees and financial exchange for goods and services could be found in even the very first civilian golf clubs, the Royal Belfast and the Royal Dublin Golf Club (Mulhall, 2006; Gibson, 1989). What's more, at this time, the number of clubs in Ireland exploded. During the next ten-year period, the number of clubs increased by 103, bringing the total number on the island to 108 (Gibson, 1988). As well as this, it is estimated that some 12,000 individuals could be considered to be active golfers by the end of the decade (Mulhall, 2006). All of these individuals now had to pay for golf and were subject to market processes.

We must recognise at this point that to assume that one single process, or individual, or group of individuals, was solely responsible for golf's change at this point is both reductive and overly deterministic. To understand what was

taking place, we must consider these developments in relation to the

interdependent figurations in which they formed. Different individuals and groups sought to monopolise elements of the golf experience, and they contributed both intentionally and unintentionally to its sportisation and marketisation. Rather than being shaped by a singular strategic intent, this process unfolded through a series of contingent dealings in which participants (clubs, railway companies, elites) responded to shifting opportunities and constraints. The power balances between them were constantly recalibrated as resources, reputations, and expectations evolved, producing outcomes that were as much unintended as they were planned. Relationships between individuals, or in this case, groups of individuals, are characterised by the nature of the power balances that exist between them, and not only this, but also that the outcomes of their engagements are highly influenced by the nature of those power balances. In support of this, we need only consider the fact that, at least initially, marketisation took place beyond the desires of the typical golfer and even beyond the desires of those who were involved in the day-to-day running of contemporary clubs.

5.2.4. Infrastructure, Interdependence, and Influence: Railways in the Irish Golf Economy

Evidence of this became abundantly clear in the 1890s when marketing was carried out not by the governing bodies of golf clubs but by other organisations, most notably railway companies. From a figurational standpoint, this shift marks the

entry of new people into the broader golfing figuration, people whose interests lay not in the sport itself but in the economic potential it offered.

Viewed through the lens of Elias's monopoly mechanism, this development represents a key moment in the marketisation process. At this point, railway companies, recognising golf's popularity and its growing value as a social and economic commodity, began to seek control over how the game was accessed and experienced. Rather than controlling play itself, they aimed to monopolise the logistical and symbolic frameworks that underpinned the sport. Namely, transportation, leisure infrastructure, and regional tourism promotion. In doing so, they repositioned themselves within the network of interdependency that constituted Irish golf at the time, transforming from mere transport providers into dominant stakeholders whose investments in hotels, courses, and events required clubs to increasingly adapt to external economic priorities. This fundamentally altered the sport's growth trajectory in ways that extended well beyond the agency of individual clubs or players. Indeed, individuals in these railway companies were interested in golf for more economic and commercial reasons than those who typically played, and they regularly promoted the sport in accordance with their own goals. An unintended consequence of this was the advancement of golf's marketisation in Ireland. That is not to suggest that these individuals were the sole drivers of marketisation at this time; the social processes mentioned above also contributed to and drove golf's marketisation.

However, we can say for certain that railway companies occupied positions of power within contemporary golfing figurations and the balances of power that existed were skewed heavily in their favour.

The impact of these individuals can be said to have been keenly felt very early on in the development of Irish golf. Indeed, at this time, the dawn of the 1890s, they had already begun to recognise the success of Ireland's first golf clubs and, more importantly, the draw that they constituted for new and aspiring golfers.
With this came the recognition of the economic potential that golf courses held. Summing up this realisation, eminent English golfer John Henry Taylor went so far as to suggest that –

> Golf may eventually prove to be the salvation of the country at large (Ireland). Trade will naturally follow in its wake, for tourists will cross the Irish Sea - not for the mountains, the lakes or the fishing, but for golf (Taylor, 1902, cited in Redmond, 1997, p. 51).

This potential was acknowledged by many, but none pursued it more diligently than those involved with the railway industry, indeed, when discussing this the then chairman of the Belfast & Co. Down Railway, Thomas Andrews, went so far as to suggest that the interests of both the club and the railway were "inseparably bound up"(Andrews, 1897, cited in Nalder, 2003, p.113). This relationship is purported to have been well established by the beginning of the 1890s when rail companies 'assiduously courted' golfers (Gibson, 1989). Golf's growth at this

point came in concert with the growth of a broader tourism market that was occurring throughout Ireland, Britain, and mainland Europe at this time. Indeed, the expansion of this 'holiday' market was becoming big business in the late 1880s and 1890s, with multiple companies actively competing with one another for dominance (Nalder, 2003; Redmond, 1997). A discussion of the development of this new 'holiday' market in its entirety is beyond the remit of this work, however, suffice it to say that competing companies at this point were scrambling to develop amenities that would increase their attractiveness to prospective tourists and provide them with an advantage over their competitors, one such amenity was, of course, golf. Indeed, multiple sources confirm that those involved in the tourism market, in particular railway companies but also hoteliers and even local governments, came to utilise golf in this fashion (Nalder, 2003; Gibson, 1989; Menton, 1991). Of note here is the fact that the resulting growth that the sport experienced did not come solely from an increase in love for the game amongst those who played it or wished to; rather, it emanated from and was driven by the efforts of those who viewed it as a means to an economic end. For railway companies, the goal was ultimately to increase traffic on their lines and, by extension, to ensure continued profit and market dominance. In pursuit of this, they endeavoured to provide consumers with what, in today's terminology, we could describe as something akin to an 'all-inclusive', or at the very least, a 'destination' holiday.

That is to say, the companies sought to provide their patrons with a one-stop

shop that would cater for all the consumer's entertainment needs and differentiate them from their competitors (Nalder, 2003). Golf was often afforded primacy in this regard; indeed, for the most part, it was the first 'attraction' provided and was subsequently augmented with additional amenities. This approach was widespread throughout the country but was most impactful in less developed coastal and rural regions (Gibson, 1989). The addition of a dance hall, a cinema, and even a skating rink adjacent to Royal Portrush is but one example of how this manifested in Ireland, whilst the construction of a very large purpose-built hotel in close proximity to Royal County Down is another of many (Gibson, 1989; Menton, 1991).

Most remarkable here is the scale at which this approach was deployed; this is perhaps characterised best by the actions of individuals like George Baillie. Baillie is arguably the most notable golf course designer in Irish history and is credited with the creation of over a dozen courses in Northern Ireland alone (Nalder, 2003). A native Scot, Baillie originally moved to Ireland to pursue a career in education, but his passion for golf quickly changed these plans, and he soon found himself focusing on the design of golf courses (Gibson, 1989). Baillie was unique amongst course designers in that he worked almost exclusively in conjunction with railway companies and could most often be found designing purpose-built courses that were located within a stone's throw of a railway station (Nalder, 2003). Similarly, working with other course designers,

the Great Southern & Western Railway Company was integral to the formation of clubs in Lahinch, Co. Clare and Ballybunion, Co. Kerry; in the same vein, the London and North Western Railway Company developed a course in Greenore, Co. Louth (Gibson, 1989; Redmond, 1997; Nalder, 2003). It is fair to suggest that the practice of courses being developed in this fashion took place on an island-wide basis at this time. Interestingly, very early on in the process of designing their tourist offerings, the perspective of the investors changed, and they quickly came to recognise that, despite the high number of alternative amenities they offered, the majority of their tourists were there, first and foremost, for golf. Investors quickly came to recognise that golfers were incredibly lucrative and, as such, came to value them above all other tourists (Higgins, 2013). This perspective was cemented as early as 1896 when it became widely accepted that golfing tourists were not "birds of passage—unlike ordinary tourists—when they come, they stay, and return year after year"(*Freeman's Journal*, 25 Dec 1896). As a result, in the eyes of its investors, golf transitioned from being perceived as an additional amenity to being considered their main product offering and focus. Indeed, even the comparatively small players in the market could adopt this approach and be quite successful. This is evidenced by the actions of the Belfast and Co. Down Railway company that, despite the fact that they operated just eighty miles of track, achieved sustained profits and more than their fair share of market dominance (Gibson, 1989). According to the

company's then general manager, Joseph Tatlow, they achieved this by actively promoting and acutely focusing on golf (Tatlow, 2016).

The most common way that such focus manifested was through the provision of speciality fares for golfers. One of the earliest examples of such targeting can be found in relation to the opening of Portrush G.C. in 1888. At this point, the secretary of the Northern Counties Railway Company decreed that it would offer free travel to and from Portrush to all existing members of Royal Belfast G. C., this was done in an effort to promote this new golfing location and to entice golfers from the city to travel out to Portrush to fulfil their golfing needs (Gibson, 1989). The offer of free travel for golfers was not commonplace at this time, but the targeting of golfers only increased from then on. Indeed, by 1892, a weekly Golfer's Express ran from Belfast to Newcastle. The service departed at noon, and within the hour, golfers were deposited adjacent to the Royal Co. Down G. C. and within walking distance of the Slieve Donard Hotel (Nalder, 2003). Numerous departures of this nature soon emerged and were often tailored specifically for the needs of contemporary golfers, leaving early enough so that players could enjoy a full round of golf and, assuming they weren't making use of onsite accommodation, return home at a reasonable hour.

Indeed, clubs such as Royal Portrush, Royal Co. Down, Royal Dublin, Bundoran G. C., Sutton G.C., Lahinch G.C., Bangor G. C., Dun Laoghaire G. C., Greystones G. C., & The Island G. C. in Dublin, to name but a few, all soon

found themselves targeted by speciality rail services of this kind(Gibson, 1989; Menton, 1990; Guiney, 1990; Redmond, 1997; Hanna, 2002; Nalder, 2003). Perhaps it is not surprising that, by the time 1904 came around, a period of just about ten years, golfing tourists had become so lucrative that the once rare practice of offering golfers free travel became commonplace. A prime example of a company wherein this took place was the Belfast & Co. Down Railway company that ran two free express services every Saturday for members of the Royal Co. Down (Gibson, 1989).

It was in this fashion that railways came to shape the early Irish golf market; that is not to suggest that they were in total control, but given that golf in the country was still very much in its infancy at this time, the power balances that existed between the two parties were heavily skewed towards the railway companies. In truth, those involved with the development of contemporary clubs found themselves heavily reliant on the investment that hailed from those in rail to provide even the most basic and fundamental elements of golf to their members. Recognising this and, indeed, recognising the success that golf had brought them, those involved with rail took steps to ensure that their relationship with clubs, and the position they held within those relationships, would be strengthened even further. A key starting point in this regard was to sponsor competitions.

Although at first glance what takes place here may appear to be fairly benign or even philanthropic in nature, when viewed through the conceptual lens of Elias's monopoly mechanism, it becomes clear that what was actually taking place here was a strategic attempt to embed themselves more deeply into the organisational fabric of Irish golf. In this context, such sponsorship was less about goodwill and more about influence in the sense that it served as a means through which rail companies could strengthen their association with the sport and reinforce their indispensability to contemporary clubs. Beyond the provision of trophies, companies regularly contributed to the development of golf clubs through subsidised transport, free shipment of building materials, and, in some cases, even direct financial investment. These actions, though perhaps subtle in nature, were instrumental in allowing rail companies to further monopolise the commercial dimension of the game, as they came to be viewed not only as facilitators of golf but as stakeholders essential to its very operation. In essence, how this started was that the companies would simply provide clubs with expensive trophies for which players could compete (Hanna, 2002), but over the years, this would grow into the commercial sponsorship relationships that we recognise by today's standards (more on this in a subsequent section).

Building on this, and again seeking to further strengthen their relationships with clubs, and by extension their synonymity with golf in a given region, some companies even went so far as to contribute financially to the development of

club facilities. This was oftentimes quite menial in nature; that is to say,

companies would often allow supplies that would lead to the enrichment of club facilities to be shipped free of charge on their lines. For example, the Northern Counties Railway company transported the sods for Greenisland Golf Club's new greens free of charge in 1894 (Gibson, 1989). However, on numerous occasions these financial contributions were much more significant in nature, indeed, at certain points in Irish history it was not uncommon for companies to go so far as to finance the construction of amenities such as clubhouses, restaurants, private rail terminals, the extension of existing courses, and, as established earlier, even the construction of purpose-built hotels (Nalder, 2003; Hannah, 2002). Notable examples of such events include when the Belfast and County Down Railway company financed the expansion of Malone's nine-hole course to the more desirable full eighteen holes (Stanley & Campbell, 2003). Beyond this, the most financially significant investments made by railways at this time came in the form of purpose-built hotels, the most prominent company in this regard being the Belfast and County Down Railway Company. Indeed, in 1896, they built the Slieve Donard Hotel, at the time, widely regarded as Ireland's premier hotel, directly adjacent to the Royal County Down G. C. (Gibson, 1989; Nalder, 2003). Drastic as this may seem, one may be surprised to hear that during this period a total of 31 'railway hotels' were constructed in Ireland, so, although incredibly expensive, it is not a stretch to suggest that the practice was commonplace at the time (Nalder, 2003). Indeed, it is worth noting

here that involvement with golf proved so lucrative that in areas where one

company did not have a complete monopoly on the destination, that is to say, one company did not own all the amenities adjacent to a particular golf club, working relationships between companies were soon formed.

5.2.5. Beyond the Clubhouse: Railway Monopoly and Destination Golf

That notwithstanding, we have yet to consider the most extreme cases of railway involvement in Irish golf; there are no better examples of this than Royal Portrush and Greenore. In these instances, railway companies occupied an extremely dominant position, with the power balances being heavily skewed in their favour. Indeed, these examples illustrate a particularly advanced stage of the monopoly mechanism, wherein railway companies moved beyond merely influencing golf's growth to actively engineering and monopolising entire golfing ecosystems. This ranged from course construction to accommodation, transportation, and marketing. This monopolisation was not simply about economic return; it was also about securing a dominant position in a growing leisure market. Indeed, railway companies were undeniably heavy-handed in their approach to these clubs and played a very prominent role in their development, even going so far as to build the towns around them. For example, Portrush in the 1880s was a small fishing village that was home to just 1,600 inhabitants. It was located some sixty-seven miles north of Belfast and, barring

the existence of a local hotel, the Antrim Arms, was light on infrastructure (Nalder, 2003). However, learning from previous endeavours on the UK mainland and recognising the potential that a seaside location like Portrush held, the Northern Counties Railway company began to invest in the local surroundings. This began with the purchase of the Antrim Arms Hotel, which they quickly renamed the Northern Counties Hotel. Building on this, in 1888 the company went so far as to secure a 21-year lease on a piece of land that ran between the hotel and railway station, and, eager to attract golfers from Belfast and further afield, the company wasted no time in developing a nine-hole course on the land (Higgins, 2013; Nalder, 2003). From here, they quickly instituted a club made up of prominent locals, well-known golfers, and senior members of the company. This new club was then opened to the public on the 12th of May 1988 to much fanfare, the occasion was marked by a competition with numerous grand prizes and reduced fares for all members of the military and Royal Belfast golf club - the details of the affair were heavily promoted in the *Belfast Telegraph* (Gibson, 1989).

Golf was similarly important to the London & North Western Railway Company and the seaside town of Greenore. Greenore, before it came to the attention of the aforementioned enterprise, was a bare stretch of coastline home to just a lighthouse and a scattering of small holdings. However, in the 1860s, the area's potential was picked up on by the London & North Western Railway, which was

of the opinion that its topography and geographic location gave it a huge advantage over other areas on the east coast of Ireland. Resting on the shores of Carlingford Lough, Greenore was unique in that it was almost equidistant from Dublin and Belfast and in that it could accommodate the shipping of heavy-duty goods. In light of this, the company commissioned the construction of a deep-water port, a railway station and a connecting line system that provided a means to distribute heavy-duty freight nationwide. They also developed a large hotel and, in addition, constructed much of the infrastructure in and around Greenore itself. Indeed, it would not be going too far to suggest that they, for all intents and purposes, built the town (Nalder, 2003). Indeed, for several years, this distinction proved quite lucrative for the company; however, in the long run, it was not enough to grant them the sustained competitive advantage they sought, and eventually, the company even became unprofitable. This problem reached its zenith in 1896 when the company reported their most significant losses with its shipping and rail offerings, making a loss of some thirty-four thousand pounds (Nalder, 2013). Understandably, those in charge were not pleased with this, but in an effort to find a solution, like many others in the rail industry, they sought to capitalise on the burgeoning holiday market; in this regard, they still believed that Greenore could provide them with the means to achieve their goals. With this in mind, they set out to develop a greenfield tourism site in Greenore that would not only provide travellers with a prime and luxurious starting point for

their ongoing travels throughout Ireland but that would become an attraction in its own right. In pursuit of this, they commissioned the development of a twelve-hole golf course and began to offer discounted fares to golfers (Gibson, 1989). Indeed, even after this, the company turned a loss in the first year of their new endeavour, however, so strong was the company's faith in golf that, in 1897, they doubled down on their investment, commissioning renowned course designer George Baillie to remodel and expand their golf course from twelve holes to a full eighteen (Menton, 1991). In addition to this, they expanded both the hotel and the clubhouse considerably and added amenities such as holiday bungalows, bathing huts, sun houses, and billiard halls (Gibson, 1989; Nalder, 2013). Upon launching these new amenities, the company made use of promotional techniques in a manner which they had not previously. They continued to offer discounted rail fares for golfers, but in addition to this, they offered tailored express services that more appropriately met golfers' needs. Furthermore, they promoted their launch in international and local newspapers alike, and they held an open-day competition in which they offered trophies for the winners and spot prizes for those in attendance (Gibson, 1989; Menton, 1991). More importantly, their promotional activities extended beyond this opening weekend, and they continued to offer discounted fares and sponsor competitions at the club for the foreseeable future(Gibson, 1989; Menton, 1991; Nalder, 2003). Perhaps more significantly, moving beyond professional play, on

an ongoing basis, the company worked hard at promoting Greenore as a destination for domestic and international tourists alike. This oftentimes took the form of placing posters in railway stations throughout the UK and Ireland or issuing promotional postcards (Hanna, 2002). Setting aside their use of promotional materials like those mentioned above, it was their engagement with print media that those in charge of the company perceived as having the most benefit. Indeed, beyond the reporting of competitive play in local and national newspapers, the company actively courted international tourists by regularly promoting Greenore abroad, so much so, that between 1900 and 1907 there were no fewer than four articles in the prestigious Golfer's Digest extolling the virtues of Greenore as an idyllic golfing holiday destination (Nalder, 2003).

Given the extremes considered above, it's clear that railway companies played a pivotal role in the early commercialisation and spread of golf in Ireland; however, it is fair to say that they would not always enjoy the dominant position they occupied at this point. Indeed, in the following section, we will consider how these power dynamics began to shift and the ramifications they held for golf.

5.2.6. Economic Instrument to Independent Entity: The Emergence of Club Autonomy

We will begin by noting that dominance is never permanent in a figuration. As conditions changed and new constraints emerged, club committees began to

assert greater autonomy. This did not occur by virtue of any overnight shift, but through a slow renegotiation of roles, resources, and responsibilities. Thus far, much has been made of the impact that railway companies' interests have had on Irish golf; indeed, how these affected the sport's early spread and development has been made plain above. Moreover, much has also been said of the fact that beyond the sport's monetary potential and economic utility, these companies often had very little to no interest in the development of the game of golf in its own right. That is to say, the courses and infrastructure they constructed were very much a means to an economic end. However, there is a very real difference between a golf course and a golf club. A byproduct of these companies' interest in golf was the establishment of clubs, and, by extension, the establishment of club committees and governing bodies tasked with day-to- day club management. Such entities were qualitatively different to the managerial boards of contemporary railway companies in that they saw golf, and their respective clubs, as something that had merit in their own right. Over time, club committees came to view the survival and development of their institutions as increasingly misaligned with the financial interests of railway networks. This reorientation was not a sudden break but a gradual recalibration of priorities shaped by changing membership dynamics, growing administrative capacity, and evolving public expectations. Power balances began to shift. That is not to suggest that railway companies suddenly stopped being involved in contemporary golf at this

time, simply that the nature of the relationship between such companies and the clubs of the day began to change.

5.2.7. Power Dynamics and Shifting Interdependencies

Indeed, as the relationship between railway companies and club committees evolved, gradual changes in the orientation of club leadership emerged. Not in isolation, but as part of a shifting network of interdependencies. The decreasing leverage of railway companies was not simply replaced by club dominance, but rather reflected a rebalancing of power within an ongoing figuration, shaped by changes in resources, legitimacy, and external pressures. That is to say, a greater degree of independence for clubs and a lessening of the influence possessed by companies. This transformation in the relationship between railway companies and golf clubs reflects a broader shift in the distribution of power within the figuration. As new roles and responsibilities emerged within clubs, and fresh faces with new ideals became more prominent, the older figures and the older ways of doing things (those mainly tied to the railway companies' economic interests) gradually became less dominant. In this sense, the decline of corporate oversight and the rise of autonomous club governance should not be viewed as abstract structural changes, but rather as real shifts in the fortunes and influence of distinct social groups. Those associated with the clubs gained increasing capacity to shape the direction of the sport, while the railway companies, losing

relevance and power in this figuration, saw their influence wane due to clubs' increasing ability to generate revenue independently, negotiate alternative sponsorships, and promote competitions through the press and emerging media.

This process, undeniably, began for railways in relation to golf around 1910, however, it is important to remember here that this did not occur overnight, it was a temporal process in the sense that it took time for club committees to recognise that their interests and aims did not always align with those of the railway companies to which they were tied, and moreover, that in certain circumstances these could even be at odds. It also took them time to recognise the potential for change here and the ways they could go about it. That being said, if we're to look at golf's development in Ireland as a whole, we could say that this divergence occurred comparatively early on. Perhaps the best example here is the situation that was occurring at Royal Portrush in 1909. It is reported that some seven thousand golfers per annum were visiting the club and that whilst this was obviously a very good thing for the Belfast & Northern Counties railway company that, as established above, invested so heavily in the club, it was quite another thing for the club committee that had to find a way to cope with the impact that this high usage level was having on the club amenities and infrastructure (Nalder, 2003). Also significant was the fact that contemporary members, the individuals who, in the form of membership fees, provided clubs with their main source of independent income, were quick to voice their concerns

about overcrowding and the subpar conditions on the course and in the clubhouse. Indeed, it quickly became clear to those in charge at Portrush that were the club were to continue and grow in its own right, changes were needed. Moreover, Portrush was not alone in this regard; indeed, this proved to be the case for most Irish clubs, with similar situations being reported at Royal Belfast, Bangor, and Malone, to name but a few indicative examples (Nalder, 2003; Menton, 1991; Gibson, 1989). This proved to be quite the conundrum; it was well known that without direct investment from railway companies, the vast majority of clubs throughout Ireland would struggle to meet their financial obligations and eventually fold. What this resulted in was clubs making slow and gradual, yet very deliberate, changes in direction. As established above, this change involved them seeking a measure of independence from railway companies, and they sought to achieve this by slowly but surely exploring alternate means of revenue generation.

This, in and of itself, is indicative of an important social shift that took place within contemporary clubs; importantly, in this case, said shift did not just occur in relation to the power balances between clubs and railways but also to those within the clubs themselves. Indeed, in this case, for things to change, attitudes long held by existing members needed to be reformed in order to embrace what can only be described as a new, economically motivated mindset. How this occurred can be explained by examining the social makeup of clubs at this time

and the changes that were occurring therein. This will be examined in much greater detail in a subsequent section pertaining to golf's democratisation and its links to marketisation. However, suffice it to say at this point that this social shift was typified by an increasing number of professionals becoming established in clubs that were traditionally dominated by members of the elite and established classes, individuals whose presence gradually fostered a more sympathetic attitude toward economic and business processes. This, in turn, paved the way for deeper and more meaningful changes in how clubs were organised and managed. A direct consequence of this was that clubs gained responsibility for their own promotion for the first time. From the outset, they sought to achieve success by capitalising on the deeply rooted desire for competitive play; an impulse shaped, as discussed above, by the quest for excitement and the broader sportisation process.

5.2.8. Competitive Play and the Quest for Excitement

Perhaps the most impactful step in relation to competitive play and the quest for excitement was taken by the GUI which, at its offset, set out with the strategic aim of popularising Irish golf; the launch of national and international tournaments in 1892 was important here but without a doubt, their greatest move in this regard was the institution of handicapping (Gibson, 1989).

Although it caused significant debate at the time of its introduction, the concept

is relatively straightforward. In essence, it is a measure of a golfer's skill, calculated by examining their previous scores and subsequently assigning them a numerical value based on these. A lower score suggests a more skilled player, whilst a high score is representative of a poor or novice player. At the end of a game, a player's handicap is subtracted from the number of strokes they have taken to give them their overall score (GUI, 1891, as cited in Gibson, 1989). This development, when considered in relation to Elias and Dunning's (1986) concept of the Quest for Excitement, helps explain golf's growing appeal; it is also an indicative example of how the sportisation process and the quest for excitement came together to increase golf's popularity at this time. By levelling the playing field, handicapping introduced unpredictability and emotional engagement into all matches, thereby fulfilling a deep-rooted desire for structured and socially acceptable tension and excitement among both players and spectators. As Elias (2008, p.71) notes, leisure activities like sport restore the "mental tonus" of everyday life not through relaxation, but through a temporary surge of pleasurable tension; handicapping ensured that even the most workaday games of golf were imbued with such tension. In this way, competitive golf came to satisfy a deeper social and emotional function, helping to explain its expanding popularity in Ireland.

What is perhaps most interesting about this is that there was a taste for both amateur and professional competition; that is to say, one did not have to be

playing the game, even spectators experienced this feeling. Perhaps more importantly from a marketisation perspective, both attracted a large number of spectators. Evidence of this demand can be found as far back as 1892, when in response to growing interest, the Golf Union of Ireland (GUI) inaugurated four new national competitions, The Irish Amateur Open Championship, The Irish Amateur Close Championship, The Irish Golf Clubs' Senior and Junior Challenge Cup Tournaments (Menton, 1991). These Championships took place on a national level, but competitive play was soon just as prevalent at local levels, with every club instituting their own form of competition or tournament. Without a doubt, the most popular amongst these were Open Mixed Foursomes, wherein male and female golfers would combine and compete against other couples. These took place at clubs throughout the island, such as Royal Belfast, Sutton, and Milltown G.C., to name but a few indicative examples (MacSweeney et al., 1995; Guiney, 1990; Menton, 1991). Indeed, the demand for competitive play was so high that it was a regular thing in the 1890s to see golfers travel from the UK mainland, and further afield, to take part in both professional and amateur competitions in Ireland (Menton, 1991).

Significantly, it was around this time that we began to see sponsorship develop into a feature of competitive golf here; this, in its infancy, began in a casual or social fashion. Competitions were sponsored by non-economic entities like members of the gentry or prominent members of local society (Gibson, 1989;

Menton, 1991; Mulhall, 2006). In such cases, sponsors didn't benefit in a financial sense from their involvement; rather, they accrued social capital instead. The Barton Shield, donated by the Honourable Justice Barton, is but one such example (Menton, 1989). However, soon after the dawn of competitive golf, the financial potential that it held became apparent to both economic entities and clubs alike; as a result, sponsorship as we now know it began to emerge. This first became clear in 1895 at Ireland's first-ever professional tournament, which, in affirmation of the changing attitudes of club committees discussed above, was organised by the committee at Royal Portrush. The tournament attracted both domestic and international golfers, and fees were charged for competitors and spectators alike (Redmond, 1997). In this instance, the club put forward prize money for competitors, and despite the risk that many suggested was inherent in this decision at the time, the tournament was touted as a resounding success and received significant praise in the national and international press (Redmond, 1997; Gibson, 1989). If we consider once again the relationship between contemporary golf clubs and their long-held partners, the railway companies, at this point, we see a very significant change in how the railways approached golf. That is to say, they still were only interested in it from an economic perspective, but they seemed to realise that it was now their consumers' appetite for competitive play, as opposed to their desire for a suitable leisure and holiday activity, that held the greatest potential profit for them, and they altered their

approach accordingly. In recognition of this, they went from building tailor-made leisure destinations that placed golf courses at their core to sponsoring competitions that were held by the club committees that eventually formed on those courses. The important difference here was that power chances were now much more equal in the sense that clubs could negotiate with other potential sponsors for their competitions, and as a result, oftentimes secured more favourable arrangements than those initially offered by railways. This is not to suggest that the relationship between golf and the railway industry ended at this point; on the contrary, it endured and simply took a somewhat altered form. That is to say, the railways now occupied a much weaker position than they once had, and accordingly, their return in terms of power and influence decreased. Perhaps the earliest indicative example of this shift can be seen at Royal County Down. As was established above, the Co. Down is the epitome of a club that was formed as a by-product of the tourism industry, the course itself being originally instituted by the Belfast & County Down Railway Company as an additional amenity for the adjacent Slieve Donard Hotel (Nalder, 2003; Gibson, 1989). As time progressed, the company's focus shifted from this to placing golf at the heart of its strategy, but as was the case nationally, when the demand for competitive golf became apparent, they shifted once more. That is to say, at this point, the company began to use competitive play to augment its tourist offerings. They did so by proposing a tournament to the committee of Royal County Down, and when

the committee accepted, they put forward the princely sum of one hundred Guineas to be used as prize money. Moreover, the railway publicised the tournament broadly and highlighted its association with the event locally, nationally and even internationally, advertising discount fares and special rates for both competitors and spectators of the event alike(Menton, 1991; Gibson, 1989).. A marked change from the prior norm here was that, in financial terms, the competition not only benefited the railway company but also the club itself, which retained the entry fees of competitors and spectators, as well as any profits accrued by the club bar.

However, not long after this, contemporary sponsorship would change once more; this change came with an increase in the prevalence of sponsorship but also with the involvement of the Golfing Union of Ireland (GUI). The Irish Open Championship, held in 1892, is perhaps a good example of this growth

and how sponsorship developed from this point. In this particular case, the competition was organised by the GUI. This represented a change to the contemporary golfing figuration and a further lessening of the control of railway companies; indeed, the group represented a significant third player that ultimately would come to possess a significant amount of power in contemporary golfing figurations.

The GUI was founded in 1891 and those involved were clear in their aims, most relevant of these was the union's pledge to popularise golf and, what's perhaps even more relevant, was the fact that they saw the relationship between competitive golf and railway companies as a means to do so (Stanley & Campbell, 2003; Menton, 1991; Gibson, 1989). As a result, they developed a host of championship tournaments for both amateur and professional golfers alike. The GUI being involved in a given sponsorship arrangement added a degree of complexity to proceedings; in essence, the relationship between the sponsor and the golf club remained the same. What differed was that the location of the championship changed every year, with the location and the details of the sponsorship arrangements being decided by the Union. Typically, what this entailed was that, as before, a club would host the competition and the sponsor (at this point in time still for the most part railways) would provide the prize and advertise and promote it accordingly. However, the Union's involvement came at a cost for both parties, clubs were charged an annual subscription to be union

members and in addition to what they were doing already, railway companies were forced to offer substantial additional discount fares and speciality rates for competitors and union members alike (Stanley & Campbell, 2003; Menton, 1991; Gibson, 1989). This arrangement proved successful and continued well into the early 1920s (Menton, 1991). However, it was at this point that sponsorship practices once more began to change, and the long-standing relationship between golf club committees and railway companies began to come to an end.

There were several reasons for this, some argue that the increasing affordability of the motorcar meant that more and more passengers became less reliant on rail (Gibson, 1989), and it has also been suggested that the impending nationalisation of rail services in Britain and Ireland left courses and clubs cut off where they had previously been regularly serviced(Nalder, 2003). Still, others argue that political change, specifically events surrounding the partition of Ireland in 1921, which will be discussed in much greater detail in a later section, rendered rail travel much more difficult and cumbersome in Ireland. And, as a result, the power and influence of railway companies decreased in a general sense (Downpatrick & Co. Down Railway, 2020; Nalder, 2003; Menton, 1991; Gibson, 1989).

Regardless of the exact cause, committees were forced to change their approach to club management yet again. Indeed, there was a marked decrease in railway

companies sponsoring competitions, providing prizes, and taking care of promotion. As such, clubs were now forced to make alternative arrangements. This is not to suggest that the appetite for competitive golf had diminished, but rather that clubs were now compelled to adopt new strategies to effectively harness and sustain it. Initially, they sought to go their own way and run competitions autonomously. Open Mixed Foursomes and Matchplay Handicap Tournaments were typically their competitions of choice in this regard (Gibson, 1989). Indeed, Milltown and Bangor G.C. both adopted this approach very successfully and were renowned for attracting a large number of participants and spectators (Stanley & Campbell, 2003; MacSweeney et al., 1995; Menton, 1991). That notwithstanding, this situation was not as straightforward as the above examples might suggest; in fact, those involved with club management soon found that simply running regular competitions alone did not ensure success. In such cases, wherein simply hosting competitive play proved unsuccessful, club committees were quick to attribute blame. This is evidenced particularly well in the case of Naas Golf Club, wherein, by November 1931, despite what Costello (1996) described as the best efforts of the club committee, members had become disenfranchised, and even the running of regular competitions was met with disinterest. The committee attributed the cause of this disinterest to a lack of promotion and captioned the situation as follows –

> ever since the death of Mr. E. I. Gray who always kept local interest in the club alive by reports to the press of every competition played, a certain lack of interest, a kind of sleepy sickness, seemed to have descended on the club…The failure was mainly due to the fact that advertisement in the form of press reports was not forthcoming (Costello, 1996, p. 23).

Those in power at the club, having identified what they perceived to be the problem and no longer being dependent on railway companies, were decisive in their response. This entailed all club competitions, and, indeed, all matters pertaining to the club, being reported widely in the press and was representative of what by today's standards could be described as an aggressive campaign of promotion. From an economic standpoint, the result was almost instantaneous; the club's next competition attracted over 460 entries and was attended by large galleries of the local populace, golfers and non-golfers alike (Costello, 1996). It would appear that this success did not go unnoticed; indeed, Naas is but one example of a club wherein a strategy that combined the running of club competitions in tandem with advertising and promotion in relevant press and media outlets was successfully deployed. The potential held by this approach meant that quite quickly it was embraced by clubs island-wide, so much so that

by the end of the 1930s, such competitions were to be described as the lifeblood of Irish golf (Menton, 1991; Gibson, 1989).

5.2.9. Sponsorship and Power: From Patronage to Partnership

Despite this newfound autonomy and the success of the competitions mentioned above, those within golfing circles were far from done with sponsorship arrangements. In reality, it was here that we started to see sponsorship that we would recognise by contemporary standards occur regularly in Irish golf. At this point, club committees (situated within a landscape of shifting sponsorship opportunities and expanding member expectations) found themselves re-engaging with the sponsorship model, not as a calculated return to past practices, but as a pragmatic adaptation to emerging pressures and possibilities. However, given that clubs were now, to a large extent, free of railway companies and, by extension, held a much greater degree of relative power, the potential for even greater financial gains was now present. As such, they decided to implement this approach once again, but with a wider variety of less dominant sponsorship partners. What occurred here was that for the organisers, most of the cost of running their promotion was covered, and for the sponsor,
exposure to golfing clientele was gained. However, the main change came in

terms of scale. Indeed, things had certainly taken a global turn, Ireland's golfing potential had been realised, and organisers were no longer satisfied with attracting just the attention of UK golfers. In fact, we can see this change manifest quite clearly in 1958, wherein the Irish Hospital Sweepstakes sponsored a tournament to the value of £5,000, the sole aim of which was "stimulating the Irish tourist industry, by drawing attention to golfing facilities here as a major attraction" (Menton, 1991, p.87). Eventually, this type of approach became the norm, and increasingly competitions were designed with global exposure in mind, as could be expected, sponsors, and sponsorship in general, followed suit. A notable example of this was the 1959 Dunlop Masters, held at Portmarnock. It brought many leading international players to Ireland and, as such, received significant attention from the global media. The competition was also very successful domestically and attracted golfers in their tens of thousands (Menton, 1991). This strategic shift towards an international orientation was working well in terms of the overall promotion of Irish golf abroad, and, indeed, it was having a positive impact domestically.

However, golf in Ireland was about to experience a veritable explosion in terms of its popularity, and this could not be solely attributed to any strategic effort or promotional activities; rather, it was a technological advancement that played a part here. Not all of the impacts of television would prove positive for all parties; more on this later, however, in terms of promotion, television was a positive and

revolutionary development. The impacts of this development manifested in the formation of Ireland's first television channel, Radio Telefís Éireann (RTE). RTE launched on the 31st of December 1961In 1963, RTE transmitted the first program in the series 'Shell's Wonderful World of Golf', the program ran for a total of seventeen episodes (Costello, 1996; Menton, 1991). Television would soon permeate throughout Irish golf, and it wasn't long until all major championships and events were broadcast in some shape or form. (Menton, 1991; Gibson, 1988).

By this point in golf's development, those in charge had come to realise that advertising had the potential to be their main source of revenue, this was certainly the case in 1973 when the GUI raised approximately £25,000 from advertising (Menton, 1991); although this tournament would prove to be a failure the fact remains that by this time golf in Ireland had become incredibly commercialised and possessed many of the marketing processes that we are familiar with today. That is to say that, thanks to the processes discussed above, to a large degree, marketisation had occurred, and those involved with club governance had embraced it wholeheartedly. Taken together, these shifts, from emotional release to structured competition, from elite patronage to commercial partnerships, reveal a process far more complex than top-down marketisation. In concluding, we now reflect on how figurational sociology helps us make sense of this transformation.

The marketisation of Irish golf occurred in a slow, unplanned fashion that was driven by a series of broader social processes and shaped by the power balances that existed between the various groups involved in the sport's development. Indeed, the role and power of entities such as railway companies and commercial sponsors, whilst significant, can only be viewed not as singular drivers of golf's marketisation on the island but as elements within a wider figuration, embedded in, and shaped by, interdependencies. As power balances shifted, initially toward commercial entities such as railway companies and later back to the clubs themselves, emergent shifts in power dynamics were observed, and these afforded clubs a degree of autonomy. What is important here is that we acknowledge that this change was not solely economic, but deeply social in nature. That is to say, it reflected an underlying transformation in the positions, roles, identities, and objectives of those involved in the game. It also depicts the way in which control over the means of production, promotion, and competitive play gradually moved away from economic outsiders and into the hands of those more directly embedded within the Irish golf figuration.

It is also important to note that the increasing centrality of competitive play, the rise of standardisation mechanisms such as handicapping, and the emotional charge associated with the game are all manifestations of the sportisation process. As previously established, this was deeply connected to the quest for excitement and the broader social desire for structured, socially acceptable

forms of tension and release in leisure. It was this convergence of economic value and emotional fulfilment that ultimately allowed golf to flourish, not simply as a pastime or amenity, but as a marketable product capable of sustaining wide public appeal. When viewed holistically, these dynamics illustrate that golf's marketisation was never purely a commercial process. It was a deeply social one that was marked by shifting power balances, contested priorities, and overlapping trajectories of economic, emotional, and cultural transformation. To understand it fully, we must accept that Irish golf is a product of its environment and account for its development not in the actions of any one group, but by considering the interdependent and dynamic figuration that gave rise to it.

5.3. Section 3 - Democratisation

5.3.1. Introduction: Golf, Class, and Social Change in Ireland

At the end of the nineteenth century, in Ireland and, indeed, the rest of the then United Kingdom, we began to see some of the ramifications of broader democratisation processes take shape and come to bear upon golf. Without doubt, as regards the sport's marketisation, the most influential of these was the formation of clubs. As established, around this time, there was a dramatic surge in the number of sporting clubs being formed. As well as this, Clark (2001, p.2)

suggests that “clubs and societies became one of the most distinctive social and cultural institutions” of the day. As was the case with the marketisation process discussed in the previous section, when it came to club formation, multiple interdependent processes contributed to this dramatic increase. By way of an explanation for this growth, Clarke (2000) suggests that the phenomenon was closely related to an increase in processes such as urbanisation, consumerism, and affluence, and goes on to state that by the late 1800s, the ‘club’ had become a central element in the lives of educated people in Ireland and the UK. Whilst Clarke is quite correct in his assertions that urbanisation, consumerism, and affluence heavily influenced the growth in the number of clubs being formed, his statement falls short in terms of explanatory merit. Elias and Dunning (2008) would suggest that this ‘infinity of clubs’ was a manifestation of changing social interdependencies and shifting power balances between classes that resulted in the gradual democratisation of sport/leisure. That is to say, the gradual ‘opening up’ of sport and leisure beyond their traditional social confines. This ‘opening up’, amongst other things (such as the social processes discussed in this chapter), resulted in golf becoming a viable leisure choice for a much broader and more diverse range of people. These individuals played a direct role in golf’s growth, its spread, and, more broadly, its transformation into a marketised sport in Ireland. Looking back at the sport’s early development, as outlined earlier in section 1, we can clearly see how rising demand led to this marketisation. This

was reflected in things like more people joining clubs, higher sales of equipment, and greater use of club facilities. The newcomers at this point, those who gained access to the sport through processes of democratisation, drove this shift in a similar fashion. The intricacies of this process as they pertain to golf will be illustrated throughout this section.

5.3.2. Manners, Sophistication, And The Civilising Process

At this time, a new emphasis on manners and sophistication appears to have developed within the upper classes in Ireland and with it came a new understanding of what was socially acceptable (Rouse, 2017). This impacted sport and leisure in quite dramatic ways. Indeed, members of the upper classes began to shift away from sports that were perceived to be less civilised or more menial in nature. For example, sports such as animal baiting suffered severe declines in popularity, their crude nature and brutality being cast at odds with this new desire for sophistication (Rouse, 2017). In tandem with the negative effects that this change brought to such blood sports was an analogous positive impact on those that were seen as more socially acceptable. The key difference here was that the increased desire for sophistication led to an increase in the popularity of these more 'civilised' sports. An increase that, in the case of golf, led to its codification and the first traces of the sport's formal infrastructure in the country (Gibson, 1989; Rouse, 2017).

Central to understanding why this shift towards sophistication occurred, and why it impacted sport in particular, is the acknowledgement of sport's social significance and the recognition of the fact that it is more than simply a one-dimensional pastime. More accurately, rather, as Maguire (1994) suggests, in many cases, sport becomes a medium of self-expression and a creator of social and communal identity. The markers and characteristics of which are shaped by the structure and inherent power dynamics of the broader societal figuration at a given time (Elias and Dunning, 2008). Evidence of this can be found very early on in Irish sport. In fact, as early as the 1770s, sport can be seen to be both intertwined with broader leisure processes and to be used in the expression of social norms. Powell (2010, p.403) illustrates this especially well in relation to the sport of fox hunting and the social gatherings that accompanied it. Building on this, Rouse (2015) argues that the above-mentioned growth, or 'infinity of clubs', was driven by, and part of, what he captions as an 'exchange of culture' that extended beyond sport into the wider social arena. However, attributing these changes to cultural exchange explains neither the emergence of an emphasis on manners nor the use of sport as a signifier of social identity. To do so, we must acknowledge that it was bound up in broader social processes, processes such as inter-class established/outsider relationships, growing interdependencies, increasing functional democratisation, identity formation, and even inter-state relations, all of which contributed to the eventual

democratisation and subsequent marketisation of golf in Ireland.

The 1890s were an incredibly important period in terms of democratisation. That is not to suggest a clear-cut change or shift in the types of people who played golf occurred. That is to say, that those who played golf early on simply stopped doing so and were replaced by another, different group of people.
Rather, any change that occurred was dynamic and processual in nature. The first step to understanding what actually took place is to acknowledge that in the early 1890s, the growth in clubs and the number of those playing golf was not just the result of overt democratisation processes. Indeed, at least at the decade's offset, the increase in numbers is largely accounted for by an increase in the interest in golf amongst members of the upper classes. That is to say, those who already played golf, the military, the gentry and other members of the elite were the driving force behind its rapid growth at this time. The means by which members of the military spread the game throughout Ireland have been discussed above; however, in the early 1890s, a definite change occurred. In many ways, golf acquired a new champion in the sense that civilian members of the upper classes took over its dissemination. The sport's alignment with emergent social values, i.e. the newfound emphasis on manners, and its use in identity formation undoubtedly contributed to this change. This new spread occurred in a few key ways. Firstly, as was the case previously with members of the military, experienced golfers who were members of the clergy, members of the merchant

class, or members of the public services, brought golf with them to the new areas in which they were posted (Gibson, 1988). Secondly, and more significantly, many prominent members of the aristocracy and the landed gentry began to develop a taste for the game. Uchter John Mark Knox, the 5th Earl of Ranfurly, is a prime example of how the interest of this particular social group brought about great change. In this case, Uchter Knox, a keen golfer, was not only the president of his local club, Dungannon Golf Club, he actually gifted the club the lands necessary for the development of a course and he funded the construction of the club's first clubhouse (Hanna, 2002), thereby, facilitating the emergence of golf in that area. Surprisingly, at the time, this was not a
significant deviation from the norm. In fact, this practice was relativel commonplace throughout the country. Some examples of golf clubs that were established in this fashion were Cavan, Monaghan, Massereene, and Rostrevor (Gibson, 1989), to name but a few. It is also important to note that these types of dissemination were not completely separate. That is to say, members of the gentry and other prominent members of the upper class (clergymen, members of the merchant class, and public servants) often worked hand in hand in the development of clubs.

5.3.3.The Role Of The Elite: Patronage And Power Retention

A prime example of this type of relationship can be seen in Sutton Golf Club in

Howth, Co. Dublin. Originally known as the Dublin Scottish Golf Club, it was established in 1890 when a group of golfers petitioned Lord Howth for permission to play on his land at Cush Point near Baldoyle, Co. Dublin. Although Lord Howth was not directly involved at this point, he agreed to lease the land on a month-to-month basis for the nominal fee of one shilling per month (Guiney, 1990). Unfortunately, in this iteration, the club never really got going; it was played on solely by its founding members and even then, sporadically. Ultimately, the informal approach to play, combined with the short-term lease arrangement, resulted in considerable financial uncertainty, and as a result, by 1894, the club was forced to merge with the Sutton Yacht and Boat Club in order to ensure its survival (Guiney, 1990). It was at this point that the club underwent a significant change, a change that began with an increase in involvement from prominent members of the established classes. Indeed, at a club meeting subsequent to its amalgamation, a new committee was instituted on which members of the gentry and the upper class featured heavily. Lord Howth was appointed president, and the Right Honourable Judge Boyd and Mr. John Jameson were named Vice Presidents (Rooney, 1939). This changed the club's perception within broader society and improved its social standing greatly. The new and improved (and now socially desirable) club proved to be so popular that its membership increased by forty-nine within its first month and went from strength to strength thereafter; the only significant change being the involvement

of the new committee members and the resulting increased attention from members of the upper class (Guiney, 1990). Other notable examples of other clubs wherein members of the gentry and prominent members of the upper classes worked in tandem in their formation include Armagh GC in Co. Armagh, Helen's Bay GC, Co. Down, Dungannon GC, Co. Tyrone, and Rossmore GC, Co. Monaghan (Gibson, 1989; Rossmore GC, 2016).

5.3.4. The Struggle For Access: Etiquette And Exclusion

It was by virtue of the dispersion means listed above that civilian golf clubs first emerged and were established in Ireland at this time. Upper-class Scotsmen, the gentry, and the others mentioned above all played their respective roles in this process. However, this accounted for just a portion of the sport's spread and success during this period; indeed, golf was soon to acquire yet another new champion, one that would push its growth even further. But before this could occur, the democratisation mentioned above needed to take place. To understand this, we need to consider the nature and social make-up of clubs established during this period. In this regard, there is always a degree of give and take amongst golfing historians. However, one constant exists amongst them. This is, to use Hamilton's (1998, p. 138) words, that –

> these were the first golf clubs in the world and, immediately, golf became where men came together, played a game, drank into the evening, and of

course made their business deal: this was a fellowship of sport and commerce.

This notwithstanding, strictly speaking, that wasn't the case. The above-mentioned 'fellowship' would prove vital to golf's marketisation, but this union wasn't as clear-cut as Hamilton would have us believe. Indeed, before it would or could manifest, golf clubs would need to undergo a significant change; this change needed to occur within the attitudes and dispositions of those playing golf.

As established throughout, in the beginning, golf clubs were dominated by the elite class, those emanating from or being at least strongly linked to the gentry and the aristocracy. For them, golf was a gentlemanly leisure and social pursuit, and, as a result, the above-mentioned synonymity with commerce was not readily apparent. At this point in time, members of the elite classes were locked in a power struggle with the newly affluent middle class. As suggested by Elias & Scotson (1994, p. xxxvii), such changes in power balances are "confliction affairs", and most certainly, the established classes were not willing to give up their social position easily. Their resistance in this regard took many forms, they attempted to restrict access to clubs by limiting membership numbers, they instituted prohibitive codes of etiquette for all new club entrants, they actively stigmatised members of the merchant classes, and moreover, they cast overt discussion of business during leisure time in a negative fashion, going so far as to suggest that doing so was ungentlemanly and even 'shameful'(Gibson, 1989;

Menton, 1991; Inglis, 1962). We need only look once more to Elias's (2000) work on the Civilising Process for an explanation of their behaviour at this time. Here, Elias and Dunning consider the relationship that existed between early court society and the bourgeoisie. The dynamic that existed between these groups is quite relevant in the sense that it mirrored that which existed between the gentry and the ascendant middle classes in Ireland quite closely at this time. In both cases, those in the established position found themselves under threat from members of an economically affluent lower social class and took similar measures to solidify their respective positions. This manifested in a few key ways, firstly, the established sought to find a way to distinguish themselves from their usurpers, in both cases, the chosen means of separation was via the development of what Elias & Dunning (2000, p.422) caption "polished social conduct". This entailed the refinement of contemporary 'taste' whereby aspects of the established classes were cast as superior whilst aspects of the outsider class were cast as inferior. When summarising how those at court employed this dynamic in relation to the bourgeoisie, Elias and Dunning (2000, p.422) state that

–

> Anything that touches their embarrassment threshold smells bourgeois, is socially inferior; and inversely, anything bourgeois touches their embarrassment threshold. It is the necessity to distinguish themselves from anything bourgeois that sharpens this sensitivity; and the particular

> structure of court life – under which it is not professional competence or even the possession of money, but polished social conduct, that is the main instrument in the competition for prestige and favour.

The use of etiquette in contemporary clubs is a prime example of how this approach manifested in early Irish golf; it set the tone for how players conducted themselves on the course and in the club (Gibson, 1989). One needed to be acutely familiar with etiquette to play the game and conduct oneself in a socially acceptable fashion. In both cases, the established group defined the nature of what constituted socially acceptable behaviour and, whether it be in relation to etiquette or polished social conduct, used the outsider group's unfamiliarity with these constructs to stigmatise, exclude, and undermine their position. This resulted in the outsider group’s economic dominance being used against them and being cast as uncouth or inferior to what the established group deemed to be ‘true’ markers of civility and merit. Etiquette was perhaps the strongest weapon in the established class’s arsenal at this time, and as such was applied to all new golfers(Gibson, 1989; Guiney, 1990). Indeed, upon admittance, all new members were expected to strictly conform to a complex system of golfing etiquette "and thus, make things pleasant for all parties" (Guiney, 1990, p.56). This entailed the regulation of aspects of their behaviour, ranging from how they played the game itself, to the modes of expression they used whilst frequenting the club, and even the very clothes they wore whilst doing so. When describing how etiquette has been

traditionally used, Malcolm & Ove Tangen suggest that it was "centrally concerned with emotional control and the regularisation of social relations" and that it "requires sophisticated impression management, and has been historically used in exclusionary ways" (2015, p. 35-37). Certainly, this was the case in Irish golf clubs. Indeed, although quite a complex concept, etiquette was used straightforwardly here; the rules and regulations being imposed were used to punctuate the differences between the established classes and the professionals. In this sense, etiquette was used to highlight the civility of the established classes and the supposed ignorance or lack of sophistication of the professional classes. By way of accounting for this type of behaviour generally, Elias and Scotson stated that "on the ladder of a civilising process the higher social formation usually takes up a position a few rungs above their own lower social formations" (1994, p. 153). This suggests that in this sort of power struggle, the established classes will go to great lengths to cement their position as superior to the outsiders. Furthermore, the pair account for etiquette in particular when they suggest that "relatively stricter morals are only one form of socially induced self-restraints among many others. Better manners are another. They all enhance the chances of a superior group to assert and to maintain their power and superiority" (1994, p. 153). Indeed, so prevalent was the importance placed upon etiquette in Irish golf at this time that Higgins (2013, p.23) claimed it "underlined the extent to which it was a social as well as a sporting experience". In light of this, it is clear that for

golf to arrive at a point where Hamilton's (1998) above statement could be considered accurate, a large degree of change needed to occur; this change came by virtue of democratisation.

Importantly, it is in the early manifestations of this change that we can begin to see how democratisation and marketisation processes are linked. To illustrate this, we must first consider the social class dynamics at play within clubs at the time. In this regard, the clubs which epitomised the typical membership make- up of contemporary clubs were the Royal Belfast, the Island G.C. in Malahide, and Sutton G.C. in Howth, with the Island G.C. being a particularly representative example. The Island G.C. was founded in 1887, and its membership was made up exclusively of members of the Protestant community in Malahide. The club quickly became extremely fashionable in the area and was said to grow to the point where it rivalled the local church both in terms of popularity and social power (Inglis, 1962). Clubs at this time prided themselves on exclusivity and the prestige associated with being perceived as so. Thus, membership was very strictly controlled by club committees. Those who were fortunate enough to be allowed entry at this time emanated from the upper echelons of the upper classes or, at least, were strongly connected to the aristocracy or the gentry. However, it is very important to note that simply being wealthy did not guarantee one access. Indeed, Inglis (1962) confirmed this high level of exclusivity when he suggested that members of the Catholic church and families in trade were excluded. Inglis

(1962) also stressed that religion was not the only membership determinant, citing the case of a wealthy Protestant merchant, who was a regular attendee and prominent member of the local church, being denied entry to the club. Inglis used this example to illustrate the fact that one was not admitted unless they were of impeccable social standing. It was a similar situation in Royal Belfast and in Sutton especially, wherein the club's membership at the time could also "be described as a miniature list of Nobility, Gentry, Merchants, and Traders"(Guiney, 1990, p.19), the latter, of course, having the appropriate social standing. To maintain this level of exclusivity, clubs vigorously attempted to keep those whom they perceived to be beneath them or of insufficient social calibre out. There were many ways that this manifested. It took the form of the strict control of membership admissions, but this also manifested in the way that clubs were and continue to be designed today. In fact, much has been said about the way courses are typically constructed and the reasons why they are put together in such a fashion.

Eichberg (1986) epitomises much of contemporary academic thought in this regard and suggests that clubs were constructed using architectural barriers to deliberately set golfers apart from the general public. However, regardless of whether such barriers to admission are architectural or symbolic in nature, their purpose remains the same. That is, of course, to reinforce the message of exclusivity and act as symbolic markers of superiority (Ceron-Anaya, 2015).

This dynamic played out particularly poignantly at Galway Golf Club. Here, prospective members had to be first proposed and then seconded by existing members, whereupon their names and addresses would be posted on the club notice board for a period of no less than one week. After this, the aspiring new members were voted upon at the club's next general meeting, and if lucky, they were approved for entry (MacSweeney, 1995). This was an arduous process, even before one considered that the membership rules stipulated that in order to

be considered a full member, one needed to own a residence within seven miles of the club. Those living beyond this distance were granted the lesser distinction of 'country membership' (MacSweeney, 1995). Moreover, to further maintain the status quo and curtail the rise of the professional classes, those stationed in the area for work, for example, members of the RIC, Bank Officials, those working in government offices, Masters in the Grammar School, and students in the Queen's College, if admitted, were granted only temporary membership (MacSweeney, 1995, p.16).

Because of this closed-off and exclusionary ethos, club membership bodies were typically quite homogenous, and members often shared and championed the same beliefs and ideals. Thus, the perception of business being discussed during leisure time as being a contravention of appropriate etiquette or even shameful was widespread and would remain so until diversity in the form of new members with new attitudes towards commerce arrived. This was to be the case towards the end of the 1890s when broader democratisation processes related to an increase in the affluence of the merchant and the professional middle classes began to impact golf (Gibson, 1988). For the first time, the newly affluent had the luxury of leisure time and the means to pursue it. Given golf's synonymity with the elite, the recently emerged emphasis on sophistication, sport's use in identity formation, and the degree of social legitimacy that it could lend members of these classes, it is no surprise that a large number of them decided to

take up the sport. Although the struggle between these classes took place nationwide and in many different social arenas, it played out particularly poignantly in golf clubs. Indeed, Mulhall (2006, p.34) goes so far as to suggest that clubs at this time represented a “final belle époque” for the Anglo-Irish elite and that the end of their “long period of social ascendancy” can be seen to play out within the clubs of the day. This was an ending brought about by advancing democratisation processes and the resulting change in attitude towards commerce that accompanied them, the circumstances surrounding this, and the drivers of which will be discussed in more detail hereunder.

5.3.5. The Shift: From Exclusivity to Marketisation

The 1800s were a period during wherein significant change took place; an important element of this process was the Industrial Revolution, the effects of which could be felt throughout the UK, particularly in England. However, from an Irish perspective, it would be incorrect to say that these effects had an island-wide impact. More accurately, they were felt more keenly in the northeast of the island, particularly in Belfast and its surrounding areas. In fact, it has been said that Belfast was the last large city to benefit from the Industrial Revolution and that during the latter half of the nineteenth century, it grew faster than any other city in the British Isles, the main industries taking root here being shipbuilding,

engineering, and textiles (Hanna, 1995). With the arrival of industry came employment, and because of this, Belfast's population expanded rapidly, growing from circa 25,000 people in 1808 to circa 70,000 by 1841, and further to approximately 385,000 people by 1911, making it by a considerable margin the largest city in Ireland at this time (National Archives of Ireland, 2009).

Although the rest of the island cannot claim to have been so heavily influenced by the Industrial Revolution, similar changes did occur. These manifested as a result of increased urbanisation and greater levels of commercialisation in the agricultural sector (Connolly & Dolan, 2020; Clarke, 2000). If we take Dublin, for example, at this time, commerce, trade, and administration, rather than heavy industry, were what drove the city's growth. Indeed, during the 1800s, the city's port emerged as a vital hub for British goods being imported into, and agricultural goods being exported out of, the island. As well as this, greater levels of employment in the financial, legal, educational, and highly skilled manufacturing sectors emerged. As a result, the rate of population growth experienced in Dublin was similar to that of Belfast, with the number of people living in the capital approaching 250,000 by the mid-1800s and rising to circa 305,000 by 1911 (National Archives of Ireland, 2009a; CSO, 2020). In light of this, it is reasonable to suggest that changes in the structure of Irish society at this time were taking place on an island-wide basis. And, as suggested by Connolly & Dolan (2020), they were closely connected to changes in the

societal structure of the rest of the then UK. In relation to golf, the most

impactful of these shifts came in the form of a vast increase in membership of the professional middle class; indeed, as a result of this increased industrialisation and commercialisation, the professional middle grew significantly. This is evidenced by the increase in the number of commercial office workers in the British Isles at this time, which grew from 121,000 in 1851 to circa 514,000 in 1891, all of whom joined the ranks of bankers, merchants, and other professionals that made up the professional middle class (Rouse, 2015). This newly acquired affluence and social status represented a very definite change in the lifestyles of those who attained it. They no longer engaged in manual labour but passed their days in more sedentary employment in factories, classrooms, and offices.

Moreover, for the first time, many found themselves possessed of disposable income and spare/leisure time, the availability of which was a prerequisite for their involvement in not only golf but sports in general at this time (Hunt, 2007). In this vein, Rouse (2005) argues that as a result of these changes in societal structure, patterns of play were subsequently moulded and adapted to suit the needs of this new and emergent class. Rouse (2015) also cites the above as the drivers of the explosion of sporting clubs, mentioned above, that occurred throughout the British Isles at this time. This sentiment is echoed by numerous notable golfing historians, many of whom also suggest that these increases in living standards were what drove the growth of golf (Gibson, 1988; Hanna,

1995; Mulhall, 2006; Menton, 1991). However, whilst an increase in living standards was certainly an important and elemental part of the process, to say it was the sole contributor falls short in terms of explanatory merit and cannot, for example, explain why these newly empowered individuals chose golf from amongst the myriad of different sports now available to them.

During this period, the two groups were experiencing a comparable change in fortunes, albeit in opposite directions, with the power of the elites being severely reduced and that of the professional middle increasing accordingly. Two of the principal drivers of this change were the Land Act of 1881 and the Arrears of Rent Act of 1882, both of which changed land management practices in Ireland and had a direct impact on the wealth of the country's elites. Much of the control previously held by landlords was taken out of their hands and reassigned to either local government or the land commission. As a result, their power and influence diminished significantly (Office of the Attorney General, 1881; Office of the Attorney General, 1882). With this, the financial footing of many landowners was severely undermined, and any debt accrued on the strength of the value of their landholdings quickly became untenable. A consequence of this was that a substantial number of Ireland's large landowners lost their estates or were forced to downsize and live as country gentlemen (Higgins, 2013). Because of this, Purdue (2009) argued that by the end of the nineteenth century, the position of the previously dominant landed classes was becoming increasingly

vulnerable. It was the combination of these changes, and those occurring in tandem concerning the professional classes, that led to the growth of sports clubs in the British Ilse's at this time. That is to say, if we consider a rudimentary established/outsider figuration, in the battle for socio- economic power, the gentry found themselves increasingly outmatched by the up-and-coming commercial/merchant and professional classes. And slowly but surely losing ownership of, and control over, the access to sport. Indeed, if we look once more to Elias & Scotson's (1994) conceptualisation of an established/outsider relationship, wherein different social groupings form a particular figuration and are positioned as diametrically opposed on a power scale, it starts to become clear how the above-mentioned changes led to this dynamic and how this conflict began to impact sport in Ireland.

5.3.6. Professional Middle Classes And The Reconfiguration Of Power

That is not to suggest that the established were ‘beaten’, or that they were no longer present in clubs at this time, only that they now occupied a position weaker than the one they once had. Indeed, one could, at best, claim that only a modicum of democratisation had occurred by this point. It is noteworthy that even after this period, the use of green and membership fees meant that golf clubs continued to be elitist, even though they were not exclusive (Higgins, 2013). Ironically, this, coupled with its association with the established class,

only served to cement golf's image as a sport imbued with privilege and

respectability, practised by those of high social standing. Because of this, golf became the obvious choice for those in the professional classes who wanted to improve upon or cement their new social position. Indeed, Higgins (2013, p.15) argues that more than any other sport at the time, golf "provided a social space for the expression of the values and interests of the ascendant middle classes".

Contrary to what was said earlier concerning the growth of golf and its drivers, at this point in time, the professional classes were very much the driving force behind its expansion during this period. That is to say, growth was no longer coming solely from increased interest from the types of people who already played golf, the established classes. Rather, the ranks of Irish golfers began to swell with newcomers from the budding professional middle classes. Indeed, the appetite for golf amongst the professionals was so strong that they quickly became responsible for the establishment of new clubs nationwide. An indicative early example of how this spread took place is Portmarnock Golf Club in Co. Dublin. Portmarnock was set up by whiskey magnate John Jameson in 1893, together with course designer W. C. Pickeman. Indeed, Jameson, a prominent local merchant, helped establish golf in the area by supplying both the land for the course and the funding for the clubhouse (Mulhall, 2006). That is not to suggest that this type of development was confined to Dublin, or indeed, other highly urbanised areas; rather, it spread nationwide in this manner, clubs in both Co. Sligo and Co. Limerick being good examples of this. As

regards Co. Limerick, Alexander Shaw, a factory owner, a director of the Waterford, Limerick & Western Railway Company, and a member of the Irish Industrial Movement, echoed Jameson's actions and spearheaded the formation of the county's first club, the Limerick Golf Club, in 1891 (Limerick GC, n.d.). In relation to Sligo, the development of County Sligo Golf Club at Rosses Point was driven by two prominent local businessmen, the first being Lt Col James Campbell, an Ulster Bank board member and the High Sheriff of Sligo, and the second being Arthur Jackson who ran a prominent shipping business in the area at the time (Gibson, 1988; Mulhall, 2006).

Other early examples of clubs that were developed in this fashion include Ballycastle, Tramore, and Lucan, all of which were also established by local businessmen or public servants who were posted in these locations (Gibson, 1988; Higgins, 2013). Indeed, at this time, the fervour with which members of the professional classes pursued golf led Mulhall (2006, p.32) to suggest that they had "become obsessed with golf" and to further remark that the prominence of bank managers on club committees "tells its own story".

Members of the legal fraternity also played a key role in this process and were instrumental in the formation and day-to-day running of many golf clubs. In fact, in Dublin in particular, there is a lot of evidence to suggest that in these early days of golf's democratisation, members of the bar were the professional class's

most active disciples (Gibson, 1988). One of the ways the legal fraternity

displayed its commitment to the sport was by regularly sponsoring club competitions, examples of which can be found in clubs at both Portmarnock and Dollymount. In Portmarnock, an example of this was when members of the bar went as far as to institute the "Legal Cup", which was to be played for annually (*The Irish Times*, 1891, p.3; *The Irish Times*, 1897, p.3). Indeed, so synonymous with golf did the legal fraternity become that the *Belfast Newsletter* (1896, p.7) reported the following –

If a Barrister is not in the library and the client asks where he had best search for him…[The] stereotyped reply in these desperate golfing days is “Try Dollymount” [a contemporary golf course].Moreover, at the Royal Dublin Golf Club by 1900, members of the bar had come to dominate the membership body, making up a large part of its playing strength (Gibson, 1988).

As a result of the rapid expansion of golf at this time and the ever-increasing number of members of the professional classes playing, the balance of power within Irish golf clubs began to shift noticeably. Members of the professional classes began to monopolise power chances and accrue the legitimacy they so desired. Indeed, evidence of their increased social power can be seen in contemporary golf clubs. They began to occupy positions of power on club committees and rub shoulders with members of the gentry at social functions throughout the country. A particularly noteworthy example in this regard is

Malone Golf Club in Belfast. Malone was one of Ireland's earliest golf clubs and was originally renowned for its exclusivity and association with the gentry (Hanna, 1995). Even here, the progress made by the professional classes was apparent. As evidence of this, a social function hosted by the then club captain, Arthur Holmes and his wife can be cited. When examining the list of guests at the affair, one encounters many representatives of both the professional classes and the established elite mixing freely. Examples of these individuals include Sir Samuel Dixon, Lord Mayor of Belfast and Lord Samuel Black, both of whom were representatives of the elite classes, and Mr G.W. Wolf and Mr Joseph Braddell, both of whom emanated from the professional class (Hanna, 1995). However, what's most notable here is that all of these attendees were described as "prominent names of the day" (Hanna,1995, p.8). In previous years, not only would it have been unlikely that members of the professional classes would've been invited to such events, they most certainly wouldn't have been considered as having the same or similar social standing as the established in the manner Hanna does here. Indeed, if we consider once more Elias and Sotcson's (1994) conceptualisation of the established/outsider relationship, it becomes clear that to have arrived at this point, significant change needed to have occurred. In this case, by virtue of the processes mentioned earlier, the elite had experienced a decrease in power, whilst the professionals had experienced an analogous increase in power, the result of these shifts being the

expansion of Irish golf.

5.3.7. Elites & Professionals: Interdependence And Eventual Integration

One could assume that at this point, the professional middle would branch out further and begin forming clubs as the need or desire arose. However, previous examples notwithstanding, it would appear that the majority of the professional middle was not yet confident enough in their position to go it alone in this regard. Indeed, despite their relative increase in power, when it came to finding a means to express their improved social status, the professional middle still found themselves reliant on the upper classes. That is to say, regardless of the shifts in the balance of power between the two, in a somewhat ironic manifestation of their interdependence, when forming new clubs, the professionals actively sought out the patronage of influential members of the elite class. This took the form of pursuing royal patronage, as was awarded to Belfast, Dublin, Portrush, and Down golf clubs in 1885, 1891, 1892, and 1908, respectively. Or by selecting members of the elite as president or captain of newly formed clubs, as was the case with Lady Annesley at County Down Ladies in 1894, the Duke of Abercorn at Bundoran in 1894, and Lord Listowel at Ballybunion in 1893, (Gibson, 1988; Higgins, 2013), to name but a few examples. This meant that the professionals depended on the elite classes to not only lend them a degree of legitimacy in the eyes of the rest of society but also to provide them with the

social practices, cultural capital, and markers of civility, to use Elias's term, to denote this newly found social power. Not surprisingly, one of the ways this interdependence manifested was in relation to the formation of even more new golf clubs. Indeed, one could argue that this turn of events, in essence, benefited both parties. The professionals gained access to and increased control over a sport that was still associated with the established classes (which, by extension, granted them the legitimacy they desired), and by sitting at the top of club hierarchical structures, the established classes maintained their social position. Higgins (2013, p.19) argues that this is one of the reasons that golf became so successful, suggesting that "it honoured the old social order while also providing a meeting place for the new establishment: the professional, managerial, and business classes". It is also a perfect illustration of how figurational interdependence shapes advancing democratisation processes and how these relate to golf's expansion and subsequent marketisation in Ireland. Indeed, whether be it in relation to the increasing numbers of club membership subscriptions, the increasing amounts of golf equipment and paraphernalia being purchased, or the increase in coverage and advertising in contemporary newspapers (Hanna, 2002; Menton, 1990; Gibson, 1989) that occurred at this point in time, advancing democratisation processes had a profound impact on contemporary golf.

Moreover, democratisation processes also had an impact beyond social class

groupings; indeed, democratisation in terms of gender relations and religion were both also important to marketisation and, as such, will be discussed below.

'5.3.8. Lady Golfers' and the Fight for Equality

5.3.8.1. Introduction: Gender and the Democratisation of Golf

We will now progress to discuss democratisation as it occurred in relation to gender, and by extension, how this particular form of democratisation is relevant to golf's marketisation. From the outset, women were largely welcomed in the sport, and in most cases, even valued as members of early golf clubs. Indeed, in the late 1800s in Ireland, golf was said to be a game "adapted to indulgence by both sexes" (*Belfast Newsletter*, 1896, cited in Redmond, 1997, p.7). Ireland's first documented female golfer was Mrs Wright, who entered a mixed foursome competition at Royal Belfast in 1892. The match was said to be attended by many women who were, in turn, "inspired to play the game" (MacSweeney et al., 1995, p.62). This may well have been the case because soon after, nearly all the clubs in the country began to welcome female golfers, with Royal County Down and Royal Portrush going so far as to build these new members their own clubhouse (Hanna, 2002). One particularly illustrative example of how early female golfers were first received is Malahide G.C. The club was founded in 1892 by renowned Irish painter Nathaniel Hone and treated male and female golfers with relative equity (Malahide G.C., 2019). Both genders enjoyed the

same rights and paid the same entry fee (£2) and annual subscription (£1) (Mulhall, 2006). It is fair to say that at this time, the number of ladies playing golf in Ireland was rising rapidly, so much so that the Irish Ladies Golfing Union (ILGU) was formed in 1893, just two years after its male counterpart (Mulhall, 2006). This was the first women's sports union in the world and was launched before women's unions in either England or Scotland, where golf had been played for much longer (Gibson, 1989). This was a time of significant growth for women's golf in Ireland. County Westmeath G.C. is a good illustration of the increasing interest amongst women. Here, the number of female members grew from just thirteen in 1904 to forty-five out of a total of 137 members in 1909, the women going from representing 18% of the membership body to just under 33% in five short years (Hunt, 2007). Also noteworthy is the fact that female Irish golfers achieved success in international competitions long before their male counterparts(Gibson, 1989). However, even before this, it is fair to say that women's golf had gained acceptance in Ireland, with the earliest sponsored competition occurring on the 14th of June 1895. This open competition was sponsored by the Dublin, Wicklow & Wexford Railway Company and was well-attended and successful (*Irish Times*, 1895; Gibson, 1989). Indeed, even at Sutton, renowned for its elitist and proud nature, women's golf was said to be thriving, that particular section of the club growing rapidly and being "conducted with increased energy and success" (Guiney, 1990, p. 14). However, despite this

seemingly auspicious start, a significant change was on the cards, and soon women's golf would be perceived in a much more negative fashion.

The first evidence of this shift came in 1899 in the form of an article by J.W. Percy published in *The Irish Golfer*. The article, titled 'The Much Maligned Lady Golfer', begins by extolling the virtues of female golfers and the enthusiasm with which they have embraced the game. It also discusses the many benefits that playing golf bestows upon women, but finishes on a negative note, lamenting the harsh treatment that female golfers faced both on and off the green (Percy, 1899). Percy regularly discussed issues pertaining to ladies' golf in his articles and often made mention of the willingness of male golfers to consider them the weaker sex, castigate their golfing prowess as inferior, and lament their presence on the course as a vexation or hindrance. Velija & Malcolm (2009, p.634) argue that such behaviour stems from "deep-seated ideological beliefs about the essential distinctiveness of males and females" and, in essence, rests upon the assumed "natural physical inferiority of females". However, when we look at these conflicts more closely, it becomes clear that biological predispositions are but one small element of a broader process. Indeed, Dunning (2001, p. 226) argues that the first core figurational assumption one should make about gender is that male/female relationships, like all social relations, are shaped by the character and structure of the society in which they occur. And, moreover, that, in line with Elias's thinking, gender identities, roles, and ideologies are partly determined by

a society's unique civilising process and the stage it has reached in that development. That is to say, whilst biological differences between the sexes are important, the more significant factors are the broader social structures that shape power dynamics and the level of sexual segregation within male/female interdependence. In this context, sport plays only a secondary, reinforcing role (Elias & Dunning, 2008).

In light of this, it is clear that in order to develop an accurate understanding of what was actually occurring at this point, we are best served by considering the nature of the relationships that existed between men and women at this time and, by extension, the power balances that existed between them. Elias supported such an approach and suggested that "like other human interdependencies, the interdependence of males and females is best conceptualised as involving at a fundamental level a 'balance of power' or 'power ratio'"(Elias,1978, as cited in Dunning, 2001, p. 227). By doing so, we come to an understanding of the shift that occurred between contemporary male and female golfers at this time and the realisation that it was heavily linked to functional democratisation and the resulting reduction in the power gap that existed between men and women in broader Irish society. When explaining how such a process takes place, Elias (2012, p. 63) suggests that –

> In the course of social differentiation and corresponding integration, certain social groups have suffered reductions in the scope of their

> functions, and even total loss of function; the consequence has been the loss of power potential. But the overall trend of the transformation was to reduce all power potentials between different groups, even down to those between men and women, parents and children.

This trend is referred to by the concept of "functional democratisation". In essence, what Elias is suggesting here is that as groups become more interdependent, the power ratios that exist between them tend to become more equal, and the nature of their relationships changes as a result.

5.3.8.2. Exclusion and Backlash: The Shift in Club Policies

Broadly speaking, at this time, we can see changes of this sort taking place within Irish society, that is to say, we start to see the positions of certain groups of women improve relative to their male counterparts. This is not true within all strata of society, and, indeed, Daly (2006, p. 81 as cited in Connolly, 2021) is of the opinion that there "is no evidence of any significant progress for the overwhelming majority of Irish women between 1850 and 1950". However, certainly, for those involved with golf, Daly's assertion does not ring true. Elias accounts for why this is the case by considering society as a whole and examining the differences that exist between different social strata. He suggests that whilst a lessening of power inequalities within a single social stratum can occur, the status quo can remain unaltered in other strata (Elias, 2009). Thus, the

possibility exists for the positions of the women who played to improve whilst those of their non-golfing counterparts remained the same. Connolly's (2021) work on the drinking habits of Irish women examines how attitudes towards, and perceptions of, female drinking habits have changed in Ireland over the nineteenth, twentieth, and early twenty-first centuries, and how these changes have manifested in relation to contemporary advertising. Connolly maintains that the development of a monopoly of violence, the establishment of a more pacified social space, and advancing thresholds of repugnance towards violence contributed to the development of a social space wherein the significance of male power built upon strength and violence decreased significantly (Connolly, 2021). Connolly extends his analysis to explore the growing significance of women's power, particularly in relation to changes in family size and the factors driving them. He references Daly's observation that this type of family management relies "on a degree of cooperation and consent between husbands and wives, and most specifically trust and consideration on the part of husbands for their wives" (Daly, 2006, p. 573, as cited in Connolly, 2021). Connolly uses this to support Elias's (2014) argument that such shifts in family planning represent both "a source and a symptom of a power shift involving a reduction in the power inequality between men and women" (Connolly, 2021, p. 1251). How this pertains to golf is that early on in her work, Daly(2006, as cited in Connolly, 2021) asserts that she first encountered these shifts in the very early

1900s, that they could originally be found in the upper classes, and that this was particularly so within the professional classes. Therefore, given the social makeup of contemporary clubs, it is safe to say that golfing figurations of the day reflected those of broader society. It is in this fact that we find the explanation for the sudden ostracisation and stigmatisation of contemporary female golfers. Indeed, Wouters (2019) argues that in the face of increasing social interdependence and the accompanying establishment of less unequal power balances, disintegration/integration conflicts can manifest as side effects. This is often the case within sporting circles, which were at the time increasingly being used by males as "sites for the ritual and symbolic vilification and demeaning of females" (Sheard & Dunning, 1973; Dunning, 1986; Nelson, 1994; Dunning, 2001, p. 227). That is to say, in the face of broader, relative increases in the power of females, males used stigmatisation and other such tools to assert their dominance and shore up their own social positions relative to those of contemporary women. This mirrors the dynamic that existed between the gentry and the professional classes explained above, and the established/outsider struggles that took place between them.

If we consider once more Percy's articles, mentioned above, we are presented with an explanation of how this manifested between males and females in an Irish context. Velija & Malcolm (2009) argue that because males are typically the established group in sporting figurations, they use these beliefs to position

females as outsiders and justify the assertion that their presence is somehow wrong in what they suggest are male social spaces. This can be seen very early on in Irish golf. In fact, just three months after Percy first mentioned this issue, we began to see such treatment in early golf clubs intensify.

Indeed, this behaviour actually escalates beyond mere complaint and ridicule to the point where club committees, which men, of course, dominated, actively started to treat women differently. In most cases, going so far as to enact rules and regulations that discriminate based on gender. This approach was so pervasive that it regularly showed up in golfing publications of the day, the following example being typical of contemporary sentiment towards women –

> If they choose to play when the male golfers are feeding or resting, no one can object. But at other times – must we say it – they are not welcome. Constitutionally and physically. Women are unfitted to golf (Golf, 1901, as cited in MacSweeney, 1995, p.37).

Velija & Malcolm (2009, p.634) suggest that "male resistance to female involvement may come in the form of verbal abuse, physical intimidation or gossip and innuendo" and account for this type of behaviour by suggesting it serves to underscore women's marginal position in sport. Given that this type of behaviour was widespread even amongst club committees and that such prejudices were actively written into club rules(Golf, 1901, as cited in MacSweeney, 1995; Gibson, 1989), it is clear that resistance of this nature was

widespread throughout golf in Ireland at the time.

The first evidence of such behaviour at the committee level can be found in Royal Dublin, where a significant reduction in women's rights occurred. The club committee formulated the following rules. First and foremost, women were only allowed to play on Mondays and Thursdays. The rest of the time, they were barred from the course. Secondly, any woman or party that played with a woman was required to stand aside and allow a man to pass if he so desired (Gibson, 1988). What's more, women were not allowed to hold full membership status and, as such, must have been either invited or a family member of an existing member to gain access to the course (Gibson, 1988). Indeed, despite starting so well, one might be surprised to find that similar changes occurred at Sutton. Here, despite substantial growth in popularity amongst women, the club committee followed Royal Dublin in restricting the rights of female golfers.
They decided that women no longer had the freedom of the club and that only wives and daughters had the privilege of playing over the links(Guiney, 1990). Moreover, they went on to institute even harsher restrictions than were in place at Royal Dublin. The following rules were enacted –

1. That no ladies shall play after 5:00 o'clock PM except in the company of gentlemen members.

2. That gentleman playing singles or foursomes have the right to pass any match in which a lady is taking part if they find that they are being

delayed.

3. That no ladies be allowed to play on Wednesdays and Saturdays after one o'clock, except in such competitions as arranged by the committee. (Guiney, 1990, p. 22)

However, Sutton was somewhat different to Royal Dublin at this point in that they had already accepted female members who, understandably, were annoyed by these new restrictions. In November of 1905, a Mrs Stewart, then Ladies Captain, wrote a strongly worded letter to the club committee expressing the concern of existing female members and outlining the injustice of these rules. She was summarily dismissed by the club committee (Guiney, 1990). Despite this, the ladies at Sutton were not content with this dismissal, and they mounted an ongoing protest. Unfortunately, this culminated in failure and the resignation of Mrs Stewart as both Lady's Captain and a club member (Guiney, 1990).

5.3.8.3. Power Ratios and Gender Dynamics

The fact that this concerted effort ended in failure is a reflection of women's position relative to men in contemporary clubs and an illustration of the lack of power that they held at this time. For the foreseeable future, this attitude was pervasive amongst almost all clubs on the island and even amongst most members of the sport's governing body, the GUI. This was to be the case well into the 1930s. Evidence of this can be found in the case of Malahide G.C.,

which was expelled from the GUI for nine months in 1938. The club was expelled for not only granting women membership status but also granting them full voting rights (Malahide G.C., 2019), a step that was perceived to be too far by the GUI governing body. Interestingly, despite the harsh position adopted by the GUI, it is around this time that we begin to see somewhat of a change. That is to say, be it out of necessity, as was the case with Galway G.C., which struggled for numbers and welcomed female members as a result (MacSweeney, 1995). Or out of a rejection of this type of discrimination, as was the case at Malahide (Malahide G.C., 2019), the power balance between men and women began to change. Indeed, it was in the era of the 1930s and 40s that we began to see small, faltering shifts back towards equality, and, as a result, women began to gain a modicum of power within contemporary clubs. A prime example of these small shifts is the advent of mixed lounges. Clandeboye G.C. is a particularly illustrative example here. In 1933, Clandeboye had 104 lady associate members(Maxwell, 2000). Women could not hold full membership status, and although they were allowed to play the course, they were restricted in terms of when and also were not permitted to use club facilities such as the bar and snooker room. However, by 1944, perceptions at the club began to change. The construction of a mixed lounge, wherein, on occasion, male and female golfers could socialise together, was proposed by the club committee and subsequently constructed. This overturned a prior committee edict that prohibited

ladies from entering the traditionally male-dominated social areas of the club and prevented them from partaking in alcohol outside of mealtimes (Maxwell, 2000, p.15). At this time, similar accommodations of this nature were also made at a small number of other clubs across the island, Bangor and Portrush being indicative examples here (Stanley & Campbell, 2003; Gibson, 1989).

Indeed, this was to be the way in which change would occur going forward, with individual clubs making small concessions on a piecemeal basis in the years that followed. However, it is fair to say that in clubs across the island, very little happened in terms of significant reform in this regard for around the next fifty years. Men continued to occupy the established positions in contemporary clubs, and women were still the outsiders, being treated as very much second-class citizens. Although a sweeping change of the kind alluded to above did not occur at this point, that is not to suggest that women were not active in clubs, or that nothing at all changed during this period; quite the contrary, in fact, is true. Indeed, in many ways, it could be argued that the work of women golfers at this time laid the foundations for future growth within the demographic and that when processes surrounding equality would eventually advance, this work allowed them to do so relatively rapidly. Perhaps the most important steps taken in this direction were pertaining to what, in today's terminology, we would classify as 'grassroots' development. What we must remember at this point is that women, although castigated and firmly entrenched in outsider positions,

were still very much a feature of contemporary golf clubs. That is to say, they had access (albeit limited) to clubs, they had their own island-wide Union (the ILGU), and, in some instances, the sympathetic ear of more progressive club committees, Malahide G.C. being a good indicative example in this regard (Malahide G.C., 2019). This meant that, despite their relative lack of power, they were actually able to promote the uptake of women's golf, at least to a small degree.

5.3.8.4. Institutional Change and Market Pressures

It was to be the early 1990s when we would begin to see what, by comparison, could be described as a significant change. As established, as regards gender democratisation, golf lagged considerably behind other sports on the island, many of which kept pace with broader society in the sense that, as relations between men and women became more equal in general in the 1960s and 70s, women's positions within clubs changed to reflect this. However, due to the particularly high level of dominance held by men and the fact that they held a monopoly on positions of power within contemporary clubs, the general situation regarding gender equality would remain much the same in golf until the 1990s. What happened at this time was that at a societal level, the power balance disparities that existed between men and women began to become much less pronounced. Not only this, it was at this point that financial motivation became a

factor for club governing bodies; indeed, funding in the form of grants became available. This was to have a fairly profound impact on the number of women playing golf on the island. In 1991, just 13% of female golfers in the Republic had full membership status and voting rights, which was quite similar to the North of Ireland, where the number sat at just 15% (GUI, 2018). However, in the decade that followed, the availability of funding that was predicated on inclusivity and equal representation would contribute to a dramatic increase in these numbers. How this manifested will be discussed in the following section.

The 1990s were a time of great change in Northern Ireland. This will be discussed in greater detail in relation to religious democratisation in a subsequent section, but suffice it to say at this point that one of the ways this change manifested, and came to impact golf, was via the provision of development grants to sports clubs and societies. These grants were made available to address issues such as sectarianism and inequality. Because of this, any club guilty of either transgression would not be eligible to receive funding. This meant that clubs where female golfers were not allowed access to full membership status needed to change in order to avail of the new grants. Clandeboye is again a prime example of one such club. At an AGM on October 26th,1998, the issue of grants was raised, and a motion to achieve more equitable status for female golfers was tabled. When voted on in December of the same year, Maxwell (2000, p.30) suggests that, with a substantial grant of "£90,000 depending on the decision,

there were very few dissenting voices". This resulted in equal access to full membership status for ladies, and the club's rule book was amended to read that henceforth it –

> shall operate an equal opportunities policy and no one shall be denied the right of equal access to its facilities on the grounds of Race, Creed, Gender, Disability, Occupation, Religion or Sexual Persuasion.

South of the border in 1985, a similar process was underway. The Irish Tourism Board, Bord Failte, passed a decree stating that any club that did not offer equal status to women could not apply for grant aid from the EU (Gilleece, 2021). As a result, clubs wherein female golfers were treated unequally not only found themselves unable to apply for grants but, crucially, were also deemed ineligible to host any publicly funded tournaments until the issue was addressed (Barry, 2021). Examples of clubs that, because of these changes, began to allow female golfers full membership status include Howth and Baltinglass, which both instituted new female membership regulations almost immediately (Gilleece, 2021). Interestingly, despite the availability of such funding and the potential increase in revenue that was available in the form of new female membership subscriptions, some clubs remained unmoved. Perhaps the most notorious example here is Portmarnock G.C. in Co. Dublin. Portmarnock, with a membership body that is made up mostly of medical and judiciary professionals, has long played host to some of Ireland's most prestigious golf competitions

(Reid, 2021). However, due to its infamous male members-only policy, the club hasn’t hosted a major competition since 2003, when the above- mentioned government policies came into effect (Barry, 2021; Reid, 2021).

Despite losing out on both competitions and funding, the club committee at the time held firm to its no-women rule. Indeed, even in the face of legal proceedings led by the Irish Equality Authority, the club committee were unyielding. The committee fought and won their case in the Supreme Court, with the judge deciding that given that the club’s primary purpose was to serve the needs of one particular gender, i.e. it was instituted with the aim of being a men's golf club, it was not in contravention of the Equal Status Act and could continue operating as it had been (Clarke, 2014: Reid, 2021; Gilleece, 2021).

Indeed, it wasn't until 2021, over a decade later, that the club would revisit the issue. In early 2021, members voted on a motion to amend its constitution to allow female members; the motion carried with 83.4% of members voting in favour of the change (Reid, 2021). That is not to suggest that women were attributed equal status to men in the club, or even that the attitudes of existing members had changed significantly, simply that women would now be admitted. Indeed, it is widely believed that a desire to host major competitions once again was the driving force behind the decision (Women & Golf, 2021; Reid, 2021). That being said, it is but logical to deduce that the marketisation of golf on the island of Ireland has been impacted by the events discussed above. Even beyond the loss of

revenue imposed by government sanctions and being declared ineligible to host national and international competitions, clubs that discriminated based on gender were, in effect, alienating half of all potential new golfers. Moreover, despite their comparatively poor treatment thus far and the fact that global golf participation numbers have declined overall in the last decade, female golfers represent the fastest-growing demographic in golf today (GUI, 2018; Lunn & Kelly, 2017). Indeed, of the 4,600 individuals involved in the GUI's 'Get into Golf' program, a staggering 3,000 of those were female, outnumbering their male counterparts almost two to one (GUI, 2018).

5.3.8.5. In Summary

The process of gender democratisation in Irish golf was neither smooth nor widely accepted. While women initially gained access and some influence, this was short-lived. As they took on more visible roles, institutional resistance, rooted in broader efforts to preserve existing power structures, grew. Male-dominated clubs reinforced their dominance not just informally but by codifying exclusion in their rules and governance. Over time, however, societal change and market pressures began to erode these barriers. This prolonged struggle reflects how gendered power dynamics were reshaped by shifting social interdependencies and economic necessity. Clubs eventually faced the costs of resisting reform, losing funding, major events, and alignment with the sport's fastest-growing demographic. Democratisation thus began to directly influence

golf's marketisation: clubs that adapted saw increased participation, public approval, and financial support; those that resisted fell behind. This interconnection between democratisation and marketisation sets the stage for the next section, where we examine how similar forces of social change (this time around religious identity)shaped the development of golf.

5.3.9. Religious Democratisation – Sectarian Issues and Golf's Development North & South

5.3.9.1. Sport, Status, And Identity In Ireland

We have established previously that sport was often used to signify social status and to illustrate who was or was not a part of the elite classes (Guttmann, 1996; Mangan, 1985). However, it is also important to note that the sport that one chose to play contributed significantly to their identity concept and was often used in the expression of that identity. What's noteworthy in this regard is that in many ways, Irish society emulated what took place on the UK mainland. This emulation cannot be dismissed as mere mimicry; rather, it points to a more complex dynamic of symbolic dependence, wherein social legitimacy in Ireland was often gauged by the extent to which individuals or groups aligned themselves with British elite practices. Such a dynamic strongly echoes Elias's concept of established/outsider figurations, in which the subordinate group

(Ireland) internalises the norms and values of the dominant one (Britain), even in the realm of leisure. In support of this, Carter (2005) suggests that for most of the British Empire's existence, Ireland, although centrally positioned in terms of geographic location, remained marginal in terms of power. Because of this, when golf became popular with the upper classes on the UK mainland, that popularity soon spread to the upper classes here and contributed significantly to the sport's development on the island. A by-product of this was that, in its early days, at least, golf was synonymous with the Protestant faith and Unionism (Higgins, 2013; Gibson, 1989). And, importantly, it was used in both the construction and expression of those particular identities. Moreover, golf's association with Unionism functioned not only to delineate religious boundaries but also to reinforce the spatial and institutional exclusion of Catholics. Golf clubs, in this sense, became highly regulated spaces through which social mobility and a sense of belonging were carefully managed and actively restricted.

5.3.9.2. Religious Democratisation And Shifting Power Balances

Despite this, as was the case with social class and gender, discussed above, democratisation occurred gradually along religious lines and, moreover, not only

did golf come to lose its synonymity with the Protestant faith and Unionism, it eventually came to be popular with the nationally orientated Catholic people, which in turn contributed to the sport's marketisation. Interestingly, it is not uncommon in an Irish context to find examples of sports such as golf, that is to say, those with inherently strong ties to Unionism and by extension the island's colonisers, that were gradually subverted and transformed into sources of nationalist pride (Stoddart, 1998; Stoddart & Sandiford, 1998).

Indeed, some anthropologists go so far as to suggest that victory over the British in such sports came to provide a "symbolic discourse of the changed power relations between the former colonial overlords and subjects" (Carter, 2005, p.193-194). That being said, for Irish society to arrive at the point in time where this was possible, significant processual change in the form of religious democratisation needed to have occurred. Certainly, this was the case during golf's early days, wherein the balance of power between those involved needed to shift considerably before golf would or even could become such a symbol. For context, the balances of power within golf clubs at this time were intrinsically linked to those that existed on a national level. In this regard, in the early 1900s, the established group was, for the most part, made up of the gentry, landlords, Unionists, and Protestants, or in general, those with inherently strong links to the union. The outsiders were very much the middle classes and the nationally orientated Catholic people. The conflict between the two sides was

driven by competition for cultural capital (Liston & Maguire, 2020) and conflicting visions of Irish nationhood (Connolly & Dolan, 2020). There was, of course, occasional overlap between these demographic segments. That notwithstanding, by virtue of advancing social class democratisation and the various drivers of this process, discussed at length in a previous section, broadly speaking, some nationalists, or at least members of the broader outsider group, were a feature of Irish sports clubs from around the 1890s. However, as with social class and gender, when it came to religious democratisation, due to the dominance of the established class, golf again lagged considerably behind the rest of Irish sports clubs in this regard. As a result, for well into the 1900s, Catholics were refused entry into or were simply not a part of most clubs.

Sutton G.C., Royal Belfast, Royal Dublin, Malone, and the Island Golf Club were notable examples in this regard (Hanna,1995; Guiney,1990; Gibson, 1989; Inglis, 1962; Mulhall, 2006). Indeed, it wasn't until the 1920s and the advent of partition, wherein British forces were withdrawn, and the island of Ireland was divided, that we began to see real and meaningful change in this regard. That is to say, it was around this time that Catholics, those of whom were of sufficient social standing to be deemed worthy of membership, began to move beyond the stigma of being outsiders and began to take up membership and even positions of prominence and power within Irish golf clubs.

5.3.9.3. Partition And The Reversal Of Established/Outsider Roles

The greatest change in this regard took place between 1920 and 1950; there are, however, some caveats here that must be considered, most of which stem from the division of Ireland, north and south. Indeed, after partition, Ireland was transformed from an outsider within the United Kingdom into an independent state possessed of what Liston & Maguire (2020, p.7) describe as a "reverse majority/minority north and south, comprised of two main ethnoreligious groupings: Protestant Unionists and Catholic Nationalists". That is to say, in the newly formed Irish Free State, established and outsider roles experienced somewhat of a reversal. Members of the previously established class, the Protestant Unionists, saw their power severely undermined and, in many respects, came to lose much of the social capital they had accrued. Indeed, they quite quickly came to occupy the outsider positions in certain circles, whilst conversely, the former outsider group, the Catholic Nationalists, experienced an increase in power and soon rose to occupy established positions. However, in contrast to the situation in the Free State, in Northern Ireland, these groups and their relative power positions stayed much the same; that is to say, very little change occurred, and the Protestant Unionists remained firmly in the established position. Because of the intricacies of this situation, any changes that took place were far from straightforward, and moreover, as was the case in relation to social class democratisation discussed above, were very much what Elias & Scotson

(1994, p. xxxvii) would describe as "confliction affairs". As a result, this was to be a gradual process of change that sometimes manifested violently. Indeed, Gibson (1989) reports that during the time around Ireland's partition, when this period of change began, newspapers carried word of the sacking of Anglo-Irish houses across the country on a daily basis. In this regard, the prevailing opinion amongst historians is that, despite its colonial origins, at this time, golf was not perceived as a threat by nationalists, and that as a result, it emerged from this period unscathed and unimpacted. However, this is a vast oversimplification of a nuanced situation that will be explored in much greater detail in a subsequent section, wherein the importance of pacified social spaces will be considered. However, suffice it to say at this point that the reality of the situation was that golf experienced quite significant change as a result of these broader social processes and, what's more, it emerged from them possessed of a social significance that differed north and south of the border. That is to say, the types of people who played golf and how the sport was perceived by the general public soon differed significantly in the then Free State of Ireland and Northern Ireland. We will explore this issue in greater detail in the following section.

In the period leading up to Partition, the topic of sport was prominently pursued by Nationalists. Newspapers across Ireland actively promoted and encouraged participation in the island's indigenous Gaelic games while simultaneously

asserting the perceived inferiority of so-called ‘garrison games’. This was a concerted and deliberate effort that has been described as a “battle of rhetoric,” into which issues such as class, nationality, and religion were woven (Rouse, 2017). Here, non-native sports were depicted as not only inferior to traditional Gaelic games, but they were also cast as anti-Irish and attributed an almost corrupting influence. As the name suggests, ‘garrison games’ were often first played here by soldiers in the bases in which they were stationed, and, as established, golf is very much one such sport. Because of this, Rouse (2018) argues that there were those in nationalist circles who perceived golf in a very negative fashion. As a result, pressure grew, and as the Anglo-Irish war commenced, golf clubs found themselves the subject of much nationalist aggression. Manifestations of this aggression varied throughout the country and will be discussed in detail in the following chapter but they typically ranged from digging up greens, as was the case at Mullingar G.C (Rouse, 2018), to arson and the destruction of clubhouses, as was the case at both Skerries and Tullamore golf clubs (*The Independent,* 2005: Tullamore G.C., 2011), to name but a few of many indicative examples.

The Anglo-Irish War was to be a relatively short-lived affair, but significantly, it was as it ended, when violence in the Free State abated, that we began to see golf there and golf in Northern Ireland diverge along different paths. That is to say, it is here, in the early 1920s, that the above-mentioned shift in established/outsider

positions, and by extension, power dynamics, began to affect golf and transform it into something qualitatively different to what it had been in the then Free State.

Surprisingly, given the Nationalists' prior attitudes towards golf, the change that occurs here is contrary to what one might assume. That is to say, when the roles were reversed, and the Catholics/Nationalists became the established group in the Free State, one could have quite logically deduced that they would have forsaken garrison games and chosen Gaelic games instead. However, in some cases, this could not be further from the truth, and in fact, golf was passionately and enthusiastically pursued by members of the newly established. Indeed, one could argue that those in the Republic, or at least some of them, seemed to forget golf's colonial origins and even rallied against them. Naas Golf Club's Michael Clarson's fervent assertion in the *Leinster Leader* that "golf is not an English game"(1932, as cited in Costello, 1996, p.11) and Browning's (2018) 1955 somewhat tongue-in-cheek suggestion that the mythical Irish figure Cuchulain may have played golf as opposed to hurling being notable examples of this shift. Yet, perhaps the most significant evidence of the change in how golf was perceived comes to us in the form of the Tailteann Games, the origins of which are rooted in ancient Irish culture and history. The games were said to have been started by the warrior god Lugh to mark the death of his foster mother, Tailtiu. They were held annually and, as one would expect, were made up of traditional Irish sports (Macalister, 2010). The games were held regularly from the 6th to the

9th century AD, but died out entirely after the Norman invasion of the 12th century (Brennan, 2011). However, in 1922, the period immediately after partition but just before the outbreak of civil war, a revival of the games was proposed by the Minister of Posts and Telegraphs, J. J. Walsh; the aim here was to bring people together after the turmoil of revolution and partition (Mulhall, 2006). Although Walsh's motives were admirable, ultimately, his efforts were premature, and owing to the Irish Civil War, the games were postponed until August 1924 (Brennan, 2011). That notwithstanding, noteworthy here is the fact that golf was deemed sufficiently 'Irish' to warrant inclusion in the revival of these ancient games. Indeed, golf competitions were included in both the men's and women's sections(Mulhall, 2006). This implies that in the 'new Ireland', golf was no longer so strongly associated with its colonial origins. On the contrary, it had been transformed into an acceptably 'Irish' sport, one which, crucially, the Nationalist sportsman could now play without calling into question his allegiances or character. In the days following Partition and Civil War, the membership bodies of Irish golf clubs came to reflect this change in the sport's perception (Mulhall, 2006). Arguably, one of the best examples of this shift can be found in Co. Clare man John Burke.

Burke came from comparatively humble beginnings, one of ten children and the son of a railway porter; he first found steady employment as a writer for the *Connaught Tribune* and ended his days as one of Ireland's most successful

amateur golfers (Irish Golf Archive, 2020). However, his golfing prowess, whilst laudable, was perhaps not the most noteworthy aspect of the man. Burke was an IRA man of considerable renown. He rose to the rank of Captain in the 4th Battalion of the Mid-Clare Brigade and orchestrated the infamous Rinneen Ambush, wherein 6 RIC men lost their lives (Fitzpatrick, 2019). Burke, a devoted and lifelong Republican, was born near Lahinch in 1899 and is said to have played golf casually from the age of 7 until 1913. After that time, at the age of 14, because golf was perceived to be so synonymous with the British and therefore an unacceptable pastime for any self-respecting Irishman, he gave up the sport in favour of the more socially acceptable Gaelic football (Irish Golf Archive, 2020). It wasn't until after golf's position in Irish society had shifted that he chose to play again (Irish Golf Archive, 2020; Rouse, 2018; Fitzpatrick, 2019). Burke made this decision in 1928 and went on to become highly successful, winning the South of Ireland Championship 11 times, the Irish Close Championship 8 times, and the West of Ireland Championship 6 times (Irish Golf Archive, 2020). The very fact that one so synonymous with Nationalism would choose to play golf, having previously abandoned it due to its colonial roots, is telling in and of itself.

What's more, beyond simply becoming acceptable, in a comparatively short time, golf actually became the sport of choice for Nationalist members of the ascendant classes. IRA gunman, popular Fianna Fáil politician, and eventual

Taoiseach, Sean Lemass, is a prime example in this regard. Indeed, Lemass has been described as an avid golfer who played golf on a weekly basis (*The Independent*, 2005) and regularly travelled to compete in club competitions (*Leinster Leader*, 1940). Lemass joined Skerries G.C. in 1932 and eventually became captain and then president of the club in 1940 (Irish Golf Archive, 2020; *Fingal Independent*, 2005). The willingness of such a prominent republican politician to be publicly associated with the sport is also indicative of the change in golf's perception. Crucially for golf's expansion at this point, whilst in the Republic the sport was no longer so strongly associated with the Union, it maintained its association with the upper classes. As a result, it granted nationalist members of the up-and-coming classes the legitimacy they desired in a socially acceptable way and, by extension, increased the number of them who took up the sport.

5.3.9.4. Golf's Expansion In The Free State Vs. The North

Indeed, when commenting on this situation in Ireland after partition, noted golf commentator Henry Longhurst suggested that golf was "under entirely new management in other directions but still for golfing purposes incorporated with the old firm" (as cited in Moran, 2003). The result of this was that, although Nationalists were quickly transforming into the established group, the prestige and social legitimacy accrued by golf's association with the previously

established group, Unionists, lived on. This would benefit golf in the then Free State immensely and would usher in a period of relative calm there, wherein, owing to the sport's newfound position as a viable choice for up-and-coming Irish Catholics/Nationalists of appropriate social standing, it would experience a significant expansion. The number of clubs being formed during this expansion is not perhaps shocking to someone familiar with the growth rates experienced during golf's earlier years in Ireland; however, when compared with those in Northern Ireland, the difference between the two locations is stark by comparison. If we examine the subsequent thirty years, spanning from 1920 to 1950, it becomes evident that the number of clubs established in the south exceeded those in the north by a ratio of approximately 6 to 1. Indeed, during this period circa 85% of all clubs formed on the island of Ireland were located in the then Free State, that is to say, some forty new clubs were formed in the south as opposed to just seven in Northern Ireland, these clubs, their location and the date of their inception are illustrated in Figure 5 below. There are other elements which may have influenced this disparity, indeed, population size, the number of clubs that were established before 1920, and the existence of a pacified social space (which will be expanded upon in the following section), may all have contributed to the differences in growth rate, however, the role played by golf's newfound position as a viable and socially desirable leisure choice for Nationalists/Catholics cannot be ignored. And, in fact, becomes even

more pronounced when considered in relation to what was happening in the North during the same period.

5.3.9.4.1. Figure 7.

Region	Club	Founded	County
Republic of Ireland	Gort Golf Club	1924	Galway
	Ballinasloe Golf Club	1926	Galway
	Tullamore Golf Club	1926	Offaly
	Rosslare Golf Club	1926	Wexford
	Claremorris Golf Club	1926	Mayo
	Arklow Golf Club	1927	Wicklow
	Royal Tara Golf Club	1927	Meath
	Laytown & Bettystown Golf Club	1927	Meath
	Rathfarnham Golf Club	1928	Dublin
	Monkstown Golf Club	1928	Cork
	New Ross Golf Club	1928	Wexford
	Birr Golf Club	1928	Offaly
	Kilkenny Golf Club	1929	Kilkenny
	Enniscrone Golf Club	1930	Sligo
	Ballina Golf Club	1931	Mayo
	Westport Golf Club	1932	Mayo
	Mahon Golf Club	1932	Cork

	Slade Valley Golf Club	1932	Dublin
	Portarlington Golf Club	1932	Laois
	Edenderry Golf Club	1933	Offaly
	Galway Golf Club	1934	Galway
	Ballaghaderreen Golf Club	1935	Roscommon
	Castleknock Golf Club	1936	Dublin
	Skerries Golf Club	1936	Dublin
	Nenagh Golf Club	1938	Tipperary
	Blainroe Golf Club	1938	Wicklow
	Mannan Castle Golf Club	1938	Monaghan
	Tuam Golf Club	1938	Galway
	Wicklow Golf Club	1939	Wicklow
	Dungarvan Golf Club	1940	Waterford
	Letterkenny Golf Club	1940	Donegal
	Portumna Golf Club	1940	Galway
	Moyola Park Golf Club	1941	Londonderry
	Bray Golf Club	1944	Wicklow
	Co Tipperary Golf Club	1944	Tipperary
	Edmondstown Golf Club	1944	Dublin
	Galway Bay Golf Resort	1947	Galway
	Lucan Golf Club	1948	Dublin
	Mount Temple Golf Club	1948	Westmeath
Northern Ireland	Knock Golf Club	1920	Down
	Kirkistown Castle Golf Club	1921	Down
	Lisburn Golf Club	1922	Antrim

	Kilkeel Golf Club	1924	Down
	Belvoir Park Golf Club	1927	Down
	Knock Golf Club	1929	Down
	Dunmurry Golf Club	1930	Antrim
	Galgorm Castle Golf Club	1947	Antrim

5.3.9.5. Sectarianism And The Stunted Growth Of Golf

As established, in 1921 with the advent of partition, the island of Ireland was divided into two distinct countries; one remained tethered to the United Kingdom whilst the other became an independent nation in its own right. This shift brought with it many changes, notable amongst which was that after partition, existing established and outsider relationships changed significantly. In contrast to the situation discussed above in relation to the then Free State, in Northern Ireland, the relationships and the power balances that existed between Unionists and Nationalists stayed much the same. Here, the Unionists were still firmly in the established position, whilst the Nationalists remained the outsiders.

Because of this, for many Northern Irish Catholics, the quest for equality didn't end, as well as this, those of whom were of the Nationalist persuasion still sought freedom from British rule. As a result, the formation of the new northern state was marred by sectarian conflict; what's more, the perception of golf as a viable target for Nationalist aggression remained the same. Indeed, a deep and visceral hatred existed between Nationalists and Unionists at this time, with socio-historian Alan Bairner going so far as to suggest that in many respects, Northern Ireland had "two distinct civil societies which could be identified with the main political traditions"(Bairner, 2013, p.221). Continued conflict, mistrust, and hatred on both sides impacted all aspects of life in Northern Ireland, including golf. Indeed, because golf clubs were still so strongly associated with Unionism there, they were regularly singled out as targets for nationalist aggression (Mulhall, 2006), with press editor and avid golfer Deric Henderson going so far as to suggest that –

> There's hardly a golf club in Northern Ireland that wasn't hit at some stage, and no sooner were they rebuilt than they were bombed again, because they were such easy targets (Henderson, 2019, as cited in Bull, 2019).

There will be more on this in the following section; however, suffice it to say at this point that this violence would abate in the late 1990s, indeed, in the years following the Good Friday Agreement, golf in Northern Ireland experienced a

notably more peaceful period. That being said, there is no denying that sectarian division has heavily impacted the development of golf in Northern Ireland. So much so that it has become the subject of much debate for golfing historians. In this regard, Gibson (1989) highly praises the efforts of the GUI for "holding golf together" on an island-wide basis after partition. He suggests that "modern golfers have much to be grateful for" concerning "the maturity displayed" and "the efforts of the administrators of Irish golf in the early 1920s" (1989, p.93). Despite this, it is possible to argue that Gibson may be misguided in his praise. Captioning the intricacies of such a task, Hunt (2016) suggested that –

The new political landscape had implications for the federations responsible for the management of Irish sport that was organised on an all-island basis prior to 1922. Their responsibilities now covered two political jurisdictions, and they had to deal with two separate government authorities and cope with the difficulties associated with combining unionists and nationalists in the same body.

Certainly, the GUI managed to maintain inter-club and competitive play on an all-island basis(Menton, 1991) (albeit with many issues caused by violence in the North). However, when it came to combining Nationalists and Unionists within the same body, as can be seen from the discussion above, in Northern Ireland, they were largely unsuccessful for a prolonged period. Indeed, one could argue that their failings in this regard contributed to golf's continued association with Unionism and, by extension, its continued perception as a

target for Nationalist aggression, which, at the very least, disrupted golf's development in the region. As established above, this situation stood in stark contrast to what was going on in the Republic, wherein Nationalists/Catholics had become a prominent feature in many clubs, and the sport enjoyed a period of relative calm. In the north, Unionists, still being the established group, were able to restrict Nationalist access to clubs. Because of this, the violence towards golf clubs continued, and the situation was slow to change. Change did, however, eventually come.

In what could be viewed as a somewhat ironic twist by golfers of the day, who found themselves the target of violent attacks, at least in part, because of the sport they played, in the 1960s and 70s (when violence was at its worst), the Northern Irish government attempted to use sport as a means to bring about calm. Various initiatives were launched to encourage Unionists and Nationalists to play together, the hope being that this would lead to integration and eventual peace (Sugden and Bairner, 1993). The church competition at Bangor G.C., being opened to all persuasions and renamed the Ecumenical Trophy in the late 1960s, is a good golfing example here (Stanley & Campbell, 2003).

However, whilst in the early days some progress was made, that is to say, a degree of religious democratisation occurred, i.e. a small number of prominent upper-class Northern Irish Catholics began to take up membership positions within some clubs – again Bangor G.C. is a good indicative example in this

regard (Stanley & Campbell, 2003). Generally speaking, this endeavour was not successful, and the perception of golf as a bastion of the Unionist identity remained unchanged, with violence continuing up to the enactment of the Good Friday Agreement. However, it is important to note that the arrival of peace did not bring an end to segregation and sectarianism, or with it true religious democratisation; efforts were and are ongoing in this regard. Indeed, in 1997 under the direction of Maura Muldoon from the Community Relations Council and the Council for Northern Ireland, the Northern Irish government went so far as to write into law integration policies that demanded anti-sectarian action on the part of people involved in sport (Bairner, 2013). This was much more successful than previous government attempts. However, despite these actions and the, admittedly, remarkable progress that occurred in this regard, the fact remains that even after the peace process and the various other steps taken by the government, the religious democratisation of sport, particularly golf, in Northern Ireland was, and is, still, at best, an ongoing process. In a recent interview, Alan Bairner discusses the gradual change that has occurred here while at the same time highlighting the issues that still exist. He suggested that there are still "certain clubs where only people with certain religious beliefs were wanted or accepted" and that "there was [still] a certain amount of discriminatory behaviour (Bairner 2019, as cited in Bull, 2019). Bairner described this as the "discreet bigotry of the middle classes" and concluded the interview by remarking that,

although the bombings have stopped, that "kind of quiet bigotry, you still hear it in conversations, and you think, well, do things really change?" (Bairner 2019, as cited in Bull, 2019).

These sentiments notwithstanding, there is no doubt that religious democratisation has occurred in Northern Irish golf to a high degree. With the kinds of sectarianism Bairner references clinging on in only a small number of clubs today, and even then, far behind closed doors. Indeed, Boyd's (2013) work on tourism in Northern Ireland confirms this; however, when considered in relation to the Republic and how religious democratisation occurred there at a much quicker rate, the stark contrast that existed between the two becomes apparent. Golf in the Republic flourished over an approximately 70-year period, wherein the day-to-day operation of clubs in the north was called into question. The most basic market processes were hindered by violence, and even beyond golf, all aspects of leisure and tourism in the country were impacted. It has been suggested that the region "lost three-quarters of its international market share in tourism at the start of the Troubles, and that underinvestment over nearly forty years has left the industry with only a fraction of its potential capacity"(NITB, 2007, p.3). Indeed, the industry was described as virtually non-existent during the Troubles, but it has been suggested since then that with the establishment of a pacified social space, the market has slowly begun to grow again (Northern Ireland Affairs Committee, 2007). Were religious democratisation to have

occurred at a rate similar to that in the Republic, this growth could have come

much earlier for the Northern Irish golf market. In light of this, it is evident that the consequences of the absence of religious democratisation discussed thus far, and by extension, the loss of a pacified social space, should not be underestimated. In the next section, we will consider the importance of pacified social spaces in much greater detail.

5.3.10. In summary

This chapter has shown that golf in Ireland has always been intertwined with broader dynamics of identity, power, and political change. Initially associated with Protestantism, Unionism, and the British elite, golf operated not just as a form of leisure but as a symbolic boundary separating established and outsider groups, reinforcing religious, cultural, and class hierarchies. With the advent of social and political democratisation (especially in the Free State), golf's meaning began to shift. What was once a signified colonialism was gradually appropriated by Irish Nationalists and reimagined as part of a new Catholic elite identity. Its inclusion in the Tailteann Games highlights this symbolic transformation.

In Northern Ireland, however, entrenched sectarianism slowed this redefinition. The differing paths taken on either side of the border illustrate how national identity and conflict can shape not only who plays a sport but also how it is structured, perceived, and accessed. These changes had direct implications for

golf's marketisation. As Nationalists in the Republic embraced golf as a symbol of upward mobility rather than colonial legacy, the sport grew. Its evolving cultural neutrality made it attractive to the rising middle class, fuelling the creation of new clubs, greater participation, and integration into Ireland's economic and tourism sectors. Ultimately, the history of golf in Ireland is not simply about sport, but about transformation (from exclusion to inclusion, from colonial status symbol to commercialised national pastime), revealing the deep connections between leisure, identity, and legitimacy.

5.4. Section 4 – Pacified Social Spaces & Conditions of Scarcity, Marketisation during War Times

The concept of a pacified social space is more complex than it initially appears. While often understood as a realm free from large-scale violence, it is more accurately seen as a regulated environment shaped by what Elias (2000) termed "centralised monopoly institutions." This enables the "competition for means of consumption and production" (Elias, 2000, p. 303) and fosters extended chains of interdependence. As a result, processes such as economisation and marketisation become central to social life. In this sense, monopolised violence is fundamental

to the formation of modern economic structures. Furthermore, as functional democratisation and market expansion progress, the role of centralised monopoly institutions, in essence, evolves from enforcing order to sustaining and regulating it. Without these institutions, pacified conditions deteriorate, leading to the breakdown of core social processes. Marketisation and economisation are particularly vulnerable in this regard. These dynamics are clearly illustrated in the development of the Irish golf market.

The transformation of Irish golf from a leisure activity to a commercial enterprise discussed above reflects this theoretical framework. Once largely independent of economic exchange, golf now involves costs for membership, equipment, attire, and event participation, rendering it a commodified product. Indeed, Irish golf now embodies many features of modern economic life, not merely reflecting them but relying on them for growth. However, the emergence and expansion of this market depended on the existence of a pacified social environment. When this pacification was disrupted, economic activities declined, and the market's viability came under threat. Elias (2000) refers to these developmental sequences as "free competition," in which elimination contests enable groups to consolidate resources and form monopolies. In Irish golf, disruptions to this monopoly (through interstate or intrastate conflict) can be understood as such contests. Elias also notes that political, military, and economic motives are inseparable and that monopolies of violence and of economic resources are "inseparably connected"

(Elias, 2000, p. 437). This interdependence is essential to sustaining monopoly power, but also renders markets highly vulnerable. When violent tensions re-emerge, pacified spaces collapse, disrupting marketisation. The Irish golf market provides a compelling example of this, particularly when considering how production, consumption, and exchange were affected. The nature and severity of these impacts varied greatly and, as such, can be considered under the headings of 'Direct' and 'Indirect impacts'. Classifying the implications of the removal of a pacified social space, thus may be somewhat misleading in the sense that one could potentially argue that all of the impacts that will be discussed below have direct impacts on the provision of Irish golf. However, for the purpose of this study, the term 'direct impacts' will refer to those instances in which the violence rose to such heights that golf clubs themselves became the targets, situations wherein violence boiled over and the provision of the Irish golfing product was threatened directly. Whereas the term 'indirect impacts' will refer to violence that occurred at a higher level of social integration but eventually came to bear upon Irish golf. We will begin by discussing direct impacts.

5.4.1. Marketisation and the Removal of Pacified Social Spaces – Direct Impacts

When examining the direct consequences of the breakdown of pacified social spaces, two periods in Irish golf history stand out: the years surrounding the War of Independence and Civil War, and the era known as the Troubles. These were times when violence peaked, severely disrupting market processes and placing the very existence of golf in Ireland under threat. This section begins with the 1920s, a period in which golf became vulnerable to wider social forces that rendered it a legitimate target for violence. These forces stemmed from ethnoreligious conflict, shaped by the established/outsider dynamic between Nationalists and Unionists, an issue explored further below.

As previously established, sport in Ireland has long functioned as a marker of social status and was used to distinguish members of different social classes (Guttmann, 1996; Mangan, 1985). Moreover, the sport one played contributed to identity formation and expression. This was especially evident around 1910, when golf experienced significant growth, largely among Protestant and Unionist communities (Gibson, 1989). During the same period, Catholic and Nationalist groups increasingly promoted native Gaelic games, positioning them as culturally superior to sports linked with the British Empire. Nationalist newspapers of the time often featured what can be interpreted as propaganda,

conflating class, religion, and nationality with sporting choice (Rouse, 2017).

Garrison games, including golf, were portrayed not only as inferior but as anti-Irish and morally suspect. Due to its association with the British officer class and landed gentry, golf came to symbolise imperial dominance. As a result, IRA commandant Ernie O'Malley observed, many nationalists were "very contemptuous" of the sport (Rouse, 2018). This disdain, however, reflected broader socio-political tensions rather than opposition to golf per se. It was deeply linked to the democratisation processes discussed earlier and mirrored the wider established/outsider dynamic within Irish society. At the time, golf was dominated by the established group (landlords, Unionists, and Protestants with strong Unionist ties), while the outsider group, comprising predominantly nationally minded Catholics, remained largely excluded (Liston & Maguire, 2020; Connolly & Dolan, 2020). The conflicts occurring at a national and even international level between these groups quickly came to impact Irish golf clubs and made it difficult, if not nigh on impossible, for people to play golf. Indeed, not only were clubs unable to provide golf and the club amenities that went along with it to their patrons, but those patrons soon became fearful of playing the sport, and as a result, demand for the game was impacted substantially.

Indeed, with economic processes such as production, consumption, and even simple exchange being threatened, it is no surprise that the golf market began to suffer. This downturn intensified in the months surrounding the 1916 rising, whereupon a shift in public sentiment can be noted. It was at this point that

Nationalism came to occupy a more central role in contemporary Irish society.

Indeed, McGarry (2008) argues that for Nationalists, even after the formation of the Irish Free State, it was the rising as opposed to the War of Independence that is considered to be the most important point in the Irish struggle for independence. Regardless of whether this was the case or not, it was at this point that Nationalist attacks on golf clubs began in earnest.

5.4.1.1. Violence, Vandalism, and the Contraction of the Golf Market

The nature and severity of these attacks varied greatly; in some cases, they can be written off as minor acts of vandalism. However, others were much more impactful, even elevating to the point where lives were lost. As established, this threat first manifested in 1916, at which point violence towards golf can be said to have escalated in tandem with that which was occurring on a national level. At this time, sections of Irish society had their sights firmly set on independence from the British and strove to achieve this goal via any means necessary. As could be expected, they met considerable resistance in this regard. Indeed, it was a very protracted affair that lasted decades, involved multiple periods of prolonged conflict, and started even before WW1 had reached its conclusion. The most significant part of the period in question spans from the Easter Rising of April 1916 to late 1925 and the release of civil war prisoners (Ducan, 2016;

Óglaigh na hÉireann, 2017). Although violence was present throughout this

time, it first became pervasive in early 1916, and, at a time when Anglo-Irish houses and country estates were being sacked throughout the island (Gibson, 1989), golf clubs were being treated in much the same fashion. This targeted destruction of golf clubs mirrored the broader dismantling of elite institutions and signalled a moment where the pacified social order was temporarily reversed. Thereby placing monopoly structures, and by extension, market processes, under severe strain. Property damage was the major threat at this point, with many clubs either being attacked, robbed, or having their courses sabotaged. Indicative examples of clubs that received such treatment are Galway G.C. and Mullingar G.C. (MacSweeney et al., 1995; Murphy, 2013; Gibson, 1989). That notwithstanding, many clubs fared far worse and, as with the Anglo-Irish houses mentioned above, many found themselves subject to arson attacks. Indeed, Skerries and Tullamore golf clubs were so badly damaged that a whole new clubhouse was required in Skerries. Whereas the committee in Tullamore was forced to go so far as to move the entire club to a safer location, abandoning what was left of their original course (*The Independent*, 2005; Tullamore G.C., 2011). This was to be the norm for the duration of the hostilities; indeed, such attacks were to continue beyond 1916 into both the War of Independence and the ensuing Civil War. With some academics suggesting that such disruption was inevitable given golf's association at this point with Ireland's social and political elite (Mulhall, 2006). Such examples highlight the vulnerability of elite

recreational spaces in periods where the monopoly of legitimate force begins to erode. As golf's social symbolism aligned it with the established group, its market stability was directly compromised by the absence of a pacified social space. One could hardly be surprised to find that in the face of such adversity, clubs began to struggle financially. Indeed, many were forced to operate at a reduced capacity, be that in the absence of their clubhouses or even with damaged and unplayable courses (Murphy, 2013; Gibson, 1989). The violence reached its peak in April of 1921 during the War of Independence. It was at this point that the assassination of RIC Major John Alastair McKinnon took place. Having been stationed in County Kerry shortly after the siege of Tralee in November 1920, McKinnon was tasked with regaining control of the area and quelling rebellious forces (Dorney, 2020; Brouder, 2021). McKinnon's death brought about a change to everyday life in golf clubs across the island.

Whilst perhaps an extreme example, this event symbolises the extent to which pacified social norms had collapsed, transforming golf clubs from sites of leisure into arenas of political contestation, and illustrating the vulnerability of marketisation when monopoly power is violently disrupted. Moreover, not only did attacks of the sort mentioned previously continue, but more importantly, many golfers no longer felt safe playing the game. This had very tangible impacts. Most notable of which was that security measures were stepped up considerably by those still brave enough to play. Indeed, oftentimes golfers,

particularly those in the military and members of government, were accompanied by armed guards whilst out on the links. In support of this,

MacSweeney et al.(1995, p. 42) suggested that, much to the annoyance of the local residents, military men who played golf at this time were often "heavily escorted" around the course at Galway G.C. Similarly, competitive play suffered and was severely hindered where it was not eradicated completely.

Indeed, the club committee at Sutton argued that, as was the case in 1914 during WW1, "general competition play…has again been conspicuous by its absence" (1918, as cited in Gibson, 1989, p. 38). Even national and international competitive play was impacted at this time; the cancellation of the 1922 Irish Open Championship is a good indicative example in this regard. The loss of this event had a severe financial impact on the GUI, which incurred the cost of organising it and also missed out on revenue that would have been generated through sponsorship (Menton, 1988). Moreover, everyday clubs were also impacted; these missed out on the revenue associated with playing host to such an event and also the revenue which would have been generated from golfing tourists who could have played local courses whilst attending the tournaments (Gibson, 1989). The reality of the situation here was that the removal of a pacified social space brought with it a severe degradation of marketisation and economisation processes. Beyond limiting the potential for new growth, as is evident above, this also severely impacted the day-to-day operation of existing Irish Golf clubs and, by extension, caused a severe contraction of the Irish golf market. Some clubs were unable to survive this long period of pressure.

Killbrittain G.C. is a good example of one such club, with historians attributing

its demise to the “political changes occurring in the country at that time” (Hanna, 2002, p.6). Much to the relief of those involved in club governance, violence of this nature wouldn’t be seen again on Irish golf courses until the 1960s and the advent of the Troubles.

5.4.1.2. The Troubles (1960s–1990s): Renewed Violence and Market Disruption

To fully grasp the origins of The Troubles, one must look beyond the 1960s. The roots of the conflict trace back to the 1921 partition of Ireland, which divided the island into two states. Northern Ireland remained within the UK, and the Irish Free State gained independence. As previously discussed, this division reshaped established/outsider dynamics. In Northern Ireland, however, the Unionist/Nationalist power imbalance persisted, that is to say, Unionists retained dominance, while Nationalists remained marginalised. For many Nationalists, the struggle for equality and autonomy continued. The northern state emerged amid intense sectarian violence, particularly in Belfast, where between 1920 and 1922 nearly 500 people were killed and over 2,500 injured.

These were predominantly civilians, with Catholics disproportionately affected (English, 2007). These figures escalated over the decades, and by the time of the Good Friday Agreement, 3,720 had been killed and 47,541 injured, the vast

majority civilians (McKittrick et al., 2004; CAIN, 2022). Ongoing mistrust and animosity emanating from both sides led to conflict that affected all aspects of life in Northern Ireland; golf did not escape this. Indeed, due to the strong association of golf clubs with Unionism, these clubs frequently became targets for nationalist aggression (Mulhall, 2006). So prevalent were these attacks that for many northern clubs, day-to-day operations became difficult. The fear of attack was so compelling that clubs were moved to take precautionary measures. One particularly illustrative example of this is Royal County Down G.C., wherein, fearing arson, the manager is said to have regularly had "the hose pipes fixed for immediate use" (PRONI, MIC259/1, George Young to Louisa Meade, Oct. 1921). We must recognise here the fact that this period of violence was not a short-lived affair. Rather, it was ongoing, manifesting in varying degrees of intensity from the early 1920s all the way to the late 1990s, with perhaps the worst of the violence taking place in the late 1960s, 70s, 80s, and 90s. During this period, militant Nationalist groups increased their use of bombs, indeed, so high were the chances of being bombed at this point that many golfers who were particularly strongly associated with Unionism (for example, politicians, prominent businessmen, members of the police, servicemen, etc.) took to checking underneath their cars on the way to and from the golf course (Starn, 2008).

Again, such acts are indicative of a market operating under intense pressure, where the breakdown of trust, essential for a peaceful social environment and

reliable economic activity, had reached such a level that even basic personal

safety was no longer guaranteed. As well as this, less potent violence was also widespread at this time; it occurred very regularly all the way up to 1999. Examples of where this type of violence took place include Malone, Royal Portrush, Bangor, and Clandeboye, all of which suffered acts of vandalism that ranged from having greens dug up and trees cut down to having irrigation systems and machinery sabotaged. As well as this, protests against British rule also took place on the grounds of some clubs, and these typically also caused significant damage (Stanley & Campbell, 2003; Maxwell, 2000; Hanna, 1995; Gibson, 1989). This violence would not abate until the late 1990s, when, in the years following the Good Friday Agreement, golf in Northern Ireland experienced a notably more peaceful period. It is important to note that while the violence discussed above had a profound impact on the marketisation of golf, its effects were not evenly distributed. Some clubs suffered disproportionately, while others escaped direct violence altogether. However, even those spared physical disruption were not unaffected by the loss of a pacified social space. The nature of these indirect impacts will be explored in the following section.

5.4.2. Marketisation and the Removal of Pacified Social Spaces – Indirect Impacts

In this section, the impacts of the removal of pacified social spaces will be discussed more broadly, hitherto only cases wherein violence touched Irish golf clubs directly have been considered. However, not only have the impacts of the lack of pacification been more diverse in nature than this, but those wherein violence was not directly a feature have had arguably just as profound an effect on the marketisation process. In this regard, four distinct types of impact have been identified, these include *conditions of scarcity, governmental decree, membership decreases,* and, finally, *golf's changing image and its unintended impacts*. Each of these will be discussed in turn, and their effect on marketisation processes will be examined. We will begin by discussing conditions of scarcity. However, before doing so, it is important to consider the periods in which these impacts occurred, that is to say, the events which led to the removal of pacified social spaces and monopolies of violence in the first place.

5.4.2.1. Conditions of Scarcity in Wartime Ireland

In terms of periods of violence that indirectly impacted the marketisation of Irish golf, none stand above World War 1 and World War 2. Much has been said

and written about each of these wars, but an in-depth breakdown of these events in their entirety is beyond the remit of this body of work and, moreover, would be unnecessary. However, it is worth noting that Ireland, then a part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, played an active role in WWI. Indeed, circa 210,000 Irishmen served with the Allied forces at this time (Dorney, 2018). WW2 was similarly impactful in this regard; this was the case for many reasons. Not least of which was that although recently freed from British rule, the annexation of Northern Ireland and the plethora of other interdependencies that existed between the then Free State of Ireland and the United Kingdom meant that, although technically neutral, Ireland could at the very least be viewed as collaborators and, as a result, experienced many of the same hardships as active combatants (Donnelly, 1999). Maintaining a war effort of the nature required placed severe stress on governments, industries, supply chains, and people alike, and, as a result, hardship was abundant and widespread at this time. What's more, everyday items such as medicines, clothes, building materials, and even food were hard to come by and were rationed where they were available at all (Hill, 2005). Contrary to the situation discussed above in relation to direct violence, whereby violent incidents abruptly impacted the ability of clubs to provide golf to their patrons, the impacts of conditions of scarcity experienced by clubs during wartime were much more subtle, but no less potent. If we consider the practical realities of golf, that is to say, the work and

infrastructure that must be put forward to offer the product. It becomes clear that conditions of scarcity disrupt and severely hamper the ability of clubs to do so. As one might expect, a lot of maintenance is required to keep courses in playing condition, and whether clubs used tractors and machinery or horse-powered mowers to achieve this, the upkeep of these tools during wartime was difficult. Moreover, Hanna (1995) argues that not only were parts, fuel, and fodder difficult to come by, but there was also a pronounced shortage of labour. As such, even in instances where provisions were available, finding individuals to enact repairs was nigh on impossible. The result of this was that during times of war, many courses became unplayable and eventually fell to rack and ruin (Hanna, 1995; Menton, 1991; Guinney, 1990; Gison, 1989). Beyond just this, it can be said that every aspect of day-to-day operation was made more difficult. Even supplying golf balls became too much in some cases, as the materials needed were earmarked for use in the war effort. Indeed, things got so bad during WW2 that some clubs had to resort to limiting the number of balls available to each golfer and even began the practice of repairing old balls (Gibson, 1989).

5.4.2.2. The Social Life of Golf Under Strain

Another, perhaps less obvious impact came concerning the social life of contemporary golfers. As established, Clarke (2000) argues that in many cases, clubs came to occupy a central position in the lives of those who attended them.

That is to say, clubs were important beyond simply the game of golf; the success of club bars and restaurants in conjunction with the plethora of club dances, fundraisers, and other events that took place across the island at this time confirms this. Unfortunately, the removal of a pacified social space would also impact this aspect of golfing life. Perhaps the very best example of this was Malone G.C. during WW2. At this point, Malone was a thriving club that was both socially significant and well attended; however, even at a club such as this, conditions of scarcity made their presence known. The institution of ration cards in Northern Ireland meant that the provision of food and drink became difficult, and the committee was forced to suggest that members "should not expect the impossible, or be unreasonable if supplies at times ran short". Moreover, curfews and the extra cost of lighting and heating the club necessitated that it be closed a large part of the time (Hanna, 1995, p.56-57). This, of course, brought many of the social aspects of club life to a standstill, elements that had become crucial to clubs' financial viability and, as previously noted, were key to gaining independence from railway companies, suddenly went away. Their loss significantly diminished both the capacity for independence and overall revenue. Indeed, although the example used here, Malone G.C., is a northern club, a similar state of affairs could be found in the south of Ireland at this point also. With that, clubs in the south also had to change the way they operated to accommodate these shortages. As a result, many could not continue in the

manner they had done previously, and, as was the case with their northern

counterparts, they were forced to limit their offerings and reduce their opening hours. Galway G.C. is a prime example here. It was reported that the club experienced shortages of materials, whiskey, and even electricity, a consequence of which was that restrictions were placed on the amount of alcohol available to members and a new, earlier closing time was imposed (MacSweeney, 1995). In reality, shortages of this kind were felt across the board, and rationing was commonplace in clubs at this time (Mention, 1991; Gibson, 1989). Simply put, the conditions of scarcity resulted in many contemporary clubs being unable to provide golf or any of the additional services their patrons had become accustomed to; for this reason, and others, many clubs closed their doors during the war, never to reopen. Indicative examples of such clubs include Killaloe G. C. in Co. Clare, Rushbrooke G.C. in Co. Cork, Blackrock G.C. in Co. Cork, Derrynane G.C. in Co. Kerry, Ardara G.C. in Co. Donegal, and Sandfields G.C. in Co. Donegal (Golf's Missing Links, 2012), to name but a few. One might argue that such conditions are to be expected, that they are part and parcel of daily life during wartime, but that made them no less devastating to Irish golf clubs. That notwithstanding, conditions were actually set to worsen for clubs because during both wars, conditions of scarcity were compounded and made much more serious by a series of governmental decrees.

5.4.2.3. Governmental Decrees and State Intervention

The nature of such decrees varied; however, they were universal in terms of what they hoped to achieve, which, put plainly, was to do everything possible, regardless of the consequences, to supply their army with enough provisions and materials to win the war. In Northern Ireland, the most impactful of these were the Defence of the Realm Act and the Tillage Ireland Order (MacSweeney et al., 2005; Hanna, 1995). These were instituted early in WW1 and called for clubs to surrender large portions of their courses to the government. This land would come to be used for food production, grazing, as training grounds for troops, or storage spaces for supplies. Given that at this time Ireland had yet to be partitioned, these edicts impacted clubs across the entire island. However, there is no denying that some suffered disproportionately. For example, in 1914, Malone G.C. was forced to hand over the entirety of their newly developed links course to local dairy farmers. It is said that despite recognising the need for such measures, members at the time lamented the damage caused (Hanna, 1995). What's more, members were further angered by the Food Production Order of 1917, which resulted in an additional eleven acres of club lands being sequestered for the cultivation of crops (Hanna, 1995). Similar events were underway at Galway G.C., but the measures were less impactful here, with only 10% of the club's land being taken over for tillage (MacSweeney, 1995). By far

and away, the club that suffered the worst in this regard was Royal Dublin. In this case, the club was forcibly shut, and the entirety of its lands were taken over and converted into an artillery range for the military (Gibson, 1989). As was to be expected, significant damage to the course and grounds was sustained, and this, of course, came at a significant cost to the club. In the face of such measures, some clubs simply could not continue and were forced to shut down completely. Whilst some accommodations were made whereby members of the hardest hit clubs could travel to other courses and play for free, for the most part, where it was not at the very least severely disrupted, playing golf simply stopped and would not return until after WW1 was over. That is to say, once the monopoly of violence had been reestablished, it was at this point that we saw marketisation processes beginning to return to normal. Indeed, in the years following WW1 and after the Irish Civil War, golf in Ireland actually experienced significant levels of growth (Gibson, 1989) and would continue to do so until the dawn of WW2. However, at this point, we again see the removal of the pacified social space in Ireland, and the accompanying governmental decrees, come to negatively impact marketisation processes.

As was the case with WW1, when war broke out in 1939, governments were quick to act in the face of such threats, and it wasn't long until the actions they took began to impact golf in a negative fashion. However, one would be remiss not to acknowledge that the situation had changed in Ireland. By this point,

Northern Ireland and the Free State of Ireland had been established, and the result of this was that when war erupted, owing to the Free State's perceived neutrality, Northern Ireland suffered more than its southern counterpart. Indeed, WW2 came to impact even the most fundamental elements of daily life at Northern Irish Golf clubs, and at many clubs, it became almost impossible to play the game. Having suffered heavy losses during the 'Belfast Blitz', the government had come to fear the German aerial threat. In response, they dictated that anti-aircraft defences be installed in all open spaces to prevent the Luftwaffe from landing (Barton, 1995), which included golf courses. These defences took the form of large poles that were buried vertically and protruded several feet into the air; they proved to be particularly disruptive at Bangor G.C., wherein they were installed throughout the club's fairways (Maxwell, 2000). These, of course, joined other new war-related hazards, chief amongst which were livestock. As was the case during WW1, the government at this time were diligent in their approach to compulsory tillage and actively sought to maximise the agricultural yield of every scrap of available land. So meticulous were officials in deploying these orders that several unconventional locations were planted, including the lawns and gardens of government buildings and even the lawns of Queen's University in Belfast. As a result of all these efforts, the total acreage of the country's agricultural sector had doubled by 1945 when compared to pre-war levels (Barton, 1995). Indeed, as in previous war years, measures of this sort proved highly damaging to golf clubs,

the intrusive nature of crop cultivation playing havoc with existing course infrastructure.

5.4.2.4. Wartime Membership Declines

The next indirect impact that warrants discussion here is the reduction in membership numbers experienced by clubs during wartime. This was particularly apparent during WW1, and if we consider once more golf's origins in Ireland, the reasons for this become clear. As has been established, from the outset, members of the military were one of the driving forces behind golf's growth here. That is to say, Ireland's earliest golfers were predominantly military officers, and for a long time, the only clubs that existed here sprang up on, or adjacent to, military bases. Indeed, much has been said thus far about the prevalence of military men in early Irish golf clubs. That notwithstanding, we have established above in relation to democratisation processes that by WW1, the military was no longer the driving force behind its dispersion. However, given that they continued to play the game and were still stationed here in large numbers at the time (Gibson,1989; MacSweeney, 1995; Hanna, 1995), military men remained prominent in the membership bodies of most clubs. Because of this, their deployment resulted in a severe reduction in membership numbers

across the board. When summarising this, Gibson uses the Curragh as an example. He suggests that, despite being one of the earliest recorded clubs in Ireland, it was severely "denuded"; he goes on to suggest that this was the case for all clubs located near garrison towns throughout the island (1989, p.87). As well as this, the issue was compounded by the strong military tradition that existed within clubs of the day. Indeed, it is held that this affinity contributed to a high number of civilian members also enlisting and further reducing player numbers (Stanley & Campbell, 2003; Menton, 1991; Gibson, 1989). This is evidenced by the fact that by March 1915, some 1,250 Irish golfers were serving at the front. If we consider this on a club-by-club basis, most saw a reduction of between 20 and 25% of their membership bodies (Mulhall, 2006). Indicative examples here include Greystones G.C., Galway G.C., and Stillorgan G.C. (MacSweeney et al., 1995; Mulhall, 2006). However, some clubs were impacted much more severely. Co. Down G.C. suffered the greatest loss with 107 of its 160 members serving; they were closely followed by Portmarnock G.C., which lost 70 members. Similarly, the Island G.C. and Foxrock G.C. lost 46 and 38 members, respectively (Mulhall, 2006), and at Royal Dublin, even the club's caddies enlisted (Gibson, 1989). In a time when relatively low numbers of people were involved with the sport, the impact of such losses was keenly felt. Malone is perhaps the best example of just how keenly. In 1918, as we approached the end of WW1, the club's membership stood at 547, compared with 710 in 1914

(Hanna, 1995). The drop here can be attributed to those lost to the fighting and represents a 23% reduction in membership numbers. When one considers that this percentage refers only to those lost, not all those serving, the severity of the reduction becomes clear. As well as this, the fact that all serving members had their membership fees waived for the duration of the war left the club under considerable financial stress (Hanna, 1995). Malone was not alone in this regard; indeed, numbers dropped so significantly that competition play and social events were cancelled across the island (Mulhall, 2006). So severely impacted were Royal Belfast that on the very eve of the war, the club committee took the decision to cancel all open competitions until further notice (Hanna, 1995; Gibson, 1989). The situation was similarly bleak at Bangor, where even senior members of the club committee had enlisted (Stanley & Campbell, 2003). Here, the remaining club committee members were forced to enact a rule stating that all club competitions were to be cancelled in the absence of at least 12 competitors. Similarly, club social events such as the annual dinner party and the club dance were also cancelled (Stanley & Campbell, 2003). The story was much the same at Sutton, where committee members noted that the situation was unlikely to improve until after the cessation of hostilities (Guiney, 1990). At Galway G.C., things got so bad that the club committee was forced to sell club assets to survive(MacSweeney, 1995). Moreover, even clubs as prestigious as Royal Dublin faced similar circumstances. Gibson (1989, p.35) suggests that at this

time, membership numbers were so low and finances so tight that the future of club employees was “most insecure”. Put plainly, at this time, there were

simply not enough active golfers left in the country for clubs to operate in a normal fashion, and, as illustrated by the examples above, many ceased to function as a result.

5.4.2.5. Changing Perceptions and Stigma

Interestingly, the issues discussed thus far were compounded by unexpected developments that manifested as a result of the sport's changing image. That is to say, less tangible and more unforeseen issues arose and came to affect golf's perception, and by extension, its marketisation at this time. As noted previously, Mennell (2007) compares such unintended outcomes to economic externalities, which he describes as side effects or consequences that arise from actions without being intended. Importantly, he argues that while these outcomes cannot be predicted or deliberately planned, they are still closely linked to how power is distributed within a particular figuration. Therefore, as with the other social processes discussed, examining established/outsider relationships and the power dynamics that exist within them helps us understand how these broader, unplanned effects influence market activity and shape the development of specific markets. One such outcome was the shift in golf's perception at this time. We have already referenced the strong links between golf and the British military that existed, and the impact that this relationship had on club membership numbers and, by extension, their day-to-day operation. However,

the impact of these issues was made worse by the fact that golf came to be perceived as a shameful activity for the duration of the war (MacSweeney, 2005). Indeed, public opinion shifted regarding the sport, and no longer was its pursuit considered to be gentlemanly or sophisticated. Rather, those who played it whilst others served overseas were considered to be cowardly. Because of this, Hanna (1995, p.24) suggests that at this time, the dawn of WW1, "men were not expected to play", and moreover that "in the local press no advertisement showed them playing". On the contrary, golfers of the day were derided by contemporary newspapers, Figure 6 below titled "A Guilty Conscience During World War 1"(Gibson, 1989, p. 89) being typical of the way golfers were criticised by the media.

So pervasive was this negative sentiment that, according to the *Irish Life*, one couldn't feel "exactly comfortable walking through the city[Dublin] with a big bag of clubs slung across his shoulder" (28th January 1916, as cited in Gibson, 1989, p.89). As well as this, there is evidence to suggest that even within clubs themselves, the sentiment around the sport had soured somewhat, especially in relation to competitive golf. Malone G.C. in Belfast is a particularly indicative example in this regard. Here, the consensus amongst the club committee and membership body, in general, was that all competitive play should be cancelled for the duration of the war. However, some at the club opposed the decision. Such individuals were treated harshly and their character was brought into

question, indeed, when describing them, Hanna (1995, p.56) suggested that –

Those most in favour of carrying on competitive golf are those who rarely put in an appearance at their clubs to play a friendly game, but are never absent when there is a chance of winning a prize, in other words, the 'pot hunters'.

What's interesting here is that this is evidence that playing golf had become shameful, not only in broader society but also amongst golfers themselves. When considering changes in attitudes or behaviour of this sort, Elias (2000) explains such transitions in relation to changes in manners and etiquette. In this case, he considers the use of one's hands whilst dining, and how that changed for the Western secular upper classes. The change that took place here centred around the rise of the fork as a more civilised way of eating. Here, the use of one's fingers in conjunction with a piece of bread went from being the modus operandi, that is to say, the civilised way to consume certain foods, to being negatively viewed and eventually uncivilised in and of itself. By way of accounting for this transition, Elias (2000, p.108) suggests that the standard of refinement/civility is reflected in certain social taboos, which can be understood as ritualised or institutionalised expressions of discomfort, such as disgust, fear, or shame. These feelings, shaped under specific social conditions, persist largely because they have become embedded within established rituals and patterns of behaviour. Perhaps it is unsurprising in the face of the sheer numbers of golfers serving and, indeed, dying on the front lines that playing the game in their absence came to be

perceived negatively. This again can be explained with reference to Elias (2000, p.108), who suggested that –

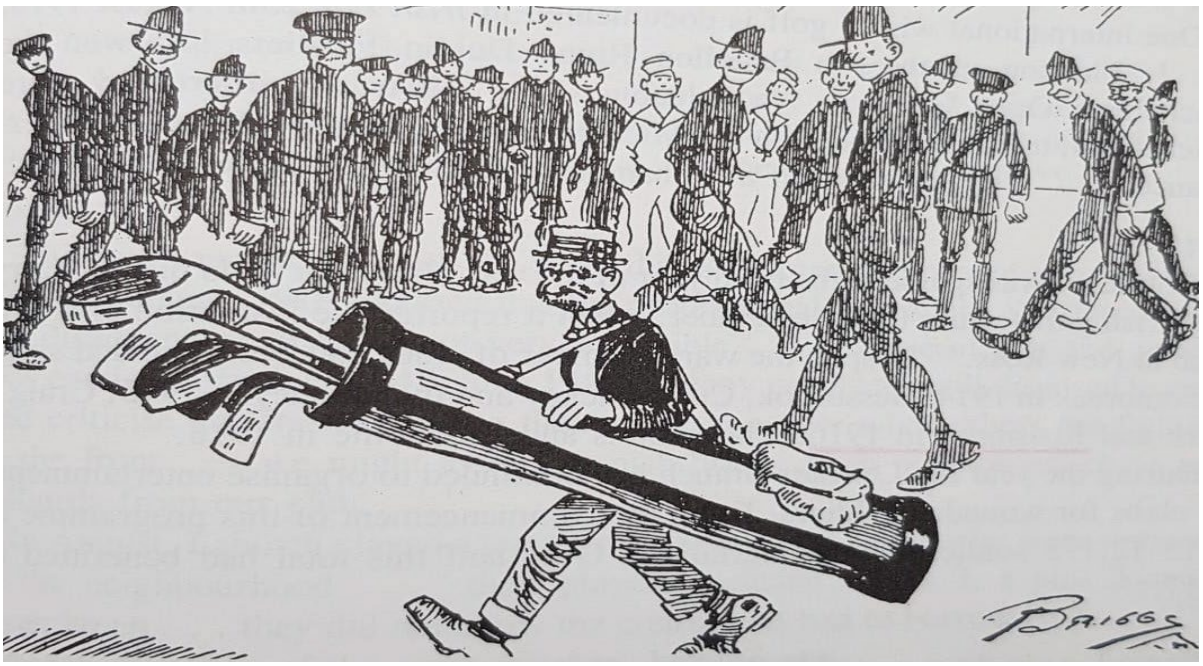
> certain forms of behaviour were placed under prohibition, not because they were unhealthy but because they led to an offensive sight and disagreeable associations; shame, offering such a spectacle, originally absent, and fear of arousing such associations were gradually spread from the standard setting circles to larger circles by numerous authorities and institutions.

The result of this was a complete moratorium on competitive play of all kinds for the duration of the war and a shift in golf's image at the time. It went from being considered a gentlemanly leisure pursuit to being cast as a dishonourable activity. This reduced the appetite for golf and had a knock-on effect that contributed to the difficulties faced by contemporary clubs.

The analysis presented above makes clear that golf's marketisation in Ireland has always been contingent upon the existence of a pacified social space. As Elias (2000) suggests, the monopoly of violence is not simply a background condition but a fundamental structuring mechanism through which economic life becomes possible. In periods where this monopoly was disrupted, whether through war, civil unrest, or scarcity, market processes contracted, provision broke down, and the sport itself was rendered symbolically problematic. What has emerged is a picture of market vulnerability that extends beyond material damage or membership decline. The erosion of pacified conditions impacted not just the

operation of clubs but the meaning of golf itself, exposing the sport as a site where power, identity, and consumption intersect. These findings reinforce the broader point that marketisation processes are deeply embedded in the figurational dynamics of the societies in which they emerge. This provides a critical platform from which to proceed to the final chapter, where these findings will be brought together and considered in relation to the study's central research questions.

5.4.2.5.1. Figure 8 .



(Gibson, 1989, p. 89)

6. Chapter 6 - Conclusion

Up to this point, this study has explored the development of the Irish golf market through the lens of figurational sociology. This section now turns to the central findings of the research, examining them in relation to two key areas: first, the research questions established at the outset; and second, the broader theoretical and practical implications that have emerged. The discussion is organised in line with each research question and concludes with a reflection on the wider significance of the findings. To begin, we will consider the first research question: *How has the game of golf become marketised in an Irish context?*

The contemporary Irish golf market has developed through the gradual and interdependent interplay of a range of social and economic processes. These processes have contributed to the transformation of golf into the routinised, codified, and marketised form that we know today. This process began many years ago; indeed, the emergence of golf in Ireland during the mid-to-late nineteenth century can be understood as the byproduct of interdependent social processes driven by shifting emotional needs, civilising trends, and emerging market dynamics. Initially confined to military circles and played but sporadically at army bases, golf lacked formal governance, public accessibility, and the economic infrastructure typically associated with modern sports. However, this phase laid the foundations for a broader transformation. Drawing

on Elias and Dunning's (1986) theory of the quest for excitement, we saw that early pioneers of the game (particularly military officers) turned to golf as a structured outlet for emotional release within the constraints of increasing social pacification. In this respect, golf functioned as a safe yet stimulating practice, offering a channel through which military elites could satisfy emotional needs in a manner compatible with the dominant contemporary codes of civility. This initial engagement with the game, although informal and elitist, represents the earliest stage in the processual transformation of golf in Ireland.

Over time, the process of sportisation began to reshape the nature of the game. Golf gradually evolved from a loosely structured pastime into a codified, rule-bound, and socially legitimised sport. The establishment of formal clubs, such as the Royal Belfast Golf Club in the 1880s, signalled a critical turning point in this regard. These institutions did not merely stabilise participation; they also introduced initial mechanisms of economic exchange (things like membership fees and charges for amenities) which marked the tentative beginnings of marketisation. However, it is important to note that during this early period, such processes remained informal and limited in scope. It was only with the intensification of interest in the sport, which contemporaries such as Clarke (2001) referred to as an "explosion" of clubs across the British Isles, that the processes of sportisation and marketisation began to accelerate in tandem. As increasing numbers of people, including members of the landed gentry and

upper classes, were drawn to the emotionally compelling and increasingly codified experience of golf, the sport's market potential expanded. As the sportisation of golf intensified, its capacity to produce legitimate and emotionally engaging experiences increased, and accordingly, it was gradually repositioned (by virtue of shifting interdependencies and rising standards of civility) as a commodity. That is to say, it was increasingly seen as something that could be sold and marketed, especially as society itself was changing to support more commercial forms of leisure.

In light of this, it becomes clear that Irish golf's shift from a niche military pastime to a regular and increasingly commercialised sport can be understood, from a figurational perspective, as the result of changing interdependencies between people and institutions, emotional needs and social rules, and the internal dynamics of sport and the wider market. Far from being a simple byproduct of economic opportunity, the marketisation of Irish golf was conditioned by social processes, most notably, the desire to experience excitement in a manner compatible with the normative expectations of contemporary society.

It is also important that we note that the early commercialisation of golf in Ireland (during the late 19th and early 20th centuries) was fundamentally shaped by the strategic involvement of railway companies, whose interests in the sport extended well beyond leisure or recreation. From a figurational

perspective, this development marked the entry of new people into the golfing figuration; these were economic entities that recognised golf's emerging value as a marketable commodity and sought to integrate it into the expanding leisure-tourism economy.

When we considered what took place in relation to Elias's monopoly mechanism, it became clear that railway companies manoeuvred to control key logistical and symbolic dimensions of the sport, not the game itself, but its accessibility, infrastructure, and cultural positioning. In doing so, they sought to monopolise golf's commercial potential and embed themselves within the web of interdependencies shaping its development. Their investments transformed golf courses from sites of mimetic play into economic assets central to the burgeoning tourism market. This monopolistic logic was most clearly realised in cases such as Royal Portrush and Greenore, where railway companies exercised near-total control over the surrounding infrastructure and commercial ecosystem, creating destination resorts built around golf. Such interventions not only accelerated the sport's diffusion across Ireland, especially in peripheral regions, but also shifted the balance of power within the figuration towards railway companies.

That being said, it became clear that at this point, the growth of golf in Ireland wasn't just the result of more people choosing to play the game. Instead, it was driven by a mix of social and economic forces, especially the efforts of

powerful organisations like railway companies. These companies didn't just support golf; they used it as a tool to attract tourists, make money, and establish dominance. As a result, golf became more than a sport; it turned into a valuable product tied to travel and leisure. This shift helped shape how golf spread across Ireland and how it was seen by both players and the wider public. However, when we consider the next stage in golf's marketisation process, it is important to note that the role of these third-party economic entities changes considerably.

Indeed, when we consider the early twentieth-century development of Irish golf, a notable shift in power from railway companies to golf clubs becomes clear, a change that also contributed to the sport's marketisation. Initially, the spread of golf in Ireland aligned closely with the commercial interests of railway companies, which invested in infrastructure and course development primarily to increase passenger traffic and revenue, rather than out of any intrinsic commitment to the sport. Over time, however, a distinction emerged between golf courses and golf clubs. While railway companies were responsible for constructing the courses, the clubs themselves often evolved into community-based organisations with independent leadership and aims that were qualitatively different. As these clubs matured, they began to pursue objectives that occasionally diverged from, and at times conflicted with, those of the railway companies. Faced with growing demand from rail tourists and limited support beyond infrastructural investment, clubs increasingly sought autonomy.

This shift was marked by a conscious move towards independent financial and promotional strategies. Sponsorship, once primarily a vehicle for elite patronage, as seen in events like the Barton Shield, became formalised and strategically employed as a commercial instrument. Clubs such as Naas Golf Club exemplified this transformation, blending competitive play with targeted marketing efforts that attracted large, enthusiastic audiences and elevated local prestige.

This transition from reliance on railway companies to self-directed commercial strategies represented a more profound structural shift. Authority began to move from external corporate actors to internal club management, signalling both a reorganisation of social power within clubs and a broader adoption of market-oriented logic. Crucially, this autonomy did not emerge abruptly but developed gradually, as club members came to recognise the need for financial independence and operational control. Clubs began to leverage the appeal of competitive golf, using sponsorship not only as a source of funding but also as a tool for audience engagement, reputation-building, and the assertion of legitimacy within an expanding leisure economy.

In light of this, the marketisation of golf in an Irish context cannot be understood as the product of a purely economic process, nor can it be considered a straightforward shift from leisure activity to codified and commercialised sport. Rather, as this research has demonstrated, it represents a

complex, contingent, and historically embedded transformation, one shaped by long-term figurational dynamics, shifting balances of power, and evolving emotional and societal needs. From its emergence as a military-only pursuit to its incorporation into the infrastructure of railway tourism, and later, its reconfiguration under the auspices of local clubs and competitive sponsorship, the marketisation of golf unfolded through a series of interdependent sequential developments. Each stage reflected and reinforced changes in how the game was experienced, governed, and positioned within wider social and economic networks.

Crucially, this analysis does not support a straightforward narrative of commercial exploitation. Instead, it reveals a more layered account of how golf became open to market influences through its own internal development. Elias's concept of the civilising process helps explain how emotional and behavioural norms gave the sport its legitimacy, while the monopoly mechanism highlights how entities like railway companies strategically intervened to shape and profit from golf's growing appeal. These forces did not operate in isolation. Rather, they worked alongside local shifts in club leadership, growing player independence, and increased audience engagement to gradually integrate golf into a wider leisure economy. Ultimately, the marketisation of Irish golf should be seen as a temporal and socially generated phenomenon. It did not emerge fully formed, nor was it externally imposed. Rather, it was produced through the

cumulative interplay of emotional, institutional, and economic transformations over time.

Building on this, the research sought to examine its second research question: *To what extent have social processes influenced this marketisation?* In this regard, we must first acknowledge that the relationship between economic and marketisation processes is undeniably strong. Indeed, as outlined above, it is fair to say that economic processes heavily influenced the marketisation of golf in Ireland. However, one of the most important findings of this research was that golf's marketisation was not solely driven by these economic processes; rather, it is more accurate to say that although they contributed to golf's marketisation, other social processes were also highly influential in this regard. Moreover, the case can be made that they were in fact, more so. Of the many social processes that contributed to golf's marketisation, two were identified as being of paramount importance these were democratisation and the presence of a pacified social space. Democratisation, in particular, was quite broad in terms of its impacts, and as such was considered in relation to the headings of class, gender and religion, which will be considered hereunder, and we will finish this section by considering pacified social spaces.

Given the findings of this research, it is not going too far to say that the transformation of Irish golf from the somewhat niche pastime that it once was into the more open and marketable phenomenon that it is today is deeply rooted

in the process of class democratisation. Indeed, the changing social class dynamics that occurred both inside and outside of Irish golf clubs and the shifting power balances that accompanied them were deeply intertwined with the marketisation of the sport. Over time, they led to the breakdown of class boundaries, which led to greater participation levels and, by extension, increased demand for memberships, equipment, and even media coverage. As established in the main body of this research, this began in the late 19th century, wherein the first surge in the sport's popularity can be noted.

Whilst some academics proffered that this sudden growth was attributed to increased affluence, increasing urbanisation, and increasing consumerism (Clarke, 2000), these factors alone failed to fully explain what was going on at this point. In pursuit of a more reality-congruent explanation, we are best served by following the work of Elias and Dunning (2008), who offer a more comprehensive explanation that emphasises the shifting social interdependencies and power balances between classes. Indeed, these shifts gradually democratised golf by broadening access to the sport, which had been historically monopolised by the elite. As one might expect, this 'opening-up' greatly expanded the number of people playing, but also the types of people playing changed as well. As a result, golf was no longer so homogeneous. In fact, as the social class democratisation process advanced, golf moved beyond its traditional elite confines and evolved into a leisure choice for the aspirational

middle classes and became increasingly marketised as a result. The power struggles that took place between the established elite and the outsider middle classes had a profound impact on the marketisation of Irish golf. The situation can be explained as follows: the passing of the Land Act of 1881 and the Arrears of Rent Act of 1882, amongst other things, significantly weakened the landed gentry by altering land management practices, redistributing power, and undermining their financial stability (Office of the Attorney General, 1881; 1882). As a result, many landowners lost their estates or were forced to downsize, resulting in a substantial reduction in their social and economic dominance (Higgins, 2013; Purdue, 2009). Juxtaposed to this were the merchant and professional middle classes, who, in tandem with the weakening of the established classes, were experiencing significant economic growth and gaining the leisure time and resources necessary to engage in sports like golf. Noteworthy here is that golf provided a "social space for the expression of the values and interests of the ascendant middle classes" (Higgins, 2013, p.15). That is to say, this newly ascendant class saw golf as an opportunity to assert and enhance their social status, which positioned the sport as vital for identity formation and social mobility. But also, expanded golf's appeal and, by extension, further fuelled its marketisation.

When the established classes monopolised the power chances in clubs, they were a highly routinised and codified social space; there is no better example of

this than etiquette and how it was used by the elites at this time. Indeed, the established classes employed etiquette to regulate everything from gameplay to clothing and even as far as what constituted appropriate behaviour in the club bar. In line with how etiquette is traditionally used, in clubs at this time, it was used as very much a mechanism of exclusion and control, and to cast outsiders as unsophisticated or uncivilised (Malcolm & Tangen, 2015). As Elias and Scotson (1994) note, this use of "polished social conduct" was a strategic effort to maintain power and exclude those from lower social classes. Despite this, in a somewhat ironic twist that was very much contrary to what the established had intended, the rising middle class embraced golf's norms and etiquette wholeheartedly and even came to see it as a means of legitimising their newfound social positions. Indeed, the middle-class mindset here was that by adopting these elite traditions, not only would they integrate themselves into the sport, but also, in doing so, they could further leverage its association with sophistication and respectability to shore up their social standing. Interestingly, like a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy, this too led to an increase in demand for golf.

The increasing participation of the middle class led to profound changes in the power dynamics of Irish golf clubs. As membership numbers grew, middle-class golfers began to occupy leadership roles on club committees, and as a result, long-held attitudes began to change. Over time, the perception of discussing

business during leisure, once considered “ungentlemanly” and “shameful” (Guiney, 1990), softened. What’s more, as middle-class values became more influential, the opposite perception began to take root. This cultural shift marked a departure from the rigid control of the elites and a recognition amongst club governing bodies of the economic potential that golf held. It is important to note here that it is not going too far to suggest that without this change in attitudes, clubs would not have been able to pursue autonomy from the railways, nor would they have embraced marketing to the degree mentioned above. In this sense, social class democratisation can be considered to be even more important to golf’s marketisation.

That is not to suggest that at this point the newly empowered middle class were ready to move away completely from the previously established classes; on the contrary, quite the opposite was true. Indeed, the fact that the middle classes continued to rely on the elite’s ability to grant them social significance and credibility when establishing new golf clubs reveals the enduring nature of social interdependencies, even amidst advancing democratisation. This highlights the fact that democratisation processes were not straightforward or linear; rather, they were shaped by a nuanced and often contradictory interplay of power dynamics. Ironically, this reliance on elite traditions reinforced golf’s reputation as a sport steeped in privilege and exclusivity, even as its membership diversified. As the number of golf clubs expanded and

memberships increased, the degree to which the sport was marketised grew in tandem. This mix of the tradition and prestige that was associated with golf and its new, relatively more open and accessible nature laid the foundation for golf's lasting popularity and economic significance in Irish society.

The process of gender democratisation also significantly contributed to the sport's growth and marketisation. This may be surprising to those familiar with golf's early days, but despite female participation being initially welcomed and even accepted in the late 19th century, gender-based discrimination emerged within golf and female golfers came to find themselves largely excluded, or at the very least, treated as second-class citizens. These changes were acutely tied to broader societal dynamics and, as a result, societal shifts and changing attitudes eventually opened the sport back up to women, further driving the expansion of the golf market.

Women were initially welcomed into Irish golf clubs and often treated as equals. Participation was encouraged, and compared to other sports, golf was notably inclusive. The game was described at the time as "adapted to indulgence by both sexes" (*Belfast Newsletter*, 1896, cited in Redmond, 1997, p. 7). In many clubs, men and women shared equal membership rights and fees (Mulhall, 2006), reflecting an early commitment to gender equality. This led to a rapid rise in female participation, exemplified by the founding of the Irish Ladies Golfing Union (ILGU) in 1893, the first women's sporting union in the world

(Gibson, 1989), and supported by broader increases in women's involvement in the sport (Hunt, 2007). This growth brought economic benefits, boosting club revenues and highlighting golf's commercial potential. However, progress soon met resistance. As women gained access to a space previously dominated by men, efforts to reassert male control emerged. Articles such as The Much Maligned Lady Golfer (Percy, 1899) reflected growing negative sentiment. Elias's (1978) concept of power ratios helps explain this backlash. As the balance of gendered power shifted, men introduced exclusionary practices. Club committees, largely controlled by men, implemented policies restricting women's rights and limiting full membership. Velija and Malcolm (2009) argue that men often position women as outsiders in order to justify such exclusion.

This mirrors earlier dynamics between the gentry and the middle classes, where exclusion served to maintain social dominance. In both cases, the process of inclusion was marked by conflict and gradual negotiation. Change accelerated during the 1980s and 1990s, driven by broader movements toward gender equality and reinforced by institutional and financial pressures. In 1985, Bord Fáilte ruled that clubs discriminating against women would not be eligible for EU funding (Gilleece, 2021). By the 1990s, many funding schemes required full membership rights for women as a condition for grants and tournament hosting (Barry, 2021). In response, clubs such as Howth and Baltinglass amended their policies. These reforms were often pragmatic rather than ideological.

Discriminating against women limited revenue and excluded clubs from critical

funding, creating strong incentives to adapt. This shift not only promoted inclusion but also repositioned golf as a commercially responsive and socially relevant sport. The effects of this shift continue to shape the sport today. By expanding the participant base, clubs unlocked new revenue streams, especially through increased membership. Recent trends reinforce this point. While overall golf participation has declined globally, women now represent the sport's fastest-growing segment (GUI, 2018; Lunn and Kelly, 2017). Initiatives such as Get into Golf reflect this growing interest. Of 4,600 participants, 3,000 were women, nearly double the number of men (GUI, 2018). These figures confirm the commercial significance of female golfers and their role in driving the future growth of the sport

In summary, the process of gender democratisation in golf closely mirrored that of class democratisation discussed earlier; both were typified by conflict and resistance from established groups that attempted to maintain their dominance. That is to say, just as the gentry resisted the rise of the professional middle classes, male golfers sought to exclude women to preserve golf as a male domain. However, importantly, in both cases, democratisation eventually led to a broader participant base and increased marketisation. Indeed, by opening golf to women, clubs not only addressed growing societal expectations but also tapped into a lucrative and expanding market. The participation of women, although initially vehemently resisted but now embraced, has now been

instrumental in driving the commercial growth and marketisation of golf in Ireland.

Whilst social class and gender democratisation significantly influenced the marketisation of golf in Ireland, religious democratisation, the gradual inclusion of Irish Catholics in a predominantly Protestant social space, was equally important. This process, however, was particularly complex, especially in Northern Ireland, where sectarian tensions have remained pronounced. In contrast, the Republic of Ireland (formerly the Irish Free State) witnessed a smoother transition, where increased Catholic participation reshaped golf's membership base, altered its cultural meaning, and unlocked new economic potential.

Initially, golf in Ireland was closely aligned with the Anglo-Irish Protestant elite. Despite early progress in class and gender inclusion, Catholic exclusion persisted well into the 20th century. Prominent clubs such as Sutton, Royal Belfast, Royal Dublin, and the Island Golf Club routinely denied Catholic membership (Hanna, 1995; Guiney, 1990; Gibson, 1989). Golf, introduced as a "garrison game" by British forces, became a powerful symbol of colonial power and exclusion (Rouse, 2018), often viewed by Nationalists as culturally foreign and politically antagonistic. This perception contributed to hostility towards clubs during periods of heightened political conflict, particularly the Anglo-Irish War.

However, the partition of Ireland in the 1920s marked a turning point. With the withdrawal of British forces and the emergence of a Catholic-led Free State, established social hierarchies began to shift. Catholics of means increasingly gained access to golf clubs, challenging their former status as social outsiders. Elias's (2012) concept of functional democratisation helps explain this transformation. As power imbalances began to level, Nationalists gradually reimagined golf as culturally neutral (or even authentically Irish in some cases). Statements like Clarson's 1932 defence that "golf is not an English game" (cited in Costello, 1996) and golf's inclusion in the revived Tailteann Games of 1924 underscore this shift.

This reframing stimulated Catholic participation in the Free State. Golf evolved into a symbol of social mobility for the rising Catholic middle class. Between 1920 and 1950, around 40 new clubs were established in the South, compared to only seven in Northern Ireland (Mulhall, 2006). The South capitalised on golf's expanding inclusivity, driving both participation and marketisation.

In contrast, religious democratisation in Northern Ireland lagged behind. Sectarianism remained entrenched, and golf clubs often replicated these divisions. As Bairner (2019, cited in Bull, 2019) notes, "discreet bigotry" persisted, whereby some club memberships discriminate, albeit quietly, against Catholics even today. This exclusion hampered growth and reaffirmed golf's status as a target of nationalist resentment. Moreover, the outbreak of the

Troubles devastated Northern Ireland's leisure and tourism industries. According to the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (2007), the region lost three- quarters of its international tourism market at the onset of the conflict. Golf clubs, unable to expand or attract new members, faced major constraints to development and market potential. Meanwhile, in the South, the inclusion of Catholics in golf club life furthered both social integration and commercial expansion. Much like the aspirational middle classes during social class democratisation, Catholic golfers used club membership to consolidate social legitimacy. The resulting growth in membership provided reliable revenue streams and helped transform golf into a mainstream, marketised leisure pursuit.

The contrasting experiences of North and South underscore the critical importance of religious democratisation. In the Free State, it broadened participation and accelerated the sport's commercial development. In Northern Ireland, by contrast, persistent exclusion and social disruption significantly impeded growth. That said, the post-Troubles era has seen signs of change. While some residual discrimination remains, Boyd (2013) notes a growing recovery in Northern Ireland's golf tourism, suggesting a slow but ongoing process of religious inclusion.

In sum, the history of Irish golf demonstrates that exclusion, whether based on class, gender, or religion, has consistently limited the sport's development. Conversely, each wave of democratisation has facilitated greater participation

and fuelled market expansion. Golf in Ireland has thus been transformed from a symbol of social exclusivity into an accessible and economically viable sport through successive, if uneven, processes of social inclusion.

The development and marketisation of golf in Ireland were intrinsically linked to the existence of a pacified social space, an environment in which violence is sufficiently suppressed to allow for stable economic activity. Indeed, Elias (2000) argued that pacified social spaces emerge from elimination contests, wherein dominant groups establish monopolies over violence and resources. These groups gradually transition from ruling elites to regulators, creating the conditions necessary for economic processes (production, consumption, and exchange) to flourish. In Ireland, the formation of such a space was essential to the growth of golf as a commercial sport. During periods of stability, golf clubs proliferated, memberships increased, and the sport became embedded in a routinised structure of economic activity. Investment in infrastructure, equipment, and social events reflected the sport's integration into a wider market economy.

Conversely, when pacified spaces were threatened, market processes broke down. This was most evident during the 1916 Rising, when political violence disrupted the social order. Disruption diminished consumer confidence, reduced participation, and threatened the financial viability of golf clubs. Membership subscriptions faltered, and the sport's economic foundations were destabilised.

Elias's theory that monopolies of violence and economic activity are interdependent is clearly validated by this example.

External disruptions also played a significant role. Ireland's interdependence with Britain and Europe meant that global conflicts such as the First and Second World Wars had comparable, if not more severe, effects. Resource shortages, restrictions on movement, and the suspension of competitive play significantly undermined golf's organisational and commercial structures. In some cases, clubs were forced to close entirely (Gibson, 1988), and shortages of equipment made the game unplayable. These episodes underscore the fragility of marketised sports in the absence of social stability.

In contrast, periods of peace brought renewal and expansion. Following the establishment of the Irish Free State, the gradual pacification of society provided a foundation for sustained growth. Golf regained momentum as clubs reopened, participation increased, and investment returned. The stability offered by the new political order enabled the sport's transformation into a structured and commercially viable enterprise.

The Irish golf market thus serves as a compelling case study in the relationship between societal pacification and marketisation. Stability is not merely beneficial but essential for the development of economic systems, particularly in cultural fields such as sport. Where violence and volatility prevailed, golf's market structure faltered, but where peace emerged, it flourished. This pattern

reinforces Elias's argument that the regulation of violence at a societal level (by virtue of monopoly mechanisms) is a prerequisite for the formation of pacified social spaces, and, by extension, for marketisation and economic development.

All of this becomes perhaps even more interesting when considered in relation to our final research question: *what is the relationship between marketing and the development of this market, and indeed, how has that relationship changed over time?*

If one considers the marketisation of golf in Ireland, a highly nuanced and complex relationship between marketing, social dynamics, and external influences quickly becomes apparent. Contrary to superficial assumptions that marketing alone drives marketisation, the marketisation of the Irish golf market makes clear how broader social processes and third-party interventions can establish the conditions necessary for marketisation. Indeed, democratisation processes, external interference from third-party commercial entities like railway companies, and shifting attitudes toward commerce were vital to the creation of a foundation for golf's marketisation on the island. Marketing, as we would judge it by today's standards, only became a central mechanism after these developments enabled clubs to adopt a business-savvy ethos. This research explored the interplay between these forces, arguing that while marketing was ultimately significant, its effectiveness depended on earlier social, cultural, and infrastructural transformations.

As established above, the democratisation of golf in Ireland played a crucial role in its marketisation. Initially, an elite pastime dominated by the gentry and aristocracy, golf maintained exclusivity by avoiding overt commercialism; however, the late 19th century brought with it significant social change. Slowly but surely, the rising professional middle class gained access to leisure activities once reserved for the elite. This shift expanded golf's participant base, increased demand for clubs and services, and gradually opened the minds of those involved in the running of golf clubs to economic processes. As a result, democratisation diversified the sport's demographics and paved the way for economic practices such as membership fees, sponsorships, and marketing.

Third-party interventions were also instrumental in its initial expansion. Railway companies played a central role in the early commercialisation of golf in Ireland, recognising its potential to drive tourism and increase passenger traffic. Their involvement extended well beyond transportation, as they actively invested in the sport by building infrastructure, sponsoring competitions, and promoting golf destinations (Nalder, 2003; Gibson, 1989). Through discounted fares, the construction of hotels and clubhouses, and the financing of strategically located courses, railway companies helped transform golf from a local leisure activity into a product embedded within the broader tourism economy. These efforts supported the expansion of golf clubs and introduced the sport to a wider audience, enhancing its appeal. However, the motivations

behind such investments were commercial rather than sporting. Railway

companies saw golf primarily as a tool to boost revenue and consolidate market influence. This commercial orientation ultimately contributed to a shift in how clubs viewed their relationship with external promoters. Initially dependent on railway support to attract members and generate visibility, many clubs gradually began to seek greater autonomy.

By the early twentieth century, some clubs, such as Royal Portrush, had started to reduce their reliance on railway companies. They did so by diversifying revenue streams and adopting more independent models of governance (Nalder, 2003). This marked an important step in the broader process of golf's marketisation, as clubs increasingly embraced self-directed promotional strategies and commercial thinking. This marked a turning point in the relationship between golf clubs and marketing, as committees began to recognise the potential of sponsorships, competitions, and promotional campaigns to sustain their operations. This development reflects a growing awareness among club committees of the power of marketing to attract consumers. By the 1930s, marketing strategies had become integral to club operations, with competitions and media advertisements described as the "lifeblood of Irish golf" (Menton, 1991). This shift underscores how marketing transitioned from a peripheral activity to a core function of golf clubs, driven by the recognition of its economic utility. However, it was only possible because of the earlier social and infrastructural transformations that created the conditions

for marketing to be effective. That is to say that, whilst marketing became more prominent over time, it was not the initial driver of change. Instead, social processes such as democratisation and third-party interventions laid the groundwork for marketisation by expanding access to the sport, reshaping attitudes toward commerce, and establishing the necessary infrastructure.

6.1. Significance & Implications

This section considers the broader significance and implications of this research and extends beyond findings that pertain exclusively to the initial research questions. Central to this is the relevance and applicability of figurational sociology to broader marketing research. The discussion also explores the parallels between the figurational approach, Actor-Network Theory (ANT), and the work of the IMP Group, with the aim of identifying common ground between these perspectives that may enhance future research conducted from a network-oriented standpoint. In addition to this, the section develops the theoretical contributions of the study more explicitly, before turning to the practical and policy implications that arise from the findings, and it concludes with a consideration of the study's relevance for future research.

6.1.1. Conceptual and Theoretical Positioning

By focusing on networked interdependence, power dynamics and the relationship between planned and unplanned outcomes, figurations grants the researcher a

detailed insight into the social processes that underpin marketisation in a given context. In many ways, it aligns with other theoretical approaches, such as ANT & IMP, that also emphasise networks and interdependencies. However, what sets figurations apart is the ability it lends the researcher to consider the intricacies of power balances and the unintended outcomes of particular actions, which makes it particularly well-suited to the analysis of dynamic and historically unpredictable markets like that of Irish golf.

Elias considered society to be made up of interdependent figurations, wherein individuals and groups of individuals are bound by ever-evolving power dynamics and mutual interdependence. Elias's concept of sequential figurations (1978) provides a valuable framework for understanding the sociogenesis of markets and organisations. When applied to market analysis, it allows researchers to conceptualise development as a series of interconnected figurations across time. Elias illustrated this with a sequence labelled A-B-C-D, where each stage both emerges from and conditions the next. This sequential model enables researchers to trace how specific historical figurations create the preconditions for later developments. In the context of this research, early Irish golf clubs dominated by military and elite members represent figuration A. These gradually developed into more inclusive clubs that admitted lower class members, constituting figuration B. This transition, driven by processes of democratisation and the growing influence

of the middle classes, exemplifies how broader social dynamics shape the trajectory of market development.

Elias's work goes beyond merely illustrating that such transitions happen, by considering the nature of the interdependency networks that exist between the people involved, it allows us to explain why. Indeed, Elias argued that within a given figuration, an individual's position and how they behave are influenced/dictated by their interdependence with others. This perspective sheds light on the drivers of change in Irish golf and highlights where shifts in class relations, power dynamics, and consumption practices played central roles in its marketisation process. Consumption practices are a good indicative example here, in the sense that they were not solely shaped by individual choice as one might assume; rather, they were influenced by broader processes. This is in line with Dolan's (2009) perspective on consumption, wherein it is argued that objects like golf club memberships can serve as markers of class and mutual identification. It also highlights the ways in which adopting a figurational research perspective allows the researcher to integrate social norms and class dynamics into the analysis of marketisation processes.

In this regard, figurations share important similarities with the work of IMP and ANT theorists, most importantly in terms of their perspectives on interdependency networks. Indeed, the IMP group examines the levels of interdependence that exist within business networks and suggests that relationships must be understood in the

context of the broader network in which they are embedded (Hakansson & Snehota, 1995). Similarly, ANT theorists view markets as assemblages (groups) of human and non-human actors, emphasising the performativity of market processes and the capacity of market forces to reshape social practices (Law, 2008). Whilst both approaches align with figurations in the sense that they recognise the interconnectedness of actors, they differ significantly in their treatment of power and agency. In the case of the IMP group, there is a tendency to consider relationships in a comparatively superficial fashion and to assume that they are cooperative in the sense that actors work in tandem for mutual benefit. Such a perspective overlooks the power imbalances and conflicts that typify human relationships. In contrast to this, figurations explicitly acknowledges that actors within a network rarely possess equal power and instead proffers that power disparities shape the outcomes of interdependencies. This focus on power dynamics makes figurations particularly useful for examining markets like the Irish golf market, wherein historical and social inequalities severely influenced its development.

ANT's emphasis on assemblages and performativity also provides a valuable framework for understanding how marketisation occurs. However, ANT theorists risk treating all actors, those human and non-human, as equivalent and equal, and by extension risk attributing significance to a non-human entity that it simply cannot possess. An Eliasian approach avoids this limitation by focusing on human

interdependencies while still considering material and symbolic factors as the affectations that they are. This makes figurational sociology more appropriate for considering markets where social hierarchies and historical contexts influence the marketisation process. That said, having situated figurational sociology in relation to ANT and IMP, the next step is to outline the theoretical contributions that this study makes within and across these perspectives.

6.1.2. Implications for Broader Theory

While the discussion above highlights the relevance of figurational sociology to market analysis, moving beyond this, the findings of this study allow for several explicit theoretical contributions. Firstly, the research demonstrates how figurational sociology can be extended beyond its traditional research confines and be used as a powerful and holistic framework for analysing marketisation processes. Indeed, by tracing the sociogenesis of the Irish golf market over time, the study illustrates that market development is not simply an economic evolution but a long-term configuration shaped by shifting power balances, social interdependencies, and historical contingencies.

Secondly, the study identifies democratisation across class, gender, and religion as central processes that drove and shaped the marketisation of golf in Ireland. Such processes are typically examined in sociological or historical contexts; however, here they were shown to produce commercial and economic consequences by

broadening participation and reshaping power dynamics within contemporary golfing figurations. This extends the application of figurational theory by illustrating how inclusion and exclusion, or established/outsider, processes directly contribute to market expansion.

Thirdly, the empirical analysis provides a concrete and tangible example of Elias's sequential figurations in action. The progression from military-controlled clubs (figuration A), to middle-class integration (figuration B), to broader democratisation (figuration C), demonstrates how each historical configuration created preconditions for subsequent developments. This enriches figurational understandings of long-term market development.

Fourthly, the study expands the scope of figurational analysis by showing how power shifted not only within clubs but between institutions, including railway companies, club committees, and later national bodies. This multi-institutional examination contributes to discussions around how figurations can be deployed by illustrating that power balances can operate across multiple overlapping figurations rather than within single organisational units, and that these interdependencies can shape long-term societal development.

Finally, the study provides theoretical insight into the role of unintended consequences in marketisation. The actions of railway companies are the best example here; they aimed to increase passenger numbers rather than develop the sport itself; however, inadvertently, they accelerated golf's commercialisation. This

reinforces and extends Elias's principle that unplanned outcomes frequently shape social and market figurations. While these contributions advance theoretical understanding, the findings likewise carry significant practical and policy implications, which are discussed below.

6.1.3. Practical and Policy Implications

Beyond its theoretical contributions, this research also offers insights of practical relevance for contemporary golf clubs, governing bodies, and policymakers. Most notably, the findings demonstrate that the expansion of the Irish golf market occurred most prominently during periods in which clubs became more open and inclusive, and were typically characterised by broader participation and greater degrees of access. This suggests that, in the present context, inclusive practices should not just be adopted because they are perceived to be ethical; rather, they should be considered to be of paramount importance to the long-term viability and commercial development of the market, insofar as processes of inclusion have repeatedly underpinned participation growth and economic sustainability.

The study further highlights the importance of recognising and responding to shifting power balances within and between golfing figurations. Historically, this is clearly illustrated by the manner in which railway companies once occupied dominant positions within the golfing figuration, exercising disproportionate influence over the organisation and commercial direction of the sport, before

gradually ceding much of this power to club-based authorities. In contemporary contexts, comparable dynamics can be observed, as national governing bodies, tourism organisations, and commercial sponsors increasingly shape the conditions under which the market develops. As such, clubs are embedded within fluid and dynamic networks of institutional interdependence and must remain responsive to changes in these power relations if they are to sustain their position within the wider figuration.

The findings further indicate that marketing practices are most effective only when augmented by favourable social conditions. That is to say, historically, marketing did not always act as a precursor to marketisation; rather, it gained traction only once broader social structures like those pertaining to processes of democratisation and infrastructural stability had created the conditions under which the market could develop. From a figurational perspective, this suggests that marketing strategies cannot operate independently of the social figurations within which they are deployed. Contemporary marketing practitioners should therefore seek to align promotional activities with the social dynamics, identities, and interdependencies that characterise the communities and consumers they are targeting, rather than simply treating marketing as an autonomous driver of market growth.

From a policy perspective, the study strongly illustrates the economic significance of inclusive governance approaches. Indeed, the gradual acceptance of women, Catholics, and members of the middle classes into golfing figurations contributed

not only to wider processes of social change but also to the marketisation and long-term economic strengthening of clubs. In this sense, it becomes clear that policies that promote inclusion function not merely as instruments of social change but also as mechanisms that can reshape power balances within a given figuration and, by extension, expand the participant base of a given market, which, in turn, can lead to greater market profitability and sustainability. Therefore, Policymakers involved in the design of funding schemes, equality initiatives, or sport-tourism strategies may find justification for promoting inclusivity on both social and economic grounds.

Finally, the research establishes the importance of pacified social spaces as a fundamental precondition for market development. Periods characterised by violence or social instability consistently constrained participation and undermined the economic viability of clubs, whereas phases of relative stability enabled growth and consolidation. From a figurational standpoint, this highlights the interdependence between monopolies of violence, social regulation, and economic activity. Policymakers concerned with sport, tourism, or local development may thus consider social cohesion and community safety not as external conditions, but as integral components of sustainable market formation.

Taken together, these theoretical, practical, and policy insights provide a platform from which to consider the broader relevance of the study for future research. As such, we will move on to discuss this in the following section.

6.1.4. Future Research

The findings of this research point towards several potential avenues for future research. One such avenue involves the application of figurational sociology to other sport or leisure markets in order to assess whether comparable sociogenetic developmental patterns can be identified. While the Irish golf market is shaped by a distinctive set of historical, political, and cultural conditions, it nevertheless provides an instructive case through which relationships between democratisation processes, shifting power balances, and market development can be examined. Comparative analyses may therefore help to establish whether similar figurational dynamics operate across different contexts, or whether alternative conditions give rise to divergent marketplaces and marketisation processes. A figurational approach may deepen understanding in this regard.

In addition, the research highlights the value of further examining the relationship between marketing practices and underlying social processes. Historically, marketing became effective only when broader social conditions rendered markets receptive to commercial activity. Future research may therefore explore whether this dynamic persists in contemporary contexts, particularly in light of the growing influence of digital media and the globalisation of sport tourism, or whether emerging forms of marketisation are reshaping these relationships.

Finally, the shifting institutional figurations identified throughout the historical analysis, most notably those involving railway companies, golf clubs, and state bodies, suggest that similar multi-institutional analyses may prove valuable in the present day. Examining how contemporary organisations interact within overlapping figurations may offer further insight into the ongoing development, governance, and commercialisation of the sport.

7. Chapter 7 – Bibliography

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