The Modern International Imaginary: Sketching Horizons and Enriching the Picture

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ABSTRACT: This article aims to bridge the literature of modern social imaginaries with the growing study of modernity in International Relations. Employing a Taylorian conceptual framework and account, the case is made for understanding modern international relations as enabled and constrained by a "modern international imaginary", which forms a significant part of the modern social imaginary more generally. It is argued that a modern social imaginaries approach offers a means to deepen and enlarge the growing studies of the international implications of modernity, by illuminating overlooked cultural preconditions and forms of modern international relations. First, a social imaginaries approach reveals the international to be coeval with the emergence of modern social imaginaries in general, and that it has come to form their "highest" and most consistently and severely problematic realm. Second, its insight into the enabling and constraining effects of social imaginaries offers a basis for studying the horizons of the international towards a "global imaginary". Third, unpacking the modern international imaginary offers qualitative benefits for international theory as practice.

KEYWORDS: Social Imaginaries, Modern International Relations, International Imaginary, Global Imaginary, Multiple Modernities, Global Modernity.

Introduction

This article aims to bridge the literature of modern social imaginaries with the increasingly explicit and systematic study of modernity in International Relations. Employing Charles Taylor's conceptual framework and account of modern social imaginaries, the case is made for understanding modern international theory and practice as enabled and constrained by a "modern international imaginary", which forms a significant part of the modern social imaginary more generally. I argue a modern social imaginaries approach illuminates the cultural preconditions and enabled and constrained aspects of modernity that are overlooked in the literature of international modernity. In general, bridging these literatures offers a deeper and more thoroughgoing account of the modern cultural form of international thought and practice.

I am employing Taylor's approach to modern social imaginaries (Taylor 2004; Calhoun et al. 2015), rather than social imaginary theory in general (such as, Castoriadis 1997; Ricoeur 1986; Anderson 1983; Bottici 2014; see, Adams et al. 2015). Taylor's use of social imaginaries differs in important respects, for instance, from Cornelius Castoriadis's first development of the concept (Castoriadis 1998; Gaonkar 2002; Calhoun et al. 2015). Castoriadis's use aims at exploring how one social imaginary comes to supersede another, exploring how a new social imaginary is imagined. By contrast, Taylor's use of social imaginaries explores how shifts in social imaginaries are shaped by and also sediment upon the "background" of prevailing imaginaries. While Castoriadis's use of the concept helps explore the emergence of new social imaginaries, Taylor's use helps explore how diachronic transitions are enabled and constrained by prevailing imaginaries. Taylor's work is particularly helpful for the aims of this article because of the number of correctives it supplies for the growing studies of modern international relations. This is to say it helps bracket-in important aspects that recent studies in modern international relations are in danger of bracketing-out. It also helps focus the discussion and amounts to a first step towards larger studies of the "modern international imaginary". Bridging the wider literatures of social imaginaries and modern international relations is beyond the scope of a single article. The majority of the discussion below concerns what correctives and supplements are illuminated by a Taylorian conceptual framework and account of modern social imaginaries.

The transformation of modernity with respect to the international has be- come a recent topic of study in International Relations (Buzan and Lawson 2015). Similarly, there has been

a recent "international" turn in Intellectual History, carving out the terrain of "modern international thought" (Armitage 2013). These studies stand to benefit from an exploration of the preconditions and cultural form of modern international thought that a modern social imaginaries approach provides. There are some understandings of the international as "imaginary" within the theoretical literature of International Relations, but they have not been connected to their modern cultural form. For instance, C.A.W. Manning theorized the society of states as having a 'notional' existence, existing only in the imagination (Manning 1975). Kenneth Waltz used the notion of an 'image' in his account of the international system of states, and being later influenced by Manning, also suggested that, 'one may well think of political systems as being merely intellectual constructs' (Waltz 1954; Waltz 1979, p. 44). More recently, L.H.M. Ling has developed an account of 'imagining world politics', which seeks the method and content of imagining world politics otherwise (Ling 2014). I argue that bridging the literatures of Taylor's modern social imaginary studies with recent studies of modern international relations opens-up a deeper and more thoroughgoing account of modern international relations, via an exploration of the modern international imaginary.

I argue first that bridging these literatures illuminates significant cultural preconditions and forms of modern international relations overlooked in the literature, whilst also revealing the international to be coeval with the emergence of modern social imaginaries in general, and that it has come to form their "highest" and most consistently and severely problematic realm. Second, I argue insight into the enabling and constraining effects of social imaginaries offers a basis for studying the horizons of the international imaginary towards "global imaginaries". Third, unpacking the modern international imaginary offers qualitative benefits for international theory as practice, by providing a richer awareness of the modern enabling and constraining "boundaries" impinging on international theory as international practice.

I. International Modernity

What is the place of the "international" in the modern social imaginary and how has the modern social imaginary shaped the international? Taylor defines a social imaginary as,

> the ways people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images that underlie these expectations. (Taylor 2004, p. 23)

This is his notion of a "background" of fundamental social scripts and normative narratives that enable performed practices and social actions. For Taylor, the modern social imaginary, in a Western context, is the story of a transition from an hierarchical picture of social and political order, to a horizontal and collaborative one. In Taylor's account, the increasing realization of this picture in theory and practice enabled the possibility, but also constrained the form of modern economies, public spheres, public and private life, popular sovereignty, democracy, and nationalism. This is to say that each of these modern practices is enabled and constrained by the emergence of a new image of what a moral order is. The modern imaginary of an economy, for instance, is the taken-for-granted sense that it is an arrangement or scheme within which individuals perform actions and transactions, so that everyone benefits. Much of what I want to argue is that the "international" has a modern origin and form, like the other realms of modern life, such as the economy and public sphere.

In describing the transition to modernity, Taylor cites Grotius as an early intellectual source. "It starts off", he says,

> in Grotius's version as a theory of what political society is, that is, what it is in aid of, and how it comes to be. …The picture of society is that of individuals who come together to form a political entity against a certain preexisting moral background and with certain ends in view. (Taylor 2004, p. 3)

Here, right off, we have an international connection, since Grotius is often regarded as the first philosopher of international law. Grotius also provides an early expression of the international imaginary.

> Just as the laws of each state have in view the advantage of that state, so by mutual consent it has become possible that certain laws should originate as between all states, or a great many states; and it is apparent that the laws thus originating had in view the advantage, not of particular states, but of the great society of states. (Grotius 2012, p. 5)

Taylor's story of the rise of the modern social imaginary describes the gradual "long march" of Grotius's modern collaborative sense of political or- der into nearly every aspect of social life, its increasing realization in modern economies, public spheres, and democracies

most clearly. But, following Taylor here, we can also say the emergence of the international, found within the early source of Grotius, is coeval with the modern social imaginary.

This discussion emphasizes the importance of the cultural modernity of international relations in theory and practice. The cultural modernity of international relations is not an entirely untouched topic. Raymond Aron's early sociological approach to international relations emphasized the importance of modern values and worldviews for the possibilities of world order, war and peace (Aron 1966a, 1966b). Another branch of international thought that has developed the modern picture of international order goes by the name of the "English School" of International Relations. With some influence from Aron's work (see the heavy citation of Aron in Bull 1977), this branch of inter- national thought has attempted to articulate an "insider" and "hermeneutic" account of international relations. A further literature is the post-structuralist account of modern international relations, which has unpacked the modern cultural form of international theory and practice (Ashley and Walker 1990; Walker 1993). A related literature is Feminist International Relations, which has studied the modern culture of gendered international theory and practice (Tickner 1992). Another body of literature developing the modern picture of the international is Constructivist International Relations. This literature has developed an account of how the emergence of modern nation-states constitute the form of the modern international system (Ruggie 1993; Bruce Hall 1999; Reus-Smit 1999). A significant contribution here, is also Justin Rosen- berg's work, which made the rise of the modern international order a central topic of study for International Relations (Rosenberg 1994). More recently, Barry Buzan and George Lawson have studied the emergence of modernity as a global transformative process from which contemporary international relations issues (Buzan and Lawson 2015). David Armitage has also explored the early canonical texts of modern international thought (Armitage 2013). Bridging these literatures with the study of modern social imaginaries, using Taylor's account as a first step, enlarges and deepens the study of international modernity, by providing a framework to understand the enabling and constraining effects of a modern social imaginary on the theory and practice of modern international relations. Presently, these literatures have no such shared framework. For instance, World Historical Sociology, connected to Uneven and Combined Development theory, has been advanced as the needed sociological direction for International Relations (Buzan and Lawson 2015; Rosenberg 2016), but much of my argument in this article is that such an approach brackets-out several important cultural aspects of modernity that a social imaginaries approach illuminates. As such, the argument here is that a Taylorian

conceptual framework of social imaginaries provides a first step towards that larger social imaginaries corrective contribution to International Relations approaches to modernity.

Bridging these literatures is also needed in part to shore up the social imaginaries literature, and Taylor's specifically, which does not explore the increasing depth of modernity for the realm of international relations. Taylor's account details the democratic, economic, national, and secular practices that the modern social imaginary enabled. He also gives accounts of modern popular sovereignty and modern revolutionary practice, but does not give an account of the new and changed international practices enabled by the mod- ern social imaginary (Taylor 2004, Ch. 8). A weakness of Taylor's account is how Taylor restricts his analysis to a Western context. It is important to emphasize the multi-cultural sources of modernity, how Western modernity has non-Western sources, and how global modernity has multiple cultural sources. As such, one benefit of bridging Taylor's account of modern social imaginaries with recent studies of modern international relations is that it helps to place Taylor's account of the Western context of modernity into the larger global and world historical context of modern international relations. Taylor's framework for thinking about social imaginaries is a conceptual aid for bridging the literatures of social imaginaries and international relations, offering a conceptual starting point for developing modern international imaginary studies in general.

What is the "modern international imaginary", and how did it become realized in practice? Let me depict it in broad strokes here, and then move into a more detailed discussion of its emergence and form that will bridge the gap between the literature on modern social imaginaries and that on modern international relations. In general terms, the modern international imaginary is an imagined social space amongst sovereign states, a space in which states, like individuals in modern society, meet against a background of sovereign rights, to collaborate or not, towards a scheme of mutual benefit. This image is a moving target, but there is a case to be made for its increasing realization in practice, where the "international" gradually took on the place of the "highest" realm of the modern social imaginary, "high politics". Grotius is credited with providing an early expression of the vision of a society of states, the modern horizontal order of sovereigns, which conveys the hegemonic Western conception of the international (Bull, Kingsbury and Roberts 1990). Grotius's vision of a moral order made its way into the various other realms of political life, generating, as Taylor has shown, the modern social imaginary, but it also carried on a deepening logic of its own, generating an increasingly realized international imaginary, from the early modern, to the modern, and into the late modern of today. The 16th and 17th centuries saw the increasing horizontalization of

the order of Europe, with the idea that each sovereign had an independent raison d'état, which gradually enabled Grotius's image in practice, what Bull classically called the 'anarchical society' of sovereign states, formalized in the 19th century, with the modern international practices of positive international law, conference diplomacy and multilateralism, great power management, and the balance of power (Bull 1977). This is the application of the modern conception of a moral order to the relations of states, the idea of order as a scheme for mutual benefit wherein each nonetheless pursues their independent interests. This image of an order amongst states, formed the emerging international imaginary. The international imaginary was, how- ever, a moving and never uncontested target. Its basic underlying pictures of what a moral order is and involves, enabled shifting and rival positions on the international, particularly the socialist international vision, which sought a liberated international order, one that would be more properly collaborative, freed from international class domination.

In the early textual sources of the modern international imaginary, the modern sense of order frames the underlying logic of the increasingly developed theory of the international. Armitage studies this emerging modern international thought in Hobbes, Locke, and Burke (Armitage 2013). With Hobbes, as Armitage explains, 'It was on his assimilation of the law of nations to the law of nature that Hobbes identified the international arena as a still existing state of nature' (Armitage 2013, p. 65). Only with the conception of order as a collaborative scheme built by an assembly of people or peoples, could Hobbes conceive the international as a realm devoid of order (Jahn 2000). Armitage also provides insight into Locke's thought, as the position that, 'commonwealths claimed the Earth's surface through positive agreements in which they mutually recognized each others' exclusive territorial rights' (Armitage 2013, p. 82). For Locke, then, there are collaborative agreements between sovereigns, but not of the same depth as those within them (Armitage 2013, p. 80). Locke differs from Hobbes on the relation of natural law and the law of nations, but the two thinkers shared the same underlying modern social imaginary, shaping their international thought. With Burke, the modern social imaginary, framing and enabling his international thought, is, again, no less present, but with a conservative bent. Burke's idea of a commonwealth of Europe is one of the most intriguing, for with it he suggests a horizontal collaborative commonwealth of European states, to which revolutionary France was a threat, because it was 'aiming at universal empire', while the Glorious Revolution, did not (Fidler and Welsh 1999, pp. 47-50; Armitage 2013, pp. 168-169). But, Burke's image of a commonwealth of Europe was prefaced by the earlier image of a Christian republic of Europe. Burke's vision of the international echoed, in a secularized register, the Medieval conception of Christendom, as an all-embracing community. The rise of

the modern international imaginary territorialized and eventually nationalized the once universal concept of a political community, constraining modern thought to the picture of an international society of separate political communities (Lefort 2000; Bartelson 2009).

These themes can be explored further by turning from international thought to the realization of the modern international imaginary in practice. I am aiming in this discussion to highlight the value-added qualities of bridging Taylor's conceptual framework of social imaginaries and account of modernity with the recent literature of modernity in International Relations. As such discussion does not engage in the comprehensive historical detail of specific events and practice. Nor does it delve too deeply into the historical transformation of social and political forms, as the literatures being bridged provide detailed accounts on their own. Rather, I mean to show what is illuminated and "opened up" by this bridging activity. In the literature of International Relations, Buzan and Lawson's recent study of international modernity pegs the emergence of the modern international system to the long 19th century, 1776-1914 (2015). Buzan and Lawson develop a sophisticated account of the novelty of the industrial revolution, the nation-state, and ideas of progress. They also advance the concept of a modern "mode of power" to explain the form of modern international relations. They define modes of power, intentionally fuzzily, as, 'the material and ideational relations that are generative of both actors and the ways in which power is exercised' (Buzan and Law- son, 2015, p. 1). As such, they describe the modern international as a 'global transformation' following from a modern mode of power characterized by 'a complex configuration of industrialization, rational state-building and ideologies of progress' (2015, p. 1). Buzan and Lawson describe this development of the modern international system as a process of three phases: the 'Western- colonial', the 'Western-global', and an emerging 'decentered globalism' (2015, pp. 273-274). The third is decentered, in contrast to the first two phases they describe as 'Western-centered', with the West forming the core amidst a global periphery (Buzan and Lawson 2015, pp. 273-274).

The Taylorian account of modern social imaginaries complements Buzan and Lawson's analysis of the global emergence of international modernity, by deepening and broadening our understanding of that process in two important respects. It, again, frames the content, gives it a richer enlarged understanding. There is, however, a tension between the account of a global transformation of modernity and Taylor's account of the preconditions, variety, and degree of modern transformations (Taylor 2001). That is to say, a Taylorian account provides an emphasis on the importance of culture in our understanding on modernity. While Lawson and Buzan peg the emergence of the modern international system to the long 19th century, Taylor's

account of modernity emphasizes earlier cultural preconditions. For instance, we can see in Taylor's view the transformations of the 19th century are the realization of ideas traceable to Grotius's 17th century writings (Taylor 2004). The realization of these ideas in practice, moreover, were not only realizable with the emergence of the 19th century idea of nation-states, but much earlier with the idea that states could have an independent raison d'état. The rise of the nation only shifted the contents of the state. A major ideational component of Buzan and Lawson's account of modernity is the rise of 'ideologies of progress', connected to modern 'political ideologies: liberalism, socialism, nationalism and 'scientific racism' (2015, p. 99). Yet, how the idea of progress became possible has cultural sources predating the long 19th century. Order had to be understood as collaborative and created, rather than prefixed as it were, before its progressive improvement could be imaginable. Furthermore, the cultural theory of modernity that Taylor develops enlarges our understanding of the multiple cultural forms of modernity. The "big bang" of the 19th century was not universal or uniform, as modernization took on multiple forms, with a Eurasian transformation, for instance (Phillips 2013, 2016; Eisenstadt 2000).

Some clarifications are needed here. This is and is not one modernity, since it has multiple cultural sources and multiple and alternative entangled and interrelated cultural forms (Meyer and de Sales Margues 2018; Bhambra 2007; Eisenstadt 2000, Appadurai 1996; Gaonkar 1999, 2002). The fact that there is one global international order with regional variations that "provincialize" one another can be thought to evince this (Chakrabarty 2000; Buzan 2011; Ancharya 2014). Multiple civilizations and modernities are not hermetically sealed. They are interwoven webs and currents of meaning that flow across them generating internally diverse and mutually entangled modern discourses (Katzenstein 2009).

Let me unpack the modern international imaginary further. With the in- creasing realization of a collaborative picture of international society in practice, during the long 19th century, significant shifts in international ordering practices emerged. Natural law receded before positive international law. Mercantilism declined before the rise of a free trade market, facilitated by the gold standard. The system of the balance of power became justified as a check against would-be hegemons, so preserving international order. Diplomacy guided by the great powers performed the deliberations of an imagined collaborative horizontal order. The sense of warfare involving divine justice was supplanted by the sense of warfare as the enforcement of positivist inter- national law and order, or as the revolutionary war for an alternative modern international order. The practice of warfare modernized in scale and speed, with railways, machine guns, and dreadnaughts, as Buzan and Lawson argue, but, crucially, the Taylorian

approach illuminates shifts in the basic pictures and expectations about what a war is imagined to be. The scale of warfare grew in the modern context not only because of the mass production of weapons and mechanized mass transportation, but because war became imaginable as a collaborative collective action, eventually enabling the modern theory and practice of total war, with the entirety of societies imagined as participating in the war effort.

These realized modern international practices were classically articulated by Vattel, who conveyed the sense of their collaborative logic in an inter- national society. As he put it, 'the object of the great society … between all nations is … the interchange of mutual assistance for their own improvement and that of their condition' (Vattel 2008, p. [lxi] 73). Here is the hegemonic picture of the modern international imaginary, a collaborating society of states. This hegemonic picture took on rival versions in theory and practice, a liberal version challenged by a socialist picture of the international, which as Buzan and Lawson suggest, were visions of 'progress', enabled by the notion of an order as collaborative and alterable, rather than divine and unalterable. In this discussion, of extending the picture of the background of the modern international system, it is important to recognize the compartmentalized development of this modern international order, as Lawson and Buzan rightly emphasize. While European states were increasingly governed by a horizontal collaborative logic, logics of hierarchy remained between them and non-European peoples, whilst attaining modern justifications. That is, there was a logic of collaborative anarchy amongst European powers, but commanded racial-civilizational hierarchy beyond them, even though the imperial hierarchy was imagined, counter-intuitively, as a modern order of mutual benefit (Buzan and Lawson 2015, p. 98; Keene 2004; Zarakol 2011). The capacity to collaborate as an independent state, with international lawyers, diplomatic corps, etc. became codified in the now infamous 'standards of civilization', but the capacity to colonize also became a marker of civilized modernity (Gong 1984; Suzuki 2005). Hence, modern imperialism has lasting effects in the modern international imaginary, long after decolonization.

Buzan and Lawson correctly identify the anti-colonial and anti-racist legacies in world politics that follow from the imperialism of the long 19th century. Yet, it is curious that their analysis of contemporary 'decentering globalism' omits identity politics. They suggest the primary tensions in this context of contemporary decentering world politics are between varieties of capitalism (Buzan and Lawson 2015, 2014). This, however, misses the significant issues of identity politics in the emerging post-Western-centric world order, such as disagreements over international law and legitimacy, including human rights, indigenous politics, and secularism, as well as culturally diverse approaches to ecological harmony. The

phenomenology of a modern social imaginaries framework and approach illuminates the post-colonial and multicultural subjectivities enabled and constrained by the post colonial legacies of modern international relations (Shani 2008). Achille Mbembe and Arjun Appadurai, for instance, use a social imaginaries framework to unpack the modern post- colonial African and Indian imaginaries (Mbembe 2002; Appadurai 1996). The historical experience of colonization, for Mbembe and Appadurai, both enables and constrains the modern post-colonial African and Indian imaginary. A related point here is that by drawing out the modern international imaginary with a phenomenological social imaginaries approach, we also gain insight into the place of affect in international relations, in both theory and practice. There are intense desires amongst states persons and theorists alike to establish and maintain "world order", but always in its modern sense, as conditioned by the modern international imaginary. Bringing the background imaginary into focus illuminates "what it's like" to be in the life-world of the international. It gives a richer understanding of why some things and not others matter in theory and practice, affectively. It gives a sense of the emotional concerns of international theory and practice, what the attachments are to, and why different situations around participants produce different moods. It helps make-sense of the affective homologies at play in international relations, between, difference and disorder, for instance. It clarifies how these things connect with a negative phenomenology, in theory and practice. The enlarged background of a social imaginaries account gives a richer phenomenological
affective picture of the foreground, the day-to-day modern international.

It is helpful to highlight how this realization of the international was not independent of the working-through of modernity in other realms of social life. The collaborative international imaginary was at first a picture of monarchical sovereigns, but out of the French, American, and Haitian revolutions, the rise of modern democracies with the idea of the sovereign people and ideal of equality, created upheavals in the emergence of the modern international imaginary. The 1815 termination of the Napoleonic wars and failed 1848 revolutions gave the international a definite statist form in practice, but also a counter-revolutionary character, in the Concert of Europe, codified in international law and diplomatic practice by the counter-revolutionary victors (Armitage 2013, p. 41). The Napoleonic wars and the counter-revolutionary order that followed them disrupted but also transmuted the idea of a Chris- tian commonwealth of Europe gradually towards the more Newtonian idea of a multi-state "system" of Europe. This transmuting image is evident for instance in Heeren's concept of *Staatensystem*, developed in his *Handbuch der Geschichte des Europaischen Staatensystems und seiner Kolonien*, 1809. The emergence of the international imaginary in

practice also occurred in this period across the Atlantic, amongst the independent revolutionary states of the Americas. The growth of belief in the equality of persons, articulated in the theory of rights and freedoms, in and beyond the Atlantic world, ushered in an era of realizing an international system, imagined as ushering in a revolutionary international society of states. With cultural preconditions in pre-modern cultures, the long 19th century saw the realization of the modern laissez-faire international system, where an international order was imagined as a collaborative scheme, wherein the self-interested actions of states were imagined as working towards the freedom and security of all, chiefly through the maintenance of a balance of power, the gold standard and free trade, positive international law, and multilateral diplomacy. The globalization of the ideal of equality and practice of rights and democracy expanded from class, to race and gender, in anti-colonial struggles that globalized the society of states into a worldwide political system, underpinned by a globalized international imaginary (Reus-Smit 2013; Dunne and Reus-Smit 2017).

The rise of modern nationalism had a significant role on this emerging modern international imaginary, gradually transforming it from a realm of monarchical, aristocratic and imperial relations to a globalized extension of the nation-state. What is interesting here are the preconditions of national- ism, the preconditions of an early Christian imaginary in particular, which shaped the hegemonic form of the modern nation-state and its impact on international relations. The word "international" was coined by Jeremy Bentham in the 19th century and it was Mazzini who gave nationalism its modern internationalist spin, the vision of a symphonic collaboration of nation-states. The rise of the nation, that is, extended into the realm of the society of states and its imperial system, transforming it into the globalized international society of modernity (Mayall 1990; Calhoun 1997; Buzan and Lawson 2015; Dunne and Reus-Smit 2017). A precondition for conceiving the nation as a political community was the prior conception of a universal community (Le- fort 2000; Bartelson 2009). This shaped the modern international imaginary in important respects, giving rise to the notion of nations as the legitimate units in the system, with both sacralized but also naturalized borders and patriotism. The rise of nationalism, as an emergent locus of legitimacy, trans- formed the practices of diplomacy and international law, war and peace, and empire, and contributed to the principle of self-determination, shaping the vision of the League of Nations. By contrast, the rise of the socialist internationalism, offered a rival class-based conception of the modern international imaginary. Yet, both visions worked within the more general modern social imaginary, closely associated with a collaborative picture. The First World War destroyed the belief and aspiration of a laissez-faire international system, but the taken-for-granted picture of an international

order as a collaborative scheme still guided the League of Nations in its diplomatically collaborative and "collective security" shape, as well as its ultimate dissolution following the unsustainability of collaborative endeavors. There was a presumption of collective collaboration in the constitution of the League, a picture that did not include the possibility of multiple simultaneous detractions and deviations (Northedge 1986). Nationalism also played a hand in the United Nations, eventually leading to the process of decolonization (Mazower 2009). And yet, the functioning of the United Nations still rests on the background picture of internationalist collaboration, in its organs and General Assembly, as well as in the Security Council, ideally intended, if rarely, to act as a concert of great powers.

Something that is interesting here, that bridging these literatures illuminates, is how membership in the society of states transformed in ways similar to the direct access society, as Taylor and Calhoun have described it in the context of the modern nation-state (Taylor 2004; Calhoun 1997). As Taylor and Calhoun have explained, membership in the nation-state was not mediated by intermediary institutions, but direct and definitive, in-or-out, as it were. Membership in the society of states, however, is conditional and was compartmentalized in the 19th century, as discussed above. Access became globalized in the process of the spread of beliefs in equal rights and the extension of nationalism to international society, through revolutionary struggles and the process of decolonization. The result of this globalized international society is similar, but not perfectly consistent with the nationalization of the modern imaginary of domestic society. Today, membership in international society is still contingent on sovereign recognition, which is practically reflected in membership in the United Nations. Not every nation is a member of international society, but not every state is a nation. The nationalist sense that every nation should, in principle, be a direct member of international society, however, is palpable in world affairs. There is a widespread sense that international society is imperfect, because direct-access membership is denied by the institution of sovereign statehood. The imperfect parallel between national and international society is contentious because of the underlying modern social imaginary that expects direct access membership in societies. There is a sense here that we are living in the practical rubble of Mazzini's internationalist vision that met the limits of an analogy between a domestic direct access national society, and the legally complicated order of international society (Mazower 2012).

Furthermore, bridging these literatures illuminates how the modern sense of a collaborative order made the notion and macro-practice of "world or- der" possible. World order, as a term, first began making its appearance in the 20th century. World order is the modern idea that the political affairs of humankind can be collaboratively organized or

arranged in such a way as to make the world a better place. It is the modern idea that the collaboration of humankind, within a certain arranged order of rights and authorities, can improve human welfare for all humankind. The modern tradition of political realism in international affairs militates against this vision. Because order has taken on a collaborative and progressive sense, the realist points out the limits of collaboration, the issues of disagreement, conflict, discord. For the political realist, because conflict exists, a thoroughly collaborative world order is impossible. It is only the modern sense of order as a collaborative endeavor that makes this position possible, however. The looser gathering of traditions understood as expressing international liberalism and idealism commonly see collaboration as possible. It is these traditions that devise schemes of world order reform, to perfect the collaborative possibilities of humankind.

Even with a cursory awareness of modern international history, one can see the modern ambition of world order has been problematic and elusive, and that its history is one of recurrent crisis. Part of what is illuminated here by bridging these literatures is how the aftermath of each international crisis has been characterized by the pursuit of a more carefully designed and revised collaborative international order. There was never a break from the modern conception of international order, only adjustments to its practice and institutions. The League of Nations abandoned the balance of power system for collective security, and wished to replace the practice of secret diplomacy with "new" open diplomacy. The United Nations abandoned collective security for a concert of great powers and developed the collaborative ambitions of decolonization and development. In the post-Cold War moment, a system of global governance has emerged around the United Nations, drawing the collaboration of state and civil society and business partners into the order of governance activities (Mazower 2012). It is interesting to see here how the modern imaginaries of a civil society and public sphere have had a limited reach into the international. Conceived as realms of collaborating publics that organize and facilitate governed society, these imaginaries of civil society and especially the public sphere are taken to be major features of the modern social imaginary in general (Taylor 2004). Because the public sphere and civil society have been conceived as such, their extension into the international "outside", with the notions of a global civil society and global public sphere, are rendered incoherent (Bartelson 2006). There is no global government for their practice to address, only an international society with elements of global governance. As such, global civil society and a global public sphere are imagined as thin, lacking a public proper, because the international is imagined to lack these features.

The international has a central place in the modern social imaginary and the international, as a coeval source of modernity's early formulation, has been enabled and constrained by that background imaginary, coming to form the "highest" and most persistently and severely problematic realm of social life on a world scale.

II. Horizons of the Modern International Imaginary

I have already begun to approach the next question of what Richard Falk has called the 'horizons' of modern international order (Falk 2016, p. 101). By this, I mean to turn to the question of the limits and confines of the imagined futures of the modern international imaginary, the analysis of which a social imaginaries account enables. Particularly for Taylor, a significant aspect of social imaginaries is how they enable the possibility of alternative practices whilst equally con- straining possibilities. As such, social imaginaries enable imagined alternative futures, utopian and dystopian pictures, but within the limited horizons of the social imaginary. What imagined futures do the horizons of the modern inter- national social imaginary enable? This question is difficult to assess without the richer cultural account of modern social imaginaries.

We can see how the modern international social imaginary has enabled futures imagined as properly or maximally collaborative schemes of humankind. Kant's perpetual peace and Marx's communist future offer alternative visions of a properly collaborative humankind. All the modern perpetual peace proposals, from L'Abbe St. Pierre, onwards, have attempted to devise properly collaborative schemes. For instance, John Rawls's Law of Peoples reproduces Grotius's picture of a political society as people assembling, against a back- ground of rights, around collaborative goals. Rawls imagines a 'realistic' international future as an expanding pacific and tolerant circle of 'well-ordered' peoples, which he defines in modern and specifically liberal terms of order (Rawls 2001). It is imagined as an expanding collaborative scheme amongst collaborative peoples, resting on and contingent on the modern international imaginary of what an international order is. Rawls's cosmopolitan critics, emphasizing modern beliefs in equal individual rights, have argued the proper future starts instead with defining a collaborative scheme of the individuals of all humankind (Barry 1973; Brown 2002). These rival international visions, in either case, however, are firmly within the horizons of the modern collaborative conception of order.

We can also see how the modern international imaginary has been a pre- condition for a variety of late-modern and post-modern imagined futures that maintain the modern sense of

international order, but shift its context in time and space. “Global” relations have been the focal point of alternative visions that suggest a transformation in the time/space context of relations (Robertson 1992; Rosenboim 2017). Beyond the international, there is often imagined a “global level” of relations, across, above, and beyond the “international”, where non-state actors can collaboratively engage in ordering practices (Bar- nett and Sikkink 2008; Neumann and Sending 2010; Brown 2014). Much of this shift in time and space enables the conception and practice of global governance. This imagined global social space is also limited by its preconditions of an international space. It is imagined as built “above” the nation-states, for instance, rather than the nation-state being built “above” and “upon” it. As such, it is subject to the same contest between modern realists and idealists, respectively viewing it as an extension of conflict or collaboration “above” the states. Because the nation-state has emerged as the site of legitimate political community in the modern international imaginary, the “global community” has become utopian in the modern imagination (Bartelson 2009). The dream of a “global community” has little congruence with the modern international imaginary. Its usage in a modern context implies a secular or disenchanted vision of the universal political community from which modern conceptions of the political community arose. With a social imaginaries account, we can also see how the increasingly globalized international imaginary enables the nostalgic search to retrieve a universal moral order, to re-connect, in a new way, to the great chain of being (Walker 2010). This is the modern search for a retrieval of the cosmopolitan world community, the civitas maxima (Bartelson 2009). These attempts at retrieval are always modern, always conceived in op- position to the horizontal and less than desirably collaborative modern world. They are, that is, always an attempt to re-connect to universal moral footholds in a secular age (Taylor 2007).

In connection to the last point, we can also see how the modern international imaginary is a precondition for shifts in the sense of who is ordered internationally. The long march of the modern social imaginary in the development of the international involves deepening transformative extension of who is ordered internationally. First, the globalization of international society gradually brought the entirety of the human population and all the territory of the earth into the order of an international society, globalizing the modern international imaginary (Dunne and Rues-Smit 2017). Second, the increasingly developed practices of global governance and human rights in international politics and international law is gradually, if incompletely and imperfectly, expanding the order of the society of states to include individuals and indigenous peoples (Brown 2014; Keal 2003). Third, a major emerging trend

is the growth of imagined ecological futures that are shaped by the collaborative sense of order, imagined futures of human and non-human collaborative schemes on planetary scales (Latour, 2016). This is to say that what are often understood as post-modern or late-modern conceptions of international order usually combine shifts in the time/space of order with shifts in who is ordered, rather than entirely new conceptions of international order itself.

Lastly, I want to touch more closely on the enabled and constrained possibility of a 'global imaginary', as an extension of the market, public sphere, etc., to a "global" level (McKeil 2017; Falk 2016, p. 151; Hayden 2009). Buzan and Lawson suggest the modern international system is approaching a phase of 'decentered globalism', as power shifts away from the North Atlantic to more regional centers (2015, p. 273-274). They suggest the system will remain 'globalist' in so far as global capitalism will persist (Buzan and Lawson 2015, 2014). What I want to suggest is that the international imaginary perspective adds more to the account of 'globalism'. The idea has crisscrossed across where/when/ who questions of imaginable and practicable modern international order. What is interesting is how the modern international imaginary is characterized by a search for a post-national or trans-national form of belonging, and a post-Westphalian form of organization that involves a search for a globalism beyond capitalist trade and finance. Richard Falk's thought is a prime example. He argues,

> For a more hopeful human future we as species need urgently to affirm the imperative of serving human interests and to recognize that this can only begin to occur if people are able to create a vibrant global political community that embraces the whole of humanity. (Falk 2016, p. 262)

The imaginary of order as a collaborative association enables and con- strains this search for a collaboration of all humankind, the ambition for a larger belonging and better order. These ambitions are often understood in terms of escape, with the global imaginary conceived as eclipsing the inter- national, but, again, it is conceived thus always within and always prefigured by the enabled and constrained limits of the modern international imaginary (Walker 2010).

III. An Enriched Picture of the International

What benefits does bridging these literatures have for the practice of international theory? What all this unpacking of the modern international imaginary brings to the table for theorists, I want to suggest, are the qualitative benefits that an enriched picture provides for international theory conceived as a practice (Taylor 1983). By enriched, I mean 'thick description' (Geertz 1973), the use of which gives us the sense-making benefits of an under-the-hood or what makes the international tick kind of insight. With this thick description of the modernity of international relations, it enriches the whole picture, making the implicit explicit. It explicitly explains, thickly, what makes the various modern international practices of diplomacy, international law, etc. all hang together, what their shared ambitions are, hermeneutically exposing them to the scrutiny and sense making of theory. The exposure of the implicit is not beneficial as an additional quantity of data, additional background variables. The point I am raising is that illuminating the "background" international imaginary has qualitative benefits for international theory as a practice. Three points help clarify and support what I mean.

First, by exposing the background and horizons of modern international thought, international theorists also bring the enabled and constrained 'boundaries of international knowledge' into focus (Der Derian 1989). As long ago now as 1993, R.B.J. Walker made the case that leading social theories of International Relations are expressions of the modern state. The point was that their background modern assumptions about politics and the international were taken-for-granted. However, an international imaginary approach to these taken-for-granted assumptions stresses their enabled and constrained nature.

Second, as such, a social imaginaries approach also frames a richer picture of what Stanley Hoffman once described as 'relevant utopias' (Hoffman 1959). Post-structuralist approaches to international relations have often avoided the use of theory to develop relevant utopias, preferring to disrupt assumptions and expand thinking-space, but without developing practical proposals. Still the question of a relevant utopia attains a richer exploration, more self aware, reflexive, in the cognizance of the existence of unimagined imaginaries. Moreover, the study of relevant utopias also becomes more focused and systematic when their enabled and constrained possibilities are illuminated by an international imaginary conception. What changes to prevailing modern international imaginaries is quantum science enabling, for instance (Wendt 2015)? This becomes a relevant question. More evident, perhaps, are changing ecological cosmologies, transforming what an or- der operates within, upon, for, against, between whom, where, and when. Dipesh Chakrabarty suggests we must reconceive the human in the context of the Anthropocene, for instance (Chakrabarty 2008). The question of what makes a vision of a future international order relevant becomes articulable, and the question of

what counts as a relevant utopia, attains a richer assessment, once the enabled and con- strained horizons of the international imaginary are brought into focus.

Lastly, understanding the place of the international in the rise of the mod- ern social imaginary provides a richer understanding of the role of the scholar in imagining international relations. Without succumbing to the 'specter of idealism', the importance of intellectuals as cultural sources in the development of social imaginaries suggests the conceptions of order and disorder that scholars produce can, sooner or later, take on a life of their own. Change has its crash and bang sources in the calamities, revolutions, and technological events in practice, but it has its sources in theory too. This supports the at- tempt by Ling to imagine the international otherwise (Ling 2014). Without meaning to suggest that the thinker can comprehend or even be aware of the entirety of the social imaginaries in which they are embedded, it is reasonable to suggest that by studying discernable aspects of the international imaginary, the theorist of international relations has an intellectual agency in the ongoing history of international relations.

Conclusion

In this article, I have sought to bridge the literature of modern social imaginaries with the growing interest in the implications of modernity for international relations. I have attempted to explore how "international" modernity has been shaped by modern social imaginaries, drawing-out its cultural pre- conditions, sketching its horizons of possibility, and clarifying its benefits for international theory as practice.

I argued first that bridging these literatures reveals a "modern international imaginary" to be coeval with the emergence of modern social imaginaries in general, and how it has come to form their "highest" and most consistently and severely problematic realm. I extended Taylor's conceptual framework and ac- count of modern social imaginaries to the international intellectual history of Hobbes, Locke, and Burke, as studied by Armitage. I sought to draw out the underlying modern social imaginary they commonly share. Applied to modern international history, as studied by Buzan and Lawson, I showed how a social imaginaries account deepens and enlarges our understanding of how modern conceptions of order have had an increasingly realized form in international ordering practices, such as international law, diplomacy, war, and international organization. Second, I argued insight into the enabling and constraining ef- fects of social imaginaries provides a basis for studying the limited horizons of the international towards a "global imaginary". I argued the horizons of modern international relations, enabled

and constrained by the modern international imaginary, shape the possibilities of and for international order. I also explored the modern international imaginary as a moving target, via shifts in who/when/ where/and how it has ordered in theory and practice. Third, I argued that un- packing the modern international imaginary offers qualitative benefits for international theory as practice, by providing a richer awareness of the modern enabling and constraining "boundaries" impinging on theory as practice.

Perhaps the most important question to arise for future research, from the contents of this article, is the question of the international imaginary horizons of an emerging post-Western-centric world order. What shifts in the modern international imaginary are involved in such a world order transition? It is hoped the research and arguments of this article can help constitute a step towards approaching these larger questions.

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