Bringing the Critical Thinking Back in: A Critique of Andrew Linklater's Theoretical Contributions to International Relations

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Abstract: Inspired by the Critical Social Theory put forth by the Frankfurt School, Andrew Linklater has dedicated part of his career to elaborating a critical and emancipatory research agenda for International Relations. However, his recent research on the restriction of violence in international society, mostly influenced by the English School and by Eliasian Sociology, has pushed Linklater away from an explicit engagement with critical epistemologies and theoretical approaches. Although there is a possibility for close dialogue between these theoretical strands, we claim that Linklater did not articulate these approaches as much as he could have done. Therefore, we make an assessment of his work to discuss some of its epistemological and theoretical inconsistencies. Based on this, we provide a way to bridge Linklater's initial critical agenda with his most recent analyses on processes of violence restriction and regulation of global harm in the international realm. We argue that by focusing on multiple global processes that contributed to the restriction of violence, Linklater failed to consider the particularities, pitfalls and side-effects of allegedly beneficial processes of violence restriction and, as a result, his work lost critical potential. Accordingly, this article demonstrates how Linklater would benefit from going back to his initial critical agenda to address the limitations of his scholarship on global harm.

Keywords: Andrew Linklater; Critical Theory; English School; Eliasian Sociology; citizenship; political communities; global harm.

Introduction

Perhaps it would be redundant to extol the contributions and importance of Critical Theory (CT) to International Relations (IR) in a thematic issue focused on the relevance,

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challenges, and pitfalls of such approach. Nevertheless, it is worth pointing out that one of the wonders of a critical program in the social sciences is precisely the fact that no one, not even authors themselves, can be exempted from criticisms. The uncovering of mis-recognised power relations and hierarchies and the acceptance of the situational nature of knowledge can be turned inward as much as they can be used to read other works.

In this paper, we aim to critically analyse the works of Andrew Linklater, a critical theorist and, in his more recent writings, an adept of Eliasian Sociology and the English School of International Relations (ES). Linklater's engagement with CT dates from his early works, in which he sought to theorise on emancipatory forms of citizenship that would create a universal bond between humanity, in a relationship that would go beyond that of states with their national citizens (Linklater 1990; 1998a; 1998b; 2007a). From the 2000s onwards, he turned his focus to the English School and the possibilities of progress in international society, engaging closely with the processual sociology of Norbert Elias (see, for instance, Linklater 2011a). Deriving from these later concerns were his theory of harm conventions (Linklater 2011a); the study of the ideas and conceptions of violence in the long history of the Western states-system (Linklater 2016); and the globalisation of the European civilising process through the idea of a standard of civilisation (Linklater 2020). All three were portrayed as theoretical constructions that combined Eliasian sociology, the English School's narrative of international society, and his ethical concerns with the issue of unnecessary suffering at a transnational level.

In this later phase, Linklater mostly abandoned his explicit engagement with CT, pre-ferring a closer dialogue with Elias and Wight. However, we argue that, contrary to what it may seem, Linklater's transition from CT to Eliasian Sociology and the ES is consistent with his normative concerns, since both schools offer more than enough support to his ethical and cosmopolitan agenda. On normative grounds, the ES and CT have much more in common than many would suppose so, which could raise opportunities for future dialogue. From the ES's point of view, CT could learn the desirability and limitations of a society of states vis-à-vis its relation with, and duties to, individuals. The ES, on the other hand, could greatly improve its normative debate by including CT's considerations on power relations and hierarchy.

Although we defend the possibility of a virtual dialogue between CT, ES, and Eliasian Sociology, Linklater himself did not articulate these approaches as he could have done. This, we argue, culminates in a few limitations of theoretical and epistemological nature which most likely could have been avoided had he maintained his commitment to the CT's emancipatory intent. In this regard, our central point is that, influenced by Elias and English School theorists, Linklater focused on multiple global processes that contributed to violence restriction, which nevertheless made him miss the particularities and pitfalls of allegedly beneficial processes of violence restriction. We will, accordingly, discuss these limitations in depth and present possible paths that can be followed by those wishing to engage critically with Linklater's admittedly monumental works about international relations.

To that end, this paper is based on a literature review of Linklater's works, selected according to their contributions to analyse three recurring themes in his theorisation, namely the problems of citizenship, political community, and global harm. On the latter, however, it is important to point out that, since the author constructs and develops these thoughts in the course of three books[1] and one of which is yet to be published (Linklater 2011a, 2016), we will present his arguments as they stand now. Thus, we fully realise that some of our criticisms and questionings may be dealt with in the last volume of his trilogy.

That said, our general argument was divided into five sections, aside from this introduction. Firstly, we provide a metatheoretical assessment that allows us to bring CT and ES closer to one another. Although we defend that Linklater did not mobilise critical theoretical and epistemological frameworks in his more recent writings, we suggest that this could have been done considering the congruencies between CT and ES. We then present the influences of these different approaches on Linklater's thinking in the second and third sections, in which we discuss, respectively, the influence of CT for the analysis of the problems of citizenship and the political community, and the ideas of the ES and Elias for understanding the harm problem. After presenting our analysis of Linklater's problems and theoretical inspirations, the fourth section problematises the shift from CT to the ES in his inquiry on global harm. The main intention of this section is to highlight the side-effects of some harm conventions and show how they served to create and enhance hierarchies within international society. For that matter, we critically discuss the context and motivations that led international society to defend and promote human rights and the right to self-determination. Finally, we present some final remarks and raise new critical possibilities for those inspired by Linklater's research agenda.

Critical Theory and English School: a metatheoretical debate

Although the 'critical turn' had already taken place in other disciplines within the field of social sciences (Bottomore 1980), it was only in 1981, after the publication of the works of Robert Cox, that this theoretical twist became prominent in IR (Vigevani et al 2011). Cox (1981) evidenced the limits of theorisation in the field by arguing that mainstream theories in IR legitimise and naturalise social orders regardless of the consequences of the international architecture for minority classes and groups. Cox's (1981) main critique of positivist approaches is that no neutral science really exists, inasmuch as scholars' preferences, priorities and standpoints are inevitably shaped by a historical process. Similarly, as nicely put by Mark Rupert (2003), theories are always expressions of a situated knowledge.

In opposition to the alleged neutral standpoint defended by positivists, Cox (1981: 130) argued that critical theory 'allows for a normative choice in favour of a social and political order different from the prevailing order.' Therefore, the research agenda that Cox tried to put forth in IR holds a normative commitment with changing unjust socio-political orders (Cox 1981; Linklater 2007; Gill 2008). Accordingly, Richard K. Ashley (1981: 227) advocated critical theories should commit to 'securing freedom from unacknowledged constraints, relations of domination, and conditions of distorted communication

and understanding that deny humans the capacity to make their future through full will and consciousness'. Thus, an emancipatory intent is embedded in every critical investigation that seeks to provide realisable alternatives towards the construction of orders free from unjustifiable oppression (Ashley 1981; Devetak 2005; Rengger and Thirkell-White 2007). With that being said, while we acknowledge the existence and importance of the varied strands of critical thinking within IR (see, for instance, Burchill and Linklater 2005; Cox 1983; Tickner 2001; Walker 1993), we will not provide an exhaustive review of them all, as this would require more than what we could accomplish here and surpass the scope of this article. Instead, we will focus on the Critical Social Theory of the Frankfurt School (Weber 2005) that has influenced much of Linklater's writings.

In the early 1930s, the Frankfurt School sought to provide alternatives against the positivist turn in Sociology. Against this backdrop, and inspired by the Marxist method of historical materialism, the referred School focused on raising critical inquiries about the challenges and pitfalls resulting from the advancement of modern benchmarks of freedom and equality. The School's focus was on the development of modern forms of social, economic and political life, especially on how modern socio-political structures backfired on forms of exclusion and domination (Bottomore 2002; Horkheimer 2002; Weber 2005; Devetak 2005; Linklater 2007). The Frankfurt School defended an ontology that would bring back normativity to the study of sociology. It also championed that the social sciences should prioritise hermeneutic and interpretative epistemologies and methodologies, as this would allow scholars to conduct in-depth investigations of complex social dynamics. Such in-depth analyses would allow scholars to theorise on the functioning of (domestic) societies and to identify prevailing hierarchical structures existing in a particular context. Yet, this interpretation would still not be enough to achieve emancipation. For the Frankfurt School, analyses of complex social dynamics are relevant only insofar as they allow scholars to evaluate how and whether social movements and other social processes could be mobilised as a pathway for emancipatory politics (Horkheimer 2002; Bottomore 2002; Weber 2005; Devetak 2005; Linklater 2007).

Having said that, it is important to note that the Frankfurt School itself was not particularly interested in providing a theoretical account on the 'international' (Devetak 2005). However, according to Linklater (2007), it nonetheless provided insights which were later reworked by IR scholars to exceed the limitations of the (often marginalised) Marxist thought in the field. IR scholars in this strand deny the unchangeable character of social structures, as this recognition would be complacent with the structural injustice that underpins international order. Thus, this brings back the possibility of normativity in IR. In addition, the Frankfurt School exposed the limits of Marxist orthodox traditions and sought to explore other forms of oppression and discrimination not closely intertwined with capitalism. Critical scholarship inspired by the Frankfurt School called for the creation of international emancipatory projects to overcome multiple transnational structures of exclusion, such as racism and patriarchy. To cope with this transnational dimension of social structures, the Frankfurt School adopted a universalist perspective when theorising on pathways that would favour the transformation of unjust systems through the creation

of advanced forms of social and political life. Accordingly, the Frankfurt School sought to theorise on alternative forms of modern political, economic, and social life which would halt the functioning of oppressive structures and warrant the Enlightenment goals of freedom and equality (Linklater 2007a).

Since normativity is central to critical thinking, Linklater's theorisation is also influenced by a normative and emancipatory agenda (Devetak 2005, Linklater 2007a). He has conducted several critical inquiries on a varied set of 'problems' to provide a praxeology aimed at transforming global politics into an emancipatory realm. Although we will discuss his contributions in the coming sections, for the time being, it is important to have in mind that Linklater has directly engaged with the Frankfurt School's theorist Jürgen Habermas and his conception of dialogic politics to analyse two problems, known as the 'problem of citizenship' (Linklater 1990) and the 'problem of modern political communities' (Linklater 1998). Linklater (2011a; 2016) has also set out another critical research agenda to evaluate the problem of global harm, which nevertheless has been sustained theoretically by the ideas of the English School and the process sociology of Norbert Elias.

Thus, we identify a transition in Linklater's writings, as his earlier critical engagement, mostly influenced by the Frankfurt School, has been less influential in his most contemporary works which are theoretically sustained by the English School and Eliasian sociology. We argue, however, that this move does not represent a rupture. Rather, we intend to demonstrate that Linklater's migration to the English School makes sense on a metatheoretical level when one considers the School's disposition to engage in normative debates. Not only that, but epistemologically and perhaps even methodologically, the ES has some important similarities to Critical Theory, especially when it comes to criticising the positivist approach to science, and also by being able to accommodate notions of progress and concern for individuals as human beings. English School scholars, in general, subscribe to a less materialist approach to IR, relying on the role of shared values, rules and institutions (particularly the latter) to comprehend international phenomena and dynamics.[2] Even if they are arguably less critical than Cox and other critical theorists, and have a less emancipatory intent, most authors within the School adopt comprehensive epistemologies and social structural approaches when dealing with the concept of international society (Buzan 2014a). It is also worth pointing out that the ES shares with CT an appreciation of history and historical analysis that makes itself present in important works of the School (Watson 1993; Suganami 2011; Linklater and Suganami 2006; Buzan 2014a).

For the argument sustained in this paper, however, the most important feature of the English School is the possibility of including normative debates both in its theoretical framework and research agenda. That is the case because the ES is both a normative theory and a theory of norms. On the one hand, its classical definition of international society, written by Hedley Bull in *The Anarchical Society* ([1977] 2002: 13), states that

> [a] society of states (or international society) exists when a group of states, conscious of certain common interests and common values, form a society in the sense that they conceive themselves to be

bound by a common set of rules in their relations with one another, and share in the working of common institutions.

That definition, by making international society dependant on common rules and institutions, recognises the importance of norms as patterns of conduct to the study of international politics (Mayall 2009). Most scholarship that subscribes to this approach, therefore, deals with international norms in one way or another, making the English School a theory in which norms occupy a privileged position.

Conversely, the ES is also normative in the more 'philosophical' sense since some of its accounts of international society try to determine what 'ought to be,' or even what is the 'better' form of organising the international (Mayall 2009: 210; Buzan 2014a). This approach is centred around what has been called the pluralist-solidarist debate or, as Buzan (2014a: 83) argues, the debate on '[…] how international, or more specifically interstate, society relates, and should relate, to world society – or, in other words, how states relate, and should relate, to people.' This discussion raises some interesting points for a normative agenda, many of which are explored in Linklater's later works on the harm principle in world politics, which will be discussed in the next section. For now, it is worth presenting in more detail the normative debate of the English School *par excellence*: the pluralist-solidarist debate.

Essentially, this debate revolves around the amount of values, rules, and institutions shared by states in an international society. Those who subscribe to a notion of 'minimal' international society, or international society as necessarily state-centric and limited to norms of coexistence, are called pluralists. They defend the cultural diversity, or 'plurality' of political communities which find in common just enough to overcome the pure rational calculations that guide behaviour in an international system. On the other hand, solidarists go beyond this notion and defend that there must be more than just basic agreements on specific themes for an international society to endure so that it does not reverse to the self-help environment of the international system. Solidarists hence adhere to the notion of a thicker international society, seeing that its members would agree on a wider range of subjects and establish rules and institutions that go beyond mere coexistence to reach cooperation and a degree of shared management. They also accept a larger role of world society and individuals in the workings of international dynamics (Buzan 2004). Needless to say, the pluralist and solidarist positions are clearly not set in stone, and many authors have attempted to relativise such stances or even introduce a 'via media' between their extremes (see Buzan 2004: 139-160; Shapcott 2019).

Linklater, on the other hand, and in accordance with his cosmopolitan perspective, presents a view of this debate that focuses on the moral and ethical foundations of international society rather than on its conceptual and analytical side. Instead of mere concepts that define the scope of international society, for him, pluralism and solidarism are more than just that. There is a degree of progress inherent to the transition from a pluralist to a solidarist international society, since the latter is better suited to deal with the problems of harm and human rights in world politics. For him, a pluralist international society is necessarily limited; inasmuch as it gives precedence to state sovereignty, it cannot deal well

with the moral necessity to protect individual human beings and may condone human rights abuses in order to avoid intervention and the breach of sovereignty. A solidarist international society, in turn, would be essential to limit the possibilities to inflict harm, both by individuals and, especially, by states, since a denser set of rules and institutions could exercise restraint and punish pernicious conduct (Linklater and Suganami 2006).

It is this side of the English School and the moral considerations it allows for the one which accommodates Linklater's writings on the harm principle. Furthermore, it is precisely because of the ethical dimension present in these themes that it was possible for him to transition from Critical Theory to the English School without losing the commitment to universal ethics that comprised much of his initial works. As the author himself points out, one of the most important questions of IR, in his view, is: 'How far can world politics be changed for the better?' (Linklater and Suganami 2006: 8). In the English School, he has found a fertile ground, albeit little explored, to continue his inquiry into the emancipatory possibilities of progress in international society that began in his works on citizenship and the political community. That said, it seems that his transition to the ES, unfortunately, made him underestimate and understate some phenomena that were central to his early writings, such as established power relations and hierarchies, as we shall argue in the following sections.

Critical Theory and the problems of citizenship and community

The critical approach of the Frankfurt School has played a central role in Linklater's analysis of the problems of modern citizenship and modern political communities (Linklater 1998a; 1998b). Although not directly influenced by CT, in *Men and Citizens*, Linklater (1982) traces the roots of citizenship by posing an unresolved ethical dilemma in modern political philosophy: the tension between individuals' moral obligations towards humanity vis-à-vis their particular responsibilities toward their fellow citizens. For Linklater (1982; 1998a; 1998b), the rise of the modern state and the emergence of the idea of citizenship and nationality established a moral bond between citizens that was discursively juxtaposed to a moral commitment towards individuals located outside the demarcated national borders. Therefore, despite the fact that the concept of citizenship is a modern result of social movements seeking inclusion and justice within states, Linklater identifies that it has a side effect to it, which is the inexorable fusion between the state and the logic of citizenship, nationalism and territoriality. In this nexus, the provision of citizenship rights is a duty of the state within its politically bounded space, meaning the national territory in which moral thresholds should be present. Linklater's core point is that while struggles for citizenship achieved equality among fellow citizens, they failed to take into account their effects to humanity as a whole. This Janus-faced feature of citizenship highlights the moral dilemma in which the progress within is often prioritised over the progress made among insiders and outsiders (Linklater 1998a).

Linklater adopted a critical stance and sought to theorise about emancipatory paths to tackle the issue of citizenship. Contrary to the fusion of state, citizenship and territoriality,

the author calls for a metamorphosis of the role played by the state in global politics. For Linklater, states should undergo a triple transformation, which is the main proposition of his critical project to IR.[3] In his words,

> '[c]ritical international theory defends the triple transformation of political community by advocating dialogic communities which are cosmopolitan in orientation, respectful of cultural differences and committed to reducing social and economic inequalities, nationally and internationally' (Linklater 1998a: 109).

The central claims of his triple transformation are pervasively inspired by the writings of Habermas, Kant and Marx (Linklater 1998a). Linklater (1998a; 1998b; 2005) resorted to Habermas' discourse theory of morality to provide alternatives for the unjust distribution of citizenship rights. Habermas (1986a; 1986b), in his critical inquiries, has defended forms of universal dialogue in which state and non-state actors would have the right to participate at open and unconstrained dialogues, which would allow them to express and share their beliefs, concerns and goals. Central to this communicative approach is the fact that 'societies can hope to solve the problem of how members can satisfy their needs without harming each other if they grant each person the right of equal access to all decision-making procedures that impose on them' (Linklater 2005: 142). Thus, dialogic frameworks could enable the formation of negotiated, cosmopolitan ethical standards concerned '(…) with the unfair systems of exclusion that restrict the opportunities of subordinate groups' (Linklater 1998a: 48; also see Linklater 1998b; 2001, 2005; 2007b; 2007c). Later on, Linklater (2007b; 2015) stressed that communication enhances emotional identification and empathy between different subjects due to a human universal condition: the realisation of a common physical and mental vulnerability of human beings before events of unnecessary suffering. The presence of a sense of 'distant suffering' in global politics – a concept that embraces the idea that the condition of humans beyond national borders matters – is central to Linklater's critical project. In more recent works, he pointed out that distant suffering has encouraged a process of self-restraint based on ethical understandings of acceptable and unacceptable forms of harming others, a point we approach and summarise below.

The overall expectation is that emotional attachment among members of dialogic communities will enhance the emergence of a normative commitment to expand citizenship rights to outsiders, especially those concerning the need to reduce injustice and poverty, evidencing the Marxist influence on Linklater's thinking. In his analysis on the transnational dimensions of capitalism, Marx demonstrated that individuals are interlinked by transnational processes of exploitation and subordination sustained by the transnational bourgeoisie (Linklater 1990; 1998a; 1998b). This point has been central to Linklater's ideas on interconnectedness (2007a; 2009). He evidenced that globalisation and technological modernisation promoted growing interconnectedness between state and non-state actors. These agents have worked separately to either maintain hierarchies or wreck such structures. As in Marx, Linklater (1990; 1998a) discussed that immanent contradictions within

hierarchies would bring about a collective understanding of the damage they cause. Thus, this realisation of the different forms of domination would be the first step towards the emergence of transnational movements of civil societies in defence of just and egalitarian social orders.

Although from a different perspective and focus, Kant has also defended universalism as a form of pacification and progress of international relations. Thus, Linklater combined the Marxist benchmark of the emancipation of the oppressed with a Kantian universalist approach as a global response against inequality (Linklater 1998a). However, he has reworked Marxist historical materialism by providing a broader understanding of non-capitalist structures of dominance, such as the ideas of citizenship and of the political community. In addition, to avoid Kantian contradictions, Linklater (1998a; 2007) has also argued that his universalisation of ethics is sensitive to differences and inequalities.

According to Linklater, the transformation of the role of modern political communities would gradually lead to the formation of universal dialogic communities. Within these frameworks, Linklater argued that there is a possibility of emancipation through the creation of a set of universal ethical and moral understandings that may challenge the state-territoriality-citizenship nexus. Therefore, Linklater stressed that growing interconnectedness and dialogue would contribute to the emergence of more inclusive forms of citizenship, albeit not necessarily involving the extinction of states and their borders (Linklater 1998a; 1998b; 2001). This idea is encapsulated by his concept of cosmopolitan citizenship, a universal form of extending citizenship rights through '(…) post-sovereign arrangements in which the whole human race owes its allegiance to global political institutions' (Linklater 1998a: 179). Dialogue is, therefore, the way through which individuals can move towards emancipation because such structures allow actors to negotiate a form of universal ethics.

Universal ethics, for Linklater (1998a), can be sown within three distinct structures of international society: pluralist, solidarist and post-Westphalian. Firstly, in pluralist structures, ethical commitments are state-centred and seek the preservation of freedom and formal equality between political communities. Secondly, the solidarist international society represents a stage in which states, although still central for global politics, build and share a set of ethical codes regarding violence restraint towards outsiders. Finally, his ideal-type of a post-Westphalian arrangement is one in which members claim for the expansion and promotion of universal notions of citizenship rights defined in a deliberative political structure. Thus, post-Westphalian structures differ from solidarist ones as their primary commitment is to the defence of ethical universalism and modern conceptions of freedom, equality, and emancipation. This differentiation draws from the English School's solidarist-pluralist debate mentioned in the past section. It thus demonstrates that Linklater was already aware of the School's potential to the theorisation of a critical, normative agenda within IR. Nevertheless, the concepts 'borrowed' from the ES operated, in this portion of his works, more as a complement to his critical thinking rather than as a complete engagement with their theoretical, epistemological and ontological framework. The next section will show in more detail how he has profited from the School's framework to advance his normative intents.

The problem of harm: new theoretical inspiration, same normative intent

In his later works, Linklater still tackles the same problems of double moral standards between insiders and outsiders, albeit through different theoretical perspectives. In Sociology, he resorts to the works of Norbert Elias, especially his ideas on the civilising process; in IR, he migrates to the normative side of the English School. There are several papers in which he attempts to combine these two approaches (Linklater 2004, 2010, 2011b, 2011c), but perhaps the synthesis is best expressed in his works on the harm principle and the problem of harm in world politics (Linklater 2001, 2002, 2011a, 2016, 2020). Down this line of thought, Linklater's argument is that, in every society, existing or past, there are conventions that identify what counts as permissible or proscribed harm, both among insiders and in their relations with outsiders. His goal is to understand, as per Elias, '(…) how far cultural forces that have replaced biological properties as the main peacemaker of human evolution can bring the genetically-based capacity to injure under greater control' (Linklater 2011a: 3). Essentially, by creating social mechanisms to control the capacity and willingness to harm others in highly interconnected societies, the emancipatory promises of progress – now in the form of a more solidarist international society instead of a post-Westphalian order – could be realised.

From Elias and his conception of the civilising process, Linklater takes the link between the centralisation of political power and the restriction of violent conduct. In his seminal book on the subject, Elias (2000) meant to understand certain long-term processes of change in European societies and their connection. More specifically, he was concerned with how changes in the structure of society which took place from the Middle Ages to the 19th century and changes in the structure of people's behaviour in the same period related to and influenced one another (see also Linklater and Mennell 2010). He then observed a connection between the centralisation of government and changes in patterns of behaviour that culminated in a progressive restriction of violent conduct; in the advancement of the threshold of shame and embarrassment; and in the relegation to the private sphere of actions and bodily functions that were associated with a more 'primitive' side of men (such as physiological needs, sexual drives, and even the cutting and cleaning of the meat that would be served at meals). These dynamics, namely state-formation and the restriction of conduct, were long-term processes and, ultimately, their conjunction was responsible for making the Europeans, especially those of the 19th century, to think of themselves as more civilised than both their forebears and other, non-European, societies (Elias 2000). The restriction of violence, therefore, was dependent on the centralisation of political power, which means that, in Eliasian sociology, the international is seen through the realist lenses of interstate conflict and struggles for conquest and survival, since there is no global monopoly of power (Linklater and Mennell 2010).

To Linklater (2011b), however, while Elias's work is a masterful account of the civilising of conduct and restriction of violence in the domestic realm, his description of the international could be enriched by the notion of 'international society' that is central to

the English School's framework. At the same time, the English School, while accounting for the restriction of violence between states and the development and expansion of international society, fails to consider the links between this process and the broader sociological phenomenon described by Elias. This is the case especially when it comes to the standard of civilisation, a concept often used by ES scholars, but that usually ignores any mention of civilisation or civilising process constructed by Elias (Linklater 2020). Thus, for Linklater, the restriction of violence in social relations described by Elias and the restriction of violence in international relations described by the English School are essentially simultaneous and interconnected processes which need to be thought of and studied as such. Moreover, he also defends that the moral dimension of critical theory present in the thoughts of scholars such as Horkheimer and Adorno should be incorporated to these approaches (Linklater 2011a), even if, as we argue, this commitment is less explicit now than it was in his previous works. Though he mentions the Frankfurt School, discussions of power relations and hierarchy in his studies of harm conventions are not as present or as deep as they were elsewhere in his works, as pointed out by Lawson (2017) in his critique of one of Linklater's books (Linklater 2016).

Nonetheless, what Linklater calls the 'problem of harm' emerges from these moral considerations on the civilising process in which he (2002: 326) argues for the existence of a 'harm principle' in world politics, or 'the global extension of the principle that obliges us to avoid harming others unnecessarily.' This principle is a consequence both of the civilising process described by Elias, and of the emergence and consolidation of a society of states. It is so since the growing interconnectedness of the global order and the improvement of military and destructive technologies mean that people all over the world can share the same fear for violence and desire of controlling human conduct when it comes to inflicting unnecessary pain and suffering. The 'problem', in this case, would be in reaching a global consensus on which forms of harm count as 'wrongful harm' and which count as 'acceptable' or 'necessary' harm, given that definitions of harm vary across groups. Therefore, concepts of harm '(…) will reflect the fears and anxieties, as well as the ideals and hopes, of particular groups in distinctive spatio-temporal locations' (Linklater 2011a: 41).

To better understand this matter, Linklater (2011a) proposes a typology, or a moral hierarchy of harm, that ranges from deliberate physical or psychological harm to other, less visible forms. Attention must be called to the identification of exploitation, negligence and structural harm as pernicious practices which affect individuals and states throughout the globe. According to him, while it is easier to agree on the pernicious nature of active forms of harming, others, such as unintentional harm, omission or even structural harm are a bit more delicate. Many of those go unnoticed, and there is also the questionable matter of intentionality and whether it is possible to ascribe blame for inaction or structural constraints. For him, when the perpetrator is not identifiable, it becomes harder to agree on ways of ending certain forms of harm (Linklater 2011a).

Therefore, the group-specific nature of harm conventions has so far prevented significant *cosmopolitan* standards of unacceptable harm, even if Linklater (2001, 2011a) argues

for their possibility. Nevertheless, there are *international* harm conventions derived from the international civilising process that resulted in the emergence of an international society out of an international system in world politics. International harm conventions are designed by states to place constraints on the use of force in the relations between them, thus contributing to the promotion of order in international society. However, as it was said before of the pluralist approach of the English School, international harm conventions have also proven to be compatible with many forms of suffering and pain, especially when it comes to individuals. By giving precedence to order between states, these conventions are themselves responsible for harming individuals, especially those already involved in relations of domination or that occupy subaltern positions in their own societies (Linklater 2011a).

The 'solution' for this dilemma is presented by Linklater (2001, 2011a, 2016) as the increase of human interconnectedness beyond state borders that could, in turn, generate enough emotional attachment to create cosmopolitan harm conventions and global ethics of responsibility without the need for a common or global state. As in Elias, rising levels of interconnectedness would deepen awareness of others and create pressures to increase self-control. This is not, however, presented as a straightforward path. Aside from the obvious fact that it is possible that some societies will never agree on cosmopolitan harm conventions due to very different cultural standards and moral aspects, there are profound ambiguities in the process of human interconnectedness itself. At the same time that it generates pressures for increasing cosmopolitan ties and recognition, '[r]outine socialization processes continue to promote strong emotional attachments to the nation-state, which is, for most people, the indispensable "survival unit"' (Linklater 2016: 11). In his historical account of violence in the Western states-systems, Linklater (2016) observed that, in times of hardship and war, solidarity is shrunk and does not usually extend beyond national borders. Finally, there are still non-violent, or structural forms of harm being perpetuated in the current world order for which there is very little attention – and even less agreement on how to control them. The problem of harm, therefore, remains.

In this sense, it would perhaps be interesting to return to Linklater's early writings on citizenship and the political community. The problem of creating cosmopolitan harm conventions is characterised as the difficulty in creating moral obligations not to harm others that go beyond national borders. So far, according to Linklater (2016), states have succeeded in limiting harm domestically and also in relations between them. They have not, however, been that successful when it comes to their relationships with 'outsiders.' Part of the reason for this comes from a lack of emotional attachment to individuals outside the main 'survival unit', and the other part comes from a lack of agreement on what, exactly, would constitute such harm conventions (Linklater 2011a). In this last case, the Habermasian dialogic community that could, through dialogue, generate mutual understandings and cosmopolitan ethical standards which would transform the political community, could also enhance communication and allow for agreements on permissible and proscribed harm between different societies. Since interconnectedness is ambiguous, increasing contact does not necessarily mean more recognition and acceptance, and may as well give rise

to patterns of exclusion as was the case of the European standard of civilisation (Linklater 2020). Thus, a dialogical community that looks for collective understandings, rather than merely a solidarist international society, would be a better alternative to enhance emotional identification and reduce transnational harm.

With that in mind, it is intriguing to think that, even though Linklater never actually abandoned the normative agenda of critical theory, his early works do not make a significant appearance in his later theorisation on harm, especially if we consider that the problems he deals with in both cases are not all that different from one another. We argue that bringing back some of those thoughts and establishing a fruitful dialogue between the ES and CT could greatly enhance his theoretical framework and bring important contributions to both approaches. The last section of this paper will thus present some of the possible contributions of this combination by problematising the absence of some essential notions of power and hierarchy in Linklater's thought. Still, it is worth to point out that our aim is not necessarily to criticise the author's arguments per se. Instead, our aim is to complement his arguments on cosmopolitan harm conventions by pointing out some of the possibilities for engagement between the ES and CT that he may have missed or chosen to overlook.

Expanding Linklater's situated knowledge on the problems of community and harm

When it comes to Critical Theory, it is always worth pointing out that all knowledge is situated, in the sense that it is impossible to make 'neutral' science, or a science that is not impacted by the author's ideational framework. The important effort, in this case, is recognising partiality and working to overcome established hierarchies and exclusionary scholarship. While Linklater succeeds in the first instance, his works on harm conventions are found lacking in the second, where he abandons the explicit dialogue with the Frankfurt School.

The narrative of the global civilising process and the emergence of restraints on violence in the Western states-systems presented in his theory of harm conventions has received criticism for reproducing the traditional 'expansion story' of the English School, which attributes excessive agency to Europe and glosses over non-European contributions (Hobson 2017, Lawson 2017, Go 2017). Interestingly, but perhaps not surprisingly, in his replies to such critics, Linklater (2017) claims his approach is not 'Eurocentric,' but 'Europe-centred,' in that he does not 'forget' the 'outsiders' of the global civilising process, but that, due to asymmetries of power, non-Western societies had a lot less influence on what came to be understood as 'civilised conduct' than Europeans. In a more recent book, Linklater (2020) addresses some of these postcolonial critiques by reconstructing the English School narrative of the standard of civilisation through Eliasian lenses, attributing more agency than he previously did to non-Europeans. In any case, to what extent his postcolonial readers will be satisfied with this account remains to be seen.

Be that as it may, the major problem here is how such an 'Europe-centred' civilising narrative contributes to a perpetuation of the very traditional hierarchies that Linklater, as a critical scholar, would seek to avoid. Some of the reasons for this lie in the epistemological nature of Eliasian process sociology and its impact on Linklater's work on harm conventions, violence, and civilisation. By assimilating Elias's notion of long-term processual analyses, and by attempting to incorporate the development of international and cosmopolitan harm conventions to his grand narrative of Western states-systems, Linklater succumbed to Eliasian notions of detached scholarship. Although Elias' relational ontology prevented him (1978) from being part of the positivist wing of the social sciences so denounced by Critical Theory (and the ES), his claim that the production of scientific knowledge was tied to emotional detachment in human societies may contradict the situational nature of knowledge of critical scholarship. By attributing to the sociologist the role of 'destroyer of myths' and advocating long-term analyses, Elias (1978, 2001) imposes upon social scientists the need to be 'outside of history.' This may well be an unintended consequence of Eliasian sociology, but the task of handling long-term patterns of change demanded, at least in Linklater's case, a detached view of the narrative being constructed. By attempting such an ambitious account of Western civilising process, we argue, Linklater glossed over the asymmetries, hierarchies and relations of domination present in the very discursive dimension of such history, hence contributing to their perpetuation by not acknowledging his own situatedness.

A case in point are the postcolonial critiques of his book *Violence and Civilization in the Western States-Systems* (Go 2017; Hobson 2017; Lawson 2017). According to these critiques, Linklater's narrative suffers from a difficulty in dealing with 'unconventional' or 'non-traditional' forms of scholarship derived from non-Western modes of inquiry. This point was briefly mentioned by Grovogui (2006) in the past, but it is worth exploring it further and turning it more clearly to Linklater's recent writings on harm conventions. The misrepresentation of 'outsiders' in the construction of dominant harm conventions is largely attributed to power asymmetries that have historically limited their voices in such processes. However, it is important to point out that even though such voices existed, they have not operated in the same frequency as Western ones. This means that, on empirically researching their possible influences on the development of cosmopolitan harm conventions, it is not enough to resort to traditional epistemologies, because, in their own frequency, such epistemologies will overpower outsiders. A possible way out of this quagmire would be to resort to other forms of scholarship that are able to analyse oral, traditional or symbolic evidences which do not appear on the majority of classic documental analysis. Therefore, studying non-Western harm conventions and their possible relation with (or influence on) their Western counterparts requires a more open epistemological and methodological dialogue with non-traditional forms of inquiry – a dialogue that was perhaps made more difficult by adopting an Eliasian focus on long-term processes.

A second criticism of Linklater's work can be built around his contention that there is a degree of progress inherent in the creation of cosmopolitan harm conventions for humankind as a whole. From the perspective of international law, which has inspired

the English School conventional scholarship (Linklater and Suganami 2006), expanding conventions that regulate global harm, both in number and scope, can indeed contribute to less violence among individuals in the 'in-between' and also in the 'international.' Similarly, from the ethical perspective by which Linklater's work is pervasively influenced, it is also irrevocable that conventions regulating the imposition of harm contribute to the global civilising process insofar as they erect barriers to causing unnecessary suffering (Linklater 2001; 2007b; 2011a). Yet, we argue that these standpoints that Linklater cannot detach from have led his analysis towards a less critical evaluation of harm in global politics. Linklater's ethical standpoint seems to have limited him (2011a; 2016) from providing a critical understanding of how power dynamics might affect the construction of cosmopolitan laws and paradoxically favour transnational class-based interests within international society.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is a good example to illustrate the point that harm conventions are not necessarily emancipatory. Although Linklater (2011a: 37) recognises the current absence of truly cosmopolitan harm conventions, he nevertheless suggests, paradoxically, the existence of successive experiments in codifying harm in the forms of universal human rights culture, humanitarian rules of warfare, and advancements in international criminal law.

The fact that these are controversial topics only highlights the point we are trying to make here. Taking the issue of human rights into consideration, it may seem laudable that '(…) the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want' should be recognised 'as the highest aspiration of the common people' (United Nations 1948). At first, there may seem no reason to suppose that such aspirations would not constitute a cosmopolitan ideal to which all societies aspire. However, human rights are a social construct, therefore we should address them accordingly (Donnelly 2003, 2007; Douzinas 2000). Indeed, the role of every critical theorist is to approach such naturalness not by taking it for granted but by unveiling possible contradictions and hierarchies that allowed such 'genuineness' to settle smoothly. Therefore, we provide a brief analysis of the roots and context of the writing of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) to indicate a form of critical engagement toward harm conventions.

As rightly noted by Hunt (2007), the roots of the UDHR can be traced back to liberal movements such as the English, American, and French Revolutions, which diffused, albeit differently, notions of 'humans,' 'Man' and 'modern political subject'.[4] Thus, it comes with no surprise that the final document, adopted in 1948 by the United Nations, failed to encompass alternative, non-Western views on human rights and be sensitive to cultural differences coexisting on a global scale (Douzinas 2000; Lévi-Strauss 1993; Piovesan 2013). The first version of the UDHR, drafted between 1947 and 1948, was written by John Humphrey, a Canadian jurist who coordinated the United Nations Human Rights Division from 1946 to 1966. Humphrey faced criticism for being partial in the context of production of the document as his ideas showed to be exceedingly influenced by a Western imaginary on human rights. He even received a recommendation from a Chinese

delegate who suggested that he should study Chinese philosophy before preparing an allegedly universal document. Against this backdrop, Humphrey maintained his agenda and prepared the first draft of the Declaration. After delivering it to the committee and receiving their approval, Humphrey (as in Douzinas 2000: 123) ironically stated that he 'didn't go to China nor did [he] study the writings of Confucius' to prepare the Declaration (Douzinas 2000). This example illustrates the disregard toward non-Western cultures in the context of the writing of the UDHR. Having said that, it is worth remembering an excerpt from one of Linklater's earlier works already quoted here: 'societies can hope to solve the problem of how members can satisfy their needs without harming each other if they grant each person the right of equal access to all decision-making procedures that impose on them' (Linklater 2005: 142). Considering what we mentioned above, the partial and only limited participation of non-Western societies in the formulation of the Declaration is, in itself, a form of harm.

At this historical juncture, other blatant contradictions should also be denounced. The international legal enactment of the human rights standard kicked in mainly following the wake of increasing claims for human equality and anti-racism and the questioning of practices such as colonialism and discrimination that had marked the conduct of European powers in the preceding centuries (Buzan 2014b; Douzinas 2000). Perhaps mainly, the human rights discourse was a response to Nazi cruelty that took place inside the European continent. Accordingly, it was mainly conceived through a Western set of values and ideas of what constituted the basic needs of individuals as human beings in an attempt to 'solve' a Western problem: how to 're-civilise' Europe and the West after the tragedies of the Second World War (Buzan 2014b; Césaire 2000 [1950]). Thus, violence only became a 'universal' problem after being brutally deployed by European powers *inside* the continent. Put differently, Europeans decided to champion the principle of violence restraint only after (mostly white) Europeans experienced the cruelty of the Holocaust (Buzan 2014b; Douzinas 2000). This evidences the ambiguous and contingent nature of the UDHR, which obliterated the years of systematic exploitation and brutal violent acts Europeans had committed *outside* their continent. Again, it comes with no surprise that the 'universal' response to violence – the UDHR – was pervasively coded according to Western ideals, principles, and notions of the 'human' which Europeans have definitely been inattentive of in their encounters with the racialised Other in the colonies (Césaire 2000).

Therefore, we argue that the promotion of harm conventions regulating harm, albeit portrayed as indications of the global civilising process, could be alternatively interpreted as a sine qua non for the advance, or even creation, of other hierarchical structures. Milton Santos (2017), albeit not from an IR perspective, provides one example of such kind. He argues that one of the key aspects that explain the collapse of the age of European empires in the 20th century was the interference of rising powers with increasing technological capacity, such as the United States – an emerging political community placed outside of the European inner circle. In this context, the realisation that former colonies and protectorates would be potential importers of national products prompted an an outright rejection

of colonial empires. Accordingly, the colonising states sought to dismantle the socio-political conditions that sustained barriers for increasing international trade (Santos 2017). As a result, harm through appropriation and exploitation, which Linklater mentions in his work (2011a), has been condemned and regulated in conventions concerning the right of self-determination. However, the 'entrance' of new states in a global capitalist economy has reinforced indirect forms of capitalist exploitation, thereby increasing inequalities and strengthening hierarchical relations between 'core' and 'periphery' (Halliday 1999). Structural harm is thus reinforced in this context, insofar as the support for independence was not accompanied by international policies seeking to reduce the negative impacts of capitalist systemic and structural forces. Conclusively, truly emancipatory projects should also critically evaluate whether, how, and under what circumstances (allegedly) progressive harm conventions may pave the way to cement greater forms of domination of subordinate classes within international society.

Therefore, our second critique opens up a third problem, one concerning the extent to which ethical standards foreseen in existing harm conventions were indeed a result of universal engagement in Habermasian communicative frameworks. Edward Keene (2002) provides interesting comments in this regard. He argues that in the 20th century, especially after World War II, tolerance towards different forms of human life has become the benchmark of the 'new' world order. However, despite the discourse in defence of self-determination and independence which became commonplace in the language of international organisations, newly-independent political communities had also been constrained to adapt to certain pre-existing norms and rules underpinning the Western form of international order. One such criterion refers to the substance of the political form – bounded, independent states –, as independence was contingent on the maintenance of pre-existing 'rules of the game'. Therefore, independent political communities, while formally recognised as 'equals,' were not free enough to develop their particular mode of political organisation. In fact, to maintain its status in the society of states, they had to perform roles of 'modern states' despite existing cultural and normative differences among distinct political units (Keene 2002).

Stephen Gill's (1995) ideas can add to the understanding of the hierarchical dimension 'ordering' the international realm. He observes that, in the 20th century, especially after World War II, the structural configuration of forces pointed to the need to internationalise the state and capital. National forms of production and economic management were gradually replaced by 'international' ways of political and economic administration. Unsurprisingly, this internationalisation of modes of production and capital privileged the interests of a bourgeois class interested in reinforcing the structure of the capitalist economy, promoting international mass consumption, and diffusing neoliberal forms of everyday life. In this sense, by placing together the arguments of Keene and Gill, the freedom of newly-independent states was contingent on compliance with the form and substance of modern political communities (Keene 2002). Likewise, the substance attached to the form was pervasively neoliberal and therefore reproduced global inequalities instead of global emancipation (Gill 1995). Beyond the imposition of the form, post-colonial political

communities also had to succumb to the neoliberal substance imposed by the transnational bourgeois class, which evidenced, once again, the role power asymmetries have played in processes of decolonisation.

The examples discussed above demonstrate the Janus-faced dimension of some harm conventions, which nevertheless raises two central inconsistencies to Linklater's earlier engagement with critical epistemologies. The first is that conventions supporting self-determination through the reproduction of modern conceptions of statecraft naturalise the modern state as *the* only form of political organisation. This is at odds with the very proposal of CT of unveiling the power hierarchies resulting from the conventional conception of the state. The second inconsistency is that power asymmetries and the 'imposition' of specific modes of political community contrast with the Habermasian idea of unconstrained dialogue. In that sense, Linklater's uncritical assessment of this dimension of harm regulations seems to be at odds with his earlier proposition regarding the potential of dialogic communities in overcoming transnational, structural inequalities. Thus, although one might interpret harm conventions on this subject as exclusively emancipatory, there are also alternative pathways for interpretation that are absent from Linklater's main framework. Considering the critical nature of his early scholarship, that is unfortunate.

Conclusions

In these last pages, we sought to understand Andrew Linklater's theoretical corpus in light of his engagements with both Critical Theory and the English School. After a comprehensive reading of most of his works, our findings are rather interesting and provide useful contributions to scholars who wish to connect with this ethical agenda of IR. By comparing CT and the ES, we suggested similarities that often go unnoticed. While less overtly normative than Critical Theory, the English School nevertheless possess a robust framework for dealing with the possibilities of progress in international society, which goes hand in hand with the Eliasian Sociology of the civilising process and with Linklater's considerations on the restriction of violence and cosmopolitan harm conventions. However, by not considering power relations and hierarchies in much depth, ES scholars risk contributing to the perpetuation of traditional narratives and exclusions even when they seek to contradict them, as we saw in the case of Linklater's later works. Resorting to Critical Theory could greatly improve their discussions without being necessarily incompatible with their epistemology. If one wishes to engage with Linklater's conceptions of harm, it would be 'profitable' to perhaps return to his earlier critical scholarship, so that these hierarchical dimensions are not lost among his account of the global civilising process.

That said, Linklater has supported normative claims that are very necessary for critical thinking, yet there are other critical possibilities left aside in his theorisation on global harm. One way to move Linklater's agenda forward depends on a critical return by resorting to theorists of the Frankfurt School. This move would allow Linklater and his followers to better understand the conditions under which harm conventions can truly contribute to global emancipation. Otherwise, non-critical inquiry in this regard would create blind

spots in which scholars engaging with his perspective on global harm would not be able to interpret harm conventions also as forms that advance the interests of actors occupying privileged hierarchical positions within international society. We suggest precisely this in our analysis of the context in which self-determination and human rights became central in the international realm. We demonstrate that, albeit contributing to violence restriction, the universalisation of self-determination and human rights reinforced hierarchies inasmuch as it had served the purpose of established and rising powers at that historical juncture. A complementary way forward would be the mobilisation of practical ways in which structures responsible for marginalising groups could be indeed surpassed through cosmopolitan harm conventions. This critical evaluation could thus favour practical and feasible ways to achieve emancipation that are indeed universal. Thus, the claims we have mobilised here do not seek to turn down Linklater's efforts of understanding global ethics as a form of ensuring emancipation in the future. Rather, by engaging critically with his current studies on global harm, we sought to provide alternatives to expand his situated knowledge hereafter.

Notes

1   He also published a 'spin-off' book on this theme which, while not part of the main argument on harm conventions, nevertheless addresses Eliasian sociology through an English School framework (Linklater 2020).

2   This commitment is clear from the start, as it can be observed in Bull's work (1966).

3   His critical project did not come through without due contestation. For a critical analysis of Linklater's account, see Walker (1999).

4   See Donnelly (2003), Douzinas (2000) and Hunt (2007) for a more detailed account of the history of human rights.

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Retomando o pensamento crítico: Uma crítica às contribuições teóricas de Andrew Linklater para as Relações Internacionais

Resumo: Inspirado na Teoria Social Crítica da Escola de Frankfurt, Andrew Linklater dedicou parte de sua carreira a formular a teorização de uma agenda de pesquisa crítica e emancipatória para as Relações Internacionais. Entretanto, sua recente pesquisa sobre processos de restrição da violência na sociedade internacional, influenciada principalmente pela Escola Inglesa e pela Sociologia Eliasiana, afastou Linklater de um envolvimento explícito com epistemologias e abordagens teóricas críticas. Embora haja uma possibilidade de diálogo estreito entre estas vertentes teóricas, argumentamos que Linklater não articulou estas abordagens tanto quanto poderia ter feito. Portanto, fazemos uma avaliação de seu trabalho para discutir suas inconsistências epistemológicas e teóricas. Com base nisso, fornecemos uma forma de criar pontes entre a agenda crítica inicial de Linklater e suas mais recentes análises sobre processos de restrição da violência e regulação de danos globais no âmbito internacional. Argumentamos que ao se concentrar em múltiplos processos globais que contribuíram para a restrição da violência, Linklater não considerou as particularidades, armadilhas e efeitos colaterais de processos supostamente benéficos de restrição da violência, o que resultou em uma perda de potencial crítico de seu trabalho. Assim, este artigo demonstra como Linklater se beneficiaria de uma retomada à sua agenda crítica inicial para abordar as limitações de seu programa de estudos sobre danos globais.

Palavras-chave: Andrew Linklater; Teoria Crítica; Escola Inglesa; Sociologia Eliasiana; cidadania; comunidades políticas; danos globais.