

# DEMOCRACY AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY: WESTERN PRACTICES OF GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

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*The paper argues that democracy in its 'liberal anti-pluralist' form represents an innovative form of the historical standard of 'civilization'. In fact, democracy has been the unifying feature of all possible successors to the historical standard of 'civilization.' Democracy is recognized as the most suitable form of governance and essential for the full protection of human rights. These compatibilities, along with freedom, stability, accountability, openness, social justice, international peace, and stronger international law make democracy the focal point for the current standard of 'civilization.' In providing a set of socio-political institutions, democracy becomes the blueprint and mechanism through which Western values and interests are transmitted. Membership conditionality represents one of the most effective ways through which such transmission takes place.*

## KEYWORDS

Democracy

## BIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

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## Introduction

It is widely accepted today that we live in an era that necessitates the introduction of new policies and practices that stand in sharp contrast to those of the past. As a result, there have been calls for the design and implementation of policies to enforce ‘civilized’ attitudes in global politics. It is also widely believed that democracy and its associated practices should provide the bases on which contemporary global politics should be based. Consequently, various global and regional organizations now require prospective member states to fulfill certain political and economic requirements – associated with liberal democracy - prior to entering the organization, as well as requiring that they introduce practices related to ‘good governance’.

Although we certainly live in a new era, the question is whether these policies and practices associated with ‘conditionality’ and ‘good governance’ are, in fact, new. Using the historical analytical framework provided by the English School of International Relations, this paper seeks to illustrate that similar practices, as well as the discourses associated with them, were used in the past and that these practices have always been connected to the efforts of Western states to build and manage a liberal international order.

## ‘Joining the Club’

English School literature argues that the contemporary global international society, which is culturally heterogeneous, includes a number of more culturally homogeneous regional international societies. In addition, it has been suggested that at the core of today’s international society one finds the states of the West, which share a common culture and outlook.<sup>1</sup> This implies that the contemporary international society is divided between a core and a periphery. In the Westphalian international order, the core of the international society initially included the European states but after World War II the core came to include the states of the West in general. These states have historically acted as the custodians of the international society.<sup>2</sup>

Because of the core-periphery division and the role that Western states play within international society, the states of the periphery are in constant need of confirmation by the core members of international society that constitute legitimate members of the latter. Moreover, the contemporary international order has been

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<sup>1</sup> Yannis Stivachtis, *The Enlargement of International Society* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), p. 189.

<sup>2</sup> Ian Clark, *The Hierarchy of States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

structured in such a way that the states of the periphery cannot achieve their objectives unless they receive adequate economic assistance from the states of the core. Assistance and recognition of international society membership, however, are subject to the acceptance of their domestic and international policies and practices by the core states, as well as the fulfillment of conditions required by the latter. As Gerrit Gong argues, “anyone who has tried to join a club...or a society of some kind understands that certain standards distinguish between those who will be invited to become members from those who will not.”<sup>3</sup> Failure to comply with the standards of international conduct - defined by the international society’s core members - may result not only in the inability of the states of the periphery to attract the much needed economic assistance but, most importantly, in their condemnation for their ‘uncivilized’ attitudes and actions.

The global application of international norms started with the expansion of the European society of states and its gradual transformation to the contemporary global international society.<sup>4</sup> In this process, the standard of ‘civilization’ played a fundamental role in determining which states would join the expanding European society and which ones would not.

Due to the application by the European colonial powers, the standard of ‘civilization’ has received an unpleasant reputation in the post-colonial era. In spite of this, Hedley Bull has stated that the basic idea behind the standard of ‘civilization’ was that political communities aspiring for membership in international society should be able to meet standards of performance similar to those that the European states expected from each other. This expectation was based on the need for reciprocity in dealings between European and non-European states, especially when the latter were either unable or unwilling to meet those standards.<sup>5</sup>

The works of Hedley Bull and Adam Watson, Gerritt Gong, and Jack Donnelly<sup>6</sup> have a tendency to depict the historical standard of ‘civilization’ as part of an ultimately progressive expansion of the European international society while paying little attention to its coercive side. This is a challenging position since their accounts do not match with the realities of a very long history of colonialism and imperialism.<sup>7</sup> A more critical approach to the historical standard of ‘civilization’ reveals an “ultimate relationship

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<sup>3</sup> Gerritt Gong, *The Standard of Civilization in International Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1984), p. xi.

<sup>4</sup> Hedley Bull and Adam Watson (eds.), *The Expansion of International Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984); Adam Watson, *The Evolution of International Society* (London: Routledge, 1992) and Yannis Stivachtis, “Europe and the Growth of International Society,” *Global Dialogue*, Vol. 5 (3-4), 2003, pp. 87-99.

<sup>5</sup> Hedley Bull, “Introduction,” in Bull and Watson (eds.), *The Expansion of International Society*, p. viii.

<sup>6</sup> Jack Donnelly, “Human Rights: A New Standard of Civilization?” *International Affairs*. Vol. 74 (1), 1998, pp. 1-24.

<sup>7</sup> Gerry Simpson, *Great Powers and Outlaw States: Unequal Sovereigns in the International Legal Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

between international society and domination.”<sup>8</sup> For example, Christopher Hobson argues that the standard of ‘civilization’ “shapes practices of inclusion and exclusion, determining which states are accorded full rights and recognition, it is heavily implicated in the structures of power that constitute these hierarchical relationships.”<sup>9</sup> The concept of ‘civilization’ in combination with how standards of ‘civilization’ have historically operated is problematic. These features are not specific to the historical standard, but fundamental to the character and functioning of *any* standard of ‘civilization.’

Many arguments have been made in reference to the stability in international order being based in large part on the degree in which states adopt and observe shared norms and rules. Thus one may observe that standards of behavior similar to those associated with the historical standard of ‘civilization’ continue to exist in international society. Gong, for example, states that “the parallels between the old standard of ‘civilization’ and a new ‘standard of human rights’ are intriguing” since they share a common concern for fundamental rights of life, liberty, property, and individual dignity.<sup>10</sup> Such an acknowledgment implies that although we may live in a new era, international society’s practices, as well as the thinking that underlies them, remain similar to those of the seventeenth, eighteenth or nineteenth-century world. Moreover, if the historical standard of ‘civilization’ has fallen into disrepute, how could one explain that its contents remain relevant in contemporary global politics? Does it mean, after all, that we keep the same ‘civilization-based’ policies but find new and more fashionable terms for them?

### **Civilizational Discourses in International Politics**

International Relations (IR) has the tendency to be silent on questions of civilization, due in extreme part to the fact that civilizations do not fit well with the state-centricism that has long dominated the discipline.<sup>11</sup> Subsequent to Samuel Huntington’s infamous ‘clash of civilizations’ thesis and the ‘war on terror,’ the role played by civilization(s) in world politics has started receiving increasing attention.

Jacinta O’Hagan depicts a useful distinction amongst two ways in which IR has sought to understand civilization(s). First, the concept of civilization is used “in its pluralist sense to define and distinguish political communities, their boundaries, characters, and their likely interaction with one another on the basis of their cultural

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<sup>8</sup> Tim Dunne, “The New Agenda,” in Alex Bellamy (ed.), *International Society and Its Critics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 75.

<sup>9</sup> Christopher Hobson, “Democracy as Civilization,” *Global Society*, Vol. 22 (1), 2007, pp. 75-95, on p. 81.

<sup>10</sup> Gong, *The Standard of Civilization in International Society*, p. 91.

<sup>11</sup> Jacinta O’Hagan, *Conceptualising the West in International Relations* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), p. 2.

identity.”<sup>12</sup> Secondly, there is the view of “civilization as a singular conception of progress relating to the political, economic and social institutions and practices of societies.”<sup>13</sup> This paper is concerned with civilization in the latter sense.

In the singular, civilization is a standard that defines boundaries of inclusion and exclusion and as Brett Bowden suggests, it is a concept that has an inherent ‘normative quality’.<sup>14</sup> Also, ‘civilization’ is an ‘evaluative-descriptive’ term: “whenever [civilization] are used to describe actions ... they have the effect of evaluating them at the same time.”<sup>15</sup> To define something or someone as ‘civilized’ has strong positive connotations, associating ‘civilization’ with a range of desirable qualities. This definition of ‘civilization’ implies three things. First, ‘civilization’ represents a process of evolution. Thus, ‘civilization’ becomes a temporal concept associated with progress. Second, it represents a principle state of affairs reflected in the existence of a ‘civilized society.’ Lastly, it suggests ‘acting’ in the sense that the members of the ‘civilized society’ attempt to civilize other actors existing outside the boundaries of the ‘civilized society.’

Consequently, ‘civilization’ does not make sense without its ‘other’ – ‘barbarism’ – which is it compared to and defined against it. These two counter-concepts are co-constitutive. As Mark Salter suggests, “barbarity is the mirror to civilization.”<sup>16</sup> ‘Barbarism’ is considered inferior and filled with implications that are negative in totality. If ‘civilization’ implies that a subject should engage in ‘civilizing’ activities, then logically the ‘uncivilized’ become the object for this action. This discussion on ‘civilization’ connotes that the concept differentiates, evaluates, includes and excludes those located within civilization’s bounds and ensures they are looked upon positively. They are associated with temporal progress, cultural superiority, and a host of other attractive traits. In contrast, the ‘barbarians’ are judged and condemned. They are viewed as inferior, lacking progressive traits, and dangerous.

Therefore, ‘civilization’ identifies a certain uniqueness in international society and its members. It demarcates who or what lies outside the scope of the society and in the realm of ‘barbarism.’ Therefore, the common tendency to talk in terms of ‘old’ versus ‘new’ standards of ‘civilization’ is somewhat misleading in the sense that it implies that such practices are viewed as being operational only during certain historical periods. However, the manner in which the standard differentiates those who meet the qualifications of ‘civilized’ states from the inferior ‘barbarous’ ones makes it an ever-

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<sup>12</sup> Jakinta O’Hagan, “Discourses of Civilizational Identity,” in Patrick Jackson and Martin Hall (eds.), *Writing Civilizations* (New York: Palgrave, 2007), p. 3.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>14</sup> Brett Bowden, “In the name of progress and peace: the standard of civilization and the universalizing project,” *Alternatives*, Vol. 29 (1), 2004, pp. 26-43, on p. 7. See also Brett Bowden, *Expanding the Empire of Civilization* (Manuscript. Copy held with author, 2004).

<sup>15</sup> Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, volume 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) p. 148.

<sup>16</sup> Mark Salter, *Barbarians and Civilization in International Relations* (London: Pluto Press, 2002), p. 18.

present feature of international politics. As Gong notes, “the processes by which an international system establishes standards to define and codify its operating interests, rules, values, and institutions are continuing ones.”<sup>17</sup> Insofar as states jointly form a ‘society’ or a ‘club,’ the standard of ‘civilization’ can be linked to membership criteria. The existence of a standard is not what varies over time, rather its character. In other words, the standard may be more or less exclusive and more or less explicit.

It is vital to recognize the continuity of the standard of ‘civilization’ along with the different forms it has taken over time. If one is to understand the role it continues to play in international politics today, the above must be reflected upon. Thus, one needs to consider the evolution of the historical standard of ‘civilization.’

### **The Emergence of the Standard of ‘Civilization’**

One of the most important aspects of modern history was the European expansion. When expansion began, the world was not established into any single global international system/society. Instead, it was comprised of several regional international societies (Arab, Indian, Chinese, and Japanese) each with its own distinctive rules and institutions reflecting the dominant regional culture.<sup>18</sup> These societies were built upon intricate civilizations including distinctive religions, different systems of governance, different types of law, and different conceptions of the world and ways of conducting relations.<sup>19</sup> This implied that relations between political entities that belonged to different regional international societies could not be conducted on the same moral and legal basis as relations within the same society. The rules of each individual regional society were culturally exclusive. Therefore, some form of ‘civilization’ standard or similar process of self/other differentiation existed already during the medieval times helping to construct state identities and the system they have interacted within.<sup>20</sup>

The European international society expanded gradually and brought other regional international systems/societies into contact with one another. In this process, the European international society was superimposed on regional international systems/societies thereby making its rules and institutions, as well as the cultural elements associated with them, the pillars of the global international society (even if non-European countries sought to modify them to some extent).

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<sup>17</sup> Gerritt Gong, “Standards of Civilization Today,” in Mehdi Mozaffari (ed.), *Globalization and Civilizations* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 80.

<sup>18</sup> Martin Wight, *Systems of States* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1977).

<sup>19</sup> C.H. Alexandrowicz, *An Introduction to the History of the Law of Nations in the East Indies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967).

<sup>20</sup> Bowden, *Expanding the Empire of Civilization*, chapter 5.

During the European expansion, non-European ‘infidels’ or ‘savages’ played a decisive role in the evolution of European identity. As the sense of the character of the European society of states increased, so did the sense of its cultural differentiation. International society was by then viewed as a privileged association of European civilized states, which had visible expression in certain international institutions, such as international law, diplomacy, and the balance of power,<sup>21</sup> as well as in the way that their domestic politics were conducted.<sup>22</sup>

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, international society consisted of Christian rulers and followers. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries religious influences on international relations declined, and international society became more secular. International society, in the nineteenth century, included not only European states but also the political communities of North and South America as they became politically independent.<sup>23</sup>

In the nineteenth century, international lawyers perpetuated the cultural duality between European and non-Europeans and made a clear distinction between ‘civilized’ and ‘non-civilized’ political communities.<sup>24</sup> The difference between civilized and barbarous humanity meant that political communities belonging to either categories were accorded different stages of legal recognition; in other words, political communities that could not satisfy the necessary political and ‘civilizational’ criteria to be sovereign states could not be members of international society.

In the course of the nineteenth century, European international society spread around the globe. As a result, Asian and African political communities were brought within the compass of the expanding European international system. Many non-European states sought to join international society, in order to be treated as equals and to strengthen their voice in international affairs. During this process, the European states saw it as their duty to define the conditions under which they would admit non-European political communities to the international society they themselves had established. As a result, political communities that aspired to membership of the European society had to meet the standard of ‘civilization’.

The standard of ‘civilization’ was an expression of the assumptions used to distinguish those that belonged to the expanding European society of states from those

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<sup>21</sup> Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society* (London: Macmillan, 1977).

<sup>22</sup> Hedley Bull, Benedict Kingsbury and Adam Roberts (eds.), *Hugo Grotius and International Relations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 82.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> Henry Wheaton, *Elements of International Law* (Philadelphia: Care, Lea & Blanchard, 1836); James Lorimer, *The Institutes of the Law of Nations* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1880) and William Edward Hall, *A Treatise of International Law*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1884).

that did not. Those who fulfilled the requirements set by the European states were brought inside and those that would not conform were left outside.<sup>25</sup>

States that did not reach or conform to the ‘civilized’ model were denied full standing in the European international system. However, this did not prohibit interaction between political communities seen to be at different levels of civilization. In practice, there were two sets of rules: one, which applied between ‘civilized’ states, and one for ‘civilized’ states dealing with ‘barbaric’ outsiders. As Edward Keene notes, “within Europe, international order was supposed to provide for peaceful coexistence in an anarchic and plural world by encouraging toleration...Beyond Europe, international order was intended to promote civilization.”<sup>26</sup> Colonization, imperialism, unequal treaties, and civilizing missions were dominant features of interaction between ‘civilized’ and ‘uncivilized’ communities that failed to conform to the model provided by the European core.

According to Gong, the standard of ‘civilization’ evolved to include the following political and economic requirements:

- A ‘civilized’ state guarantees basic rights, such as life, dignity, and property; freedom of travel, commerce, and religion, especially that of foreign nationals;
- A ‘civilized’ state exists as an organized political bureaucracy with some efficiency in running the state machinery, and with some capacity to organize for self-defense;
- A ‘civilized’ state adheres to generally accepted international law, including the laws of war; it also maintains a domestic system of courts, codes, and published laws which guarantee legal justice for all within its jurisdiction, foreigners and native citizens alike;
- A ‘civilized’ state fulfils the obligations of the international system by maintaining adequate and permanent avenues for diplomatic interchange and communication; and
- A ‘civilized’ state by and large conforms to the accepted norms and practices of the ‘civilized’ international society.<sup>27</sup>

The key elements to the standard of ‘civilization’ centered on the degree of socio-political organization and form of government. To be recognized as ‘civilized’, non-European states had to replicate European forms of internal governance and external sovereignty. In other words, being ‘civilized’ in essence meant being ‘European.’ The standard of ‘civilization’ did significantly more than regulate entry into the European international society: it legitimized a different set of rules, norms, and practices for dealing with the ‘uncivilized’ parts of the world.

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<sup>25</sup> Georg Schwartzberger, “The Standard of Civilization in International Law,” in George W. Keeton and Georg Schwartzberger (eds.), *Current Legal Problems* (London: Stevens & Sons, 1955).

<sup>26</sup> Edward Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 147.

<sup>27</sup> Gong, *The Standard of Civilization in International Society*, pp. 14-15.

The standard of ‘civilization’ mirrored the norms of the liberal European civilization.<sup>28</sup> What these ‘basic rights’ were and what constituted their guarantee was never well defined. This meant that the fulfillment of the standard of ‘civilization’ became a ‘moving target’, which would allow the European states to push for further reforms before they decided to accord a non-European state a ‘civilized’ status. Moreover, different conceptions of demands for ‘civilized’ rights made them arduous to enforce. Likewise, the conditions of maintaining ‘civilized’ conditions without ‘civilizing’ the country’s inhabitants was often as difficult as ‘civilizing’ its inhabitants without estranging them from their cultural heritage.<sup>29</sup>

In one way or another, the standard of ‘civilization’ became the organizing principle for non-European political communities, which had to learn to adjust themselves to new realities. In their effort to acquire the privileges assigned to ‘civilized’ states, non-European countries used the standard of ‘civilization’ to initiate political, social, and economic reforms, even if such changes would affect their own societies.

What is demonstrated in the relevant literature is that the historical standard of ‘civilization’ is detrimental. This dual system of exclusion and inclusion through assimilation was, as Bowden emphasizes, the extent to which it perpetuated and justified violent acts of imperialism in the name of ‘civilizing’ the ‘other.’<sup>30</sup> In his work, Paul Keal identifies the particularly severe impact that the imposition of ‘civilization’ has had on the world’s indigenous populations.<sup>31</sup> Shogo Suzuki notes the ‘Janus-faced’ nature of the European society and argues that the Japanese entry into international society involved meeting the standard’s criteria when dealing with ‘civilized’ Europeans, but also resulted in similar ‘civilizing’ behavior towards their ‘barbarian’ neighbors in Asia.<sup>32</sup> Suzuki, Keene and Salter all acknowledge the ‘dualistic manner’ in which international law operated, whereby a different set of rules and conduct is applied for persons beyond the limited boundaries of international society. These analyses show that under the guise of ‘civilization’, a hierarchical international society perpetuated and enforced systematic processes of exploitation, exclusion, and imperial violence.

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<sup>28</sup> Robert Tucker, *The Inequality of Nations* (New York: Basic Books, 1970) p. 9.

<sup>29</sup> Gong, *The Standard of Civilization in International Society*, p. 22.

<sup>30</sup> Bowden, *Expanding the Empire of Civilization*.

<sup>31</sup> Paul Keal, *European Conquest and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

<sup>32</sup> Shogo Suzuki, “Japan’s Socialization into Janus-Faced European International Society,” *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 11 (1), 2005.

## The Standard of ‘Civilization’ in the post-World War II International Society

The historical standard of ‘civilization’ functioned until the middle of the twentieth century. There are three factors that led to its demise. First, during the First World War, Europeans began describing each other as ‘barbarian’; a fact that started to unravel the distinction between a ‘civilized’ Europe and a ‘barbaric’ other.<sup>33</sup> Second, the horrors perpetuated and visited on the world by the ‘civilized’ European powers during the Second World War undermined the suggestion that the majority of non-European peoples were too ‘uncivilized’ to be considered full members of international society.<sup>34</sup> Finally, the standard of ‘civilization’ was regarded by the colonized people as part of an unjust system of domination and exploitation. Consequently, colonized communities started revolting against its application. The standard of ‘civilization’ was perceived as denying equal rights to the political communities of Africa, Asia and Oceania whose fate was either to become colonies of the European imperial powers or to be assigned a subordinate form of independence. The standard of ‘civilization’ was insulting to representatives of non-European civilizations, as the privileged legal status which European states claimed for themselves invited abuses and led to campaigns for its abolition.

This, however, did not mean a standard of ‘civilization’ ceased to exist. Actually, the standard was the most overt manifestation of a more general desire for a degree of homogeneity amongst states.<sup>35</sup> The old version of the standard of ‘civilization’ embedded in international law became largely extinct, but a more limited pluralist standard remained.<sup>36</sup> In the post-World War II world and especially in the post-colonial era, it was the external characteristics of states, rather than their internal makeup, which determined full recognition and international legitimacy. Article 2 of the UN Charter established the organization as “based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all of its members.” It clearly respects the territorial and political independence of states, pledging that nothing “shall authorise the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any State.” It has been suggested that, “it is possible to see the period 1945–1989 as one marked by a rejection of standards of civilization, culture and democracy as a criteria for membership of the international community.”<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Salter, *Barbarians and Civilization in International Relations*, p. 82.

<sup>34</sup> Donnelly, “Human Rights: A New Standard of Civilization?”, p.12

<sup>35</sup> Herch Lauterpacht, *Recognition in International Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1947) and Georg Schwarzenberger, *A Manual of International Law*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition (London: Stevens & Sons, 1976).

<sup>36</sup> Martin Wight, “International Legitimacy”, *International Relations*, Vol. 4(1), 1972.

<sup>37</sup> Simpson, *Great Powers and Outlaw States*, p. 272.

*The ‘Standard of non-discrimination’ or the ‘Standard of Human Rights’*

While the old standard of ‘civilization’ fell into disrepute, a number of alternatives have risen as new standards in contemporary international society.<sup>38</sup> The first possible successor to the historical standard of ‘civilization’ is the ‘standard of non-discrimination’ or the ‘standard of human rights’ reflected in the relevant UN instruments and organizational structures, as well as in the various European Human Rights Conventions and institutions. For example, Donnelly clearly argues that “internationally recognized human rights have become very much like a new international ‘standard of civilization’.”<sup>39</sup> Ian Browlie also suggests that “...the principle of respect for and protection for human rights had become recognized as a legal standard.”<sup>40</sup> According to Browlie, this standard derives “...from the United Nations Charter, especially articles 55 and 56, the practice of United Nations organs, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as other international conventions, court rulings, and resolutions.”<sup>41</sup>

The similarity between the old standard of ‘civilization’ and the ‘standard of human rights’ is staggering as they share a common concern for fundamental rights of life, liberty, property, and individual dignity. Moreover, there has been an easy transition from concern for ‘civilized’ rights to concern for ‘human rights’. For example, during the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, various delegates in the International Law Commission argued that the principles that should apply “...must be sought out in the Constitutions of the different civilized states, namely the states which respect fundamental human rights.”<sup>42</sup> But what is even more intriguing is that the willingness and ability to protect human rights became a new standard for European countries. For instance, the European Human Rights Conventions requires compulsory jurisdiction, while European organizations, such as the Council of Europe, may suspend a country’s membership due to the violation of human rights. Moreover, effectiveness in addressing human rights concerns have become a precondition for joining international regional institutions, like the European Union and NATO or receiving economic assistance from global institutions, such as the World Bank and IMF.

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<sup>38</sup> Donnelly, “Human Rights: A New Standard of Civilization?”; Mehdi Mozaffari, “The Transformationalist Perspective and the Rise of a Global Standard of Civilization,” *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* Vol. 1 (2), 2001; David Fidler, “A Kinder, Gentler System of Capitulations? International Law. Structural Adjustment Policies, and the Standard of Liberal, Globalized Civilization,” *Texas International Law Journal*, Vol. 35 (3), 2000 and “The Return of the Standard of Civilization”, *Journal of International Law*, no. 1, 2001, pp. 137-57.

<sup>39</sup> Donnelly, “Human Rights: A New Standard of Civilization?”, p. 1.

<sup>40</sup> Browlie, Ian, *International Law*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 596.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 598.

<sup>42</sup> Gong, *The Standard of Civilization in International Society*, p. 91.

### *The 'Standard of Modernity'*

The second possible successor to the historical standard of 'civilization' is the standard of 'modernity' that can take two forms, namely the 'standard of living' and the 'standard of cosmopolitan culture.'<sup>43</sup> The former is concerned with the quality of life on a global scale, and it is reflected in the policies of global institutions like the UN or the World Health Organization (WHO). The latter refers to the possibility of shared values, moral norms, and experiences on a global perspective. For example, drawing on Nobert Elias's sociological analysis of the 'civilizing process', which refers to the process by which modern European societies have been pacified over the last five centuries, Andrew Linklater argues for a sociology of global morals with an 'emancipatory intent', as well as for policies with a commitment to ethical universalism.<sup>44</sup> Mehdi Mozzafari claims that globalization has provided the fertile ground for the development of a 'global standard of civilization', which refers to a set of laws, norms, values and customs that provides opportunities and constraints for international actors.<sup>45</sup> For Mozzafari, the 'global standard of civilization' is a product of the European standard of 'civilization' that has been formulated through centuries in a cumulative fashion. Brett Bowden agrees with Mozzafari's observations although he entirely disagrees with him on the desirability of an international order based on the Western conception of 'civilization'. According to Bowden, "basic human rights, a descent standard of living, and a just system of government are achievable in societies that are something other than replicas of the West."<sup>46</sup>

### *The Standard of Liberal Principles in International Law*

The third possible successor to the old standard of 'civilization' is embodied in contemporary international law, which constitutes a clear reflection of liberal values. Specifically, David Fidler argues that "the civilizational conquest that started with the old standard of 'civilization' is now being carried deeper into the hearts of non-Western cultures through international law" and that "under the new standard of 'civilization', international law is a tool of political, economic, and legal harmonization and

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<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 92.

<sup>44</sup> Andrew Linklater, "Towards a Sociology of Global Morals with an 'Emancipatory Intent'," *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 33, 2007, pp. 135-150; "Dialogic Politics and the Civilizing Process". *Review of International Studies*. Vol. 31, 2005, pp. 141-154; "A European Civilizing Process?" in Christopher Hill and Michael Smith (eds.), *International Relations and the European Union* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); and "Nobert Elias: The 'Civilizing Process' and the Sociology of International Relations," *International Politics*, Vol. 41, 2004, pp. 3-35.

<sup>45</sup> Mozzafari, "The Transformationalist Perspective and the Rise of a Global Standard of Civilization," p. 251.

<sup>46</sup> Bowden, "In the name of progress and peace," p. 14.

homogenization on a scale much greater than that of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.”<sup>47</sup> According to Fidler, while capitulations were at the heart of the old standard of ‘civilization’, the new standard “has equivalent centers of activity, namely human rights, market liberalization strategies, structural adjustments policies, the emphasis on the ‘rule of law;’ and ‘good governance’, and the democratic legitimacy of governments.”<sup>48</sup>

Fidler further suggests that with the end of the Cold War, liberalism emerged victorious and that “no non-western culture is universalizable like liberalism.”<sup>49</sup> Indeed, in contemporary international law, liberal dominance appears in the prominence of free trade, democratic governance, human rights, the rule of law, and ‘good governance’. Moreover, in the field of International Relations, scholars working with liberalism have divided the world into liberal and non-liberal zones. According to Benedict Kingsbury, the liberal zone consists of “liberal states practicing a higher degree of legal civilization, to which other states will be admitted only when they meet the required standards” and that “the liberal West as the vanguard of a transformed legal global order contains a new standard of ‘civilization’ ...to promote the advancement of the backward.”<sup>50</sup>

One just needs to compare the features of the historical standard of ‘civilization with the features of the new standard to see the similarities involved. The historical standard of ‘civilization’ included: protection of basic human rights of Western nationals such as life, liberty, property, and the freedoms of travel, commerce, and religion; the opening of domestic markets to foreign traders and merchants; the implementation of organized and effective governmental bureaucracy; the adoption of Western-style system of domestic law with impartial administration of justice; the ability to engage in international relations and abide by international law; and the ability to conform to Western customs, norms, and mores; and sources of international law central to applying the old standard of civilization to non-Western countries. According to Fidler, the ‘new’ standard includes: protection of basic civil and political rights; liberalization of markets for trade in goods, services and investment capital; ‘good governance’ and anti-corruption measures; emphasis on the rule of law within countries, and linking governmental legitimacy to presence of democracy; stress on a state’s ability to participate in the process of globalization and to follow international legal regimes adopted to deal with globalization issues; pressure on states to adopt Western individualism, consumerism, and secularism at the expense of traditional practices; and sources of international law, and international legal regimes created with them, central to applying the new standard of civilization globally.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Fidler, “The Return of the Standard of Civilization,” p. 147.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 149.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 147.

<sup>50</sup> Benedict Kingsbury, “Sovereignty and Inequality,” *European Journal of International Law*, Vol. 9, 1998, p. 90.

<sup>51</sup> Fidler, “The Return of the Standard of Civilization,” p. 150.

Following this comparison, one can safely arrive at the conclusion that many areas of contemporary international law can have a more significant impact on a state's domestic governance and law than the old standard of 'civilization'. For example, human rights law today extends protections of life, liberty and property guaranteed to Westerners under capitulations. Likewise, liberalization of trade and investment requires far-reaching reforms of domestic economies and legal systems than the old standard required, while the test of democratic legitimacy is far more reaching than under the old standard of 'civilization'.

### *The Standard of Liberal Democracy*

The fourth possible successor to the historical standard of 'civilization' is the standard of 'liberal democracy'. Specifically, the end of the Cold War and the apparent triumph of the Western model of market capitalism and liberal democracy led to a "reinvention of a restrictive international society."<sup>52</sup> A considerable resurrection in the confidence of liberal values, combined with a sizeable power differential favoring key democratic states, has led to the re-emergence of a more restrictive standard of 'civilization,' which again largely reflects the values and interests of Western states. Lacking the juridical status of the historical standard, the political realm that it is primarily found centered on the principles of democracy, capitalism, and individual human rights.

In fact, democracy has been the unifying feature of all possible successors to the historical standard of 'civilization.' Democracy is recognized as the most suitable form of governance and essential for the full protection of human rights. Such rights are only being considered totally secure when they are not dependent on the benevolence of an unaccountable ruler. These compatibilities, along with freedom, stability, accountability, openness, social justice, international peace, and stronger international law make democracy the focal point for the current standard of 'civilization.' In providing a set of socio-political institutions, democracy becomes the blueprint and mechanism through which Western values and interests are transmitted.

The movement towards a 'restrictive international society' has meant the strengthening of the principles that inform 'rightful membership,' with the growing conviction that the internal (democratic) makeup of states plays a crucial role in bringing about 'rightful conduct.'<sup>53</sup> This has led to a renewed emphasis on the socio-political organization of states. In other words, one can observe a return of focus to the internal characteristics of states. The policies and rhetoric of individual states, international organizations, and NGOs has been a pervading desire for liberal democracy in the political sphere and market capitalism in the economic one. This escalating push towards

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<sup>52</sup> Ian Clark, *Legitimacy in International Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 180.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

a far greater level of socio-political uniformity across states clashes with the more pluralist framework inherited from the UN Charter system. These shifts reflect an ongoing tension between two versions of liberalism that help define international society: 'liberal pluralism' and 'liberal anti-pluralism.'<sup>54</sup> The former corresponds to classical liberalism, which emphasizes "the virtues of tolerance, diversity, openness together with an agnosticism about moral truth."<sup>55</sup> Although, this was more prominent in the post-1945 order based on sovereign equality and independence. It was a pluralist ethic framed in terms of coexistence not inquiring too heavily into the domestic makeup of states. Initially the start of the de-colonization process and the end of the Cold War, however, one witnesses the return of 'liberal anti-pluralism,' characteristic of the era of the historical standard of 'civilization.' This version of liberalism is imbued with a 'moralistic flavor' and a conviction in the truth and 'right-ness' of liberalism and liberal politics.<sup>56</sup> It encourages exclusiveness and intolerance towards non-liberal regimes. Again, the world was inhabited by 'civilized' and 'barbarous' communities only now it is understood in terms of democracies and non-democracies.

In the post-Cold War era, marked by this liberal anti-pluralism, there has been a far greater interest in the internal makeup of states, with liberal jurists even claiming the emergence of a 'right' to democracy.<sup>57</sup> A much heavier emphasis was also placed on labeling, ostracizing, and when necessary, confronting 'pariah' states that do not conform to the new form of the standard of 'civilization.' Reflecting on this anti-pluralist trend, Donnelly makes the useful distinction between 'behavioral' and 'ontological' outlaw states.<sup>58</sup> The former "violate particular international norms," while the latter "are outlaws more for who they are than what they have done." The manner in which international society is reformulating, with a more explicit and stricter standard based around democracy is one that leads states into being more easily classified as 'ontological outlaws.' The fact that these states are 'non-democratic' becomes the basis of their pariah status.

In order to fully comprehend the development of democracy as a innovative form of the historical standard of 'civilization', one needs to adopt a historical approach and examine how and why democracy and its promotion has become central to the practice of international politics.

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<sup>54</sup> Simpson, *Great Powers and Outlaw States*, p. 272.

<sup>55</sup> Clark, *Legitimacy in International Society*, p. 77.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 78.

<sup>57</sup> Thomas Franck, "The Emerging Right to Democratic Governance," *The American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 86 (1), 1992 and *Fairness in International Law and Institutions* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).

<sup>58</sup> Jack Donnelly, "Sovereign Inequalities and Hierarchy in Anarchy," *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 12 (2), 2006.

## The Historical Development of the ‘Standard of Democracy’

It has been argued that “in the general climate of world opinion, democratic governance has now achieved the status of being taken to be generally right.”<sup>59</sup> John Dunn has also claimed that democratic governance has become the benchmark for full international legitimacy in a world where “a democracy is what it is virtuous for a state to be.”<sup>60</sup> Democracy has taken on the conceptual qualities of ‘civilization,’ becoming associated with progress, development, and modernization. The phenomenon of democratic states being considered ‘righteous,’ however, is hardly new.

In the seventeenth century, one of the most important developments in Europe was the creation of the modern state. Subsequently, ideological and political developments in Europe have had an important impact on the idea of civilization and what is necessary for a state to be considered civilized. Norbert Elias asserts that, the idea of civilization in modern international politics started with the efforts of the Europeans to relate the concept of ‘civilization’ to the way the modern state should function.<sup>61</sup> Thus, for the rest of the world to be civilized, non-European states should replicate the European prototype of a state. However, evolving historical and political conditions in Europe gave rise to opposing political claims as to what principles the modern state should be based on. Essentially, these claims called for conservatism to be succeeded by liberalism and absolute monarchies to be succeeded by enlightened monarchies and parliamentary democracies. Furthermore, they argue, democracy has been viewed as the product of the development of the capitalist state and its spread vital for the spread of the capitalist system.<sup>62</sup> For example, one of the main functions of the nineteenth century standard of ‘civilization’ was to protect capitalist operations in foreign territories.

The imposition of European standards upon the non-European world invited a confrontation involving different cultures, since fundamental European cultural practices clashed with non-European ones. According to the standard of ‘civilization’, the non-European communities had to adopt European rules, values, ethical standards, economic standards, and commercial practices associated with liberalism and capitalism. Thus the standard of ‘civilization’ came to be seen, among other things, as a tool to spread capitalism and protect its operations in foreign lands.

As the First World War came to an end, the Wilsonian campaign for democracy’s spread around the world begun. Shortly after the First World War, Ivor Brown wrote of a “world in which every one is trying to show that he is more democratic than everybody

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<sup>59</sup> Amartya Sen, “Democracy as a Universal Value,” *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 10 (3), 1999, p. 5.

<sup>60</sup> John Dunn, *Western Political Theory in the Face of the Future*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 11.

<sup>61</sup> Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, 2 volumes (New York: Urizen Books, 1978) and Johan Goudsblom and Stephen Mennell (eds.), *The Norbert Elias Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998).

<sup>62</sup> Roger King and Gavin Kendall, *The State, Democracy and Globalization* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2004).

else.”<sup>63</sup> Resulting from the interwar years, democracy and democratic statehood became the flags and symbols of the liberal states in their fight against the totalitarian regimes. In other words, the historical distinction between ‘civilized’ and ‘barbarous’ humanity was transformed into a division of the world between the democratic ‘civilized’ states and the ‘barbarous’ totalitarian countries.

At the end of the Second World War, an ideological contest that used different understandings of democracy soon surfaced. Central to the dynamics of the Cold War were two competing ideals of the concept of democracy. On the one hand, the United States and its allies advocated liberal democracy. In contrast, people’s democracies were propagated by the USSR and its satellites. Neither side actively denied ‘democracy’; rather, they each contested its boundaries by attempting to re-describe it in such a manner as to include one camp while exclude the other. Commenting on this situation, John Dunn noted that “democratic theory is the moral Esperanto of the present nation-state system, the language in which all Nations are truly United.”<sup>64</sup> C.B. Macpherson nearly a decade earlier, highlighted three types of democracy in existence: the liberal, the Communist, and a Third World model.<sup>65</sup>

The emergence of American hegemony, which favored democratic constitutions, kick-started the process of the second wave of democratization. This wave took place mainly in Europe, however, it also occurred in other parts of the world where the circumstances favored it. In the post-World War II era, the struggle between communism and the ‘free world’ became another way of distinguishing between the ‘civilized’ West and the ‘tyrannical’ and ‘barbarous’ East. Thus, being civilized meant to be democratic. Therefore, democracy became associated with freedom. Authoritarian democracy, however, served as useful political alternatives wherever the spread of communism posed threats to Western and particularly U.S. interests. The most interaction between democratic liberalism and cultural and political realities has been manifested in the Third World context.<sup>66</sup>

After a while, the majority of people outside the Western community of states accepted the standards of intellectual and material achievement that Western thought and enterprise represented. They subscribed to the vocabulary of political symbols that had been composed in the West, as well as adopted the form of government that Europeans and Americans had devised. An acknowledgement of the validity of the tenets of international interaction long associated with the European society of states was also

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<sup>63</sup> Ivor J.C. Brown, *The Meaning of Democracy*. London: Richard Cobden-Sanderson, (1920), p. 175.

<sup>64</sup> Dunn, *Western Political Theory in the Face of the Future*, p. 2.

<sup>65</sup> C.B. Macpherson, *The Real World of Democracy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966).

<sup>66</sup> Adda Bozeman, “The International Order in a Multicultural World,” in Bull and Watson (eds.) *The Expansion of International Society and The Future of Law in a Multicultural World* (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1971).

adopted.<sup>67</sup> Thus, both their present and future in terms of Western aspirations and achievements was established. This widespread diffusion of the Western legacy had the indisputable effect of providing the modern society of states with a unifying structure. It was instrumental in fostering the assumption that all people participate in a world culture and constitute a world community.

The superiority of the European or Western powers was expressed not only in their advanced economic and military power, but also in their commanding intellectual and cultural authority. This was also evident in the rules and institutions of international society. Yet, when the non-Western people began to assume their places as modern political communities in the world so largely shaped by Western liberal thought, it became increasingly apparent that the Western ideas were not the exclusive mainsprings of their political attitudes and actions.<sup>68</sup> Unofficially, Western interpretations of such values as freedom, democracy and law, discords grew in the field of intercultural relations. Non-Western political communities proceeded consciously and unconsciously to reinstate their native modes of thought and behavior, while continuing to pay allegiance to Western concepts and forms. Meanwhile, Western states, hearing their words employed in senses strangely foreign to long-familiar definitions, began to realize that not only their transplanted words but also their associated institutions had come to stand for practices and attitudes that differed greatly from the paternal norms.<sup>69</sup>

Demands from Asian and African states for equal rights were put forward long after their communities had absorbed the European ideas of the equality of states to sovereignty, of communities to self-determination, and of people of different races to individual rights. Formerly these ideas were almost non-existent in the cultures and political experience of the regions concerned. As the Third World mobilized politically in defense of their interests, the use of force to maintain Western positions of dominance became extremely costly. Simultaneously, the Third World found allies in the 'barbarous' and totalitarian Soviet Union whose anti-colonial practice and rhetoric was well suited to the needs of the Third World.<sup>70</sup> It was mainly the conflict between the two opposing ideologies of liberalism and communism during the Cold War that temporarily subdued cultural differences. Naturally, with the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union such differences came to the forefront.

The demise of the Soviet Union provided the fertile ground for a third wave of democratization resulting in the collapse of authoritarian regimes in Eastern Europe and

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<sup>67</sup> Frederick Cooper and Laura Ann Stoler (eds.), *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997).

<sup>68</sup> Adda Bozeman, *Politics and Culture in International History* (Princeton NJ.: Princeton University Press, 1960).

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>70</sup> Hedley Bull, "The Emergence of a Universal International Society" in Bull and Watson (eds.) *The Expansion of International Society*, pp. 217-20.

other parts of the world and the introduction of either liberal democracy or partial democracy. The fall of the Soviet Union and the decline of communism invoked scholars like Francis Fukuyama to declare the triumph of democratic liberalism and the end of history. As a result, ‘models of democracy’ were replaced by *a* ‘model of democracy.’ As Peter Fenves suggests, Fukuyama hit upon an important ‘linguistic fact,’ namely, “the absence of any universalizable alternative to the language of liberal democracy for the legitimisation of political institutions.”<sup>71</sup> Consequently, the end of the Cold War did not signify that democratic states were confirmed as ‘virtuous’. Instead, it raised a much more limited understanding of what ‘democracy’ as an institution and in practice means, and which model this ‘virtue’ stems from. It is one variant – the Anglo-American liberal model – that is promoted *as* democracy and the benchmark of fully legitimate statehood.<sup>72</sup>

International institutions and world leaders did not stay behind. President George Bush called for a new world order based on democratic states, while President Yeltsin was quick to reciprocate by declaring that Russia should become a democratic state in order to join the ‘community of civilized states’. Also, the G-8 made the promotion of democracy a key feature of its blueprint for a twenty-first century peace.

The Soviet Union’s collapse and the decline of the communist ideology were viewed as a triumph of civilization over totalitarianism. Accordingly, the democratization of the ‘barbarians’ became an accepted and necessary component of international behavior. Peace, stability and predictability in international relations could only be achieved through the democratization of the non-democratic ‘other’.

Liberal democracy today has become hegemonic to the extent that the ‘liberal’ is regularly dropped out, with this model ‘naturalized’ *as* democracy. What is forgotten is that there are multiple types of democracy, of which the liberal version is only one.<sup>73</sup> Kimberly Hutchings gives the important caution not “to become closed to the appreciation of alternative ways of thinking about what democracy means.”<sup>74</sup> However, in order to accomplish such, one should recognize that liberal democracy has been conditioned, shaped and determined by its primarily Anglo-American heritage. When considering alternate conceptions of democracy within Africa, Matthew Todd Bradley argues that democracy is “a configuration of governance molded by the general values, biases, and nuances of a given culture.”<sup>75</sup> He is inferring that the model of democracy promoted not only by individual Western states but also by many global and regional

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<sup>71</sup> Peter Fenves, “The Tower of Babel Rebuilt,” in Timothy Burns (ed.), *After History? Francis Fukuyama and His Critics* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1994), p. 229.

<sup>72</sup> Hobson, “Democracy as Civilization,” p. 84.

<sup>73</sup> David Held, *Models of Democracy*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966).

<sup>74</sup> Kimberly Hutchings, “Modelling Democracy,” *Global Society*, Vol. 12 (2), 1998, p.174.

<sup>75</sup> Matthew Todd Bradley, “‘The Other’: Precursory African Conceptions of Democracy,” *International Studies Review*, Vol. 7 (3), 2005, p. 407.

institutions like the European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN) is not politically and culturally neutral. It reflects the experiences, interests and values of its promoters.

Social democracy, along with models that emphasize a far greater level of activity and participation by the people, are viable alternatives hidden behind the dominant version.<sup>76</sup> Variations between the different models that were found in Western democratic states largely disappear when democracy is exported in its Anglo-American form. Subsequently, a new standard of ‘civilization’ based on democracy retains the Western-centricism that marked its initial historical form. Similar to the earlier version of the standard of ‘civilization’, which reflected the interests and values of the dominant European powers, democracy is now understood and promoted in a comparable fashion.<sup>77</sup> Within the new form of the standard, democracy is viewed largely through Western lenses. Consequently, once again a particular socio-political form of organization is promoted that conforms to a model emerging from a core of powerful Western states. This new standard is not asking states to meet some objective criterion; rather, it is asking ‘them’ to become more like ‘us.’

Suggestions have been made that the new form of the ‘civilization’ standard operates more through ‘attraction’ than ‘coercion.’<sup>78</sup> Democracy’s progressive label along with the universalizing language it is cloaked in and the structures of power in which it operates, are, nonetheless, overlooked.<sup>79</sup> Indeed, behind the seemingly benevolent universal standard of democracy is a specific conception of what democracy is and what democratic states should look like. Coercion operates through defining and limiting what democracy is and has the potential to be. States that do not try to conform to this liberal democratic standard experience difficulty to be recognized as fully legitimate.

Democracy serves as a new version of the historical standard of ‘civilization’ in the sense that it becomes central to determining the limits of international society and constructing relations with those ‘beyond the pale of civilization.’ Therefore, in spite of its positive role in opening possibilities for greater levels of international peace, stronger international law and more secure protection of human rights, ‘democracy’ also promotes processes of exclusion.

Democracy’s determining role in a contemporary standard of civilization means it cannot be the completely progressive force it is regularly painted as or presumed to be. Any standard – democratic or otherwise – will be deeply implicated and infused with power, hierarchy and varying degrees of violence. Insofar as democracy has become the

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<sup>76</sup> Hobson, “Democracy as Civilization,” p. 85.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.

<sup>78</sup> Mozzafari, “The Transformationalist Perspective and the Rise of a Global Standard of Civilization,” p. 263.

<sup>79</sup> Hobson, “Democracy as Civilization,” p. 86.

defining feature of “what a state should look like and how it should act,”<sup>80</sup> it plays a particularly influential role in determining the makeup of international society: deciding who is in and who is out, who lives in a Kantian world of peace and who remains “mired in history,” who are ‘our’ ontological allies and who are ‘our’ ontological enemies, who retains the rights to the protection sovereignty (supposedly) provides, and who may need to be civilized/democratized in the name of peace and progress. These ‘democratic’ discourses and practices reinforce and perpetuate existing asymmetrical relations and power imbalances, with the new standard being only somewhat less explicit than its classical predecessor. Here Paris makes a similar point in regards to international peace-building, seeing it as a “new phase in the ongoing and evolving relationship between the core and the periphery of the international system, with the core continuing to define the standards of acceptable behaviour.”<sup>81</sup> Viewed in this light, democracy promotion and democratic interventions become the means toward the end of a more homogeneous international society in which ‘perpetual peace’ can eventuate. And as Salter notes, the ends of civilization can frequently justify uncivilized means.<sup>82</sup>

The implication of this analysis is that the involvement of the idea of democracy in maintaining hegemony and hierarchy, justifying neo-imperial violence and perpetuating exclusion, means it cannot achieve the emancipatory goals often portrayed as central to democracy’s heart. Democracy’s role in influencing the makeup and identity of ‘our’ ontological allies and enemies leaves it unable to avoid the darker side inherent to any standard of civilization. ‘Democracy’ evaluates, judges, classifies, orders and excludes. On the other hand, one cannot deny the popularity of democracy and the value placed in it by much of the world’s populace. Something called ‘democracy’ motivates struggle, resistance and counter-hegemonic movements across the globe. Signified in the meaning we find in the very etymology of the word, the idea of democracy remains particularly potent, powerful and positive. The result is a fundamental tension between democracy as an emancipatory ideal, and democracy as a discourse implicated in structures of power and domination. The contested and indeterminate character of democracy, as well as its inherent normativity, means the term can be legitimately invoked for acts as different as war in Iraq and resistance in Nepal. It is only through first recognizing, however, that the discourses and practices of democracy are implicated in domination and exclusion, as well as emancipation and inclusion, that we can begin to move toward a fuller understanding of the role this incredibly powerful idea plays in world politics.

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<sup>80</sup> Roland Paris, “International Peacebuilding and the ‘Mission Civilisatrice’”, *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 28 (4), 2002, p. 654.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 653-4.

<sup>82</sup> Mark Salter, “Not Waiting for the Barbarians,” in Jackson and Hall (eds.), *Writing Civilizations*.

Western states not only continuously enquire to re-affirm their ‘democratic’ status at home, but they also attempt to promote democracy abroad. States that have recently transformed to democracy have sought to consolidate the new regime through ongoing reforms. At the same time, states wishing to become ‘democracies’ become subjects to the application of ‘democratic conditionality’ by major global and regional international institutions. The process of the socialization of democratic norms by international institutions may be well seen as a ‘civilizing’ process aiming at transforming non-democratic/‘barbarian’ states into ‘civilized’ democratic ones.

International and transnational actors promoting democracy have tended to provide “a stricter understanding of what democracy means, and what [a democracy] should look like” by offering a version that reflects the standards and interests of the most powerful democracies.<sup>83</sup> Becoming a legitimate form of domestic governance, democracy has been caught up and used in global structures of domination, hierarchy and violence. As Hobson puts it, “democracy, usually seen as being demanded from ‘below,’ is now clearly also a form of government demanded from ‘above.’”<sup>84</sup> Thus, a tension emerges from the contradictory practices and discourses about democracy that are being used and promoted in international politics. As a result, more attention needs to be given to democracy’s coercive dimension.

Although, there are important contributions highlighting the less progressive dimensions of democracy promotion<sup>85</sup>, the democratic peace thesis<sup>86</sup> and the democratic entitlement in international law,<sup>87</sup> these studies have remained discrete and limited in number. According to Hobson, what needs to be investigated is the way these separate, albeit interrelated, discourses and practices all feed into and reinforce the preeminent position of democracy in world politics.<sup>88</sup> It is important to find out what role democracy plays in defining legitimate statehood. In doing so, it helps structure relations between democratic and non-democratic states.

In fact, a ‘sin’ that presently unites all rogue and pariah states is their undemocratic nature. States that are alleged to be non-democratic or inadequately democratic are becoming ‘ontological outlaws.’<sup>89</sup> What these states *are*, or *are not*, is what removes them from ‘the civilized world’.<sup>90</sup> A major reason for this is that the

<sup>83</sup> Barry Gills, Joel Rocamora and Richard Wilson (eds.), *Low Intensity Democracy* (London: Pluto Press, 1993).

<sup>84</sup> Hobson, “Democracy as Civilization,” p. 80.

<sup>85</sup> William Robinson, *Promoting Polyarchy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

<sup>86</sup> Tarak Barkawi and Mark Laffey, *Democracy, Liberalism, and War* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2001).

<sup>87</sup> Susan Marks, *The Riddle of All Constitutions: International Law, Democracy, and the Critique of Ideology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) and Hazel Smith, “Democracy and International Relations,” *Global Society*, Vol. 12 (2), 1998.

<sup>88</sup> Hobson, “Democracy as Civilization,” p. 81.

<sup>89</sup> Donnelly, “Sovereign Inequalities and Hierarchy in Anarchy”.

<sup>90</sup> Hobson, “Democracy as Civilization,” p. 85. See also Peter J. Schraeder (ed.), *Exporting Democracy*

internal framework of states is now widely seen as determinative of external behavior. Thus, democracies are threatened because other states are non-democratic. The heart of these perceptions is the hugely influential Democratic Peace Thesis (DPT), which proposes that the internal (democratic) character of states has a causative role in generating international peace. The pacifist (antiwar) nature of democratic states, identified by the DPT, helps to represent and inform their ‘virtue.’ On the other hand, non-democracies increasingly are being targeted as obstacles on the road to ‘perpetual peace.’

### **Exporting Democracy: The Civilizing Process in the Contemporary International Society**

An essential debate today revolves around the normative issue of whether the international community should be actively involved in democracy promotion efforts. According to its proponents, the promotion of democracy should serve as the guiding principle of foreign policy for the northern industrialized democracies. Some have even argued that ‘exporting democracy’ will allow these industrial democracies to ‘fulfill their destinies’ within the international system.<sup>91</sup> The opposition to democracy promotion is also varied. Arguments range from the isolationist perspective, according to which the industrialized democracies should focus on their own affairs, to the belief that the ability to influence the democratic character of other countries is extremely limited. Negative consequences of democracy promotion programs, regardless of how well intentioned their proponents may be, was a major concern for others. Moreover, it has been suggested that democracy promotion serves as a tool for the pursuit of economic self-interest on the part of the international system’s most economically powerful states. Rather interesting in this debate is the addition of a cultural dimension in denouncing democracy promotion as the attempted Westernization of non-Western peoples. Hence, it has been argued that democracy promotion essentially amounts to a form of ‘neo-colonialism’ within the international community.

Essentially, the emergence of what constitutes a global consensus in favor of democracy promotion has prompted another debate among its proponents that revolves around a similar question: What forms of intervention should constitute part of the global arsenal in seeking democracy’s spread? One can speak of a spectrum of interventionist tools that have been employed in the name of democracy. These consist of diplomacy, foreign aid, political conditionality, economic sanctions, covert intervention, paramilitary intervention and military intervention. Questions have risen as to whether these specific

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(Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2002).

<sup>91</sup> Joshua Muravchik, *Exporting Democracy* (Washington D.C.: AEI Press, 1992).

tools are both proper and effective in securing democratic norms. Those that doubt whether democracy should or can be forced upon another sovereign state are critical of the use of any interventionist instruments with the exception of classical diplomacy and foreign aid. Nonetheless, political conditionality appears to enjoy widespread support, especially within the policy-making establishment of the northern industrial democracies, as a useful ‘middle road’ in between the two ends of the interventionist spectrum.

During the Cold War, global institutions, like the IMF and the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the predecessor of the WTO) and regional organizations, such as the European Union and NATO, were viewed as clubs formed by and for liberal states. As a result, the capitalist system was confined to a limited geographical space. The collapse of the Soviet Union, and the end of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe, along with the decline of communist ideology in general and the request for membership in the above-indicated organizations by former communist countries, paved the way for the expansion of the capitalist system. Simply put, organizational membership or assistance came to be dependent on the adoption of political-democratic and economic conditions by candidate or assistance-seeking states. The achievement of these standards has contributed to the expansion of the capitalist system and the liberal political and economic order associated with it.

Although several scholars have examined recent developments as reflecting new forms of the historical standard of ‘civilization’, what is absent from the literature is an investigation of the relationship between the idea and policy of ‘conditionality’ and the historical standard of ‘civilization’.<sup>92</sup> In other words, another possible successor to the historical standard of ‘political and economic performance’ is reflected in the idea and policy of ‘membership conditionality’. The latter is practiced both at the global and regional levels by international organizations, which constitute the visual expressions of the global and regional international societies respectively.

### **Membership Conditionality: The Contemporary Standard of ‘Civilization’**

‘Political performance’ (political conditionality) is a standard largely based on the idea of democracy, which has emerged as the predominant form of political governance within the Westphalian international states-system. This development has been strengthened by the surfacing of an international norm that considers the spreading of democracy to be an accepted and necessary component of international behavior. For instance, the widespread acceptance of democracy promotion as an international norm is clearly

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<sup>92</sup> Yannis Stivachtis, “Civilization and International Society,” *Contemporary Politics*, Vol. 14 (1), pp. 71-89.

demonstrated by its embodiment in the activities of the United Nations. As an organization, the UN was regarded and constructed on fundamental democratic principles. The organization promotes democracy through its norm-creating ability. UN organs have promulgated considerable international law embodying cardinal principles and values of democracy, especially through human rights treaties and the progressive codification of democratic principles into international legal norms. Ultimately, the UN actively facilitates democratic principles and institutions internationally by promoting a democratic culture in states. This is accomplished through monitoring and verifying national elections and holding referenda, which aim to foster fairer and freer opportunities so the democratic process works more openly and efficiently in newly emerging state societies.<sup>93</sup> As a result, international law has undergone a gradual transformation in favor of recognizing democracy as an ‘entitlement’ both to be defended and promoted.<sup>94</sup> Additionally, democracy may be seen as representing the highest stage of the western-type ‘civilized’ statehood, which was initially established and developed in Europe.<sup>95</sup>

The standard of ‘economic performance’ (economic conditionality) is connected to the adoption of policies aimed at the restructuring of the domestic economies of the candidate states and, as an extension, at market liberalization. Therefore, the application of ‘economic conditionality’ assists the expansion of capitalism. ‘Economic conditionality’ is closely tied to ‘political conditionality’ and ‘good governance’ and figures prominently in the policies of global and regional organizations such as the IMF, WTO and the EU (Williamson, 1983; Dell, 1981). In other words, a liberal political-democratic order – promoted through the application of ‘political conditionality’ – is seen as essential for the establishment and success of a liberal economic order promoted through the application of ‘economic conditionality’. In practice, however, ‘economic conditionality’ has not always worked in parallel with ‘political conditionality’. Thus ‘economic conditionality’ may be implemented by non-democratic regimes. ‘Democratic conditionality’ has been central to the policies of regional international organizations, such as the EU, NATO, CoE, as well as the normative system of the OSCE.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Sally Morphet, “The UN, Democracy and Europe since 1945,” in Trine Flockhart (ed.), *Socializing Democratic Norms* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2005).

<sup>94</sup> Thomas Franck, “The Emerging Democratic Entitlement,” in Anthony D’Amato (ed.), *International Law Anthology*. Cincinnati, OH: Anderson, 1994), pp. 367-73.

<sup>95</sup> Yannis Stivachtis, “Democracy: The Highest Stage of ‘Civilized’ Statehood,” *Global Dialogue*, Vol. 8(3-4), 2006.

<sup>96</sup> Flockhart (ed.), *Socializing Democratic Norms*; Franck Schimmelfennig, S. Engert and H. Knobel, *International Socialization in Europe: European Organizations, Political Conditionality and Democratic Change* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2006); Franck Schimmelfennig and U. Sedelmeir (eds.), *The Europeanization of Central and Eastern Europe*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005); Grabbe, Heather, *The EU’s Transformative Power: Europeanization through Conditionality in Central and Eastern Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2006); Brandon Kliewer and Yannis Stivachtis, “Political Conditionality and State Socialization in the European Union,” in Yannis Stivachtis (ed.), *The State of European Integration*

‘Democratic conditionality’ is also at the heart of the policies of global organizations, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organization (WTO).<sup>97</sup>

The above-indicated organizations provide a powerful incentive for aspiring members or assistance seekers to rethink their domestic, political, and economic arrangements by making democracy and market liberalization a precondition for acceptance or assistance. Moreover, what all these international organizations have in common is their tendency to promote a liberal international order. Observations may show that what ‘membership conditionality’ and the standard of ‘civilization’ have in common is their tendency to create and support an international liberal political and economic system. It is certainly not a coincidence, that the requirements included in the historical standard of ‘civilization’ are also included in the concept of ‘membership conditionality’ (guarantees for basic rights, such as life, dignity, and property; freedom of travel and commerce). Even though the major adjustments that have occurred within the standard of ‘civilization’ have remained, international practices and benchmarks that work against the attitudes and policies of states are continually assessed. In retrospect, nowhere can this be seen more clearly than in the policy of ‘democratic conditionality’ applied by a range of European-based international institutions.

The case can be made that the best possible successor of the historical standard of ‘civilization’ is ‘membership conditionality’, which is practiced both at the global and regional levels by international organizations that constitute the visual expressions of the global and regional international societies, respectively. This is for three reasons. First, ‘membership conditionality’ incorporates the ideas and policies related to the other three possible successors to the old standard of ‘civilization’. Second, historically speaking, the definition of standards of behavior and their implementation presupposes the existence of a society of states embedded in a much larger international system. It is the acceptance of the standards by non-members of that society that alters the society’s boundaries. This is clearly illustrated by the historical expansion of the European society of states and the concomitant changes effected within the contemporary global international society through the application of the standard of ‘civilization’. Third, the implementation of the standards involved needs to be administered while the progress in their fulfillment requires monitoring by a group of states that are already members of an international society. Contemporary international organizations, like the EU and NATO, are reflections of international societies and they do administer the standards that candidate

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(Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007); D. Papadimitriou and D. Phinnemone, “Europeanisation, Conditionality and Domestic Change,” *Journal of Common Market Studies*. Vol. 42 (3), 2004, pp. 619-39; and Geoffrey Pridham, *Designing Democracy* (New York: Palgrave, 2005).

<sup>97</sup> Kwame Akonor, *Africa and IMF Conditionality* (London: Routledge, 2006); John Williamson, *IMF Conditionality* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1983) and Sidney Dell, *On Being Grandmotherly: The Evolution of IMF Conditionality* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981).

states should fulfill to gain entry into these organizations/societies and monitor their progress towards accession.

Studying the enlargement of the European Union, one may observe that this process is not very different from the process of the historical expansion of European international society.<sup>98</sup> As in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, EU Member States had to define the conditions under which they would admit candidate states. As a result, European states which aspired to EU membership need to meet the political and economic criteria associated with ‘membership conditionality’. Like the standard of ‘civilization’, ‘membership conditionality’ is an expression of the assumptions used to distinguish those that belong to the expanding European Union from those that do not. Those who agree to fulfill the political and economic conditions set by the EU states will be brought inside, while those who will not conform are left outside. This thesis has been most recently supported by Hartmut Behr, who has argued that the accession politics of the EU and the standard of ‘civilization’ have strong commonalities.<sup>99</sup> Like the non-European states before, EU candidate states had to learn to adjust themselves to new realities, even at some cost to their own societies.

## Conclusion

It is widely believed today that democracy and its associated practices should provide the bases on which contemporary global politics should be based and guided. Consequently, various global and regional organizations now require prospective member states to fulfill certain political and economic requirements (such as membership conditionality) that are associated with liberal democracy prior to entering the organization, as well as introduce practices related to ‘good governance’.

Using the comparative historical framework provided by the English School of International Relations, this paper sought to illustrate that similar requirements and practices, as well as the discourses associated with them, have also been used in the past and that they have always been connected to the efforts of Western states to build and manage a liberal international order. In other words, there is a historical continuity in the practices of Western states although the terms used to express these practices alter over time.

The paper argues that democracy in its ‘liberal anti-pluralist’ form represents an innovative form of the historical standard of ‘civilization’. In fact, democracy has been

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<sup>98</sup> Yannis A. Stivachtis, “Civilization and International Society: The Case of European Union Expansion,” *Contemporary Politics*, Vol. 14 (1), March 2008, pp. 71-90.

<sup>99</sup> Hartmut Behr, “The European Union in the Legacies of Imperial Rule?” *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 13 (2), 2007, pp. 239-262, on p. 239.

the unifying feature of all possible successors to the historical standard of ‘civilization.’ Democracy is recognized as the most suitable form of governance and essential for the full protection of human rights. These compatibilities, along with freedom, stability, accountability, openness, social justice, international peace, and stronger international law make democracy the focal point for the current standard of ‘civilization.’ In providing a set of socio-political institutions, democracy becomes the blueprint and mechanism through which Western values and interests are transmitted. Membership conditionality represents one of the most effective ways through which such transmission takes place.