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'Civilization' and its subalterns

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Abstract

This article reviews Andrew Linklater's *Violence and Civilization in the Western States-Systems*. Focusing upon the book's explanation of the 'European civilizing process' in the modern era, it suggests that the account is limited by 'civilizational isolationism' and 'metrocentric diffusion'. These analytic operations serve to minimise the agency and contributions of non-Western, colonial, and postcolonial actors to the global civilizing process. The occlusion of such agency and contributions, however, are not specific to this work, but reflect broader limitations in historical sociology writ large.

Keywords

Civilizations; Norbert Elias; Historical International Relations; Historical Sociology; Empire; Harm Conventions

Andrew Linklater's *Violence and Civilization in the Western States-Systems* is a masterful work. Offering us a comprehensive view of 'civilization' and 'self-restraint' in international systems, stretching from the Hellenic city-states to our modern world-system, the breadth is staggering. This is a *tour de force* of historical sociology that will rightly be taught and read by scholars and students for years to come. And yet, like so much of the best historical sociology, from Max Weber to Michael Mann to Immanuel Wallerstein, its omissions are as glaring as its erudition, and they emerge from certain analytic tendencies in the work that are not specific to it but rather reflect historical sociology's extent limitations more broadly. These tendencies and limitations are seen in the sections of the work that relate to the modern era, and they warrant further attention. Since this review is meant to be a friendly critique rather than just laudation, I devote most of my space to them. They are twofold: 'civilizational isolationism' and 'metrocentric diffusion'.

The task

To start, the larger project of Linklater's book should be kept in mind. As I see it, the project is twofold. The first task is to systematically compare standards of civilization across Western state-systems, examine the connections between ideas about civility between peoples within states and between them, and thereby sketch the overall trajectory of ideas about civilization, restraint, and harm as they pertain to peoples and states. 'Civilization, their relationship with harm conventions that embody general understandings about civilized behaviour, and their impact on the prevalent ideas about the permissible and the forbidden within and between state-organized societies belong to one overall pattern of social and political development', Linklater declares, and so his goal to uncover this pattern.[1]

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[1] Andrew Linklater, *Violence and Civilization in the Western States-Systems* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), p. xii.

Ultimately, Linklater finds significant differences. Unlike ancient systems, for instance, the modern state-system shows a greater willingness to 'tame the great powers', producing 'unprecedented global social standards of self-restraint'.[2] The modern state-system has also experienced an expansion of international society, thereby 'weakening pernicious contrasts between the "civilized" and the "barbaric" that blocked the development of images of an international society of nominal equals in the earlier Western states-systems.'[3] Additionally, the modern system has seen the development of cosmopolitan harm conventions and various novel measures to reduce harm. These and other developments together constitute the 'European civilizing process' that has transformed the relationships between violence and civilization in world politics.[4]

More than sketching these differences, Linklater's other goal is also to explain them; to account for *why* the modern state-system differs from ancient systems. Here the answers are multiple, involving broad developments across centuries. One is the establishment in modern state-systems of relatively long periods of political stability that were lacking in Hellenic and Italian city-state systems. Such stability has enabled rulers and citizens to direct attention to civility in international relations, just as much as they might only focus upon civility in domestic space. Another factor is increasing interdependence and the relative balance of social forces in the modern system. Through globalisation and associated processes, humanity has undergone 'a major new phase of social and economic integration which, though not immune from reversal, created additional pressures and incentives to develop global standards of self-restraint'.[5]

So how to assess this extensive work that covers most if not all of Western human history? The comparative part of this project is not something with which I will quibble. I do not have the breadth of knowledge to question Linklater's claims about the differences and similarities between ancient and modern systems and their respective notions of civilization, restraint, and harm. Linklater's erudition here is likely unmatchable. Rather than this aspect of the project, I am more interested in the text's characterisation of the modern state-system and its development over time, and will accordingly focus upon those swaths of the work. It is in those swaths in particular where I find analytic tendencies that obscure rather than illuminate. They are *civilizational isolationism* and *metrocentric diffusionism*, and their danger lies in serving to minimise, if not entirely occlude, the contributions and agency of non-Western subaltern populations while overemphasising the contributions and agency of European metropolitans.

Civilizational isolationism and diffusionism

By 'civilizational isolationism', I refer to the analytic move that differentiates human societies into distinct cultures or societal systems that each amount to their own 'civilization'. Isolationism is a relevant description because, in this sort of schema, these civilizations are more or less separated or isolated from each other, even though they may have certain points of contact. In turn, by 'metrocentric diffusionism', I mean the related presumption that one of these 'civilizations' – in this case the Christian West centred initially in Europe – grows and develops on its own to then encompass the world, spreading its purportedly unique traditions, beliefs, norms, and values along the way. European civilization spreads to everyone else.

[2] Ibid., p. 441.
[3] Ibid., p. 444.
[4] Ibid., p. 456.
[5] Ibid., p. 466.

In short, both civilizational isolationism and diffusionism amount to civilizational analysis in sociology – a theoretical approach and area of study manifested in, for example, the macrosociology of Eisenstadt, among others (and also critiqued by Arif Dirlik and later, Gurminder Bhambra).[6] Civilizational isolationism also diffusionism also reach back to the earliest sociological thinkers. 'Marx, Weber, and Durkheim assumed', summarises Steven Seidman, 'that a civilizational divide between the Occident and the Orient was at the foundation of world history'. And they each presumed that 'the Occident revealed a pattern of development and progress culminating in the modern era'.[7]

Linklater's *Violence and Civilization in the Western States-Systems* operates from the same sorts of assumptions. For example, throughout the text, Linklater explores the thought of major Western thinkers, excavating their key ideas regarding civilization, restraint, harm, cosmopolitanism and the 'we-I balance'. The work here seems to be to trace out a distinct intellectual tradition. Links are drawn among the diverse thinkers, continuities and discontinuities are revealed, origins are located. This analysis thereby presents the image of a relatively isolated conversation over centuries. Linklater refers to the Renaissance humanists such as Erasmus, anti-slave writers like William Fox or the Spanish theologian Tomas de Mercado, the *Federalist Papers* and Kant and others of the Enlightenment. Lines then drawn among them and to institutions or ideas like international trusteeship, international criminal prosecutions, sovereignty, human rights, cosmopolitanism, and humanitarianism. All of these ideas and institutions are seen to have emerged within the cultural tradition of the 'West', developing within the 'Western state-system'. They are part and parcel of 'the European civilizing process' that has taken over all of 'international society'.[8] Evinced in all of this, therefore, is the notion of a distinct 'European' or 'Western' civilization: an autonomous system of states that develops on its own and then encompasses the entire world. And presumably, there is an outside to this civilization, consisting of various actors underneath it or adjacent to it, including other distinct civilizations bearing their own characteristics, values, and cultures – including ideas about 'civilization' itself. Indeed, Linklater refers precisely to these other cultural formations when he writes:

> The expansion of international society is testimony to considerable success in constructing principles that bridge substantial political and cultural differences. The societies in question – not only European societies but also China, Japan and the Ottoman Empire – made significant advances in freeing themselves from the 'hegemonial conceptions of international society' in which they placed themselves at the centre of a 'civilized' core and regarded others as 'social inferiors' that should submit to their 'standard of civilization'.[9]

We see here not only the notion of different societies or intersocial systems with 'substantial political and cultural differences', but also the sense of diffusionism: international society, which originates in the Western system, eventually came to encompass everyone in it. This notion pervades the work: the values of the European state-system have spread throughout the world. The 'global civilizing

[6] S. N. Eisenstadt, 'Cultural orientations, institutional entrepreneurs, and social change: Comparative analysis of traditional civilizations', *American Journal of Sociology*, 85:4 (1980), pp. 840–69; Gurminder Bhambra, *Rethinking Modernity: Postcolonialism and the Sociological Imagination* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Arif Dirlik, 'Global modernity? Modernity in an age of global capitalism', *European Journal of Social Theory*, 6:3 (2003), pp. 275–92.

[7] Steven Seidman, 'The colonial unconscious of classical sociology', *Political Power and Social Theory*, 24 (2013), p. 46

[8] Linklater, *Violence and Civilization*, pp. 189, 464.

[9] Ibid., p. 464.

process', Linklater declares, is 'Western-driven'.[10] In Linklater's story, the mechanism of such diffusion was probably imperialism. Linklater rightly notes: 'Expansionist territorial states, and strategic and economic rivalries that came to be conducted on a worldwide scale, forced all peoples into a single stream of world history with European civilization at its core.'[11] But whether through imperialism or postimperial globalisation, the story told is clearly one where the civilizing standards of 'Europe' (or 'the West') have spread to create our current interstate system. Even if those values and standards have not always been consistently applied, they ostensibly originated in the West and then colonised the world. 'The point', Linklater explains in discussing this diffusion, 'is not that non-European peoples have become more "civilized" in some normative sense but that they became entangled in a global civilizing process *that originated in Europe*'.[12] Europe remains the center.

Occluding the Other(s)

So what, exactly, is the problem with civilizational isolationism and diffusionism? One problem is that while Linklater admits that there are other societal systems or 'civilizations' besides the Western state-system, such as those in Asia, the work does not discuss them in any sustained manner. My admittedly rough count shows no more than nine references to China, ten to Japan, and even less to the Ottoman Empire. This elision is unfortunate. These were monumental and important societies in modern world history; it was not until the nineteenth century that Europe even began to overtake them, as George Lawson and Barry Buzan have recently discussed.[13] Yet Linklater excludes them. Jack Goody's critique of Norbert Elias's *History of Manners* is applicable here:

> why disregard what happened in other societies such as China when one is dealing with 'civilizations'...? There two the development of manners, the use of intermediaries (chopsticks) between food and mouth, the complicated rituals of greeting and of bodily cleanliness, of court constraint as contrasted with peasant directness...all these present parallels to Europe at the time of the Renaissance that should have attracted his attention and led to geographical (cross-cultural) analyses rather than to one confined to Europe.[14]

Linklater is not dealing with manners, of course. He is dealing with matters of violence and harm between societies. But the overarching point is pertinent: when writing about the modern state-system, why are China, Japan, or the Ottomans left out of the picture?

Linklater is surely aware of this occlusion. After all, *Violence and Civilization in the Western States Systems* is meant to be only about 'the Western state systems': hence its title. And Linklater acknowledges the criticisms of Elias, which claim that Elias 'ignored the influence of non-European cultures'. But if Linklater is aware of the occlusion, his account is not troubled by it. While the lack of sustained attention to non-Western systems 'raises profound questions for the future development of the process-sociological explanation of the civilizing process', there is no 'space to consider them here'.[15]

But is this Eurocentric focus and occlusion justified? One answer is 'yes', on the grounds that the modern European empires did rule the world. Because Europe did so, it is easy to assume that only

[10] Ibid., p. 463.
[11] Ibid., p. 441.
[12] Ibid., p. 442, emphasis added.
[13] Barry Buzan and George Lawson, *The Global Transformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).
[14] Jack Goody, *The Theft of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 173.
[15] Linklater, *Violence and Civilization*, p. 227.

the European system has birthed our present world; and so only it is worth of sustained investigation. This, in fact, is a common justification in macro-historical sociology for why the study of European or Western societies should take precedence, and why other societies or 'civilizations' can be relegated to the analytic waiting room. In Wallerstein's early world-systems analysis, for instance, the 'European world-system' is the one that eventually takes over the entire globe, and so it is only natural to focus on it.[16] Similarly, Michael Mann's *The Sources of Social Power* directs most of its attention to European developments because Europe has been at the 'leading edges' of power.[17] Is not history written by the victors?

Yet such justifications only make sense if we assume civilizational isolationism and diffusionism. To say that there were distinct civilizations or state-systems, that one of them became dominant, and therefore that it suffices to analyse the one that did become dominant is to assume that the Western state-system has developed endogenously; that its pristine cultural formation has been untouched by its interactions with others outside or beneath it. In other words, the Eurocentric focus is only justified if one assumes Eurocentric isolationism and diffusionism: Eurocentrism is built upon Eurocentrism. But did European diplomats, travellers, and writers learn nothing from contemplating interstate principles in relation to what they learned about or seen in Chinese, Ottoman, or Japanese courts? Linklater points to Elias's claim that the French absolutist court became a 'model of civility' for others to follow.[18] But did the 'West' learn absolutely nothing about statecraft or civility from interacting, over centuries and at multiple registers (economic, political, cultural), with these Other societies that all ostensibly developed in isolation from one another? Was the 'European civilizing process', in short, *only* 'European'?

The objection here is not that Linklater lacks a comprehensive comparative sociology of the sort that Max Weber might countenance. It is not, in other words, that Linklater fails to systematically compare an 'Eastern' civilizing process with a 'Western' one. It is rather that we gain no sense of *possible relations or cross-fertilisations* between them, and, instead, Linklater's analysis assumes that there were no significant relations.[19] Is this a tenable assumption? We know that modern industrialism, for example, did not just originate in Europe and then spread outward, but rather that European industrialism was always-already enmeshed in relations with those analytically relegated by Immanuel Wallerstein to 'the outside' of the system.[20] We also know, from John M. Hobson, that 'Western civilization' did not develop autonomously from 'Eastern' influences, but rather that the two systems were integrated, and that the former was dependent upon the latter.[21] Furthermore, we know that even the very notion of modern state sovereignty did not happen internally, 'within' Europe, but rather through complex interactions with colonised peoples and places.[22]

[16] Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System Ii: Mercantilism and the Consolidation of the European World-Economy, 1600–1750* (Boston: Academic Press, Inc., 1980).

[17] Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power, Volume I: A History of Power from the Beginning to AD 1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012 [orig. pub. 1986]), pp. 1–3. See also Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power Volume 4: Globalizations, 1945–2011* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

[18] Linklater, *Violence and Civilization*, p. 218.

[19] Bhambra, *Rethinking Modernity*, pp. 56–7; Julian Go, *Postcolonial Thought and Social Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 109–10.

[20] On this point, see Julian Go, 'For a postcolonial sociology', *Theory & Society*, 42:1 (2013), pp. 25–55.

[21] John M. Hobson, *The Eastern Origins of Western Civilisation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

[22] Jordan Branch, '"Colonial reflection" and territoriality: the peripheral origins of sovereign statehood', *European Journal of International Relations*, 18:2 (2012), pp. 277–97.

In brief, what Linklater's otherwise global analysis does not tell us is whether the 'European civilizing process' was similarly influenced. And without that answer, Laurent Dubois's critique might readily be summoned here: 'It has long been the belief of modern men that the history of Europe covers the essential history of civilization, with unimportant exceptions; that the progress of the white [Europeans] has been along the one natural, normal path to the highest possible human culture.'[23]

Occluding the subaltern

We can register the same critique not only about the occlusion of Chinese or Ottoman 'civilization' but also the role played by weaker, subaltern societies and groups; that is, those who were not considered fully autonomous parts of the system, such as colonised peoples or colonial societies. This is an important issue, because Linklater claims that an important component of the European civilizing process was a shift in the treatment of subject peoples; that is, 'the dismantling of the barriers between the "civilized" members of international society and the "barbarian" peoples who were incorporated within the European empires'.[24] The emerging sense that so-called inferior races or peoples could no longer be treated without some sort of restraint has been part and parcel of the European civilizing process: Europeans 'ended imperial cruelties, if not colonialism itself', and 'Europeans began to regard empire with feelings of collective shame rather than national pride'.[25] These passages show that, unlike some other works in historical sociology, Linklater rightfully incorporates empire and colonialism into the analysis.

But how and why did such monumental shifts in the relations with colonised subjects emerge? Linklater places great emphasis upon movements within the metropoles themselves. He highlights the role played by abolitionists, for instance, and how their tradition extended up to the idea of international trusteeships. But more broadly, he locates the shift in the agency and interests of the rising bourgeoisie:

> The increasing power capabilities of the bourgeoisie in relation to the traditional aristocracy led to the growing importance of universal and egalitarian moral sensibilities. The latter were used, as in the case of abolitionism, to forge an interwoven class and national identity that opposed forms of exploitation and suffering that had not caused widespread outrage or led to the clamour for reform in the earlier Western states-systems ... Universalistic and egalitarian principles were the bridge between shifting power balances within 'civilized' societies and public demands for new conceptions of the permissible and the forbidden in imperial encounters. Disgust with the 'savagery' of colonial wars was one manifestation of the attempt to tame the colonists that extended the earlier process of 'taming the warriors'. Such an approach explains how such notions as 'the sacred trust of civilization' emerged as a link between the civilizing process and new prohibitions of harm in European international society. Therein lies one of the main explanations of core differences between the ancient and the modern states-systems.[26]

Linklater here intimates that the bourgeoisie were the 'carriers', in Weber's term, for the new civilizing ideology and, surely, reformers and cosmopolitans emerging from or connected to the bourgeoisie played important roles in envisioning and promoting new ideas about how weaker

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[23] As quoted in Hobson, *The Eastern Origins of Western Civilisation*, p. 11.
[24] Linklater, *Violence and Civilization*, p. 466.
[25] Ibid., pp. 463–4.
[26] Ibid., pp. 266–7.

peoples should be treated. But the role that colonised peoples themselves may have played is overlooked and at best underappreciated. Colonised peoples enter the story told by Linklater, but the crucial developments occur among Western actors *about* those peoples rather than *from* them. While the abolition movement is discussed, for example, there is no mention of the Haitian revolution, which was the first to universalise the Rights of Man to include non-whites (*not* the French revolution). The Haitian revolution in many ways even enabled the French Revolution. It was only because of the slave revolt in Haiti that France was later forced to abolish slavery in 1794 and also to acknowledge (however temporarily) the new independent nation.[27] Was this *not* part of the larger transformation of which Linklater speaks? Or what about, more generally, the insistence by enslaved peoples that they be treated differently, not least through their multiple revolts? C. L. R. James once remarked that the 'only place where Negroes did not revolt is in the pages of capitalist historians'.[28] But we do not see any slave revolts in the pages of Linklater's text either. Did not the bourgeoisie come to see the immorality as well as the economic futility of slavery at least partly because slaves asserted their humanity against the system that purportedly 'civilized' them?

The agency of colonised and postcolonial peoples has been crucial for creating our existing world order, including all of the values that the English School so cherishes. The demise of colonialism as a viable political form and the subsequent emergence of the principle of self-determination in the twentieth century did not come about because of Europe or the United States. It was pushed and promoted by anticolonial movements that forced the metropolitan countries to shift their strategies.[29] The emergence and proliferation of international human rights ideas was not due the benevolence of France or England but from colonised and postcolonial peoples. 'By 1962, as the UN human rights project floundered … Human rights were coming in from the South.'[30] While Western metropoles were refusing to institute their pronounced principles of civilization, anticolonialists and human rights advocates in the colonial and postcolonial world were putting them into practice.

Classic diffusion stories would insist that principles such as national self-determination or human rights originated from the West and that colonised and postcolonial peoples simply copied the original; passive receptors of the West's civilization. But such a claim overestimates the agency of Europe while undervaluing that of the Rest. It problematically presumes, for instance, that human rights were Europe's to spread in the first place. In fact, as Steven Jensen shows, while the human rights story 'has too readily been understood as a story of Western values … what happened in the 1960s was that the states of Jamaica, Ghana, the Philippines and Liberia and others gave a master class in international human rights diplomacy to both the Eastern and the Western actors embroiled in the Cold War. They were at the vanguard of universality.'[31] This is just one example of how colonised and postcolonial peoples did not passively adopt the ideals and values that Europe presumably offered them; that, instead, they creatively and forcefully advanced them. As Frederick Cooper puts it: 'The antislavery movement, the anticolonial movement, and the antiapartheid

[27] Laurent Dubois, *A Colony of Citizens: Revolution and Slave Emancipation in the French Caribbean, 1787–1804* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

[28] C. L. R. James, *C. L. R. James and Revolutionary Marxism: Selected Writings of C. L. R. James, 1939–1949* (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press International, 1994), p. 77.

[29] Julian Go, *Patterns of Empire: The British and American Empires, 1688–Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 147–58.

[30] Steven Jensen, *The Making of International Human Rights: The 1960s, Decolonization, and the Reconstruction of Global Values* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), p. 7.

[31] Jensen, *The Making of International Human Rights*, p. 277.

movement … were not simply entrapped in a framework of European beliefs; they profoundly changed what Europeans thought they believed.'[32]

There are moments in the work where Linklater offers glimpses of agreement. He notes, for example, that the 'social impact of the conviction that slavery and the slave trade were not just "barbaric" rather than "civilized", but "barbarizing" rather than "civilizing", was strengthened by slave testimonials by Cugoano and Equiano in Britain', and 'by Frederick Douglass, Nat Turner and others in the United States'.[33] Later, Linklater declares that the reduction in the 'social gradient between the former colonial and colonized peoples as well as between rulers and ruled' was shaped by 'anti-colonial struggles'. These were 'integral parts' of the civilizing process, he asserts.[34] Still, we get little sense besides these passing references to their contributions to the civilizing process. If these actors were as central as Linklater claims, one might expect to read more about them. Does not a discussion of Gandhi and how his non-violent movement resonated around the world warrant some attention? Or Martin Luther King Jr? Or even Franz Fanon's substantial critiques of colonialism and Western humanism's hypocrisy in its claims to 'civilization'?

This is not to suggest that Linklater assumes a 'great man' model of history, where these subaltern actors play a leading role in creating the entire state-system. The point is that Linklater *does* devote attention to various Western thinkers. And across vast swaths of the work, extending over four hundred pages and amidst references to everyone from Kant to Callières, we only get an inkling of the agency of non-Western or subaltern peoples – one or two passages that acknowledge such agency but do not integrate it into the account. While Linklater in a few spots declares that his analysis is not one of a standard Western-centric diffusion model, there is unfortunately little in his analysis that suggests otherwise. And so, to draw from Jensen, we have yet to fully 'acknowledge the ways that the Global South civilized the West'.[35]

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And yet, as I have intimated already, the occlusion of subaltern agency is not unique to *Violence and Civilization in the Western States-Systems*. Linklater's book is part of a wider tradition in historical sociology, one that includes not only Norbert Elias but also Max Weber and, more recently, Michael Mann. All of these works explore broad trends and developments in international systems. All of them express the best in the field. Yet, in all of them we find the same analytic tendencies and limitations as found in *Violence and Civilization in the Western States-Systems*. All of them presume civilizational isolationism; and so while they all gesture to a world and to actors outside of the presumed center (modern Europe), they nonetheless end up reducing them to passive receptors of Western modernity.[36]

In Linklater's work, this is especially ironic. Linklater draws upon Norbert Elias and Elias's processual figurational sociology is meant to analyse 'networks of interdependent

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[32] Frederick Cooper, 'Postcolonial studies and the study of history', in Ania Loomba, Suvir Kaul, Matti Bunzl, Antoinette Burton, and Jed Esty (eds), *Postcolonial Studies and Beyond* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), pp. 401–22 (p. 413).

[33] Linklater, *Violence and Civilization*, p. 257.

[34] Ibid., p. 445.

[35] Jensen, *The Making of International Human Rights*, p. 279.

[36] Julian Go, 'A global-historical sociology of power: On Mann's concluding volumes to *the Sources of Social Power*' [Review Essay], *International Affairs*, 89:6 (2013), pp. 1469–77.

human beings'.[37] This seminal conceptualisation of social relations would seem to be especially useful for non-Eurocentric histories. It appears supple and open enough to capture the agency of *all* actors in figurational networks, whether those in the 'West', outside the West, or those subject to the West's imperial power. Unfortunately, the promise contained in Elias's concept was not fully realised by Elias, nor it is realised in the treatise offered by Linklater here. Despite the other multiple virtues of *Violence and Civilization in the Western States-Systems*, it does not transcend the limitations of the Weberian sociological tradition it inherits.

Might future work by Linklater or others make good on the promise? One should hope so. Surely an analysis of violence and civilization in the modern world-system that overcomes the limitations of civilizational analysis and diffusionism would be a more proper application of the relational thinking inherent to Elias's figurational sociology. It would therefore offer a notable advance towards a more relational IR that has been called for in various sectors but which has been less often realised in scholarly analytic practice and thus offers a proper *global* historical sociology.[38] But more so, in turn, an analysis of violence and civilization in the modern world-system that overcomes the limitations of civilizational analysis and diffusionism would matter for the same reason that Linklater's book matters. At stake is nothing less than our understanding of how our modern state-system actually developed, as opposed to our comparably impoverished understandings that evidently cannot help but misread history as something that only European powers have. Linklater's book opens up the path towards reaching such an understanding, but it requires further scholarly labor to fulfill the promise.

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[37] Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 1968), p. 261.
[38] Patrick Thaddeus Jackson and Daniel Nexon, 'Relations before states: Substance, process and the study of world politics', *European Journal of International Relations*, 5:6 (1999), pp. 291–332.