The Harm Principle and Recognition Theory: On the Complementarity between Linklater, Honneth and the Project of Emancipation

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Abstract: This paper explores potential points of synthesis between two leading theorists in Critical Theory and Critical International Relations Theory, Axel Honneth and Andrew Linklater. Whereas Linklater's recent work on the harm principle has turned away from the critical social theory of the Frankfurt School in favour of Norbert Elias and process sociology, the paper observes a fundamental complementarity between harm and the precepts of recognition theory that can bridge these otherwise disparate approaches to emancipation. The paper begins with a brief overview of Linklater's emancipatory vision before examining his recent turn to the harm principle and Eliasian process sociology. It is argued that Honneth's work, particularly the ideas of mutual recognition and the diagnosis of social pathologies, clearly resonant with Linklater's defence of ethical universalism and can help further the emancipatory project of Critical International Relations Theory. In particular, Honneth's intersubjective concept of autonomy is argued to provide a normative and empirical standard for emancipation premised on the historically progressive expansion of attitudes of recognition, born out of social struggles, toward the ideal institutionalisation of mutual recognition in world politics.

Keywords: harm; recognition; critical theory; emancipation; process sociology; Honneth; Linklater.

Introduction

This paper brings together two seemingly disparate themes in the project of emancipation associated with the Frankfurt School: the harm principle

and recognition theory. It explores these ideas as a potential point of synthesis between the work of Axel Honneth and Andrew Linklater as a complementary research agenda for the future direction of Critical Theory in world politics. While there have been two dominant trends in the Second and Third Generations of the Frankfurt School, the former led by Jürgen Habermas's theory of communicative action, the latter by Axel Honneth's refinement of Hegel's recognition theoretic framework, it is only the former that has had a substantial influence on the emancipatory vision of Linklater and Critical International Relations Theory. Yet Honneth's work, particularly the ideas of mutual recognition and the diagnosis of social pathologies, clearly resonant with Linklater's defence of ethical universalism and the expansion of moral community. Moreover, the precepts of recognition theory can help illuminate, at both psychological and sociological levels, some of the socio-historical processes that remain assumed but unspecified in Norbert Elias's process sociology that have been adopted in Linklater's study of the harm principle. In particular, Honneth's intersubjective concept of autonomy premised on the historically progressive expansion of processes of recognition through social struggle complements Linklater's concern with harm and provides a normative and empirical justification for the ideal institutionalisation of mutual recognition, and thus respect of the harm principle, in world politics.

This article begins with an overview of Linklater's contribution to Critical International Relations Theory before engaging with the harm principle and Elias's processes sociology. It is contended that what is surprising in Linklater's concerted focus on the reduction of harm in world politics, and his faithful reliance on Elias's anthropological history as the basis for these claims, is how little these reflections have taken into account the work of Honneth who is argued to offer complementary insights into this research agenda. The difficulty in sustaining this argument is that whereas Linklater makes little reference to Honneth or recognition theory, Honneth also makes scant reference to the field of International Relations.[1] Nevertheless, where there is analytical overlap between the two theorists relates to process sociology and it is by detailing the specific points of

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1. Honneth discusses International Relations explicitly only in two papers. See A. Honneth, "Is Universalism a Moral Trap? The Presuppositions and Limits of a Politics of Human Rights", in J. Bohman and M. Lutz-Bachmann, *Perpetual Peace: Essays on Kant's Cosmopolitan Ideal* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997), Chapter 5; A. Honneth, "Recognition between States: On the Moral Substrate of International Relations", in T. Lindemann and E. Ringmar (eds), *The International Politics of Recognition* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2012), 25–38. This latter paper is not discussed at length because it is focused on state-to-state processes of recognition that are not the concern of this article.

synthesis and departure regarding this field that reveals the existence of a unique connection on the issue of human emancipation from which a joint research project can be advanced between Linklater and Honneth. The last part of the paper then engages with the question of how Honneth's work can advance the project of emancipation in Critical International Relations Theory. It reveals how Honneth's development of Hegel's recognition theoretic approach are not only foundational to any concept of harm but are broadly supportive of Linklater's express ideal of emancipation through the transformation of political community. Here, Honneth's intersubjective concept of autonomy is argued to provide a normative and empirical standard for emancipation premised on the historically progressive expansion of attitudes of recognition born out of social struggle that can further the emancipatory project of Critical International Relations Theory.

A brief overview of Linklater's move to the harm principle

Marx and Kant, with their respective visions of a universal association and expansive moral community, have remained the "two great luminaries"[2] for Linklater. By deliberately meshing these interests with the dialectical methods of the Frankfurt School, Linklater has been able to build upon the rich legacy of Critical Theory to examine the actual, potential, and latent contradictions in world politics that he hopes may give rise to a cosmopolitan society in which there is a "higher level of autonomy".[3] With this imperative of the ethical transformation of world politics firmly in view, his earlier work has been called a "ground clearing exercise" helping to establish a philosophical defense of ethical universalism that could offer the justification for the formation of cosmopolitan political community.[4] Linklater's work has been marked by a consistency of focus regarding human emancipation through the moral progress of humanity conceived of as a dual process involving the end of any moral distinction between citizens and outsiders, and, the implementation of principles that

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2. A. Linklater, "Citizenship, Community and Harm in World Politics", in S. Brincat, L. Lima and J. Nunes, *Critical Theory in International Relations and Security Studies: Interviews and Reflections* (London: Routledge, 2011), (forthcoming), 8; A. Linklater, *Men and Citizens in the Theory of International Relations* (London: Macmillan, 1982), 205.

3. A. Linklater, *Beyond Realism and Marxism: Critical Theory and International Relations* (London: Macmillan Press, London, 1990), 22.

4. See M. Hoffman, "Restructuring, reconstruction, reinscription, rearticulation: four voices in critical international theory", *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 20, no. 2 (1991), 173; M. Griffiths, *Fifty Key Thinkers in International Relations* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 138–43.

treat citizens and non-citizens as moral equals.[5] Linklater has looked to the possibility for the development of post-sovereign and dialogic forms of cosmopolitan community that may embody the Habermasian ideal of discourse ethics and, more recently, to a concerted focus on the harm principle through Elias's process sociology. Linklater's unique contribution is his examination of the impact of global processes on emancipation through a "commitment to thinking about the human species and the planet in its entirety" that offers a significant advance on the critical social theory of the early Frankfurt School.[6] Yet because inquiries into methodology, philosophy of the social sciences, and communicative action have outpaced empirical analysis in Critical Theory, Linklater has since focused his energies on developing a sociology of International Relations rather than pursuing the ethico-philosophical concerns that animated his earlier research. It is argued that in turning to these sociological concerns Linklater did not need to relinquish his focus on the Frankfurt School in favour of Eliasian process sociology but could have located in Honneth's thought the basis for a complementary critical sociology.

Whereas the Habermasian approach to Critical Theory concerned with communicative action and the promotion of discourse ethics has had a large influence in International Relations theory – particularly within the context of the Fourth Debate, the normative turn and the critique of positivism in International Relations theory – the Honnethian current is as yet to have been picked up by the disciplinary mainstream in equal regard.[7] This should not be seen as insinuating that Honneth's critical social theory has been entirely absent[8] but rather to highlight that under the shadow

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5. A. Linklater, "A Postscript on Habermas and Foucault", in *Men and Citizens in the Theory of International Politics*, Second Edition (London: Macmillan, 1990), 208. For an example of his consistency, see his course syllabus at Monash University in the early 1990s which showed, even at this time, the outline of his entire research project that he has continued to the present day. I thank Richard Shapcott for a discussion on this point. See A. Linklater, "Course Outline" (Monash University, December 1991).

6. Linklater, *Beyond Realism and Marxism*, 8–10; A. Linklater, "Citizenship and Sovereignty in the Post-Westphalian State", (Paper presented at Faculty of Arts, Deakin University, Toorak, 6 April 1995), 6; A. Linklater, "New Directions in International Relations Theory", in *New Horizons in Politics, Essays with an Australian Focus*, H.V. Emy and A. Linklater (eds) (Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1990), 107.

7. For a review of Habermas's reception in International Relations see T. Diez and J. Steans, "A useful dialogue? Habermas and International Relations", *Review of International Studies* 31, no. 1 (2005), 127–40. For a strong endorsement of Habermas's importance in International Relations see J. Haacke, "Theory and Praxis in International Relations: Habermas, Self-Reflection, Rational Argumentation", *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 25 no. 2 (1996), 255–89.

8. For examples see Jürgen Haacke, "The Frankfurt School and International Relations" on the

cast by Habermas's legacy that Honneth's work has been unnecessarily dimmed. This lack of engagement with recognition theory is particularly pronounced in the work Linklater who has instead adapted Habermas's communicative theory in his unique conception of the "triple transformation" and development of dialogic communities in world politics. With such a unique research interest that had drawn heavily from the Frankfurt School previously, it is curious that Linklater has since chosen to disengage from the more recent developments in its Third Generation in favour of the process sociology of Norbert Elias. This change in theoretical direction seems anomalous because while Habermas and Honneth have both resisted the "Frankfurt School" label in order to not give the impression of a continuous research program,[9] they nevertheless share a number of methodological and normative commitments concerning the possibilities for an emancipatory politics in the conditions of modernity. Haacke has rightly questioned any supposed "break" between Habermas and Honneth, for as Honneth has himself repeatedly claimed, his project builds explicitly on the Habermasian framework by offering a refinement of Habermas's concept of communicative action. At the same time, Habermas's discourse ethics presupposes the structure of mutual recognition and his defence of individual rights is compatible with Honneth's emphasis on collective struggles for recognition. Above all, each share the vision of an emancipatory politics tended toward safeguarding undistorted forms of intersubjectivity that is based, at least in part, on universalistic principles that clearly resonate with Linklater's own defence of ethical universalism.

I must forego a detailed engagement with Linklater's work to instead concentrate on the theme of his current project, The Problem of Harm in World Politics, and its intersection with recognition theory. This three-volume series is principally concerned with the reduction of harm done to others in the international community that demonstrates the capacity for collective social learning and the potential for moral development in world politics. Yet there is marked degree of continuity throughout these shifts, despite the seeming separation in subject matter. For Linklater, it was those passages in Marx's The German Ideology that had emphasised the

centrality of recognition", *Review of International Studies* 31 no. 1 (2005), 181–94; V. Heins, "Realising Honneth: redistribution, recognition, and global justice", *Journal of Global Ethics* 4 no. 2 (2005), 141–53; T. Lindemann, E. Ringmar (eds), *The International Politics of Recognition The International Politics of Recognition* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2012); M. Weber, "Hegel Beyond the State? Left-Hegelian Thought and Global Politics" (presented at the ISA Annual Convention, Chicago, 2007).

9. J. Anderson, "The 'Third Generation' of the Frankfurt School", *Intellectual History Newsletter* 22 (2000), 2, 13.

importance of widening the scope of "emotional identification to embrace the whole species" that led to his examination of the emancipatory potential in the harm principle. It was only the discovery of Elias's process sociology however, particularly his thesis in The Germans that the civilising process placed restraints on people so that they did not demean, injure and in other ways harm each other, that offered a sociological method for Linklater to compare civilising processes in various forms of world political organisation.[10] Weil's findings that emotional responses to the suffering of others were automatic or hardwired into the human psyche and Nussbaum's observation that our biology and common circumstances had led to shared "emotional repertoires", invited Linklater to consider the certain ethical potentialities that have long been immanent within our "universal vocabulary of moral emotions".[11]

For Linklater, cultures throughout history have agreed to certain duties toward others as shown in attempts to protect the vulnerable in war and the modern consensus against slavery and apartheid. For him, such commitments rest "on nothing other than a sense of common humanity" because even though groups are "wildly different" (Rorty) there exists shared moral obligations against harm.[12] This was evidence of the human capacity or species-power to acquire sympathies that could be extended to distant strangers. Despite the importance of the harm principle for the potential development of moral relations in our external dealings, Linklater has found that no strand of social and political inquiry had yet been devoted to the investigation of harm.[13] The question however, is not necessarily the importance of the harm principle in the expansion of moral relations but rather whether in making harm the central concern of Critical International Relations Theory we are witnessing a retreat from Linklater's more positive accounts of emancipation – his vision of a future "global society … determined by freely chosen moral principles which further the autonomy

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10. A. Linklater, "Citizenship, Community and Harm in World Politics", 1–2, 6, 16 citing Norbert Elias, *The Germans: Power Struggles and the Development of Habitus in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Cambridge: Polity Press 1996), 31.

11. A. Linklater, "Towards a sociology of global morals with an 'emancipatory intent'", *Review of International Studies* 21, no. 1 (2007), 138, citing S. Weil, *The Need for Roots: Prelude to a Declaration of Duties Towards Mankind* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1952) and M. Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 169.

12. A. Linklater, *The Transformation of Political Community* (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 1998), 87.

13. Linklater, "Towards a sociology of global morals with an 'emancipatory intent'", 140; Linklater, "Citizenship, Community and Harm in World Politics", 16.

of all human beings"[14] – to one concerned with the far more limited, negative, aspiration for the reduction of harm?

On the harm principle

It is telling that Linklater begins with an account of Jainism that highlights the difficulties in positioning the harm principle as the focal point for a critical theory of International Relations.[15] Jain monks reputedly wear masks, strain their drinking water, and gently sweep the ground in front of them as they walk so as to 'do no harm' to any living thing – a practice whose devotion, while endearing, reveals a certain fanaticism underlying such an attempts to actualise the harm principle in all of one's actions. The compulsion behind the harm principle leads inexorably toward an absolutist or puritanical conception that would culminate in a form of pathological behaviourism focused on "self-restraint" and "self-limitation".[16] The task would be exacting and ongoing, involving the highest form of self-reflexivity at all times – and yet one could always be considered doing harm to someone or something as dependent on one's relative perspective. Consider, for instance, the millions of bacterial cells living and dying on the body of the Jain monk, or in their drinking water, and the veritable impossibility of actively upholding the harm principle accordingly. The example may be an exaggerated one but it does reveal that the principle of harm raises an impossible and therefore myopic standard for human ethics.[17]

In distinction to the radicalism of the Jainists, the mediate position regarding the harm principle has been long held by liberal theory – with Mills being the exemplar, though he was unable to balance the duty of harm with liberty successfully.[18] As is well-known, the Millsian conception maintains that one can do whatever one wishes so long as it does not harm the pursuit of freedom of others and yet, as Linklater has noted, the question then becomes balancing between the right to liberty and the

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14. Linklater, *The Transformation of Political Community*, 22.
15. See A. Linklater, "Introduction", *The Problem of Harm in World Politics: Theoretical Investigations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), vol. I, 1–39.
16. Linklater, "Citizenship, Community and Harm in World Politics", 18.
17. Such acts then are largely symbolic, more concerned with fulfilling one's intentionality rather than real outcomes of not harming other living things. Such behaviour reflects the catharsis or deflection of a particular moral neurosis through ritualistic acts of sweeping, straining and so on.
18. See J. S. Mill, *Autobiography*, (London: Penguin, 1990), Part V.

duty to avoid harming others.[19] The perennial problem facing the liberal tradition is that the harm principle suffers great difficulty in the realm of applied ethics. This is compounded by the complexities of the real world problems in International Relations that, like all ethical dilemmas, are open to context and cultural interpretation – does the capitalist harm the worker by employing them and thus paying for their livelihood and yet at the same time extracting their surplus labour? Is the village fisherman who takes small quantities of a protected species equally culpable as the industrialised fishing fleet for harming disappearing fish-stocks and the duties owed to future generations? The liberal interpretation of the harm principle cannot guide us in these questions and, in the end, merely offers a rhetorical means for justifying its own individualist conception of liberty precisely because it ties its understanding of harm to its a priori doctrine of voluntarism.

Linklater is fully conscious of these limitations regarding the harm principle. For him, it is fundamental to not "claim too much" of the harm principle so that it somehow covers "the whole of morality", nor "so little" that it means "simply refraining from various forms of violent and non-violent harm".[20] He links this qualification with an historical assessment of the standing of the harm principle taken from Elias that suggests that in terms of the moral learning of the species, humanity may still be in its prehistory, that "modern humans are still at the beginning of what may be a long collective learning process".[21] This highlights the crucial synthesis of Kantian, Marxian, Habermasian, and now Eliasian themes in Linklater's thought that brings to the fore two issues related to the harm principle in world history. Firstly, the moral under-development of humanity in regards to the standard of the harm principle and, secondly, the human capacity for moral learning that suggests the possibility for the realisa-tion of the harm principle in global relations sometime in the future. This has clear synergies with the Kantian mantra of the potential for moral progress.[22] How the harm principle has been reflected throughout human history has thereby replaced Linklater's earlier heuristic of the "scale of

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19. See J. S. Mill, *On Liberty*, (Library of Liberal Arts Edition, London: Macmillan, 1956), 13; Linklater, "Citizenship, Community and Harm in World Politics", 18–19.
20. Linklater, "Citizenship, Community and Harm in World Politics", 18.
21. Linklater, "Citizenship, Community and Harm in World Politics", 22; A. Linklater, "Intro-duction", *The Problem of Harm in World Politics*, vol. I, 18, 32.
22. See I. Kant, "The Contest of the Faculties: 'Is the Human Race Continually Improving?'", in Kant: Political Writings, H. S. Reiss(ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 177–91.

forms" borrowed from Collingwood[23] because it illustrates forms of collective learning located in the advancement of harm conventions in human history. As he writes, "[a]midst the differences [between peoples and states] there are certain shared vulnerabilities and common aversions to pain and suffering that can provide the basis for advances in learning how to live together more amicably". Most social systems recognise the contribution that the principle of harm has for the development of relations of co-existence, something that not only confirms an "overlapping global moral consensus on the virtues of a harm principle" already exists but which can be furthered in world politics.[24]

For Linklater, the themes of emancipation that had run through Critical Theory were now seen as being "carried forward" in Eliasian process sociology "without the partisanship" of its earlier Marxian and Frankfurt School forms, and with a more "comprehensive analysis of long-term patterns of change".[25] Linklater connected Fromm's contribution to psychoanalysis, Adorno's notion of injurability, and Horkheimer's philosophical reflections on suffering as foreshadowing the placement of vulnerability as central to emancipation. Here, it is the recognition not only of our own individual aversion to suffering but of our shared human vulnerabilities to such suffering that is believed to provide the impetus for moral development towards more amicable or civilised relations through the harm principle. Interesting then, is the absence of Honneth's work on the same topic, without which Linklater cannot account for the recognitive acts implicit within the civilising process and upon which the normative potential of the harm principle is fundamentally reliant. Without the mutual recognition of our shared ability to suffer or to be harmed, the harm principle remains an extraneous type of moralism rather than an ethical duty that is shared precisely because we recognise this unique capacity in all others. Arguably, it is only by combining Eliasian process sociology with Honneth's recognition theoretic that could offer the holistic account necessary to ground the philosophical, empirical and sociological of Linklater's project of emancipation.

But first let us examine how Linklater views the emancipatory potential of the harm principle. Linklater positions the harm principle within a possibilist dialectic. That is, he regards the potential for its expansion

23. A. Linklater, "Citizenship, Community and Harm in World Politics", 22, Footnote 43 citing R. G. Collingwood, *An Essay on Philosophical Method* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 54–60.

24. Linklater, "Citizenship, Community and Harm in World Politics", 22–23; Linklater, "Introduction", *The Problem of Harm in World Politics*, vol. I, 23–24, 34.

25. Linklater, "Citizenship, Community and Harm in World Politics", 6–7, 9.

alongside its potential for regression and notes that "the capacity to harm more and more people over greater distances in more and more destructive ways has run ahead of the capacity to curb that power". This is inline with Elias's own assessment that civilising and decivilising process develop in tandem.[26] Nevertheless, it is the optimistic side that Linklater wishes to emphasise and he insists that the negative obligation to not injure others has "radical implications".[27] Here, the negative obligations raised by the harm principle are said to not stand alone but imply some positive obligations – precisely what obligations and how far they extend is left undetermined by Linklater who refers the matter to future philosophical debate (his own next two volumes may address precisely these issues).[28] Linklater's reference to Feinberg's Harm to Others which argued that the obligation to avoid harm extended from the more obvious proscriptions as killing, assault etc., to the positive duty to rescue (when there is no serious risk to the rescuer), or Pogge's World Poverty and Human Rights that argued the negative obligation to avoid harm generated a positive responsibility to dismantle those "global coercive regimes" that disadvantaged the global poor, offer possible areas of development.[29] But it is precisely these very thorny questions that set the normative agenda that we can expect from the harm principle. On the one hand, if we are left only with negative obligations to "do no harm" we come from a tradition of 'Critical Theory' concerned with human emancipation to a liberal project concerned with mere (formal) civil protections. On the other, if we proceed to some (non-defined) positive obligations derived under an applied ethic of the harm principle then we are looking toward the advancement of a type of 'Critical Theory' with specific ethical content that can be developed, modified and publicly debated accordingly. It is unsatisfactory then to fall back on the observation that "an overlapping global moral consensus" on the harm principle exists in world politics because this replaces a Critical Theory concerned with the enhancement of historical processes of emancipation to one concerned with drawing a sociological history of the moral structures existent in world politics – a move in which the connection with an emancipatory politics diminishes accordingly.

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26. Linklater, "Introduction", *The Problem of Harm in World Politics*, vol. I, 18 and 32; Linklater, "Citizenship, Community and Harm in World Politics", 23–24.
27. A. Linklater, "Public Spheres and Civilizing Processes", *Theory, Culture and Society* 24 no. 4 (2007), 31–37.
28. inklater, "Citizenship, Community and Harm in World Politics", 17–18.
29. Linklater, "Citizenship, Community and Harm in World Politics", 17; J. Feinberg, *Harm to Others: The Moral Limits of the Criminal Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984); T. Pogge, *World Poverty and Human Rights*, Second Edition (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008).

Nevertheless, there are two ways in which the harm principle leads to an optimistic social theory of emancipation in Linklater's thought. The first is Habermas's notion of decentration which Linklater understands as the "standing back from one's own community" to look at how its behaviour seems to those "outsiders who are affected by it". This requires a high order of self-reflexivity in society, "a sense of unease about how exactly one's community should behave towards the wider world" that is considered necessary for the development of wider solidarities.[30] The second is Elias's concept of detachment which specifies the extent to which individual members can "see" their community from the "outside" and detach themselves from preconceived political positions. While this skill of detachment is recognised as something difficult to develop (and yet precisely how this complex social ability is achieved remains unspecified), it is considered integral to the moral development of societies and thus the entire weight of argument placed on the emancipatory potential inherent to the harm principle. Detachment is not strictly a moral behavioural trait however, but rather an anthropological or evolutionary development that Elias referred to as having "survival value" for the species. Detachment made it possible for societies to adapt to new circumstances, new relations and new civilisational encounters – such as those demanded by the high levels of 'globalised' interconnectedness in world politics today – in a reflexive way that meant that violent outbreaks in these engagements were less likely to occur.[31] The relation between socio-structural (sociogenetic) and psychological developments (psychogenetic) processes indicated that all societies possessed "civilising processes" in some form.[32] That is, for Elias all societies possessed civilising processes because all societies must train their young to follow relevant social norms and basic principles of social interaction in order to tame aggressive impulses necessary to protect all members of society from serious harm. The civilising process entailed the study of how the increasing interdependency of people led to new rules of etiquette/manners and to the development of other civil obligations so that expanding social relations could remain amicable and peaceful.[33]

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30. Linklater, *The Transformation of Political Community*, Chapter 3; Linklater, "Citizenship, Community and Harm in World Politics", 10.
31. Linklater, "Citizenship, Community and Harm in World Politics", 20, 13, 10–11; N. Elias, *Involvement and Detachment* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2007).
32. Linklater, "Introduction", *The Problem of Harm in World Politics*, vol. I, 30.
33. Linklater, "Citizenship, Community and Harm in World Politics"; 13, Elias, *The Germans*, 31; N. Elias, *The Civilizing Process: The History of Manners* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1969), vol. I; N. Elias, *The Civilizing Process: State Formation and Civilization* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1982), vol. II.

This process was also potentially developmental or cumulative. A key example was Elias's observation of the growing distaste for public and private acts of violence in fifteenth century Western Europe. This growing distaste continued, with obvious setbacks and reversals, toward the emergence of moral concerns regarding civilian suffering and the ill-treatment of prisoners of war that reflected a "lower acceptability of violence" as something now central to the modern civilising process. This raises the obvious questions of how far societies drawn closer together through modernity, interdependency and 'globalisation' now adapt to such changes by creating new normative frameworks attuned to "each others' interests and beliefs". The speculative point – and the promise of the harm principle for a politics of emancipation then – is whether a humanity divided by the state-system, threatened by nuclear weaponry and facing environmental collapse, but also a humanity possessing enhanced relations of interconnectedness through patterns of globalisation, had "better prospects than past international systems [for] solving the problems associated with the ambiguities of historical development by institutionalising cosmopolitan principles and practices".[34] This should not be mistaken as some linear ascent toward "civilisation", for Elias or Linklater have never claimed evidence of progress in international history. Linklater even admitted that "at times, there is no significant difference between his [Elias's] position and the neo-realist position that the same patterns of conflict and competition have been repeated endlessly over the millennia". The difference between Elias and the ideology of realpolitik however, is that Elias did not suggest that the set-backs and regressions evident in history are signs of a human incapacity for pacifying its social relations. Rather, his analysis presented a certain ambivalence in its interpretation of the civilising process, particularly in his comments on the most recent phase of globalisation. Here, it was posited only that the "lengthening chains of interconnectedness" made "more people more aware than ever before of distant suffering", and thus the possibility that the "scope of emotional identification might yet extend beyond co-nationals". Elias's thesis was decidedly not one in which globalisation issued forth toward some guaranteed end of increased cosmopolitan sociality, or some farcical liberal democratic peace and the "end of history", but neither did it lead to a self-replicating world of power politics or denigration to a war of all, against all. Rather, the pacification or "civilising" of world politics remained "an open question".[35] This confirmed Linklater's earlier gestures to the "dark-side of

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34. Linklater, "Introduction", *The Problem of Harm in World Politics*, vol. I, 27, 38 citing N. Elias, *Involvement and Detachment*, 67.

35. My emphasis added. Linklater, "Introduction", *The Problem of Harm in World Politics*, vol. I, 28.

modernity" – the extraordinary state powers for total warfare, genocide etc. – that paralleled Elias's assessment of the link between civilising processes and de-civilising processes that develop in tandem. Any radicalism within the harm principle is only a potentiality and Linklater conceded that the harm principle could not reconcile political differences regarding its interpretation or application so that, in the end, all that was concretely claimed was the historical existence of the harm principle in human relations, albeit one "still at an early phase of development".[36]

This brings in to clear view what is being lost in Linklater's turn away from the precepts of Critical Theory towards Eliasian process sociology. The limitation of Elias's work, and process sociology in general, is that it does not offer the methods to locate or recover the potentially progressive elements of the harm principle that is necessary to channel them to emancipatory ends. The process sociology of Elias is deliberately apolitical, as not only evidenced in the ambivalent way it views both the possibilities for progress and regression in civilisation but also because of deliberate vagaries in its normative vision. All we are left with in process sociology is a means to speculate on the question of the future direction of human sociality, or as Linklater expressed it; "whether the West's bequest to future generations will amount to little more than unprecedented levels of economic and technological interconnectedness – little more than global structural change without significant moral development", or possibly something more.[37] Elias's observation that balance of power systems represent the highest political structure to have evolved in response to the challenge of increased global interconnections, reveals the weakness in relying on his proscriptions for a 'critical' theory of International Relations. A re-statement of realist principles, tempered by the potential for moral progress, seems all that we can expect. For Linklater however, this is emancipatory because the "separate track-lines" of realism and utopianism can be brought together, whether the utopian element in International Relations (in the sense of Carr and Herz) can "actually be seen as essential for the preservation of the social system or for adapting it to deal with new challenges".[38] Yet Elias offers no form of immanent critique or dialectical analysis of this acute social, moral and political problem – something attributable to his concern with analysis over diagnosis and prognosis in sociology.[39] Without a focus on dialectical immanence such an approach

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36. Linklater, "Citizenship, Community and Harm in World Politics", 19–20.
37. Linklater, "Introduction", *The Problem of Harm in World Politics*, vol. I, 35–36.
38. Linklater, "Introduction", *The Problem of Harm in World Politics*, vol. I, 29; Linklater, "Citizenship, Community and Harm in World Politics", 13–14.
39. Linklater, "Citizenship, Community and Harm in World Politics", 20.

succumbs to the limitations inherent to any mere explanatory theory, limitations that are not present in the critical social theory of the Frankfurt School because of its emancipatory interest and its unique dialectical methodology. It is on these grounds that we can begin to trace out a complementary approach that is able to combine the strength of Elias's historical sociology, with, the emancipatory interest of Critical Theory.

Linklater has observed that the harm principle tends to offer only a "negative utopia", a future in which people are no longer subjected to various forms of violent and non-violent harm. This, he admits, is a long way from the "loftier goals" that Marx and others in the critical school have advocated and Elias's core ideal regarding the "pacification of social and political relations" represents a clear contraction of the emancipatory project. Nevertheless, Linklater believes Elias did have a clear normative position as evident in his hopes for a world in which people who violated human rights were regarded as either "criminal or insane".[40] In this way, Linklater has argued the harm principle is not a retreat from the emancipatory project of Critical Theory and suggests the possibility for more positive obligations to flow from the application of the harm principle. Moreover, Linklater has identified a number of parallels between Elias and Horkheimer located in their shared concern with overcoming human suffering, despite Elias's advocacy of "non-partisan inquiry".[41] Linklater has argued that Critical Theory and process sociology could be brought more closely together and yet the admission that this would require the rolling back of the more grand ideals of Critical Theory to a "utopia of limited aspirations" grounded in the "affirmation of ordinary life" leaves open the question of what exactly is being lost in the emancipatory project through this transition.[42] As shall be argued, there does not need to be any loss or retreat in the emancipatory aspirations of Critical International Relations Theory if a bridge can be formed between process sociology and the dialectical approach of the Frankfurt School.

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40. Linklater, "Citizenship, Community and Harm in World Politics", 20–21 citing N. Elias, *Involvement and Detachment*, 13. Some of the differences between Elias and both Marxism and the Frankfurt School are drawn out in N. Elias, "Address on Adorno: Respect and Critique", in N. Elias, *Essays III: On Sociology and the Humanities* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2009).
41. Linklater, "Introduction", *The Problem of Harm in World Politics*, vol. I, 33 and Linklater, "Public Spheres and Civilizing Processes", 31–37.
42. Linklater, "Citizenship, Community and Harm in World Politics", 21–22, citing A. Linklater, "Towards a sociology of global morals with an 'emancipatory intent'", 135–50 and C. Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

Honneth and Joas: A critique of Elias's process sociology

Honneth (with Hans Joas) has offered a useful critique of Elias's process sociology that helps bridge the 'civilising process' thesis with Critical Theory and the project of emancipation. For Honneth and Joas, Elias's historical anthropology moved beyond traditional history to examine how human civilisation had changed human nature within its "organically set bounds" and, through an ethnological method, brought out the "historical determinacy and mutuality of human nature" through a "wealth of factual data" that indicated the possibilities for socio-cultural progress. The "originality" of Elias's work was that he was less concerned with the ideological content of social systems than with the scrutiny of their corporeality and immediate interactions, not to mention his "extraordinarily ingenious" use of sources in his history of manners.[43] Elias's *The Civilising Process* was seen to reflect some of the concerns of the later generations of the Frankfurt School, particularly the rejection of the philosophy of consciousness and the shared interrogation of the limits and the "costs" of the dominant rationality in civilisation. Yet the problem was that whereas the Frankfurt School made the connection between its emancipatory interest and the object of its study openly, Elias sought to understand what civilisation "really" amounted to in an "emphatically value-free manner".[44] Yet, as Horkheimer and Cox have argued, any supposed value-free inquiry is both impossible and undesirable.[45] All approaches should be cognisant of their embedded value positions in order to invite debate, critique and reflexivity.[46] What Elias achieved in his masterful historical narrative of human sociality came at the expense of clarity in the normative implications of this story, something he never outlined substantively. In distinction, the emancipatory interest of Critical Theory not only recognises the unity of reflection and interest in knowledge but is intended to generate knowledge that enhances autonomy and responsibility through the human capacity to be self-reflective and self-determining.[47]

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43. A. Honneth, *Hans Joas, Social Action and Human Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 118–19, 122.
44. N. Elias, *The Civilising Process* (New York: Pantheon, 1982), vol. II, xvii.
45. M. Horkheimer, "Traditional and Critical Theory", *Critical Theory: Selected Essays* (New York, Herder & Herder, 1972); R. W. Cox, "Social forces, states and world orders: beyond international relations theory", *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 10, no. 2 (1981), 128.
46. A. Honneth, *Hans Joas, Social Action and Human Nature*, 120–22.
47. D. Held, *Introduction to Critical Theory: From Horkheimer to Habermas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 255; J. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972), 210–11.

Alongside this lack of self-reflexivity and specificity in his normative commitments, Elias was also unclear in detailing the complex array of psychological and socialisation parameters underlying the civilising process. The thrust of Elias's thesis was deeply suggestive of the necessity for external compulsions, forces and authorities as being intrinsic to the civilising process. The establishment of increasing emotional control and self-discipline on the part of individuals was understood as the "product of processes of growing social intertwining" whose "genesis of a strong, internalised agency of behavioural control" was "inseparable" from the "emergence of the modern state and its monopoly of violence and taxation".[48] The question of what changes in social structure and external compulsions set in motion this "psychological mechanism" of social control over individual "affects and behaviour" was seen, in the second volume of *The Civilising Process*, to take place through two important "regularities" in the transition to civilisation: competition and monopolisation. Through these two developmental logics, the civilising process was described by Elias as an historical movement in conformity with a linear model that "finally" resulted in "the formation of more stable monopolies of physical force and taxation with highly specialised administrations possible, i.e. the formation of states…" Through the state:

> "…the life of the individual gradually gains greater 'security'. But this rise in the division of functions also brings more and more people, larger and larger population areas, into dependence on one another; it requires and instils greater restraint in the individual, more exact control of his affects and conduct; it demands a stricter regulation of drives and – from a particular stage on – more even self-restraint".[49]

Here, we see a definite pre-commitment to quasi-Freudian concepts regarding the restraint of internal drives combined with cognitive behavioural controls. These foundational assumptions lead Elias to assert that the state meant "greater security" for all persons which, for many minority groups and colonial peoples, is a highly questionable interpretation of the formation and history of the state. Through this assumption, Elias's work led to an unwitting commitment to methodological nationalism that circumscribed any implications for cosmopolitan community that may have come from it, with the result that his theory came to defend the institution of the

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48. Honneth, *Hans Joas, Social Action and Human Nature*, 121–22.
49. Honneth, *Hans Joas, Social Action and Human Nature*, 13 quoting Elias, *Civilising Process,* vol. II, 310ff.

state as something integral to the civilising process against all alternative forms of moral and discursive communities.

In *The Civilising Process*, Elias did not distinguish competition from cooperation, nor did he explore historical examples of the latter that could lead to increased solidarity without the need for repressive external controls. Rather, competition appeared as a "law" that could not be eliminated but only ever lead to "ever greater units of domination". Civilisation and domination are seen to develop in tandem, so that any gains in sociality comes at the cost of repressive social control. This reveals a unique structuralist tendency in Elias's work that severs human agents from the historical process, a "mechanistic" tendency revealed in Elias's assumption of the "diffusion" of practices from upper classes to the lower classes and colonised peoples as a downward, one-way process. In Elias's thought, the practices of these lower strata appear "outmoded and barbarous" and non-resistant to being "supplanted" by "civilising" processes from above. The internalisation of norms by individuals is depicted as the "quasi-automatic, compulsive guidance of behaviour" from external forces of "control and affect", with the outcome being the tyranny of structure over agency, the "separation of history from the consciously directed action of individuals, groups and classes" and the loss of any semblance of power and resistance by subordinate peoples.[50]

At the same time, Elias argued that in distinction to the modern period, pre-modern society was not "at all" characterised by unrestrained aggressiveness of its individual members. Yet for Honneth and Joas, this "uninhibitedness of aggression" did not have to be explained by the "lack of control of affect" (i.e. repressive external controls on aggressive behaviour) but was "due to the sharp demarcation between intrasocietal morality and the morality governing dealings with foreigners", particularly the corresponding permission of aggression on outsiders/outcasts. Honneth and Joas argued that the dialectic between permissive acts of aggression on outsiders remains the "fundamental stock" of social integration "even today" – an argument consistent with Linklater's findings in *Men and Citizens*. Yet without this distinction between legitimate and prohibited forms of violence in the pre-modern period, Elias leads his readers to believe there had been some linear decrease in "manifest aggression" overall. In distinction, Honneth and Joas – following George Herbet Mead – suggest that any decrease in societal aggression may have taken place through the integration of discursive clarification of intra-group conflicts in which the "friend-and-foe", or "insider-and-outsider", schema is seen as the dark-side

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50. Honneth,*Hans Joas, Social Action and Human Nature*, 126, 128.

of these processes. Elias's failure to take into account how discursive forms of decision-making may have contributed to the pacification of societal relations, both within local communities and in external relations between them, blocked the "outlook to a future civilisation with less self-restraint and less subjection to a central authority". Rather, in Elias's world, the state becomes the necessary subjugating central authority for any gains toward civilisation. Not only is the state analysed in its institutional form independently of any discursive developments within it but Elias's approach hides any possibility of self-determination with others or of "taking back the state" through discursive social organisation.[51]

The burden of proof for Elias's anthropological theory of the civilising process rests on the "internalisation of external constraints" by individual subjects and yet he explains "surprisingly little" about his socialisation theory. Elias's principle thesis is essentially Freudian in its suppositions and yet he never detailed precisely the relation between the civilising process and psychoanalysis, other than the vague notion of tracing the historical genesis of the super-ego and early concepts of behaviourism, specifically its notion of "conditioning". As we have seen, for Elias, it was through the "closeness" of individuals in society that led each to "inevitably forego following and fulfilling their drives" as societies would require the taming of aggressive impulses as necessary for social stability. Specifically, it was through social disciplinary training and fear under repressive social authorities that the child would begin to exhibit the desired social behaviour. As Elias wrote; "[w]ithout the lever of these men-made fears the young human animal would never become an adult deserving the name of a human being".[52] Yet Elias assumes the individual can shape the forces of their drives without the repressive consequences of this process, that is, the inhibitional energies and/or neurotic disorders that may result from such repressive conditions. Freud had stipulated that the social constraint of drives should be accompanied with rational justifications, without which they would appear mere authoritarian impositions. Yet Elias posited a "linear heightening of the necessity of repressive self-control" in which internalisation was the blind automatic mechanism of behavioural constraints "invested with fear" and not the internalisation of norms "arising from the recognition of their necessity or utility".[53] In distinction, Honneth's recognition theory has contended that behavioural-normative constrains must be interrogable by their participants and based on reasons

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51. Honneth, *Hans Joas, Social Action and Human Nature*, 127–29.
52. Elias, *The Civilising Process*, vol. II, 328.
53. Honnet, *Hans Joas, Social Action and Human Nature*, 125.

rather than mere authority. This perhaps accounts for why Elias found civilising processes to be always accompanied by decivilising processes, why civilisation was always "precarious" and "unfinished". As stated by Linklater, "[e]fforts to create civilised practices and habits usually generated their own dangers that create the possibility that the overall process could be thrown into reverse at any time".[54] These dangers are explainable by the dependency of the civilising process on forms of social repression that can themselves cause other forms of social harm – in this context, the Frankfurt School's analysis of the formation of the authoritarian personality and its culmination in the fascist German state provides a telling example.[55] The civilising of society is decidedly not "the result of a gaining of autonomy" and the question of the "features of a desirable future" are left completely unexplored.[56]

These problems are, in part, attributable to Elias's proximity to evolutionist theories, something Elias admitted when he described his understanding of history as explicitly Darwinian; history as "purposeless" but "explainable" progress. Yet they reveal just how "ambivalent" the civilising process is; how it is "situated" between "a liberation making possible self-determination" and "a self-restriction that is obviously necessary for safety in social living, but that is nevertheless repressive".[57] As we shall see in the next section, Honneth offers a way to overcome these problems by positing that the rational justification for enhancing ethical life and moral duties can take place through relations of mutual recognition rather than through the socially forced suppression of psychic drives, or obsolete Darwinian assumptions. Recognition provides a social and psychological basis for expanding human sociality without need for authoritarianism that taints Elias's account of the civilising process.

Recognition theory and emancipatory political change

While the previous section has revealed a number of limitations in Elias's process sociology, these various arguments should not be seen as a rejection of its primary thesis – that there has been some development in moral community and that there remains a unique human capacity for the possible

54. Linklater, "Introduction", *The Problem of Harm in World Politics*, vol. I, p. 25.
55. See T. W. Adorno, E. Frenkel-Brunswick, D. J. Levinson and R. Nevitt Sanford, *The Authoritarian Personality*. (New York, 1950).
56. Honneth, *Hans Joas, Social Action and Human Nature*, 126, citing N. Elias, Wolf Lepenies, Zwei Reden.
57. Honneth, *Hans Joas, Social Action and Human Nature*, 124.

expansion of sociality in the future. It is in illuminating these civilising processes and channelling them toward emancipatory ends that remains problematic from the perspective of Critical Theory. The central limitation of Elias's thesis revolves around its inability to disclose the psychological and sociological motivations that both generate and sustain the dynamic complexity of the 'civilising' process. If the pacification of social relations is taken as a normative goal it is unsatisfactory to accept Elias's ambiguous deferral to the potential for civilising and decivilising processes to development in tandem. The point rather, is to understand both tendencies in the hope of being able to encourage those that assist the emergence of a more civil world, and to arrest those dark force of modernity that seek to pull human sociality apart. In this final section I aim to redress some of these limitations identified in process sociology, by engaging with the theory of recognition. Here, Honneth's work is argued to provide a systematic explanatory and normative theoretic for not only the pacification of human relations in International Relations but the establishment of social conditions necessary for stable identity formation and the attainment of self-autonomy through mutual recognition.

There is an essential recognitive dimension to the harm principle that serves to bridge Linklater's work with Honneth's. One key limitation of the harm principle acknowledged by Linklater was that the anxiety over one's own welfare does not, of itself, guarantee the development of sympathies for others.[58] Without the necessary intersubjective reflexivity between human subjects, the harm principle remains bounded by the self requiring recognitive processes to enable movement to a higher form of pacific social relations, or what Elias would have termed "detachment". The human capacity for mutually intelligible concerns related to suffering and harm, and the awareness of one's moral responsibility for reducing the suffering and harm done to others, is the active moment of the harm principle and how it can translate into an applied ethic. That is, the recognition of our humanly shared aversion to suffering provides both the individual and social rationalisation for moral development toward civilisation, a process by which the reduction of suffering done to others is made a conscious aim of an individual or a society's responsibility and action. This requires a high degree of reflection not just on one's ability to inflict harm or duty to "do no harm" but the reciprocal recognition of this positive/negative potential in all others. The reduction of the suffering of others as an application of the harm principle is therefore fundamentally a post-facto recognitive act

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58. Linklater, "Towards a sociology of global morals with an 'emancipatory intent'", 139 citing A. Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 1982), 136–37.

and can therefore be discussed in direct relation to the precepts of recognition theory as developed philosophically in Hegel's famous Master/Slave dialectic and systematically in Honneth's recognition theoretic framework.

There is a discernible connection between recognition theory's concern with safeguarding individual autonomy and the harm principle's commitment to protecting against human vulnerabilities. Yet whereas the notion of harm has been typically restricted to the protection of negative liberties for the individual's exercise of will, recognition theory shows that we also need to account for the various threats to individual autonomy that occur through damage, distortions or pathologies in the social relations that support individual autonomy. Honneth and Anderson have developed this line of argument in reference to a critique of liberalism that revealed our dependence on relationships of care, respect and esteem and our shared vulnerability to their social deformation.[59] The identified three fields of vulnerability: (i) basic self-confidence can be violated by the social denigration of those kinds of relationships that foster trust; (ii) self-respect is vulnerable to social exclusion from those things that affirm our ability to possess and exercise rights and moral agency, and; (iii) our self-esteem is vulnerable to social denigration that restricts our ability to give affect to our will. Freedom then, requires a reduction in the harm done, or threats to, the supportive recognitional infrastructure in society.[60]

With this link between recognition and harm, we can begin to see how Honneth's work offers a corrective to the normative ambiguities and problematic Freudian assumptions underlying Elias's civilising thesis. Honneth situates The Struggle for Recognition in opposition to the atomistic philosophy of Hobbes and Machiavelli that emphasised the struggle of self-preservation, a social ontology that continues to dominate many of the theoretical approaches to International Relations theory. Instead of the "war of all, against all", relations of intersubjectivity between human subjects are placed as a precondition for individual identity formation and self-autonomy. Following the lead of Hegel's intersubjective theory, Honneth looked to the possibility of a genuine subjectivity through, and with, others – of "being with self in others" (bei sich Selbstsein im Anderen).[61] The philosophical grounding for this normatively charged

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59. See J. Anderson and A. Honneth, "Autonomy, Vulnerability, Recognition, and Justice", in J. Christman and J. Anderson (eds), *Autonomy and the Challenges to Liberalism: New Essays*, 127-49 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 129.

60. Anderson, Honneth, "Autonomy, Vulnerability, Recognition, and Justice", 132–37, 144.

61. R. B. Pippin, *The Persistence of Subjectivity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 120 and A. Honneth, *Suffering from Indeterminacy: An Attempt at a Reactualisation of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, Jack Ben-Levi (trans.) (Amsterdam: Van Gorcum, 2000), 7–17.

ideal is, of course, provided by Hegel's concept of the struggle for recognition development before the Phenomenology.[62] Honneth augments this speculative philosophy with empirical work in sociology and psychology (through George Herbert Mead, Donald Winnicott and others) to identify the modern intersubjective conditions necessary for the ideal conditions of mutual recognition through which individuals and groups can achieve stable formation of their individual identity and the expression of their self-autonomy.[63] Honneth's primary contention is that human freedom is fundamentally predicated on the intersubjective achievement of self-confidence, self-respect, and self-esteem that are "granted recognition by others whom one also recognises", that is, mutually.[64] In this schema, self-autonomy is revealed to be dependent on establishing relations of mutual recognition within primary relations of love and friendship, legally institutionalised rights related to dignity and respect, and in ethical life with the esteem of one's unique attributes in society. These ideal conditions are typically expressed as the triad of 'love, rights and solidarity', through the experience of which, the individual comes to recognise themselves – and all others – as having a certain status: as the bearer of needs, as a bearer of responsibility (and agency), and as a bearer of something unique, something of social value. Ultimately, these represent the pre-political conditions necessary for emancipation in Honneth's project.[65] At the ontological level – and why recognition is deemed to have a universally emancipatory character – is because all humans are said to hold recognition as a "vital human need",[66] something essential for the stable construction of personal identity and self-actualisation. The violation of our moral expectation to be recognised by others, and the perception of such injustices of disrespect or denigration,[67] subsequently provides both a sociological model and psychological motivation for social struggles towards the establishment of ideal processes of mutual recognition. At the nominal level, it is the indi-

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62. Honneth deliberately refers only to the intersubjective notion of recognition that Hegel developed in the Jena period, before the philosophy of consciousness and spirit came to dominate as presented in the Master/Slave dialectic. A. Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996), 60–63.

63. See, in particular, G. H. Mead, *Mind, Self, and Society from the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist*, C. W. Morris (ed.) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934); D. Winnicott, *The Maturational Processes and the Facilitating Environment: Studies in the Theory of Emotional Development* (London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1965).

64. Anderson, "Translator's Introduction", *The Struggle for Recognition*, xi–xii.

65. Anderson, Honneth, "Autonomy, Vulnerability, Recognition, and Justice", 144.

66. C. Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition", in A. Gutmann (ed.), *Multiculturalism and 'The Politics of Recognition'* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 26.

67. See Anderson, "Translator's Note", *The Struggle for Recognition*, viii.

vidual or group's moral sense of wrongful violation of a moral expectation for recognition that motivates social struggles not only within communities but also between states.[68]

The importance of recognition does not lay merely in the reduction of harm. Rather, it lies in the fact that struggle for the mutual recognition of identity can foster the development of "institutions that would guarantee freedom".[69] Here, the need of human subjects for recognition is regarded as the catalyst for social transformation rather than an opaque process that results from repressive social authorities and which can lead as much to civilising as de-civilisng tendencies. Recognition has fundamental implications for a radical re-ordering of socio-political life from existing pathological distortions in society toward the institutionalisation of ideal processes of mutual recognition. Recognition theory provides a way to distinguish systematically between forms of social interaction with regard to the level, type and mode of recognition embodied in them, including the very structures of world politics.[70] Quite simply, if recognition processes are distorted or restricted, the type of autonomy possible within such conditions shall be similarly distorted and restricted, thus requiring the sublation to overcome such antagonisms. The "moral injustice" of disrespect constitutes a form of harm to one's very identity and thereby the ability to exercise self-autonomy, and is said to occur whenever human subjects are "denied the recognition they deserve" and the concomitant moral feelings of "shame, anger or indignation".[71] By focusing on these patterns of disrespect and misrecognition, Honneth was able to identify an empirical phenomena from within "ordinary, lived experience" from which to promote struggles for mutual recognition and thereby ground a theory of emancipation.

In the context of Linklater's work, the dialectic of identity, struggle and social transformation in recognition offers a way to move beyond the moral principle of harm to one concerned with the empirical conditions necessary for successful identity formation and self-autonomy. That is, the notion of harm shifts from a purely negative conception to one where positive conditions can be articulated against the basic social infrastructure required for mutual recognition. This allows for the "disorders or deficits" in the social framework of recognition to be at the centre of critical diagnosis rather

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68. On recognition processes between states see Honneth, "Recognition between States: On the Moral Substrate of International Relations", 33.
69. Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, 5.
70. Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, 37–38, 59.
71. A. Honneth, "The Social Dynamics of Disrespect: On the Location of Critical Theory Today", in *Disrespect: The Normative Foundations of Critical Theory* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), 69–72.

than the ambiguous historical narrative of civilising and decivilising pro-cesses.[72] The moral claims of under-privileged groups and experiences of disrespect are not just the violation of "communicative rules" or rebellions against social authority but the violation of identity claims essential for selfhood and which result in struggles for mutual recognition.[73] Of course, such struggles may fail, or even be inarticulable by the victim group. Nev-ertheless, as an agent centered social process, it contradicts Elias's civilis-ing process as a hierarchical and structurally determined one in which the practices of the aristocratic classes were diffused to the lower rungs of the social ladder in ways that coerced them into following the dominant norms of social behaviour. Recognition theory locates social transforma-tion within the experiences of the dominated themselves, rather than in civilising processes that take place above them.

In recognition theory, persons are considered as both independent indi-viduals and communal beings and it is precisely within this tension between "communality and individuality" or between "socialisation and individu-ation", that the "dialectic of ethical recognition" lies. As Forst explains in reference to Mead, through the "generalised other" the self is constituted as a "me," as having a social existence; and as an "I" it reflects the social norms and conventions in a unique way and "strives to go beyond them".[74] This captures, in ways Elias's model does not, the push and pull between the individual and society, between the social repression of normative behav-iour and resistance of individuals and groups to it. Recognition opens the possibility for a dynamic analysis of social struggle that can better capture the emancipatory potential in the civilising process, whether related to the negative obligations of the harm principle, or to even more positive duties gestured at in the concept of emancipation. The expressions, struggles and even silences of persons and groups, are the resources that articulate the normative framework of society and indicate where such structures can, or are, being challenged toward enhanced recognition processes. As Deranty neatly summarises, the experiences of suffering and disrespect reveal the "discontent" within the existing order and the "normative ideal that could drive change". As a result, those who suffer from injustice and disrespect not only have a "privileged position" in epistemic terms but also from an

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72. Honneth, "The Social Dynamics of Disrespect: On the Location of Critical Theory Today", 74.

73. R. Foster, "Recognition and Resistance: Axel Honneth's Critical Social Theory", *Radical Philosophy*, 94:3 (1999), 7–9; Honneth, "The Social Dynamics of Disrespect: On the Location of Critical Theory Today", 69–74.

74. My emphasis added. R. Forst, *Contexts of Justice: Political Philosophy Beyond Liberalism and Communitarianism* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), 283.

emancipatory perspective.[75] As argued by Haacke, Honneth's recognition theory does far more than merely advocate for social struggles "to the point where all groups and individuals have equal opportunities to participate in the organization of the polity".[76] It is also more than a justification by which groups "can always revolt and should revolt as soon as they see themselves misunderstood and misrecognised" under the dominant paradigm in relation to love, rights and solidarity.[77] Rather, it gestures toward the realisation of the totality of social conditions wherein all forms of identity and individual freedom can be achieved with, and through, all others. As Honneth concluded in Redistribution or Recognition? "the reason we should be interested in establishing a just social order is that it is only under these conditions that subjects can attain the most undamaged possible self-relation, and thus individual autonomy".[78]

In this way, recognition provides a means of describing the "culturally independent conditions" that would allow subjects to experience undistorted self-realisation. These conditions are expansive – including both the local and global conditions necessary for human flourishing – by which a society can be considered "successful, ideal or 'healthy' if they allow individuals undistorted self-realisation".[79] Honneth's reframing of the recognition/disrespect nexus is able retain the substantive social critique of the earlier members of Critical Theory regarding the investigation of social contradictions whilst channeling them toward emancipatory ends.[80] Moreover, as argued by Roberts, it allows Honneth to link combating social pathologies whether they are situated in global centers or peripheries – a key benefit when examining the vast array of phenomena in world politics and their ability to harm others in the international community.[81] Here, Honneth makes an important link between harm and recognition that

75. J.-P. Deranty, "Injustice, Violence and Social Struggle: The Critical Potential of Axel Honneth's Theory of Recognition", *Journal of Social & Critical Theory* 5, no. 1 (2004), 304–307.
76. Haacke, "The Frankfurt School and International Relations: On the centrality of recognition", 186.
77. A. Honneth (interview with Gwynn Markle), "From Struggles for Recognition to a Plural Concept of Justice: An Interview with Axel Honneth", *Acta Sociologica* 47, no. 4 (2004), 388.
78. A. Honneth, "The Point of Recognition: A Rejoinder to the Rejoinder", in N. Fraser, A. Honneth, *Redistribution or Recognition? A Political-Philosophical Exchange* (London: Verso, 2003), 259.
79. My emphasis added. A. Honneth, "Pathologies of the Social: The Past and present of Social Philosophy", in *Disrespect*, 34–35, 36–37.
80. R. Foster, "Recognition and Resistance: Axel Honneth's Critical Social Theory", 11.
81. N. Roberts, "Recognition, Power and Agency: The Recent Contributions of Axel Honneth to Critical Theory", *Political Theory* 37, no. 2 (2009), 299.

can assist in re-attaching Linklater's research with a Critical International Relations Theory concerned with emancipation. As we have seen, because autonomy is regarded as a capacity that exists only in the context of social relations that can support it, freedom and autonomy can be "diminished or impaired" through damage done to social relations.[82] Yet it is precisely this understanding of harm – the impairment to individual autonomy by damaged relations of intersubjectivity – that remains largely unexplored within International Relations theory, and even Linklater's work. In distinction, for a Critical Theory based on recognition theory, "disrespect" constitutes the "systematic key" to comprehending patterns of social recognition that can generate justified demands on the way "subjects treat each other", particularly in combatting those that harm others.[83]

This potential is reflected in one of Honneth's few writings expressly dealing with world politics and the "globalisation of moral responsibility" through universal human rights. Following an explicitly Kantian model, Honneth observes a marked increase of the recognition of an "international responsibility" for persons suffering from harmful and life-threatening situations that can no longer be apportioned to geographical proximity. The similarities with Elias's thesis need no explication. Yet Honneth does not explain such developments in reference to the ambiguities of Elias's civilising process but rather by human collective moral learning through recognitive acts. For Honneth, a shared responsibility for the suffering of others is now evident in world politics, a process of "moralising international relations", that he finds is most likely to be "historically irreversible".[84] While one could argue that Honneth needs more sombre reflection on human rights institutions before seeing in them an unequivocal move to the "moralising" of International Relations, this argument parallels in no uncertain terms Elias's and Linklater's views regarding the long-term trends towards higher levels of human interconnectedness and the "widening scope of emotional identification".[85] The difference however, is that Honneth's work gives us reason for optimism and, more importantly, an identified source of immanent potential for emancipatory struggle towards conditions of self-actualisation through the expansion of moral community. Linklater has referred to the considerable "tests" of the human capacity for enlarging

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82. Anderson and Honneth, "Autonomy, Vulnerability, Recognition, and Justice", 128–129, and 127 quoting J. Nedelsky, "Reconceiving Autonomy: Sources, Thoughts and Possibilities", *Yale Journal of Law and Feminism* 1, no. 7 (1989), 25.
83. Honneth, "Preface", *Disrespect,* xii–xiii.
84. Honneth, "Is Universalism a Moral Trap? The Presuppositions and Limits of a Politics of Human Rights", 210–12.
85. Linklater, "Citizenship, Community and Harm in World Politics", 14–15.

the "circle of cooperation" and of the great difficulties involved in institu-
tionalisation of "cosmopolitan conventions that protect all humans from
pointless suffering". Yet for Linklater, these questions are deferred to a
greater engagement with world history to shed light on past achievements
for controlling violent and non-violent harm.[86] While his goal in engag-
ing the sociology of International Relations is intended to increase levels
of detachment – as consistent with the requirements of Elias's civilising
process – a critical politics that can assist in such detachment and which
could channel these developments to emancipatory ends is absent. Hon-
neth here offers an important corrective that would enable Critical Inter-
national Relations Theory to re-attach itself to an emancipatory politics
whilst pursuing important inquiries into the historical sociology of harm
in world politics.

Three examples can illustrate what recognition can help unravel in the
harm principle and the ways in which Honneth's work complements a
number of Linklater's concerns:

(i)   Firstly, in relation to love and basic self-confidence, the concept
        of bodily harm or violence that is of utmost concern in the work
        of Elias and Linklater constitutes a primary form of disrespect in
        Honneth's theory of recognition: the deprivation of one's ability to
        freely dispose of their own body. Harmful acts of rape and torture
        are regarded by Honneth as the most fundamental acts of per-
        sonal degradation that are destructive of ones practical relation-to-
        self. Coupled with a sense of shame is the loss of trust in oneself
        and the world, something that detrimentally affects the individ-
        ual's future dealings with other subjects and may lead to a defor-
        mation in the development of one's self-identity. The term "harm"
        however, is not confined to immediate affects on one's physical
        integrity but can be extended to include, secondly, the systematic
        denial of rights (moral self-respect), or thirdly, the degradation of
        the social value of individuals or groups (self-esteem) which, taken
        together, form the sources of motivation of social struggle towards
        the three fields of recognition; "love, rights and solidarity".[87]

(ii)   In terms of rights and self-respect, Linklater's *Men and Citizens*
        thesis concerned with expanding moral community through the
        participation of outsiders, can be understood as a process of which

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86. See A. Linklater, "Global Civilising processes and the ambiguities of human interconnected-
    ness", *European Journal of International Relations* 16 no. 2 (2010): 155–78.
87. Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, 132–34.

the circle of rights and laws essential to the moral self-respect of persons/groups can be expanded across state borders. Here, recognition is fundamental to the institutionalisation of the rights of distant others to participate in decisions that affect them, a concern that has been an essential component of Linklater's emancipatory vision.[88] It is only through a form of mutual recognition that the unequal moral significance of proximate and distant suffering – the privilege given to the suffering of the one's survival group over all others – can be overcome. This would also be inclusive of Linklater's concerns with the development of cosmopolitan harm conventions and his vision of the "triple transformation" of political community that both expands the rights of citizenship to an ever-widening circle and augments the content of what it means to be a bearer of such rights in international society.

(iii)   In terms of solidarity and self-esteem, by overcoming existing form of the degradation of different cultures and peoples can lead to pacification of International Relations by increasing relations of solidarity in the world community. Here, solidarity offers a means to understand the processes by which increased social interactions may lead to civility, processes that remained otherwise vague in Elias's work. For Honneth, self-esteem involves a broad sense of what unique qualities or characteristics make an individual or group esteemed members of society. Yet, what is considered of social value is contingent on a range of historical and cultural factors: it is a fluid condition that subjects and groups struggle over.[89] Honneth uses the term "solidarity" to express the cultural conditions in which self-esteem becomes possible, a notion which suggests the ideal conditions for the expression of self-esteem are those forms of solidarity that are open, pluralistic and participatory, those that provide the conditions through which a broad array of qualities can be recognised as valuable. In this way, recognition theory offers a means to understand how the pacification of International Relations may take place via struggles to overcome the various forms of harm associated with degradation and attacks on individual or group integrity or different ways of life within international society.

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88. See A. Linklater "Dialogic Politics and the civilising process", *Review of International Studies* 31 no. 1 (2005): 141–54.

89. Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, 126ff.

Conclusion

This paper has illustrated the complementarity between Linklater's concern with the harm principle, Eliasian process sociology, and the precepts of Honneth's recognition theory. It was shown that while Elias's work offers a means to chart the civilising process historically, it lacks a means to understand how the harm principle could lead to more amicable social relations in world politics without relying on the authoritarian and repressive structures of the state. Moreover, because process sociology is explicitly 'non-partisan' it fails to offer any means for deriving an emancipatory politics from the harm principle. In distinction, Honneth illustrates how recognition claims are both a motivating force for subjects in struggles over cessation of forms of harm to individual identity-formation and, at the same time, are the normative benchmark to evaluate the legitimacy of social norms and structures that are fundamental to self-actualisation. It is not about describing forms of social repression that have led to "civilised" relations as within Elias's account, but rather the augmentation of autonomy through the establishment of ideal formative conditions for self-identity throughout society. Misrecognition and disrespect do not simply warrant therapeutic intervention "but also political action" because patterns of disrespect are consolidated in social practices that can only be remedied through social struggle.[90] Consequently, through recognition theory, focus shifts from descriptive historical narrative to historical praxis, from civility as a 'process' to history as struggles in the way socially acting subjects advance claims for recognition that may lead to the "progressive expansion" of such processes of recognition over time.[91] In all of these ways, Honneth offers a re-engagement with emancipatory politics that is otherwise lost in Elias's process sociology and Linklater's formulation of the harm principle. If, for Linklater, the task of Critical International Relations Theory remains to look for "evidence of cultural contradictions… [and] to reveal how these contradictions can be overcome by a more coherent account of the moral relations between the self, society and the other",[92] then recognition theory can assist with these endeavours as a complementary and allied research project. This suggests that recognition theory can help further the emancipatory politics of Critical International Relations Theory because it gestures towards an ideal vision of a global recognitive sphere capable of affirming all aspects of human difference and individuality and which can be expanded to include all human-beings.

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90. J. Connolly, "Recognition and the Politics of Disclosure", (2010) (unpublished), 5.
91. M. Weber, "Hegel Beyond the State?", (2011) (forthcoming), 18.
92. A. Linklater, "A Postscript on Habermas and Foucault", in *Men and Citizens*, 222–23.

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