



Lecture Series of the Department of Development Studies

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***Uplifting the human and dominating the animal:
imperialism, violence and the 'Civilizing Process'***

Wednesday, 11 April 2018, 4.15-5.45 pm

Seminar room, IE, Department of African Studies
Spitalgasse 2, Courtyard 5, 1090 Vienna

Chair:

Nora Faltmann

(Department of Development Studies, University of Vienna)

Norbert Elias' influential work, *The Civilizing Process* (1939), traces the development of social attitudes in European modernity and the causes of these changes. Elias considers how post-medieval European mores on matters of sexuality, bodily functions, violence, table manners and speech were transformed over time through the internalization of self-restraint. Significant levels of structural and interpersonal violence are compatible with the increased salience of narratives of civilization, however, and conceptions and practices of 'civilization' are rooted in specific understandings of 'the human' and 'the animal'. Elias makes an important contribution to understanding the civilizing process as one of 'taming', training and subduing 'the animal' in the human in order that we might become civilized. In addition, those outside of civilization have been regarded as in some ways less than human, being less independent from nature. Comparisons can be drawn between the processes of dealing with those peoples 'outside' of civilization to the treatment of non-human animals. This leads to the conclusion that what must be resisted is not only the animalization of those others who are dominated, but the reproduction of an imperial human through the discourse of 'civilization'.