

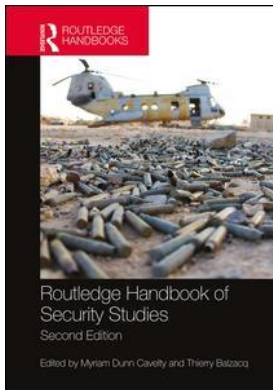
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4

THE ENGLISH SCHOOL AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

*Barry Buzan**

The ‘English school’ and ‘International Security Studies’ are names that are seldom found in the same sentence. Few if any people working within mainstream International Security Studies would think about the English school (ES) as a body of either theory or empirical work relevant to Security Studies. If they thought about it at all, they might well see the ES, with its concerns about order and legitimacy (Bull 1977; Clark 2005) as coming from the opposite, liberal end of International Relations theory, than from the conflict/disorder realist end of the spectrum to which International Security Studies generally relates.

The classic ES approach involves seeing international relations as composed of three elements (Buzan 2004b: 6–10): international system (realism, Hobbes), international society (rationalism, Grotius), and world society (idealism or revolutionism, Kant). These elements are in constant interplay and the nature of international relations depends on the balance among them. In principle, this opens a bridge between the ES and International Security Studies via the realism element in ES theory. In practice, however, the great bulk on ES work has focused on international and world society, and on the rules, norms, and institutions that underpin the social order of international society.

Few within the ES have explicitly addressed the International Security Studies agenda, and the concept of security does not play much role in ES thinking. It is therefore reasonable to ask what a chapter on the English school is doing in a volume on International Security Studies. This chapter contains three answers to this question. The next section sets out the ES as a general theoretical framing for International Security Studies comparable with realism and liberalism and Marxism. The section after that reviews the existing ES literature on international security to show where the overlaps are, and the concluding section opens up some opportunities for how the relationship might be developed further.

The English school as an approach to International Security Studies

As the other chapters in this section make clear, the sub-field of International Security Studies does not stand by itself. Its traditional core of Strategic Studies focuses on state (‘national’) security and sees threats and responses largely in military terms. As just noted, this traditional core is closely related to realism, whose state-centric, power-political, and conflictual understanding of international relations provides a complementary and close-fitting general framework for

Strategic Studies. Marxism, which also features a power-political and conflictual, if not state-centric, understanding of international relations can also serve as a general theoretical framing for International Security Studies. So can liberalism, though with its emphasis on intergovernmental and transnational institutions, cooperation, and joint gains, the framing it provides emphasizes possible ameliorations of and/or exits from the 'permanent' conflicts and security dilemmas of the realist and Marxist worlds. These various theoretical framings have all played their part in the widening and deepening of International Security Studies as a sub-field that has been going on since long before the end of the Cold War (Buzan and Hansen 2009).

The English school has not so far played much of a role in the widening and deepening of International Security Studies, but it could, and probably should, do so. What is distinctive about the ES is its focus on the societal elements of international relations, which it approaches through history, political theory, and law. Constructivists have recently moved onto this ground as well, but their approach to social processes is made mainly through ontology and epistemology. Realism, liberalism, and Marxism all offer a picture of what international society does or should look like. Constructivism generally does not offer such a picture, though Wendt (1999) does give a general sketch of international social orders built around relationships of friend, rival, and enemy. Because the ES comes from historical and normative roots, and makes a feature of the primary institutions of international society,¹ it offers a much more detailed picture of international society and so can more easily serve as a general framing for International Security Studies.

In a nutshell, the ES framing for International Security Studies can be set out as follows. Whereas realism sees a world of enemies and rivals running on a logic of coercion and calculation, the ES agrees with Wendt in allowing enemies, rivals, and friends, and running on a logic of coercion, calculation, and belief. In this sense, the ES incorporates both the realist and liberal framings, and contextualizes them in a range of possible types of international society that offer much more depth and detail than Wendt's general scheme.² This spectrum can be envisaged as four general types:

- *Power Political* represents an international society based largely on enmity and the possibility of war, but where there is also some diplomacy, alliance making, and trade. Survival is the main motive, and few values are shared. Institutions will be minimal, mostly confined to rules of recognition and diplomacy. Quite a bit of ancient and classical history looks like this, and the units composing such a society may be empires, city-states, and nomadic barbarians as well as states in the modern sense.
- *Coexistence* is modelled on the exemplar of pre-1945 Europe, meaning the kind of Westphalian system in which the core institutions of international society are the balance of power, sovereignty, territoriality, diplomacy, great power management, war, and international law. The units seek some degree of international order, but remain distinct, self-centred, and not infrequently warlike.
- *Cooperative* means that the units seek a level of order sufficient to pursue some joint projects (e.g. a world economy, human rights, big science). It might come in many guises, depending on what type of values are shared and how/why they are shared, though the standard model here is based on shared liberal values. Cooperation does not require broad ideological agreement, but only instrumental commitments to specific projects. The contemporary commitment to the market is a good example, with many illiberal and nondemocratic countries willing to play by international market rules. Probably war gets downgraded as an institution, and other institutions might arise to reflect the solidarist joint project(s).
- *Convergence* means the development of a substantial enough range of shared values within a set of states to make them adopt similar political, legal, and economic forms, and to aspire

to be more alike. The usual models here are the EU, or democratic peace theory, but in principle any shared ideological base could underpin convergence. The range of shared values simply has to be wide enough and substantial enough to generate similar forms of government (liberal democracies, Islamic theocracies, communist totalitarianisms) and legal systems based on similar values in respect of such basic issues as property rights, human rights, and the relationship between government and citizens.

It is immediately apparent from this spectrum that what type of international society one is in has huge consequences for what the agenda of international security will look like. Life within a power political international society will be extremely different from life in a cooperative or convergence one. It is also clear that these international societies represent forms of social order quite distinct from the materialist sense of order represented by the distribution of power in realism. In a sense, realist assumptions are confined within the power political and coexistence models, and pay attention only to some of the institutions that define those models. The classical ES view of coexistence international societies, like the realist one, stresses great powers, war, and balance of power as key institutions of the social order. But in cooperative and convergence international societies of almost any conceivable sort, war and balance of power will be respectively marginalized or nearly eliminated as institutions. This does not, of course, mean that such societies have no security agenda. As one can see from the contemporary practice of the EU or the liberal international economic order, security concerns move away from the traditional military ones towards economic, societal, and environmental ones, and human security agenda.

International society therefore represents a type of social structure. This structure can vary in form (as above) and also in distribution (it may be universal or partial, and if universal may still have differentiations of degree within it – think of the EU within global international society). Thinking of international society in this way opens the possibility of transposing Walker's (1993) inside/outside perspective to thinking about how an ES approach frames international security. Walker's idea is that thinking about International Relations and international security has been largely framed as a distinction between what goes on inside states (order, progress) and what goes on outside (or between) them (disorder, and a repetitive logic of anarchy). If international society is conceived of as a social structure, then it also has inside/outside qualities, and this points to at least three novel lines of thinking about international security.

1. What are the security consequences for insiders of being included within the particular set of primary institutions that defines any international society? The primary institutions of international society are the key social framework within which the processes of securitization occur. It makes a difference whether the dominant institutions are, say, dynasticism, human inequality, and suzerainty, or popular sovereignty, human equality, and nationalism. Likewise, the possibilities for securitization are shaped by whether the dominant economic institution is mercantilism or the market. Some institutions have an obvious major impact on what the agenda of international security will look like (e.g. sovereignty, territoriality, colonialism, war, balance of power, human inequality, nationalism, market, environmental stewardship). Will it be a security agenda arising from classic military-political competition among states, or one more centred around interdependence issues such as economy, environment and/or identity?
2. What are the security consequences for outsiders of being excluded from international society? Insiders have to live with the consequences of being inside as in point 1. Outsiders have the problem of not being recognized as equals, or possibly not being recognized at all. Think of the era of European (or Roman, or Persian, or Chinese) imperialism with the world divided into the civilized, barbarian, and savage, with few or sometimes no restraints

on the ‘civilized’ from subordinating or even exterminating the ‘lesser breeds’. As a few days in Taipei quickly reveals, non-recognition poses real security problems for outsiders. The ES view of inside/outside relating to membership of international society provides a framing for International Security Studies that makes much more sense for constructivist, feminist, and Copenhagen School approaches, and puts the traditionalist, military/political approach into a wider context within which one can see whether its assumptions are appropriate or not.

- 3 If one puts the inside and outside perspectives together, then the institutions of international society, both individually and collectively, can become the referent objects of security. Since the institutions of international society constitute both the players and the game (think of sovereignty and territoriality and the market for example), threats to those institutions affect both the units and the social order. One of the logics behind the ‘war on terrorism’ is that violence-wielding outfits such as al-Qaeda threaten the institution of sovereignty. The global market easily becomes a referent object when there are threats to the rule on trade and finance on which its operation rests.

This is how the ES *could* be used as a comprehensive approach to International Security Studies, and the next section will sketch out to what extent this has been done so far.

Existing English school literature on international security

Deciding what is, or is not, ‘English school’ literature, or indeed what is, or is not, ‘international security’, is hardly an exact science. Neither is it always clear how they should be linked together. There is, for example some discussion of collective security in classic ES texts (Bull 1977: 238ff.; Hudson 1966), but this has little significance for international security because it is mainly about how to define solidarism, and not really a discussion of collective security in itself. There is also the problem of how to place the work of individuals who sometimes wrote in the ES tradition, but some of whose work is probably more correctly placed outside it: Hedley Bull’s works on arms control, for example, or Michael Howard’s on war.

Despite these difficulties there is a lot that is pretty clearly both English school and international security. In some cases, ES work is explicitly addressed to security issues, but other cases require an exercise in reading ES work through security lenses. The brief survey that follows is organized along the three lines of thinking about international security within the ES sketched above, albeit not all the literature falls neatly under one or other headings. Limitations of space forbid an attempt to capture all of the literature, but the discussion below is hopefully sufficient to give an accurate sense of its general shape and orientation.

The security consequences of international society for insiders

There are two ways of approaching this topic. The first would be to follow a general set of models of international society like those sketched in the previous section and analyse how their overall social structures impact on the likely agendas of international security. As hinted in that discussion, the impact should be very large: there are huge security implications in the ES idea that a range of international societies is possible along a pluralist–solidarist spectrum. The classical literature had little to say on this question at the global level, but recently it has been taken up in some depth, both generally and through the idea of the security dilemma (Hurrell 2007; Booth and Wheeler 2008). This approach puts into systematic form the general proposition that there is not just one logic of anarchy, as realism suggests, but many (Buzan 1991, 2004b; Buzan et al. 1993; Wendt 1992, 1999; Clark 2005). This idea of multiple possible logics of anarchy is also explored at

the sub-global and regional levels in work on security regimes (Jervis 1985), security communities (Adler and Barnett 1998), and regional security complexes (Buzan 1991; Wæver 1996; Buzan et al. 1998; Buzan and Wæver 2003) and orders (Lake and Morgan 1997; Ayoob 1999).

The second approach is to look at individual primary institutions of international society and their security consequences. The exemplar here is Mayall's (1990) discussions of how the rise during the nineteenth century of nationalism and the market as new institutions of international society not only changed the nature of international politics and security in themselves, but also transformed the practices associated with other institutions such as war and territoriality. There has been no systematic attempt to relate the whole possible range of ES institutions to security issues, though this would be a valuable thing to do. What there has been is quite a lot of work on some institutions, but not much on others. Much of this work parallels discussions in International Security Studies, though little of it was done with an international security audience in mind. The ES has devoted a lot of discussion to war (Howard 1966; Bull 1977; Draper 1990; Holsti 1991, 1996, 2004; Windsor 1991; Best 1994; Hassner 1994; Song 2005; Jones 2006), and there is a large body of work specifically on the laws of war by Adam Roberts (2004, 2006, 2007; Roberts and Guelff 2000). There has also been substantial ES work on the balance of power (Butterfield 1966; Wight 1966; Bull 1977; Hobson and Seabrooke 2001; Kingsbury 2002; Little 2006, 2007), and great power management (Bull 1977; Brown 2004; Little 2006). Although the security dilemma is not considered to be an institution of international society, there have been ES reflections on that as well (Butterfield 1951; Booth and Wheeler 2007).

The other big discussions in the ES that relate to International Security Studies are those on intervention and human rights, which can be read as close to human security. The ES discussion of human rights is partly a general one about the tensions between human rights and sovereignty in relation to international order (Bull 1977, 1984b; Vincent 1986; Hurrell 2007: 143–64) and partly a more particular one about the emergence (or not) of human rights as a norm or institution of international society. There is a lot of discussion of (non)intervention generally (Vincent 1974; Bull 1984a; Roberts 1993, 1996, 1999, 2006; Vincent and Wilson 1993; Makinda 1997, 1998; Mayall 1998; Cronin 2002; Buzan 2004b), and humanitarian intervention in particular (Wheeler 1992, 2000; Knudsen 1996; Wheeler and Morris 1996; Williams 1999; Ayoob 2001; Brown 2002; Bellamy 2003; Wu 2006).

The security consequences of international society for outsiders

The only systematic general attempt to think through the security consequences of being inside or outside international society is Buzan (1996). This remains a pretty preliminary exercise, but did attempt to map out both the specific character of the spectrum of international societies on a sector by sector basis, and the possible security implications of these for insiders and outsiders. There has been no specific attempt to follow it up, though both Buzan (2004b) and Holsti (2004) can be read partly along those lines. Nevertheless, one of the big stories of the ES, that of the expansion of an initially European international society to global scale, is essentially about insiders and outsiders, and much of it is about the coercive imposition of European values and institutions (Bull and Watson 1984; Gong 1984; Zhang 1991; Keene 2002; Keal 2003). There are many studies in this literature of the encounters between on the one hand, well-armed Europeans (and later Americans) not hesitant to use force to impose their values, and on the other, a variety of non-Western cultures (mainly Japan, China, the Ottoman Empire, Thailand) forced to come to terms with the new Western order. These encounters, with their stories of unequal treaties and threats of occupation, give a stark insight into the problems of being outside international society. They also underpin the decline of a core

institution of pre-1945 European international society, colonialism, which became obsolete as international society became global.

The 'expansion of international society' story is not just one of coercion, but also of the spread of particular institutions that frame security issues for all, particularly: sovereignty, territoriality, and nationalism. These institutions were quickly indigenized in many places and used as defence mechanisms against ongoing Western demands. Yet insider/outsider security dynamics are still visible. The intervention literature discussed above is relevant here inasmuch as the politics of intervention is strongly mediated by whether it is understood to be an affair amongst insiders (and therefore subject to the relevant primary institutions) or one between insiders and outsiders (and therefore subject only to whatever rules are thought to be universal). This dynamic plays particularly strongly in relation to institutions that are still more Western than global, most notably human rights and democracy. The West still pressures others to accept these on the grounds that they are universal rights, but there remains much resistance from many quarters to that interpretation. All of this suggests that although the idea of outsiders might appear to have lost much of its interest as international society became global, in fact it is still very much alive. It is perfectly clear, for example, that at the level of 'the street', much of the Islamic world continues to think of itself as a site of resistance to Western values.

In a global international society, of course, all are to some degree insiders, and the idea of outsiders becomes much more relative than it was during the 'expansion' story, when in and out could be pretty clearly drawn. When outsider status is relative, and contingent on one's placement in a differentiated international society (e.g. core or periphery) Wendt's (1999: 247–50) idea that social structures can be held in place by coercion, calculation and/or belief is one useful way of approaching the idea of outsiders in contemporary international society. A contemporary institution like the market is obviously held in place by a mixture: some believe in it (US), some calculate it to be in their interest (China) and others are mainly bullied into it (parts of the third world). Where a particular institution is either contested, or held in place mainly by coercion, that could be seen as marking a form of outsider status.

International society as a referent object of security

This line of thinking features either the international social order as a whole (Bull, 1977: 18), or individual primary institutions, as the referent objects for security. It plays to the English school's focus on social structures, and contrasts with the realist's inclination to privilege the state as the central referent object for all Security Studies. The Copenhagen School has applied its securitization theory to show how the primary (e.g. sovereignty, market) and secondary (e.g. WTO, UN) institutions of international society can be referent object for securitization in their own right (Buzan et al. 1998).

The expansion of international society story discussed above also implicitly features this issue. A consistent theme in the classical ES story of expansion is the consequences of the fact that as European international society expanded, it necessarily moved beyond its foundational cultural base, and absorbed non-European cultures. Much classical ES literature assumes that interstate society necessarily rests on a substrate of shared culture from which it draws the shared values that define and enable its institutions. Modern Europe could be understood as Christendom, and classical Greece could also be understood as a zone of shared culture within which a states-system operated. The concern was that a multicultural foundation would necessarily diminish the pool of shared values available for international society, and thus expansion would equate to weakening. The ongoing tensions over human rights and democracy already noted exemplify the force of this concern, although the readiness with which some institutions, notably sovereignty, nationalism, and territoriality have become accepted and internalized offers some counterweight to it.

If international society can be threatened by a reduction in its cultural coherence, it can also be threatened by the interplay of institutions that pull in contradictory directions. There are several possibilities here, including the market and territoriality, and nationalism and sovereignty, but the one that has been most written about in the ES literature is that between human rights and sovereignty (Bull 1977, 1984; Vincent 1986; Makinda 1998; Bain 2001; Bellamy and McDonald 2004). Here the problem is that if human rights are universal and rooted in the individual, then this brings sovereignty (the absolute right of the state to exercise authority within its territory) into fundamental question. That tension has large implications for the legitimacy of humanitarian interventions, and also ties into the human security agenda of how to harmonize the rights and responsibilities of individuals with those of states (Buzan 2004a; Dunne and Wheeler 2004). In considering this question, Williams (2004) makes the case for linking the more radical concerns with human rights in the ES to the emancipatory themes of Critical Security Studies in order to create a more revolutionist ES approach to security. Morris (2004) and Nardin (2004) address the related, but more general, question of how the structure of international society defines the legitimacy (or not) of the use of force.

Conclusions: opportunities for developing the linkage

It should be clear from the above that in terms of both general framing and specific topics addressed, there is a lot of common ground between the English school and International Security Studies. That said, it is obvious that there is a lack of mutual awareness and interaction between them. The blindness is probably greater on the International Security Studies side, but it is equally true that ES writers need to do more to make the security dimension of ES work explicit, and to address it clearly to issues and debates within International Security Studies. Hopefully, this chapter has shown that the thinness of the contact so far hides quite rich possibilities for synergies. One of these possibilities is to focus attention more specifically on the interplay between the primary institutions of international society and security. How do primary institutions such as nationalism, territoriality, sovereignty, colonialism, human rights, and suchlike both define and frame the whole discourse of security? In what sense can and do such institutions become the referent object for processes of securitization?

Another possible synergy is available in the interplay between the study of regional international societies and regional security. There is some work on this (Ayoob 1999), but so far the ES has not shown much interest in the regional level of international society, having chosen to concentrate on the global level. A good case can be made that there are distinctive regional international societies (think of the EU), and there are some studies that analyse what makes them distinct from the global level, and how that distinctiveness matters (Buzan et al. 2009). In security perspective, for example, it seems clear that within the Middle East, sovereignty is a weaker institution than at the global level, and war a stronger one. Just as a social structural perspective throws interesting light on the analysis of security at the global level, so it does at the regional one. One obvious linkage point here is the Copenhagen School, which has a particular interest in regional security (Buzan and Wæver 2003) and is also open to English school thinking. Can one, for example, theorize a connection between strong security interdependence on the one hand, and the emergence of distinctive regional international societies on the other? Does security interdependence generate the incentives for a degree of international order that underpins international societies? On the face of it, it looks a reasonable hypothesis. It fits with European history, the Middle East case lends further credence to it, and others might as well. The idea of regional international societies also plays into the discussion of intervention above, because the differences represented by regional international society could well define the terms of insider/outsider that would make intervention legitimate or not.

The English school has much to offer to International Security Studies, but it needs to be considerably more proactive than it has been in making this clear to the community of International Security Studies scholars. For their part, some of the International Security Studies community needs to open their eyes to the importance of international society in framing and shaping the agenda of international security.

Notes

- ★ This is the unrevised version from the first edition of *The Routledge Handbook of Security Studies*.
- 1 Primary institutions are deep, organic, evolved ideas and practices that constitute both the players and the game of international relations. They include sovereignty, territoriality, balance of power, war, international law, diplomacy, nationalism, great power management, and the market. This understanding of institutions is quite different from that used by regime theorists and liberal institutionalists who focus mainly on instrumental and constructed organizations and arrangements such as intergovernmental organizations and regimes, which are referred to in the following as secondary institutions. Primary institutions have a history as old as human civilization, whereas secondary ones emerge only in the nineteenth century. See Buzan 2004b, 161–204.
 - 2 The ES has concentrated mainly on international society where states are the central players, and the discussion that follows mainly reflects that focus. World society, which centres mainly on individuals and civil society, is less well developed in ES thinking, and there is some tension as to whether it should be approached via the domestic reform of states or via more cosmopolitan, transnational ways of thinking. There is not space in this short chapter to address this level of complexity.

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