



MAPPING A LATENT CONTROVERSY ON THE STANDARD OF CIVILIZATION FOR THE COLD WAR PERIOD

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Abstract: *The study of the Cold War period from the viewpoint of the global international society brings to the fore the standard of civilization, a concept formulated in the 19th century which fell into disrepute after 1945 but which made a comeback in academia since the 1990s. Jack Donnelly, Yannis A. Stivachtis and Barry Buzan contributed to the return of the standard of civilization as a research topic in the field of international relations and, more specific, as an analytic category for the study of the Cold War. Each of them differently conceives the interplay between the Cold War global international society and the standard of civilization but, despite holding clearly incompatible perspectives and, in some cases, even despite citing the opinions of the other one(s), they seem to ignore what obviously separates their points of view and thus they are not aware of being engaged in a potential controversy over this issue. This paper marks out what differentiates their points of view in order to chart this controversy and thus to stimulate a real debate on its object.*

Keywords: *standard of civilization; Cold War; international society; English School of international relations; civilization; human rights; self-determination; sovereignty.*

INTRODUCTION

The standard of civilization underpins the existence of international society by regulating its membership and, from the 19th century until 1945, it was explicitly recognized by scholars reflecting upon the normative framework of international relations. During the Cold War period, the process of decolonization enabled universal membership of international society, which became a global one, and made the term of standard of civilization to fall into disrepute, with the result of the relevancy of a standard of civilization for that period being called into question. After the end of the Cold War, international relations scholars from the English School of International Relations began to consider the international society corresponding to that period through the lens of the standard of civilization which resulted in very different perspectives in this respect. What is peculiarly striking about their views on this issue is that, despite reading each other, they do not seem to realize that they disagree on key aspects and, consequently, that they are engaged in a latent controversy which

this paper aims at mapping. To this end, in the first section the standard of civilization is defined, a typology is provided for it and its emergence is briefly presented. The second section is dedicated to the overlooked controversy with respect to the theorizing of the standard of civilization for the Cold War era and the final two sections describe, compare and comment on the opposing views held by Jack Donnelly, Yannis A. Stivachtis and Barry Buzan, three scholars belonging to the English School of International Relations¹, on the standard of civilization for the global international society from the Cold War era.

The Standard of Civilization: concept, typology and emergence

The standard of civilization in international relations is considered by one of the most authoritative researcher of this topic, Gerrit W. Gong, to be similar to conditionalities attached to membership of clubs, societies or colleges with the peculiarity that it regulates accession of a state, of a system of states or of a society of states to an international society made up of

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¹ On the inclusion of these scholars in the English School of International Relations see Barry Buzan, *An Introduction to the English School of International Relations. The Societal Approach*, pp. viii, 37, 58, 66, 155, 159, 160, 174.



states which consider themselves as civilized and which, consequently, label as barbarous or savage all states that do not belong to that society². Gong concisely defines a standard of civilization as "an expression of the assumptions, tacit and explicit, used to differentiate those who belong to a particular society from those who do not"³ and he borrows the meaning of *international society* from Hedley Bull for whom it designates a group of states that share common interests and values and which subject their relations to commonly recognized rules and institutions⁴.

It is thus obvious that a standard of civilization fulfills an evaluative function given that it asserts the superiority of the members of the international society and the inferiority of those ones that do not belong to it, which further amounts to asserting the superiority of those considered to be civilized and the inferiority of those classified as barbarians. Any standard of civilization implies therefore the sharp contradiction between civilization as a positive value and barbarity as a negative value. This contrast is well captured by Samuel Huntington who maintains that "the idea of civilization was developed (...) as the opposite of the concept of "barbarism" (...) to be civilized was good, to be uncivilized was bad"⁵.

Jack Donnelly advances an ideal typology of the standards of civilization which results from the combination of two criteria: substance and application⁶. Substance could be either positive, or negative; in the first case, the standard requires states to be engaged in a lot of actions and thus it tends to be maximalist and to define civilization in a broad and, consequently, exacting manner, while in the second case, the standard imposes states to refrain from the worst forms of barbarity and thus it tends to be minimalist and thus to define civilization narrowly and, as a result, less demanding. Application could take an inclusive form, in which case the demands are addressed predominantly

to civilized states so that universalism is favored through highlighting similarities between states, or an exclusive form and in this case the demands are primarily directed towards barbarian states, which leads to particularism being emphasized by means of pointing out differences separating them from civilized states.

According to Donnelly, the inclusive application could take a Lockean or a Hobbesian form, and the exclusive application could have a fundamentalist form, or a Burkean form. The Lockean inclusive application, equally called by Donnelly "the liberal application", conceives the state as an instrument designed through the social contract to protect the rights of its members and thus it makes the membership of international society depend upon respect for human rights. The Hobbesian inclusive application, which Donnelly also designates as the legal positivist application, is built upon the assumption of a violent state of nature and it recognizes membership in international society solely on grounds of a state exercising control over its territory and fulfilling the obligations it assumed at international level.

The Burkean exclusive application acknowledges the existence of different levels of development among states and turns them into a criteria for international society membership with only the more developed states being included within the international society and, consequently, being entitled to more rights and enjoying greater importance. As for fundamentalism, Donnelly maintains that it determines membership in international society on religious grounds and he indicates that such a criterion is advocated by Calvinists and, possibly, by Muslims who make inclusion in international society dependent on adherence to their own religion.

The European standard of civilization emerged in the 19th century and from 1860 and until 1914 it was explicitly made part of international law where, according to Gong, it encompassed five demands fulfilled by any civilized state: 1) protection of basic rights of people on its territory, particularly of foreigners; 2) existence of a political bureaucracy capable to conduct with relative efficiency the whole machinery of a state and also to provide the state with the capacity to defend itself; 3) compliance with international law and the setting up of the necessary conditions for both its own nationals and

² Gerrit W. Gong, *The Standard of „Civilization” in International Society*, pp. xi, 3 and Gerrit W. Gong, *Standards of Civilization Today*, pp. 78-79.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 3.

⁴ Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society. A Study of Order in World Politics*, p. 13.

⁵ Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilization and the Remaking of World Order*, pp. 40-41.

⁶ Jack Donnelly, *Human Rights: A New Standard of Civilization?*, pp. 11,14.



foreigners to enjoy legal justice; 4) maintenance of permanent diplomatic relations; 5) compliance with those norms and practices followed by civilized states in areas like sexual relations and funeral rituals⁷.

Jack Donnelly argues that this standard of civilization, which he calls the classical one, belongs to the ideal type whose substance is negative and whose application is exclusive in a Burkean sense⁸.

It is to be mentioned that a broader standard of civilization also operated during the 19th century and it included religion, race, economic and technologic development, and intellectual capacity⁹.

Differences that were overlooked in theorizing the standard of civilization for the Cold War period

Following the atrocities committed during the First World War by states which had previously proclaimed themselves as civilized, the language of the standard of civilization started to fade away but it did not completely disappear in the interwar period as it is proved by the trusteeship system created through the League of Nations and by the statute of the Permanent Court of International Justice¹⁰. The standard of civilization shortly survived the Second World War to be included in the 1945 statute of the International Court of Justice¹¹ but afterwards the concept was excluded from the realm of international law¹² and the concept itself disappeared from the scholarly vocabulary of international relations, including from the one used by the English School whose representatives had been the first to apply it to the study of international relations, with the consequence that *barbarian* and *savage*, two concepts intimately linked with it, have been equally abandoned¹³.

Barry Buzan argues that this linguistic change

⁷ Gerrit W. Gong, *The Standard of „Civilization” in International Society*, pp. 14-15. See also Alexis Heraclides, Ada Dialla, *Humanitarian Intervention in the long Nineteenth Century*, p. 33.

⁸ Jack Donnelly, *op. cit.*, pp. 11, 14.

⁹ Alexis Heraclides, Ada Dialla, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 38.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 38 and David P. Fidler, *The Return of the Standard of Civilization*, p. 138.

¹² David P. Fidler, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

¹³ Barry Buzan, *The Standard of Civilization as an English School Concept*, p. 577.

was the result of the *standard of civilization* being too closely associated with the colonial policy of Western states to be employed in an era of decolonization and also of the international society becoming universal under the reign of the principles of self-determination and sovereign equality to the effect that the study of its membership, a traditional topic for the English School, lost its academic relevance¹⁴. The following excerpt from a forward written by Hedley Bull in 1984 is self-relevant for how the standard of civilization was conceived during the Cold War “Today, this concept has a bad name. It was, after all, part of the rationale which the European states provided, when they were at the height of their power and authority, for denying equal rights to the political communities of Asia, Africa, and Oceania, whose fate in that era was either to become colonies of the European imperial powers or to be assigned a subordinate or second class form of independence (...) The standard of “civilization” laid down by Europeans in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries now appears to us as part and parcel of an unjust system of domination and exploitation against which the peoples of Asia and Africa have rightly revolted”¹⁵.

Buzan argues that after 1945, the term *standard of civilization* was replaced with terms bearing no offending resonance such as *conditionality*, *good governance* and *development*¹⁶.

If one could discuss about a scholarly consensus on the abandonment of the term *standard of civilization* within the academic field shortly after the end of the Second World War, when it comes to the standard of civilization as a criteria regulating membership in the global international society corresponding to the Cold War period, the opinions of the researchers no more coincide, with some of them arguing in favor of a standard of civilization being used in that period while others holding the view that no such standard was then to be found. Moreover, even among those who share the view that a standard of civilization operated during the Cold War, there is no common view as to the content of this standard, various descriptions of it being developed. It is therefore surprising that the existence of various perspectives on the standard of

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 577, 585.

¹⁵ Hedley Bull, *Foreword*, pp. 7-8.

¹⁶ Barry Buzan, *op. cit.*, p. 577.



civilization for the Cold War period had not been highlighted enough for enabling one to remark how different they really are and thus to realize that there is significant potential for a relevant scientific controversy. The failure to detect the disagreement on this issue could be partly explained by the fact that even researchers holding different views do cite one another without being fully aware about how much their opinions diverge.

Therefore, in the following sections three different points of view will be described and contrasted about the standard of civilization corresponding to the Cold War period that were put forward by three scholars from the English School of international relations: Jack Donnelly, Yannis A. Stivachtis, and Barry Buzan.

The standard of civilization as an operating criterion during the Cold War period

The first to be investigated are the perspectives advanced by Jack Donnelly and Yannis A. Stivachtis who both maintain the existence of a standard of civilization regulating accession to the global international society from the Cold War period.

Jack Donnelly argues that during the Cold War, self-determination and sovereign equality, two paramount values promoted in the process of decolonization, made up a version of the standard of civilization which regulated the membership in the global international society¹⁷. Moreover, Donnelly maintains that, for being designed to confer to former colonies the right to become full members of global international society, this standard of civilization extended upon all states the quality of being civilized at the expense of making the concept of civilization sufficiently morally diluted to encompass the egregious human rights abuses committed within the confines of the borders of some of the new members by people like Idi Amin, the ruler of Uganda between 1971-1979, Macias Nguema who led Equatorial Guinea between 1968 and 1979, and Mobutu Sese Seko who ruled Zaire (Democratic Republic of Congo) for the period 1965-1997; as a result, he considers that the idea of civilization was compromised and it could no more be opposed in an intelligible way to the idea of barbarism which adequately described rampant human rights violations committed while

the Cold War unfolded¹⁸.

According to Donnelly, the international society became a global one by disregarding human rights and by accepting for their defense to be condemned as neo-colonialism by those who violated them. Donnelly mentions that, despite the fact that during the Cold War human rights became increasingly incorporated into the body of international law, the criteria for becoming a member of global international society and thus for being considered civilized, remained the control of the territory and the fulfillment of obligations internationally assumed so that the standard of civilization incorporating them has to be classified as negative from the point of view of the substance and as inclusive in a Hobbesian sense from the perspective of the application¹⁹. Even if Donnelly does not explicitly identify the global international society with membership in the United Nations, this equivalence seems to be operated by him since all states which emerged following the decolonization process became members of the United Nations and, moreover, since Uganda, Equatorial Guinea and Zaire (Democratic Republic of Congo) had been members of the United Nations from their independence onwards without any interruption²⁰.

The standard of civilization identified by Donnelly in the Cold War period is well illustrated by Resolution 1514 adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 14 December 1960 which reads that "immediate steps shall be taken in Trust and non-self-governing Territories, or in all other Territories which have not yet attained independence, to transfer all powers to the people of those Territories without any conditions whatsoever (...). The inadequacy of political, economic, social or educational preparedness should never serve as a pretext for delaying independence"²¹.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 15.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 14.

²⁰ Zaire (Democratic Republic of Congo) became member of the United Nations in 1960 and was followed by Uganda in 1962 and Equatorial Guinea in 1968. See United Nations, *Member States* available at <http://www.un.org/en/member-states/> accessed on 16.12.2017.

²¹ General Assembly of the United Nations, Resolution 1514, 14 December 1960 apud Adam Watson, *The Evolution of International Society. A Comparative Historical Analysis*, p. 296. A characterization of the international society during the Cold War is provided by Watson in chapter 24 of his book.

¹⁷ Jack Donnelly, *op. cit.*, pp. 13, 15, 16.



Considering now the perspective of Yannis A. Stivachtis, he maintains that, after 1945, the 19th century standard of civilization was succeeded by what he calls the *membership conditionality* applied during and after the Cold War by global international organizations, such as the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization, which make use of it to regulate membership in global international society and also by regional international organizations like the European Union, NATO and OSCE which employ it to regulate membership in regional international societies²². The *membership conditionality*, Stivachtis argues, operated during the Cold War at the level of both the global international society and the regional international societies and it was made up of political conditionality - encompassing mainly democracy - and economic conditionality - that is concerned with capitalism and the liberalization of the market - both components being upheld by global international organizations as well as by regional international organizations²³.

In support of his contention that human rights had been a constituent of the Cold War standard of civilization, Stivachtis mentions that their protection was enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, was upheld in the work of the main organs of the United Nations and was at the core of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted under the aegis of the United Nations. Stivachtis provides a further argument for the inclusion of human rights within that standard of civilization by arguing that the democracy as a political conditionality had been strongly promoted by the United Nations and encompassed a human rights dimension²⁴. However, he mentions that during the Cold War the communist states from the Eastern part of Europe remained subjected to undemocratic regimes disrespectful of human rights and thus barbarous²⁵.

With respect to regional international societies, Stivachtis developed an analysis of the system of conditionalities for membership elaborated by European Union during and after the Cold War²⁶.

²² Yannis A. Stivachtis, *Civilization and International Society: the Case of European Union Expansion*, p. 76.

²³ *Ibidem*, pp. 76-77.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 76.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 78-79.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 81-85.

According to him, for the Cold War period, the economic conditionalities had been the first to be elaborated by the European Economic Community because the purpose it had been established for was an economic one. These conditionalities have been intended to promote the liberalization of the markets and, more generally, to support capitalism, but the fact that the potential candidates during the Cold War were all capitalist states prevented the economic conditionalities from acquiring a prominent status. The political conditionalities for joining the European Economic Community were the most important ones given that some potential candidates (Spain, Greece and Portugal) did not fulfill them. More exactly, democracy and the respect for fundamental human rights and freedoms became indispensable for becoming a member of the European Economic Community after 1962 when the European Parliament approved the Birkelbach report, and these conditionalities remained in use until the end of the Cold War. After the end of the Cold War both the economic and the political conditionalities became equally important in the context of the Central and Eastern European states quest for European Union membership and consequently, the European Council held in June 1993 in Copenhagen decided upon a set of criteria that any state must fulfill in order to become member of the European Union. These criteria referred to democracy, rule of law, human rights, protection of minorities, a functioning and competitive market economy, and acceptance of the objectives pursued by the European Union in the fields of politics, economy and within the monetary area.

The standard of civilization identified by Stivachtis could be classified according to the typology elaborated by Donnelly as positive from the point of view of the substance and as inclusive in a Lockean sense from the perspective of the application.

An attempt to demarcate the global international society as understood by Stivachtis proves problematic because he equates the membership in global international society with the membership in global international organizations, a category in which he includes not only the United Nations, but also the International Monetary Fund, albeit the former had, during the Cold War more members than the latter. A comparative analysis of the membership in the United Nations and in the International



Monetary Fund during the Cold War reveals that the Soviet Union, the Republic of Yemen, Bulgaria, Mongolia, and Albania have not been members of the International Monetary Fund²⁷ but they have all been members of the United Nations²⁸. Moreover, the membership of these organizations in the Cold War era challenges its identification with the global international society because the communist states from the Eastern part of Europe, considered by Stivachtis as undemocratic, had all been members of the United Nations²⁹ and, except for Bulgaria, they had also been members of the International Monetary Fund³⁰.

At this point it becomes apparent that Stivachtis and Donnelly differently conceive the standard of civilization for the Cold War era, their opinions with respect to human rights being totally opposed given that Stivachtis explicitly includes human rights within that standard while Donnelly explicitly excludes them from it. Donnelly does not deny that during the Cold War there was a concern for human rights at international level which caused them to become part of international law but he points out that the importance attached to human rights was insufficient to determine the creation of multilateral instruments designed to ensure compliance with them and to turn them into a diplomatic issue until the beginning of the '1980s which explains for him why human rights failed to become a constituent of the standard of civilization³¹.

If one agrees with Stivachtis then one has to consider that the gloomy perspective depicted by Donnelly is inaccurate with the effect that the standard of civilization must not be considered morally discredited. However, sharing Stivachtis's account of the standard of civilization raises the problem of how the relationship between the global

international society and the states from the Eastern part of Europe, which gravely violated human rights, should be conceived during that period. If the standard of civilization has the content that Stivachtis attributes to it, then either it was not accepted by the United Nations, which explains why the mentioned communist states had been accepted as its members, or it was accepted by the United Nations in which case the membership of those states remains unaccounted for. Unlike Stivachtis's reading of the standard of civilization, Donnelly's understanding enables the inclusion of these states into the global international society.

Given the big differences between how Donnelly and Stivachtis conceive the standard of civilization, one would expect Stivachtis, who makes reference to the article where Donnelly expressed his point of view and which had been published ten years before his own, to remark these differences and to comment on them. Surprisingly, Stivachtis did not do that and apparently he remained unaware of their existence. Even more surprising is the fact that Stivachtis cites Donnelly's mentioned article as an argument in support of his own point of view as one could observe by reading the following fragment „While the old standard of 'civilization' fell into disrepute, new possible successors have risen as new standards in contemporary international society. The first is the 'standard of non-discrimination' or the 'standard of human rights'. For example, *Jack Donnelly clearly argues* (emphasis added) that 'internationally recognized human rights have become very much like a new international "standard of civilization"'³². In fact, Donnelly argues that human rights started to be incorporated into the standard of civilization only after the Cold War which for him marks an important difference between the standard of civilization operating during the Cold War and the one that was supposed to emerge after the end of the Cold War. Considering that the same standard of civilization operated during and after the Cold War and that this standard encompasses human rights, Stivachtis reads Donnelly's idea that the standard of civilization emerging after the Cold War contains human rights as an argument in support of the idea that the standard of civilization corresponding to the Cold War period equally included human rights. This proves that Stivachtis misinterprets Donnelly's

²⁷ International Monetary Fund, *List of Members* available at <https://www.imf.org/external/np/sec/memdir/memdate.htm>, accessed on 16.12.2017.

²⁸ United Nations, Member States available at <http://www.un.org/en/member-states/> accessed on 16.12.2017.

²⁹ Czechoslovakia and Poland became members of the United Nations in 1945 and membership was granted to Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary in 1955. See United Nations, *Member States* available at <http://www.un.org/en/member-states/> accessed on 16.12.2017.

³⁰ Czechoslovakia became member of the International Monetary Fund in 1945, Romania acquired this status in 1972 and Hungary and Poland joined the organization in 1982 and 1986, respectively.

³¹ Jack Donnelly, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-15.

³² Yannis A. Stivachtis, *op. cit.*, p. 74.



view on the standard of civilization by overlooking the fact that he discriminates between two standards of civilizations, one corresponding to the Cold War era and the other one corresponding to the post-Cold War era.

The standard of civilization as a (quasi) absent criterion during the Cold War period

Barry Buzan's perspective on the standard of civilization corresponding to the global international society from the Cold War period substantially differs from how Jack Donnelly and Yannis A. Stivachtis conceive it, given that he denies that such a standard really existed. Buzan grounds his view on the idea that, during the Cold War, the process of decolonization enabled all states to join the global international society solely on grounds of self-determination and sovereign equality³³, an argument which shows that, unlike Donnelly, Buzan does not consider that self-determination and sovereign equality make up a standard of civilization but that they are contributing factors to the dissolution of such a standard. Consequently, it could be argued that, in contrast with Donnelly, Buzan considers that a standard of civilization must rely on a concept of civilization that is not morally diluted but morally demanding. Nevertheless and despite relying on some of Donnelly's ideas about the standard of civilization from his article analyzed above³⁴, Buzan does not acknowledge the contradiction between their views about the standard of civilization peculiar to the Cold War years. Buzan equally mentions the article by Stivachtis which was previously discussed in this paper and he explicitly indicates that Stivachtis accepts the existence of a standard of civilization during Cold War³⁵ but, surprisingly, he does not point out the significant differences separating their understanding of that standard.

The absence of the standard of civilization for the Cold War global international society provides for Buzan a straightforward explanation for why the issue of membership in this society became irrelevant for the English School scholars writing after 1945.

However, it is to be mentioned that Buzan seems not to definitely reject the standard of civilization

underlining the global international society from the Cold War period given that he maintains that during that time "questions of membership in, and conditions of entry to, international society *largely* (emphasis added) disappeared". In case he had completely denied the existence of the standard of civilization he would clearly have been unable to justify the existence of the Cold War global international society he speaks about. The standard of civilization he refers to as somehow vaguely operating in the background is the one elaborated in Europe during the 19th century which classified states based on their degree of development so that it corresponds to what Donnelly calls the classical standard of civilization having a negative substance and an exclusive application in a Burkean sense.

Nevertheless, Buzan argues that a standard of civilization bearing Western civilizational landmarks operated during the Cold War *within* the global international society which had acquired a hierarchical structure dominated mainly by the Western world and which gave rise to various groups organized in a similar manner to clubs (e.g. European Communities/European Union) whose accession to was regulated by that standard³⁶. According to Buzan, since the Cold War period, the "international society may have become universal, but in the process it has become both more layered and more regionally differentiated"³⁷ to the effect that the outsiders-insiders divide no more refers to the global international society, but to various international societies formed within it. It is to be remarked that, albeit Buzan speaks about multiple regional international societies, he seems to admit the existence of only one standard of civilization underpinning all of them and his opinion looks like being grounded on him conceiving these societies as having a Western descendance and thus as sharing the same civilizational background.

According to Buzan, the scholars belonging to the English School of international relations ignored the existence of this standard of civilization and thus they failed to explore it, an error which, one could argue, diminished the relevance of this approach by removing one of its traditional topics. Buzan considers that the mentioned standard, which one could rightly call a sub-global standard of civilization, encompassed

³³ Barry Buzan, *op. cit.*, pp. 585-586.

³⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 579, 586.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 585.

³⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 585-586.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 586.



human rights, democracy, capitalism, environment and development³⁸, five constituents which enable one to argue that this standard does not fit into the ideal typology elaborated by Donnelly, given that it could be said to mix various of its elements by being positive from the point of view of the substance but inclusive in both a Burkean and a Lockean sense from the perspective of its application.

Buzan acknowledges that Stivachtis equally accepted the existence of a standard of civilization operating below the global international society but, from the way Buzan introduces this idea, one could argue that Buzan retained from Stivachtis only the fact that, during the Cold War, there was a standard of civilization for regional international societies. Assuming such a reading of Stivachtis by Buzan, it follows that when the latter refers to the standard of civilization described by Stivachtis he refers, in fact, only to one operating at sub-global level, leaving thus aside the second one that, according to Stivachtis, operated at the global level. It becomes now apparent why Buzan does not refer to the stark difference between how he and Stivachtis conceive the standard of civilization peculiar to the global international society formed during the Cold War.

CONCLUSIONS

The comparative analysis of how Donnelly, Stivachtis and Buzan approach the issue of the standard of civilization corresponding to the global international society from the Cold War era revealed significant differences among them and unveiled that misinterpretation. Also, focusing on similarities resulted in Stivachtis and Buzan not remarking what tells apart their perspectives. Thus, Stivachtis is aware that he shares with Donnelly the idea that during the Cold War a standard of civilization operated at the level of the global international society but he does not perceive that the content he attributes to it sharply contrasts with the content that Donnelly ascribes to it. Buzan, albeit familiar with Donnelly's understanding of the standard of civilization, does not notice that the features he considers to have determined the dissolution of the standard of civilization during the Cold War period are for Donnelly the essential ones for that standard. Moreover, Buzan, despite

³⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 585-592.

knowing Stivachtis's account of the standard of civilization, reads it without taking notice of the fact that he denies Stivachtis's idea that the Cold War period had a standard of civilization regulating membership in the global international society.

The obscure controversy that this paper attempted to make apparent could be used for deciding whether or not the fact that, during the Cold War period, the English School scholars ignored the topic of the standard of civilization corresponding to the global international society was justified; if in that period no such standard operated, then there was nothing to be studied, but, if a standard like that existed, an important research topic was ignored and therefore has to be studied today.

This paper also draws attention on the importance that has to be attached within the English School of international relations and, more generally, in the field of international relations, to dissimilarities which sometimes could be easily overshadowed by similarities. Equally it is proved that the examination of the Cold War era from the viewpoint of the global international society is a relevant topic which requires further consideration.

Finally, the paper shows that in the field of international relations the analysis should go beyond terms and consider the realities they stand for, given that well established terms could go out of use while what they designate could continue to exist, as it happened in the case of the term standard of civilization.

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