

Eric BOUSMAR (Université Saint-Louis – Bruxelles)

Thursday 6 December 2018, 11.00–12.30

Teaching the Civilisation Process to a Multidisciplinary Undergraduate Audience as an Historian

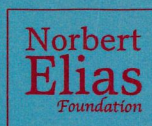
This paper aims to present an experience of teaching Elias and to reflect on it. Since more than 10 years, I have been teaching a course on Historical Anthropology to 3rd-year undergraduate students from various backgrounds (mainly students in History, Sociology and Anthropology, but also French Studies, Political Science and others). My perspective is that of a mediaevalist teaching a cross-period introductory course, ranging from the Ancient Greek World to Modern and Contemporary Europe. I teach several chapters, each of them introducing a distinctive way of practising Historical Anthropology, the study of the civilisation process being one of those, alongside other perspectives such as structuralism, micro-history or the narrative empathy developed by G. Duby. A strong chapter is also devoted to the development of Historical Anthropology as a research field within History (from the *Kulturgeschichte* experience through the *histoire des mentalités* to cultural history). Elias's idea of the civilizing process is presented within its background and through its sociological perspective; the chapter goes on with Elias's reception by the historians and examines how the model was considered an inspiring theory and socio-cultural description but also how it has been challenged or supported by adding new sources, facts and questions, and how the evolution from 20th C. to the present day may be related to the original model, or not. This includes a hint at possibly de-civilizing trends during the 20th C. (focusing on brutalisation and violence on the one hand, on nudity and sexuality on the other hand) and on the potentiality of an approach centred on multiculturalism and globalization. The paper will try to assess the strengths and the limits of such an approach when teaching Elias.

**Global
Interdependencies**
Norbert Elias
Conference
Brussels
2018

What's New in the
Human Society of
Individuals?

5–8 December

Université Saint-Louis – Bruxelles



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Table of Contents

Presentation and <i>Remerciements</i>	3
Programme in Brief.....	5
Conference Timetable.....	7
Full Programme	13
Abstracts (ordered alphabetically by author)	23
Participants.....	131
Conference Venues.....	137



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