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Regions
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International Society

The English School at the Sub-Global Level

Aleš Karmazin
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Yongjin Zhang
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MASARYK UNIVERSITY

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Aleš Karmazin

The authors of this volume declare that they are wholly responsible for the following text, including any possible inaccuracies or mistakes in the individual chapters they authored.

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1 | Introduction: English School Investigations at the Regional Level

Aleš Karmazin

The presented book is concerned with the English School (ES) of International Relations (IR) and its approach to regions in international politics. The ES has understood international society, which is its key concept, to be globally homogeneous and to be sharing the same characteristics at least as far as the most fundamental ones are concerned. This prevailing understanding of the global level of international society as highly coherent has been contested as it has obscured regional variations and specifics. This volume aims to (1) highlight the gap between the perception that international society is globally homogeneous and the current state of international society, (2) to develop the emerging issue of the ES' analysis of the regional level and (3) provide empirical examinations of three regions, namely, East Asia, South America and Central Asia, which have not been much analyzed at the sub-global level in the existing ES scholarship.¹ Or in more general terms, this volume investigates regions from the ES perspective, develops (theoretical) frameworks and ways for studying regions, and provides critical explorations of the ES at the regional (sub-global) level.

The recent proliferation of contemporary ES scholarship has been preceded and facilitated by growing interest in this theoretical tradition during the 1990s. During the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s, the ES was little known outside of the British IR epistemic community. During the second half of the 1990s and 2000s, however, the ES became increasingly recognizable as a contending approach to theorizing IR, thanks to a series of conscious efforts by a group of scholars that included, among others, Andrew Hurrell, Tim Dunne, Robert Jackson, Hidemi Suganami, Andrew Linklater, Barry Buzan and Richard Little. It is Tim Dunne and Barry Buzan who have perhaps done the most for the promotion of the ES. Dunne dedicated his doctoral thesis (published as a book in 1998, see Dunne 1998) to exploration of the history of the ES and has continued to advance the ES afterwards. Buzan argued for the theoretical promise and potential of the ES at the 1999 British International Studies Association conference and subsequently issued a call to revive the ES through his 2001 article (Buzan 2001). He has been inspirational in the last decade or so for the global diffusion of the ES as a theoretical tradition.

1 Thanks to the volume edited by Barry Buzan and Ana Gonzalez-Pelaez (2009), the region which has been studied most comprehensively is the Middle East. Barry Buzan, this time with Yongjin Zhang who authored a part of this book, are currently preparing another extensive piece focused on East Asia (Buzan and Zhang forthcoming). Europe is another region which received greater deal of attention (Czaputowicz 2003, Diez and Whitman 2002, Stivachtis and Webber 2011, Sakwa 2011). Other regions were analyzed only limitedly at best.

The efforts of the aforementioned scholars have led to rich production of ES scholarship as well as to growing connections between the ES and other theoretical perspectives. Current ES debates clearly demonstrate that the ES is not and does not aim to be a mere compromise between realism and liberalism as sometimes claimed (comp. Dunne 2008: 268, Weber 2005: 56). The ES has always included different types of inquiry which becomes more apparent during the 2000s when the ES broadened and widened its scope. Despite this, or perhaps because of this, it is possible to unveil a minimal definitional core of the ES. The main claim of the ES is that international politics and relations among states are embedded in a societal environment. Just like people form and are formed by society, states (and other actors) form and are formed by international (second-order) society. This second-order society exceeds domestic society and, like its domestic counterpart, has own norms, both formal and informal institutions, culture and power relations. The ultimate ES question, hence, is to understand international society and its actors, processes, structure, institutions, norms and functions (Buzan 2004: 1, Dunne 1998).

One key question, which is a consequent follow-up of the ES' fundamental focus on international society, is if and how such second-order societies exist not only at the global level, but also at the sub-global (regional) level. For a long time, the ES overlooked the existence of regional groupings and their normative and institutional specifics. Although this gap has recently started being addressed, the topic is still underexplored. In this context, it is necessary to note that the "regional topic" is not so new. The ES conducted some investigations on regions previously, usually dealing with the pre-20th century world (espec. Bull and Watson 1984).² This line of investigations was not continued, however, after the early 1990s.³ This book critically engages the ES in another way. The ES was satisfied (and perhaps continues to be satisfied) with a simple composition (or structure) of international society which means that the ES elaborates on institutions of international society, but it often does not pay close attention to their mutual relationship (for more details see the next section) or to the existence of other specific constituents of international society like regions. Regions should be apparently considered as parts of international politics and its structure and composition. Hence, this paper questions the prevailing ES view (which does not incorporate regions) and indicates the need for a new one (which would take regional dynamics into account).

Although this book develops a debate within the tradition of the ES, its contribution is not without relevance outside this theoretical approach. It is directly relevant to two other groups. Firstly, the book should deliver more understanding to area specialists. The ES approach helps to bring regional character of issues like sovereignty and diplomacy into light. Secondly, through examination of different

2 I call these previous efforts *the first wave of regional research* while current ES regional research is labeled as *the second wave*.

3 Watson's book (1992) on societies of states from Sumer to the contemporary global international society can be regarded as the last piece of the first wave of regional research.

regional settings, the volume contributes to understanding of the contemporary global order. Much has been said about the decline of the USA and the West on the one hand and the rise of emerging powers (mainly from Asia) on the other. Since the dynamics of this change (whether real or alleged) has a regional basis, looking at regions seems to be necessary and imperative.

The rest of this chapter, which has the character of an editorial introduction, is divided into three parts and proceeds as follows. The first part introduces intellectual terrain of the ES to those readers who are not closely familiar with this theoretical approach. It is done so with respect to the current trends and to the topic of regions. The second part summarizes and analyses development of ES views on regions. This step is important because a coherent elaboration on the development of the topic was missing. Different waves and stages of development and their characteristics are discussed. The third part explains this volume's rationale and basic characteristics. It also introduces the rest of the book, defines its concrete goals and provides a basic conceptual ground.

Re-Emergence of the English School: Topics and Intellectual Terrain

This section presents two specific topics which are quite characteristic, although not completely unique, of the current development of the ES.⁴ Both help to situate the revival of the ES and contextualize the topic of regional international societies. As a part of its revival, the ES has developed a debate between pluralism and solidarism. The origins of this first significant topic are derived from Wight's seminal article (1960) where he asked why IR does not have theories which would give answers on what international politics should be like while domestic politics have such theories of "good life". Trying to deal with this, he distinguished three traditions⁵ which are relevant for answering this question and which contain seeds of a pluralist and solidarist view (Wight 1991). The distinction between these two orientations was fully introduced later on (Bull 1966). Pluralism emphasizes a state-centric international society and positivist international law and can be likened to realism. Solidarism, on the other hand, emphasizes cosmopolitan values in international society, natural law and can be likened to liberalism (Buzan 2004: 45-62, Linklater and Suganami 2006: 59-74, Mayall 2000).

After the end of the Cold War, the pluralist – solidarist debate has focused, among others, on possibilities and justification of humanitarian interventions. As this issue has become one of the crucial topics of IR, it helped the ES to get involved with mainstream debates. The topic of humanitarian interventions was comprehensively discussed by classical ES scholars as early as during 1970s

4 It is not possible to say that the ES was concerned by the topics mentioned in this paragraph only. There have always been various research topics more or less related together or centered around the core ES claims. The paragraph examines two broad issues which may be regarded as distinctive for this time period.

5 He developed his discussion in a slightly different way later on (see espec. Wight 2005, the book collected and published after Wight's death).

(Vincent 1974). However, it was only after the end of the Cold War and succession of new generations of ES scholars when cardinal arguments *for* humanitarian interventions (i.e. a clearly solidarist stance) started to be forcefully articulated. Solidarists aim to propose an intentionally normative vision to justify humanitarian interventions. As aptly expressed by the title of the key solidarist piece, their goal is “saving strangers” (Wheeler 2000). Solidarism draws some inspiration from the Christian tradition and is mainly rooted in the Western liberal tradition of thinking (Knudsen 1997, Wheeler 1992).⁶ Contrary to this, pluralists claim that solidarism is too ethnocentric and projects Western liberal visions onto other cultures. The goal, thus, should be to guarantee greatest possible sovereignty of cultural frameworks in international politics (Jackson 1992, 2000).

Although pluralism intentionally brings topic of cultural differences into light, it has not coherently connected this theme with regional aspect of the international society. In spite of this, pluralists managed to produce important works tackling a common ES view that the most important (primary) institutions are evenly shared across the contemporary globalized international society (e.g. Jackson 1992). Bearing in mind that primary institutions and international society are mutually constitutive, there is just a small step towards highlighting the existence of particular regional international societies.

The second topic, or rather an area of interest, is a broader one and relates to what could be called composition and structure of international society. This could be tentatively divided into: (A) a specification of the ES’ classical triad (international system – international society – world society), (B) a composition of international society itself, (C) the topic of regional international societies which is a part of this broad topic as much as it is a stand-alone question. One of the main analysts of all the three sub-topics is Barry Buzan (espec. 2004).

(A) The ES (most notably Bull 1977) differentiated between three ideal types of how a second-order level of politics can work. International system is preoccupied with power-political mechanisms. International society exists as a grouping of norms, institutions and states as main actors. World society requires inclusion of non-state actors and cultural and normative framework among them. The ES mainstream chiefly focused on analysis of international society while world society was almost completely overlooked during the Cold War period.⁷ World society has recently received more attention from three different angles. Firstly, solidarists devoted more attention to this term as it is connected with their vision of cosmopolitan world (see above). Secondly, a broader interest to examine this topic is more apparent (Clark 2007). Thirdly, some want to clarify a position and role of world society within the classical triad of international system, international and world society (Buzan 2004, Little 2000, comp. Linklater and Suganami 2006: ch. 3, Keene 2009, Pella 2013).

(B) Unlike the prominent solidarist-pluralist debate and the discussion on (A), which was cultivated and developed in the last decade or so, the issue of composition of international society has been avoided to some extent. Firstly,

⁶ This, however, does not mean that all solidarist efforts or actions need to embrace liberal values.

⁷ John Vincent (1974, 1978, 1992) was an eminent exception.

we lack a systematic and comprehensive elaboration on institutions of the contemporary international society. Secondly, one can intuitively suspect and expect that institutions of international society are not of the same importance. However, the ES is usually concerned with neither delineating mutual relationship between particular institutions, nor their relative importance. Buzan (2004: ch. 6) summarized works of others to get at least a basic image of hierarchy between primary institutions, but the most developed and sophisticated work was released by Reus-Smit (1999) who managed to connect normative background of politics, primary and secondary institutions.

(C) In the Cold War period, the ES produced some historical works on non-Western regional societies before their inclusion into the current global (Western-led) international society (Bull and Watson 1984, Watson 1992, Gong 1984). But neither did these authors examine regional formations within the current global international society, nor did they understand regional international societies as operating at the sub-global level. As I argue and show later on, this first wave of regional research does not constitute an inception of a possible solution to the lack of regional research within the ES, but it is rather a part of the problem.

The new awareness of sub-global (regional) international societies (the second wave of regional research) was prefigured by Mohammed Ayoob's (1999) comprehensive article on the topic which was, however, not followed by a direct increase in regional research. Although he clearly linked his article with the ES tradition, Ayoob has been on the fringe of the ES which seems to be the reason why he did not manage to stimulate further investigations. In 2002, another pioneering paper appeared when Yongjin Zhang delivered his contribution called "Towards a Regional International Society? Making Sense of Regionalism(s) in Asia" at the International Studies Association Convention. We are lucky to present an updated version of this paper as a part of this volume (chapter 3). Zhang combines an outline of the new research program with an analysis of a specific region. One of the most influential impetuses is provided in Barry Buzan's re-elaboration of the ES, which leads him, among others, to take regions as a topic from his previous research and put it on the ES table (Buzan 2004). Since then, Barry Buzan has been the main vanguard figure of this topic and his leading role has been confirmed by two edited volumes (Buzan and Gonzalez-Pelaez 2009, Buzan and Zhang forthcoming). Another strong line of regional research is developed in Andrew Hurrell's works. His attention to regions and the ES are connected and appear and in his magnum opus (2007a) and, even more explicitly, in other papers (2007b).

Regional International Societies as a Topic for the English School

It has already been indicated that there are two waves of ES regional research. The first wave was interested in regional international societies before the emergence of the current global international society. An overview of the main works of the second wave has been provided in the previous paragraph. This section argues

and shows that the first wave of the ES publications on regions tended to *preclude* further research on regional international societies. Then the section proceeds to show which influences led to the revival of the topic and that the influences originated largely outside the ES. Finally, the current stage of development of the second wave is examined.

The First Wave of Regional Research

The first wave of ES regional research was interested in historical investigations on international societies in different cultural contexts (most frequently the Middle East, South and East Asia, and Europe). The first wave can be understood with the help of three key books (Bull and Watson 1984, Watson 1992, Gong 1984)⁸ which are all based on the same narrative with the following steps. They analyze: (1) international societies across the world before the existence of a global international society; (2) their subsequent incorporation into the European international society which originated along with European modernity (roughly the 16th – 18th century) and which became global after it had managed to incorporate non-European societies; and (3) the emergence of the global international society which has diminished the importance of regions to minimum.

These books describe socialization of the non-Western into the West and disappearance of the non-Western element. The story ends with transformation of outsiders into insiders and with a strong teleological moment of Western universalization. The subsequent global international society is then understood as even and homogeneous because all alien and non-Western elements are suppressed. Geographical and societal composition of the global international society is flat as everything is absorbed into one global layer. This description given by the first wave was correct only to some extent and only for a limited period of time. Even during the Cold War, there were important regional deviations (decolonization or regional integrations) which indicated that the vision cannot be completely accurate. A major problem related to this narrative of the first wave of regional research, however, is that the main part of the ES adopted this story as an answer to how the current international society was created and as an assumption which stands beyond its research about the current international society. Thus, there was no need to conduct analyses of the regional dimension because this issue was understood as solved and irrelevant at the same time.

Inceptions of a New Regional Research: Influences from Inside and Outside

Mainly outside influences helped to break the ES' assumption of a homogeneous and "non-regional" world. The rise of regions as a new agenda for analysis has

8 Wight's work (1977) can be partly added too.

been obviously facilitated by enhancement of regional integrations, regionalization of the world and rise of some non-Western regions. However, these real world trends do not seem to influence the ES directly and immediately. Deepening or widening of regional integrations took place during the 1990s in Europe, East Asia and the Americas without having an evident impact on the ES. Quite the contrary, the ES was inspired by intellectual development in other fields. The first trend, which is also the most general and the most powerful force, exceeds IR and is connected with a broader political-ideological constellation. For some part of the 1990s, it could have seemed we did experience an ideological end of history with the final victory of neo-liberal globalization which, however, proved wrong and credibility of non-(neo)liberal alternatives to globalization gradually entered into mainstream circles (comp. e.g. Rupert 2000, Mittelman 2004).

Academic influences come from three different directions: (1) post-colonial theory, (2) quite broad literature on regionalism (new regionalism), and (3) security studies. (1) Post-colonialism was brought into the ES by Ayoob who connected these two approaches and based his article (1999) concerned with regional international societies on them. Although other encounters between the ES and post-colonialism were not very close, some inspirations which (directly or indirectly) came from post-colonialism to the ES can be traced or sensed (see e.g. Acharya and Buzan 2010, Bellamy 2005, Jackson 1992, Keene 2002, Linklater 1998, 2007). Compared to the following two trends, this influence is the most culturally sensitive. (2) New regionalism whose existence tends to be demarcated by various dates but which, as a coherent body of literature, has existed since the late 1990s has had an important impact too. Despite its central prominence in the research on regions, new regionalism remains a source of rather indirect inspiration. However, Zhang's early 2000s expression (see chapter 3) of the need to investigate regional international societies was based on this influence. (3) Security studies and Barry Buzan as one of its main representatives (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde 1997, Buzan and Wæver 2003) became aware of the crucial importance of regions. When Buzan started engaging with the ES (comp. Buzan 1993), he continued developing his focus on regions.

These influences helped to set the new agenda of regions within the ES, but have not created specific interconnected nexuses of the ES-regionalism, ES-postcolonialism or ES-security studies through which research on regions would be conducted. The most eminent exception is Barry Buzan who connected his interest in security studies, regions, social structuralism (and others) into a new research agenda which is one of the dominant approaches to ES regional research at the moment (see espec. Buzan 2004, Buzan and Gonzalez-Pelaez 2009). The Buzanian path will be more closely discussed in the third section.

Certain studies (Clapham 1996, Grovogui 2002, Krasner 2001) which worked on the fringe of the ES realized that characteristics and institutions of the current international society are not evenly distributed. These authors did not link their arguments and observations with the existence of regional international societies, though. The ES pluralist works (discussed previously) can be generally added

into this group. From the heart of the ES, two academics were struck with a missing regional dimension⁹. Both of them arrived to this persuasion differently. Keene (2002) articulated a rather theoretical dissatisfaction with the ES conception of international society related to civilizations, colonial legacy and global composition of norms. However, the articulation of the regional dimension was a by-product of his research. For Hurrell (1995), on the contrary, the important role of regions in world politics was a result of his empirical observations which he has continued to improve and deepen afterwards (2007a, 2007b).

The Second Wave and the Current State of Research

In order to illustrate the second wave of research on regional international societies, it may be useful to summarize its current stage of development and to look at potential room for improvement. The second wave focused, until recently, on defining main questions and issues related to international societies at the regional level, articulation of the topic, and investigations on particular regional societies and their norms, institutions or characteristics. This investigation is usually conducted through synchronic stand-alone case studies.

As it is typical for academic inquiry, there are possibilities for developing a further stage of research. As we can see its inceptions nowadays – the last section of this chapter should indicate some of these inceptions within this publication – we should not draw strong boundaries between the “current” stage and the “further” stage. The distinction serves rather as an illustrative example and it works with a certain level of simplification. The further stage should potentially be able to understand and analyze subsidiarity of norms between the regional and global levels and coexistence of different (and potentially contradicting) forms of the same institutions which are present at both global and regional levels (like sovereignty). Another potential task lies in inter-regional comparisons and especially in understanding normative and institutional dynamics in inter-regional dynamics. At the same time, the ES regional research would highly benefit from exploring dynamics between regions and regional international societies as both these entities may have different background, development and manifestations. A specifically important question is whether (regional) international societies can overlap. If so, what happens to the norms and institutions of such overlapping regional societies? Are there any specific societal outcomes when norms and institutions which exist in different forms in different regional international societies come to interact together? Understanding the dynamics between the global and the regional element, between different regions and within one region is necessary for the ES to engage critically and more thoroughly with second-order societies at both global and regional level.

9 Others' works are aware of the issue only partially (like e.g. Suganami 2002).

The first and second wave of regional research

Terminology of this book	When the research conducted?	Characteristics of the research
First wave	Late 1970s – early 1990s	Analyzing separate regional societies before the emergence of the global international society
Second wave	Late 2000s, early 2010s and onwards? <i>(this publication takes notice of the state of research until 2013)</i>	Analyzing regional societies as sub-global phenomena; Mainly (synchronic) case studies

Characteristics of This Volume

Goals of the Volume

This book brings together five authors (including the author of the appendix chapter) – each responsible for one of the chapters – whose particular approaches are comprised of both similarities and differences. This section tries to highlight common themes (or themes which could be used for a basic comparative reading between the chapters) while each author’s chapter will unveil some differences later on. As stated at the very beginning, this volume explores regions from the ES perspective, develops (theoretical) frameworks and ways for studying regions in international society, and provides critical explorations of the ES at the regional (sub-global) level. More concretely, this volume wants to (1) highlight a gap between the perception that international society is globally homogeneous and the current state of international society; (2) develop the issue of regional (sub-global) international societies; and (3) empirically examine regions which have not been much analyzed through the perspective of international society at the sub-global level. The volume’s investigations and its goals can be juxtaposed with Buzan’s version of the ES. The question why a discussion with Buzan is highlighted deserves a few more words. Buzan’s approach to the regional level is one of the most developed and dominant ones within the ES. Buzan made a very strong argument for regions to become a new topic of the ES investigation in 2004. In 2009, he with other colleagues produced the most detailed empirical contribution on the topic so far. In 2012, he spoke about the topic on behalf of the ES and offered a summary of it to a broader audience (Buzan 2004, Buzan and Gonzalez-Pelaez 2009, Buzan 2012).

Buzan, a synthetist by inclination and a taxonomist in his ES research mission, proposes a new version of the ES which incorporates his previous interests in the debates about structuralism in security studies and social sciences. He turns international society into a set of concepts and analytical categories which are universally applicable to analyzed cases (including regions or regional international societies). This volume does not question Buzan's contribution and its importance. However, it undertakes ways of exploration which differ from that of Buzan in some aspects. At some points, the volume emphasizes a more emic perspective and perhaps stronger connections between phenomena (norms, institutions etc.) and political practice. To make sure, this book does not aim to reject Buzan's approach but wants to show other possibilities, ways or frameworks of research. Each of the volume's authors develops his/her own angle of how to look at his/her case. Some of them point to certain weaknesses in Buzan's approach (espec. chapter 2 and appendix), while others (espec. ch. 4) are not so distant from it.

This Volume within the English School Terrain

Except for this one, the book consists of other three chapters and one addendum chapter. The following chapter develops and deepens theoretical discussion on the topic of international societies at the sub-global level while other contributions are primarily focused on particular regions (East Asia, South America, Central Asia). None of these regions has been comprehensively examined from the perspective of regional international societies until now and, thus, the three chapters provide some of the first steps, findings and conclusions¹⁰. Besides having a separate theoretical elaboration on regional international societies (chapter 2), each of the empirically-focused chapters contains its own theoretical discussion as the theoretical chapter of the book cannot address all possible points, as its goal is not to provide a direct and strict framework for analysis, and as each empirical chapter chooses a slightly different way of exploration. This format helps authors to follow their points of view and arguments, to show and develop varieties of directions the ES can incorporate, and to indicate a certain degree of theoretical pluralism. Pluralism is sometimes mentioned as one of the crucial signs of the ES which, however, does not mean that the ES is a free space without theoretical demarcations. A specification of this publication's position within the ES follows.

The second chapter by Costa-Buranelli develops a theoretical discussion on a triangle of novelty of the topic, institutions at the regional level, and methodological questions. The questions of novelty of the topic and institutions help to show how dynamics of formation of international societies and institutions at the regional level can be grasped. This is oriented to a more dynamic understanding of global-regional, inter-regional, and intra-regional relations which has not been

10 Southeast Asia has already been analyzed by Quayle (2010). Although using the ES, Quayle has largely focused on civil society within this region.

fully developed within the ES regional perspective. The question of methodology unfolds a dialogue with Barry Buzan. Other papers can be characterized as (mainly) synchronic studies focused on particular regional societies. The third chapter is written by Zhang who originally developed his text as a conference paper in 2002 with the aim to break silence about regional dimension of international society. Although his text is updated by a new part, the paper contains an original discussion of the topic including some theoretical points, which were necessary to illuminate the topic ten years ago. The original conference paper and this book's chapter serve as an indirect backdrop for further avenues of research on regional society/societies in East Asia (Buzan and Zhang forthcoming). The fourth chapter by Merke deals with the South American international society and, among other things, sketches possibilities for comparative dynamics between institutions of the global international society and institutions of the South America society. The last part of this volume by Kaczmarska is incorporated as an appendix chapter because it presents a counter-argument against the existence of a regional international society in the case of Central Asia and, thus, differs from other chapters. Despite this divergence, Kaczmarska's contribution remains highly relevant to the topic of the publication and develops its discussion on regions in international society.

Research within the ES can be distinguished with the help of two classifications of the ES which can help to approximately situate this book and its chapters within the ES terrain. The first classification (Linklater and Suganami 2006: ch. 2) differentiates between three basic types of research: (1) structural, (2) functional, and (3) historical. The main goal of structural research is to understand institutional and constitutional structure of international societies. Functional research is interested in how societies work and what their functional merits can be. More specifically, this type often looks at how different societies maintain international order. The last one studies history of international societies. The second classification (adjusted from Buzan 2004: 12-14) can be used to distinguish how international society is understood; whether as: (A) a set of ideas and visions in the minds of political actors, (B) a set of ideas in the minds of theorists or philosophers that expresses their belief how international society should be organized, (C) a set of externally imposed concepts that can be used as analytical tools and that are designed to capture composition and/or functions of international society.

The case studies in this book are interested in structural, normative, or institutional characteristics of the regional level (functional aspects, like preserving order, are more or less disregarded) and mainly understand regional developments and international society as derived from real world politics. Thus, they come close to the type of (3A). This categorization should not be understood too strictly, but rather as an ideal type which this volume approximates. At the same time, it is necessary to bear in mind that each chapter of the volume has its specifics. The distinction between (A) and (C) deserves a short discussion, especially in the context of Merke's chapter on South America. Merke borrows from Buzan's vision of international society as an analytical concept and thus the chapter leans towards (3C). Although he uses the concept of primary institutions as a category for analy-

sis, he proceeds with emphasis on understanding of specific norms from within the society itself (and thus has elements of 3A). One of the ways how to increase cultural sensitivity of analytical categories (which are derived from researcher's thinking) is to develop their sub-categorizations according to practices contained within examined cases (regions). Merke does so when he points at some institutions which were derived solely from South American politics and when he touches on formation of social bonds and relations in the region which are prior to formation of institutions.

Conceptual Basis

This section provides a closer conceptualization of key terms which are used in this book. As discussed by Costa-Buranelli (ch. 2), the ES, especially in the classical generation and in the first wave of regional research, relied on an intuitive understanding of what regions are. Any attempt to conceptually and operationally grasp the topic of regional international societies is complicated by the ES' general reluctance to define its research procedures. Although conceptual definitions can be found or at least distilled from ES texts, they usually lack closer operationalization and conceptualization.

As this book shifts ES' focus from the global level to the regional (i.e. sub-global) one, it is useful to highlight the differences between them. The global level includes social relations and interactions at the level of the whole world. Related to this and to ES-oriented investigations, we presume that the current international society is spread all over the world. At the same time, it is assumed that although social manifestations (e.g. international society as such, state sovereignty, the United Nations, particular norms of international law etc.) are directly or indirectly derived from the totality of social relations in the whole world, inquiry on their main characteristics and main dynamics can be conducted without the necessary need to research this world totality.¹¹ The regional level is, on the other hand, defined as a sub-global ontology that is contained in the global ontology, but sub-global social relations and manifestations (institutions, culture etc.), i.e. regional variations, are distinct from global manifestations.

Because the ES has not been fully capable to provide an adequate definition of a region, we borrow from a quite general understanding of region which comes outside the ES. According to a theoretical definition which serves as a basic ground for our examination in this publication, regions can be defined as spaces "that are proximate to each other and are interconnected in spatial, cultural and ideational terms in a significant and distinguishable manner" (Paul 2012: 4). The following chapter contains a deeper conceptual discussion including a clarification that ES views tend to comprise both material and ideational elements when defining region.

11 However, I do not claim that global manifestations and institutions need to be investigated at the global level only. It may be useful to focus on lower levels of analysis, too.

Unlike in the case of regions, there is a consolidated understanding of another key concept – international society. Since the purpose of this publication is not to theoretically re-elaborate conceptual foundations of the ES, we are going to use a generally shared and accepted definition by Hedley Bull. According to him, “[a] society of states (or international society) exists when a group of states, conscious of certain common interests and common values, form a society in the sense that they conceive themselves to be bound by a common set of rules in their relations with one another, and share in the working of common institutions” (Bull 1977: 13).¹² This definition is applicable to the regional level. However, it requires certain specifications, especially related to Bull’s usage of the term “state”. Bull restricts his definition to a society among states only, which is, however, too narrow and not followed by all ES authors (comp. Linklater and Suganami 2006, Buzan 2004). For this volume, international society is conceived as second-order society where states (polities) are the constitutive and key actors while other political actors are present too. Second-order societies, generally specified, are “those in which the members are not individual human beings, but durable collectivities of humans possessed of identities and actor qualities that are more than the sum of their parts” (Buzan 2004: xviii). It is good to note that regions and international society are defined through both material and ideational aspects while it is not declared whether the material or the ideational is the primary element.

Regional international society is a kind of international society which exists at the sub-global level. It means it is a constitutive part of the global level but it is also distinct from it. Regional international societies have the character of second-order societies and are formed by or within a region. We intentionally do not claim that a region precedes a regional international society or otherwise, but what is apparent is that there cannot be a regional international society without a region (or more accurately, without at least a minimal regional consolidation). On the contrary, it remains an open question if there cannot be a region without a regional international society, but it seems it is neither logically necessary nor empirically inevitable for each region to form a regional international society.

International societies, including regional ones, are understood by the ES to be fundamentally composed of institutions which are accumulations of norms and rules. Institutions are understood in a sociological way. According to Meyer et al. (1987: 13) institutions are: “cultural rules giving collective meaning and value to particular entities and activities, integrating them into larger schemes”. This definition of institutions by the Stanford School of sociology is in agreement with the ES approach as argued by some of ES writers themselves (Buzan 2004: 167, Reus-Smit 2009, Wæver 1998: 112). For the purposes of this publication, it is important not only to define institutions but also to distinguish between primary and secondary institutions. While primary institutions can be outlined by the previously mentioned definition (they create general rules), secondary

12 Similarly to Bull, the majority of ES authors connects their understandings and definitions of international society with interests, rules, norms, institutions or some combination thereof (Armstrong 1993: 12; Reus-Smit 1997; Dunne 1998: 188; 2003: 305; Keal 2000: 61).

institutions are represented by regimes and organizations (they create rules about the rules). (comp. Bull 1977: part 1, Buzan 2004: 167, Navari 2009a, 2009b). Bull (1977) famously mentioned the following primary institutions: the balance of power, international law, diplomacy, war, managerial role of great powers whereas particular international organizations or particular international laws could be examples of secondary institutions.

All the definitions which are mentioned above are primarily of a theoretical or conceptual character. Each of the following chapters chooses a slightly different way of investigation, but here we can introduce a basic operationalization of two key notions – a regional international society and primary and secondary institutions. Regional international society can be investigated through common interests and values, institutions it creates and adherence of actors' identities to a set of interests, rules, norms. It also can be investigated through bonds (binding principles) which are present in a particular international society. Institutions can be observed and evaluated through their history and evolution, collective meanings they provide, rules they are based on, ways how they integrate actors into larger entities, practices and identities associated with them.

How to Read and Understand This Volume

This book can be read with the help of two theoretical discussions. Firstly, it uses Buzan's approach to the ES regional analysis as a backdrop from which it departs and diverges to undertake more or less different paths. This volume tries to put forward a context sensitive approach and to produce a more emic understanding of regions and not to be strictly confined by applying analytical categories derived from researcher's analytical scheme. In this respect, Costa-Buranelli discusses the distinction between emic and etic research and its implications for the topic of regional international societies (ch. 2). Zhang, while analyzing East Asia, provides a discussion which shows possibilities to understand regional international societies through their specific regional integration processes (ch. 3). Although Merke starts with the analytical scheme developed by Buzan (2004) and with Bull's (1977) classical list of institutions to analyze South America, his findings point out that any analysis should carefully examine the state of institutions in society itself. He grounds his approach in an informed investigation of South America's understanding of primary institutions (ch. 4). Kaczmarek (in the book's addendum) points out certain limitations of applying Buzan's approach to those regions where regional international societies are loosely formed or not formed at all (as she claims in the case of Central Asia).

The second way of reading this work is through a thesis that regional international societies can be at different stages of consolidation and/or can be based on different kind of sociality, socialization, integration or cohesion. This may sound self-evident and unproblematic, but it has not been reflected in the ES research which tends to be performed in "either – or" categories (either there is a regional

society or there is no regional society). To get a deeper perceptiveness, the ES can confront itself with literature on regional integration, which is usually aware of different levels of integration and of regional cohesion, and with (especially) constructivist inquiries on socialization in regional or world politics. The first wave of ES regional research can be helpful to some extent too as it was concerned with a wide range of societies in different contexts. However, it did not offer deeper understanding of intra-regional socialization. A closely related question is whether a regional international society is always formed in every region. The question is shortly discussed from the theoretical point of view in the second chapter by Costa-Buranelli and closely examined in the case of Central Asia. In her contribution, Kaczmarek argues and shows that a regional international society has not been formed in the region of Central Asia which has broader implications. It strongly challenges the view that links between regions and regional international societies arise naturally.

As ES comparative research is still missing at the regional level, there was no need to think about different types of socializations or cohesion in different regional international societies. This publication is not a comparative study either but at the same time allows a certain level of a comparative reading. Central Asia is a region, as argued by Kaczmarek in the last part, without established regional international society. Central Asia possesses a high level of potential and quite strong preconditions to form a regional international society at both inter-human and inter-state levels, but also experiences intrusive influences which prevent its emergence. The Central Asian framework of regional organizations, which could be a possible channel for developing a regional international society, is hollowed and, hence, does not help either. East Asia, as discussed in the third chapter, reveals a certain level of ambivalences. Zhang points out some contradictory opinions regarding the East Asian regional society. His chapter tends to explore varieties and ambiguities of the region rather than to strictly decide what the East Asian region is. Despite these contradictions about both geographical and societal demarcation which exist due to dense and overlapping networks (rather than due to lack of them), it is impossible to ignore strong elements of East Asia's regional society of states while consolidation at the inter-human level remains dubious. South America (ch. 4) exhibits a case of a regional international society formed at the level of political and inter-state framework which is, as indicated by Merke, backed-up with common cultural preconditions at the inter-human level.

Thus, we face three hypothetical scenarios of development of regional international societies. The word "hypothetical" is to connote a state of the very tentative elaboration. The first one (derived from Central Asia) describes a case with quite clearly demarcated region and strong preconditions for forming a regional international society which is complicated by inner and outer political impacts. The second one (derived from East Asia) shows a situation when cultural preconditions or cohesion at the level of inter-human society are quite low but regional international society seems to be formed from above through rich (yet rather informal) regional integration with abundant political ties maintained via many

overlapping regional organizations. This type of regional international society seems to be more dependent on regional organizations and regionalisation processes. This can, as in the case of East Asia, complicate demarcation of regional borders although it seems that we need to accept this “scatteredness” to fully appreciate a way of regional socialization/cohesion. East Asian regional society seems to be concentrated around ASEAN countries, but other regional organizations as ASEAN+3, ARF, APEC seem to blur geographical limits of the regional international society. The last scenario (derived from the South American case) is ultimately grounded in a common cultural space and a deep consolidation at the inter-human level while international society, formed in such a region, seems to be a consequent result. In other words, this kind of regional international society receives an impetus from below which is reciprocated from above.

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2 | The English School and Regional International Societies: Theoretical and Methodological Reflections

Filippo Costa-Buranelli

INTRODUCTION¹

One of the beauties of the discipline of International Relations (IR) is that it can move forward in terms of theoretical sophistication, analytical power and explanatory ability not only by looking at the developments of the realm it seeks to study, that of international politics, but also by dealing with blind spots, lacunae and grey areas within its already established (or so believed) theoretical toolkits. In this respect, the English School (ES) does not seem to be an exception. The recent turn of the theory to the regional scale, shifting from the global level of analysis to a lower, regional one, has been hailed as one of the most significant theoretical (and hopefully empirical) advancements of the ES for the next decade, ushering in a new regional agenda of the School (Buzan and Gonzalez-Pelaez 2009). The novelty is especially evident by looking at the historical conditions in which the School was born in the lap of the British Committee of IR in the late 1950s (Dunne 1998). The rise of American hegemony, the systemic structuration in a bipolar scheme according to the logics of the incipient Cold War, and the ubiquitous presence of the two superpowers in every part of the globe to compete for military pre-eminence and ideological supremacy led to a considerable neglect of how the norms, rules and institutions of international society were interpreted, re-framed and used in different regional contexts.

However, with the demise of the USSR and with the world opening itself to reinvigorated political, social, cultural, ethnic and normative complexity and plurality, the role of regions has assumed increasing importance, especially as places where international relations are not only consumed, but also produced (Hurrell 1995, Lake and Morgan 1997, Buzan and Wæver 2003). The world, in sum, has begun resembling a pan of fried eggs (Buzan 2004), where thick clusters of cultural, ethical and normative commitments hinge on a shared-by-all, although minimal, set of pluralistic rules and values aimed at the viability and sustainability of the whole system.

Here, it is argued that more than a theoretical novelty and the inauguration of a new agenda, primarily the regionalisation of the ES represents a challenge for the ES itself, but also a welcome off-ramp from which the ES research program can move forward providing new questions and enlarging, enhancing and entrenching the scope of the research agenda on regional international societies.

1 I would like to thank Natasha Khurt, Elene Melikishvili and Daniel Matteo for their helpful comments and suggestions on earlier drafts. Also, I would like to thank Lola Buranelli for her support in writing this article.

The gist of this paper is that the regionalisation of international society², more than a novelty in the ES, should be seen as an opportunity for what may be called an *intra-theoretical self-reflection*. In particular, this chapter is intended as presenting three specific questions whose answers are aimed at refining and sharpening the theoretical utility both of the ES in general and of the concept of regional international society in particular. First, what is novel about the new “regionalisation” of the ES? Is it really a path-breaking analytical move? Second, can we still speak of “institutions of international society” when they are subject to regional interpretation and adaptation? Third, what kind of problems, and indeed opportunities, does the regionalisation of international society elicit from a methodological viewpoint? In the end, one could argue, the aim is also to understand and justify the need and the utility of the concept of regional international society, both for the ES itself and for IR theory more widely.

The argument will be developed as follows: in the first part, I will develop the questions formulated above, explain their significance in relations to the regionalisation of international society and identify in them possible critiques to the whole theoretical body of the ES. In the second part, conversely, I will try to offer plausible answers, or at least suggestions, to tackle the interrogatives formulated in the first part, thereby offering new prospects for theoretical reflections and avenues of enquiry. In the third, conclusive part, I will argue that the three questions and the three answers provided form an inextricable logical and conceptual link, and I will argue that the regionalisation of the ES can be seen as a progressive research programme in Lakatosian terms (1970).

THE FIRST QUESTION

The first question contests the common assumption that the ES has consistently neglected the regional level of international relations (Buzan and Gonzalez Pelaez 2009). It is certainly true that especially when looking at the inter-human linkages of the post-Cold War period, the need to move to the analysis of regional international societies is compelling. However, were not Wight’s (1977), Bull and Watson’s (1984) and Watson’s (1992) works theoretical speculations and analyses of historically specific, politically determined and culturally significant regional international societies? Almost thirty years ago, Bull and Watson observed that in the past “the world [...] comprised several regional international systems [...] each with its own distinctive rules and institutions, reflecting a dominant regional culture” (1984: 1).

Especially by looking at the titles of their works, and in particular of some subsections, it is possible to argue that those that can be considered among the pillars of the ES literature were indeed idiographic historical enterprises (Linklater

2 While the ES encompasses the notions of international system, international society and world society, in this chapter the spotlight will be primarily on international society. However, when the other two concepts are relevant, they will be dealt with accordingly.

and Suganami 2006: 87-88) concerned with regions, defined as territorial spaces in which contiguous polities, or political communities, enjoyed constant interactions among each others, be they economic, diplomatic, cultural or all of these. Therefore, the critic may argue, if three of the most renowned authors within the ES had already dealt with regional international societies (or “systems”, in Wight’s terminology), why should one regard the new regional agenda of the ES as a novelty? What is distinctive in this enterprise (the second wave of ES regional research) in comparison with the past ones mentioned (the first wave), and how can it favour an advancement in the theory?

THE SECOND QUESTION

The second questions is not related to the level of analysis or the territorial application of international society theory, but rather with its specific hallmark, or “definitional soul” – that is, the concept of institutions, defined as durable but not eternal patterns of behaviour that give predictability and order to a given social system (Buzan 2004: 181). If the starting point of the regionalisation of international society is the assumption that the institutions of global international society can be adopted, re-interpreted or rejected, and if these institutions can be re-interpreted and modified in a number of ways, potentially having several international societies each of them having its own interpretation of a given norm or institutions, to what extent is the theorist/analyst allowed to speak of the presence of a common institution? In other words, when does the renegotiation of the meaning of an institution make it so blurred and multi-meaningful (“polysemic” using the word above) that it is no longer possible to speak of a shared institution at all?

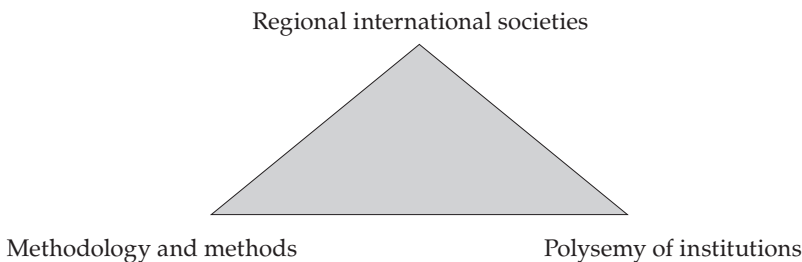
THE THIRD QUESTION

The third question is concerned with one of the most vulnerable aspects of the ES, if one wants to say, the School’s Achilles’ heel: methodology and methods. As it has been recently said, to speak about a defined and consolidated methodology of the ES is a contradiction in terms (Navari 2009: 1) or, in other words, the ES is antipathetic to methodology and methods (Wilson 2009: 184). This is not the appropriate place to thoroughly analyse the complex relationship between ES theory and methodological stances, as it has been magisterially done elsewhere (Navari 2009). However, a quick recapitulation may be useful for the construction of the argument. Its methodological complexity notwithstanding, the ES has been characterised as essentially an interpretive, qualitative and inductive enterprise, based on the study of the discourses and practices of philosophy, history and international law (Bull 1966, Navari 2009).

There has also been a recent attempt to “soft-positivise” the ES, claiming that international society is something visible “out there”, in the implementations and sustainment of institutions and norms by the actors involved (Buzan 2004, Buzan and Gonzalez-Pelaez 2009; for a recent critique, see Dunne 2005). However, one may ask what is at risk in giving up the ideational, discursive and interpretive character of international society. As it will be argued later, this “methodological turn” has serious implications for the analysis of regional international societies.

The regionalisation of international society, therefore, can be seen both as a theoretical novelty but also as a set of new questions and conundrums, with which the researcher should deal if he/she is to fully grasp the complexity not only of regional international societies, but also of ES and world politics more generally. Moreover, it is evident how these three sets of questions are inherently linked among each other: to specify the regional dimension of a given international society and its relation with the global level means to reflect on the need of making justice to various interpretations of given norms, rules and institution that may be thought, erroneously, as having a fixed and shared universal meaning, and to the different meaning that some institutions can have in specific regional settings. This last point is linked with the necessity of carefully pondering our methodological choices and methods, especially since social research should use methods, methodologies and tools “not because they have been used before, but because they are fit for the task at hand” (Greener 2011: 50). And given that a methodology should be applied in a specific and well-specified domain, this last point is connected with the first one mentioned above.

Figure 1: the triangle of conundrums in regional ES



By looking at the triangle above, one thing is already clear: like the most complex structures in physics and biology, such as DNA, whenever we alter a character, or a feature, of a theory, the whole body undergoes a chain of “mutations” that should result in a modified, but still self-sustainable, organism. In this case, the downgrading of international society to the regional level brings with it a number of potential interesting changes both at the definitional/institutional level as well as at the methodological one.

THE FIRST ANSWER

The first question was one concerned with the apparent novelty of the concept of regional international society. Many of the works in the ES tradition, as noted above, dealt with regional international societies, and therefore there is nothing really “new” in the recent ES agenda on international society and regions. Is there not? To properly answer the question, a brief detour around the concept of “region” as used in the ES is required.

In social sciences, the concept of region is undoubtedly a contested one³. When a definition of what a region is is asked for, “one detects a palpable unease among scholars” (Hameiri 2013: 316). Yet, following the literature of comparative politics and international political economy (Mansfield and Milner 1999; Hettne and Soderbaum 2000, Fawn 2009, Mansfield and Solingen 2010) four conditions seem to be necessary to identify a region in world politics. Firstly, a region should be a sub-global ontology: to be analytical discernible, a region should be a distinct part of the world, rather than the world itself. Secondly, there is proximity: for a region to be meaningful, the units forming it should be close enough to facilitate exchanges, interactions and flows of people, money, goods, and cultural practices as well as security issues. Thirdly, there is interaction capacity: within states forming a region there should be a thicker flow of interaction, social, political, economic and security-related than with other states in the global system, although the latter are expected to exist as well in an era of globalisation. Lastly, there is what Hameiri has called the geopsychological aspect of regions (2013: 317). This last factor is usually proposed by social constructivist theorists, arguing that what makes a region is a complex web of ideational, social, normative and identity-related relations (Katzenstein 2005).

Following the conditions set out above, a region may be tentatively said as being a cluster of states “that are proximate to each other and are interconnected in spatial, cultural and ideational terms in a significant and distinguishable manner” (Paul 2012: 4). In sum, despite the pervasive confusion and fragmentary condition of the studies on regions and regionalism, both the material and the ideational element seem to have to be present in order to meaningfully speak of a “region”.⁴

Digging more specifically into IR Theory and the ES, it is possible to identify two “ideal-types” of regions, used distinctively by the classical ES of Bull, Wight and Watson and the “new” ES of Buzan⁵. In the classical ES and the first wave of regional research, the term “region” was used in a very basic and simple manner

3 While a thorough conceptualisation of “region” is necessary for the argument of the chapter, the following discussion should be intended as better identifying where ES situates itself in the regional debate, and not as a full-fledged attempt to solve the ontological and epistemological conundrum of what a region is.

4 The combination of material and ideational factors is usually referred as “regional identity”, a concept dear to the discipline of human geography (Paasi 2003).

5 I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for suggesting me this formulation to escape the definitional aporia of the ES.

to indicate a specific and well-defined geographical area composed of political units interacting among each other through social institutions (above all trade, diplomacy, and war) underpinned by the sharing of a common culture and historical legacy (Wight 1977; Bull and Watson 1992). The new ES and the second wave of regional research goes one step further, and argues that *institutional differentiation* from the global level is what defines a region and, consequently, a regional international society. By institutional differentiation from the global level, I mean the condition when a region adopts institutions different from those at the global level (or does not adopt specific institutions present at the global level) and/or interprets differently institutions present at the global level, albeit accepting them. This aspect, however, is dealt more in depth later in the text.

Barry Buzan has recently stated that a region is defined primarily by its interaction capacity (2012: 23), and that a region is essentially “a geographical clustered subsystem of states that is sufficiently distinctive in terms of its internal structure and process to be meaningfully differentiated from a wider international system or society of which it is part” (2012: 22). The distinctiveness and differentiation mentioned in the definition pertain to the institutions that are adopted in present-day regions, which are the key to identifying and distinguishing specific clusters of states from the global level of world politics. This concept of differentiation from the global level is, I argue, what distinguishes how the term “region” was intended in the classical ES from how “region” is being used now within the new ES. It was the establishment of a global international society that made possible an analytical (and territorial) differentiation between the two levels, the global and the regional one, where the institutional differentiation is and can be observable. This is why, for Buzan, the regions dealt with in the classical ES should be better understood as international societies in their own right (2012: 23-24).

From the discussion above, it is also interesting to note how the ES conflates the territorial and the ideational aspects of the definition of “region” dealt with earlier, as it seems that in the new ES the analytical boundary between a region and regional international society is porous at best. For if a region is defined by the intensity and frequency of the interactions among the constitutive units (which are likely to occur more intensively over a short than a long distance), arguably these interactions will require by necessity a common set of social and institutional arrangements and practices to be managed. Such non-material arrangements, when sufficiently institutionalised, give birth to a society of regional states. With this distinction in mind, I argue that the new regional ES can carve out its distinctiveness and analytical utility when compared to the first wave of regional research in two respects.

The first one is by focusing on what I would call a “diachronically idiographic analysis” of regional international societies, tracing the evolution of regional norms, rules and institutions of a single and defined regional environment from an historical perspective, through the centuries up to the present. It would be diachronic because it would cover a long and extended time-frame, while it

would be idiographic because it would focus only on a single region. For example, this kind of enterprise would be interested in covering the oscillations from pluralism to solidarism (and/or vice versa) within a single regional international society, as if it was a world apart. This diachronically idiographic analysis would be also distinct from previous works on regions, in the way that follows: at a deeper reading, Martin Wight (1977) was more interested in the social institutions that constituted the social dimension of inter-relations among political entities, and therefore he provided examples of specific “historical close-up shots” in specific moments of the history of those parts of the world, to show how in past centuries as well polities of every type, from city-states to empires, were able to create, sustain and obey specific rules of conduct and institutions aiming at preventing the order and the predictability of the system. Bull and Watson (1984) were interested in the historical dimension of regional international societies as well, but took the regional dimension of international society as a springboard to analyse and trace the expansion of the society of a specific region, the European one, more than in the historical evolution of those societies before the encounter with the Europeans and after it.

Also, in Watson (1992), the evolution of international society is looked at with the “globality” of it in mind, as if it was implicit an assumption of uniformity and inevitable convergence in a single, global international society. The second part of the book is the one that most resembles a diachronically idiographic analysis of a regional international society, the European one, from the city-states of the Renaissance age, to the great Empires of the Nineteenth Century, to their break-up in the Twentieth, and can serve as a useful proxy for future explorations of regional evolutions of specific regional international societies in other parts of the world.

The second way in which the second wave of regional research and its new agenda can distinguish itself from the first wave is the move from a discrete analysis of systems of states (Wight 1977) to a more organic picture of society of societies. It is akin to the metaphor of pan-fried eggs (Buzan 2004), but it also moves a bit forward. Here, the crucial variable is that we should not forget the existence of a global international society. The works of Wight, Bull and Watson, and Watson resembled what social scientists call “case studies”, intensive descriptions of the “societiness” of given regions, standing alone one from the other before the European model of doing international relations spread its blanket all over the world creating a global international society. This singularity of analysis was also due to the absence of an all-encompassing social structure at the macro level, one in which several sub-systemic international society could exist and relate to each other through globally shared institutions and norms. The world was a “system of societies”, i.e. an environment where several regional international societies coexisted being barely in touch with one another, due to lack of means of communications, technology and sometimes even of knowledge of each other’s existence (Buzan and Little 2000).

After the European expansion of international society, and especially as it has been noted with the end of the Cold War, these discrete and autonomous

regional international society have been in contact with each other, have some common rules and institutions on which they can base their relations (diplomacy, sovereignty and international law above all) retaining their diversity both in the sphere of inter-state and world society (Buzan 2010). From a system of societies, it is as if we had moved to a society of societies or, to use an expression dear to the ES, to a second-order pluralism (Buzan 2004). Therefore, with respect to the past, it is noteworthy that the new regionalisation of the ES opens avenues for more substantial comparative work across several regional international societies, on their degree of institutionalisation, on the similarity or differences with respect to shared norms, rules and institutions, on what happens when pluralist international societies meet more solidaristic ones (Morada 2012), or on how the same institution has been interpreted in different ways in two or more regional societies (on sovereignty, for example, see Cummings and Hinnebusch 2011).

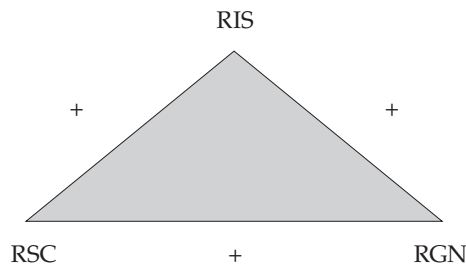
As noted above, the regionalisation of the ES has been believed to be necessary due to the pre-eminence of the cultural factor in world politics as well (Buzan 2004, 2010). This cultural factor is to be found at the inter-state level but also and perhaps more importantly, at the (regional) world society level, a level that was much downplayed in previous ES analyses. Thus, an interesting shift from the past can be a comparative analysis of the several configurations that a regional inter-state society and a “regional” world society can assume (hand in hand? at odds? indifference?). Works in this direction have started being produced, e.g. on the Middle East (Valbjørn 2009, Hashmi 2009) or on ASEAN (Quayle 2010), but further work can be conducted on other regional international societies as well⁶.

To conclude, another suggestion may be to expand the agenda on the correlation between a regional international society (RIS), a regional security complex (RSC), and forms of regionalism. Put in relation with each other, the regional international society pillar represents the *social character* of relations among states, from conflict to confederation, passing through co-existing pluralism to developmental solidarism (Buzan 2004); the regional security complex pillar represents the *strategic-security character* of the region, which can develop from conflict formation to security community where war is unthinkable among the regional members; the forms of regionalism represent the *integrative character* of the region, ranging from sporadic interactions through more coordinated and integrated action to a federation of states (Hettne and Soderbaum 2000). How these three characters of a region are linked is still unknown, although the strongest hypothesis seems to be that of a positive correlation among the three: the more solidarist a society

6 It is important to note that the role of culture and of historical diachronism that can favour a dialogue between the ES and post-colonial approaches to IR and regions. The analysis of how local regional cultures interact and clash with social institutions inherited from previous experiences of domination interact, and of how local cultures have resisted forms of institutional impositions in a diachronic way combining ES and post-colonial narratives is a fertile ground of research. This richer approach can certainly be a valuable lens of analysis to understand the pluralist character of present-day international society. It is perhaps not surprising that a leading post-colonial theorist, Mohammed Ayoob, is strongly sympathetic to ES approaches to regional and world politics (see in particular Ayoob 1999). I am grateful to one of the two anonymous reviewers for reminding me of this very important link among the two perspectives.

of states is, the more peaceful the security realm is, and the more integrative the political-economic realm is. However, more empirical studies are needed on these theoretical relations, especially as far as regional international societies and forms of regionalism are concerned. The point made here, however, is that the concept of regional international society can serve as an additional comparative term in the wider literature on regions and regionalism, allowing the exploration of new paths of enquiry and the investigation of relational forms of integration not only from an economic viewpoint, but also from a social one.

Figure 2: the hypothetical relations between RIS, RSC and RGN



THE SECOND ANSWER

The second critique dealt with above referred to what I called the polysemy of institutions, arguing that it is difficult to speak of the universality of an institution if this is subject to several interpretations, definition and content renegotiations. I borrowed the term “polysemy” from linguistics, using this discipline as a proxy for what the regionalisation of the ES has meant to the concept of institutions. Commonly, polysemy refers to that situation when the same word assume different (but related) meanings in different context within the same linguistic structure (Lichtenberk 1991: 475). For example, the word “bank” means both the physical building where money is stored (“the bank opens at...”) and the personnel in that building (“the bank said that...”). At the heart of both meanings, however, there is the idea of a financial institution in charge of managing people’s savings (Pustejovsky 1995).

I argue that the same occurs for institutions translated from the global level of international society to the regional one: within the same “linguistic” (here “institutional”) structure, that of global international society where all the potential regional international societies are included, the same institution can have different meanings, or interpretation, or understandings in different (regional) contexts. To put it simply, despite the attempts to expand a Western political and

institutional vocabulary, “the various peoples of the world are speaking of different things while uttering the same words” (Bozeman 1960: 9). So, “sovereignty” can have a different meaning in Europe and East Asia, while “international law” can be seen rather differently in the post-Soviet world compared to Europe, or “market economy” can have various degrees or ways of interpretation in Africa, Southeast Asia and, let’s say, the Middle East. And this is potentially valid for all the other institutions, such as borders, diplomacy, environmental stewardship and so forth. This opens up two questions: how to deal with these interpretations, and how they are born.

In my opinion, the main problem with the polysemy of institutions is that they themselves are concepts so wide and all-encompassing that it is difficult to pin them down. Just to give an example, the very notion of “sovereignty” is one of the most debated, treated and dealt with within the discipline of IR (Krasner 1999). Sovereignty assumes different meanings not only in different regional international societies, but also in different IR theories. The same is true for international law, or the “market economy”. So the question is, how to account for this intra-diversification within institutions and inter-diversification across different regional international societies?

What I suggest is to not forget that these terms, before being institutions, are “concepts” and, as such, they run the risk of “conceptual stretching”, meant as that situation when “our gains in extensional coverage tend to be matched by losses in connotative precision” (Sartori 1970: 57). ES institutions, being wide concepts and “big words” of politics, are potentially subject to meaninglessness if all their facets and differentiations are sacrificed on the altar of general conceptualisation. This is especially true if, passing from the global to the regional, concepts (and therefore institutions) “travel” from one domain to several others, where the same concept can be seen in different terms (Sartori 1970, Acharya 2004). In the past, even the recent one, there was no need to do this, as the global international society was the reflection of a single, coherent social configuration, the Western-liberal one. Now, with several regional domains, a sharper definition of global institutions is necessary if we are to trace their change and semantic/social renegotiation in several regional international societies. One potentially fruitful path would therefore be to define those minimal but key characteristics, those core features of the concepts that cannot be neglected if the concept is to be meaningful and somehow operationalisable, therefore engaging in a process of “concept formation” (Sartori 1970). These features should be then present in all the different interpretations of institutions across regions, so that the conceptual cornerstone of the institution remains intact while other features may change. Again, there are interesting parallels with linguistics, if we think that one of the way to deal with polysemy is to identify “a set of necessary and sufficient conditions satisfied by each and every one of the meanings of an element” (Lichtenberk 1991: 475).

Another interesting question, related to what is noted above, is to understand why some institutions assume different characteristics and interpretations in

some regions while retaining other meanings in others. Here, I believe that the most convincing explanation is that of local imperatives (Adamson 2005) or, in other words, norms localisation within cultural priors (Acharya 2004: 251). To assume that the whole world has gone through the same historical, cultural and social experiences is not simply an overstatement, but indeed a historical fallacy. Due to diversity in culture, uneven paths of development (both qualitatively and quantitatively), the heterogeneity of societies and different normative commitments (both in the legal sense and in the ethical one, viz. “to do what is right, normal”), world politics has become a space of plurality and difference, with several *Gemeinschaften* hinging on the same, world-scale *Gesellschaft*. With the regionalisation of the concept of international society, therefore, the ES agenda has among its tasks that of understanding how norms travel from one level to the other(s), and what is the semantic/interpretive renegotiation that occurs during this level-of-analysis switch. Again, this brings us back to the idea of concept formation and how to avoid concept stretching: while Sartori speaks of concepts that “travel” across domains, Acharya speaks of how norms “spread”.

The idea of linking the concept of norm localisation, meaning “a complex process and outcome by which norm-takers build congruence between transnational norms (including norms previously institutionalized in a region) and local [i.e. regional] beliefs and practices” (Acharya 2004: 241), is of the utmost importance, I believe, if we are to understand how regional societies not only operate and are sustained, but *how they are formed*. As a matter of fact, in describing the “existential conditions” for a regional international society to exist, Buzan states that it must be distinct from the global level in having distinct institutions absent from the global level, an absence of institutions conversely present at the global level, or a *different interpretation* of institutions present at the global level (2009, 2010). In my opinion, to say “a different interpretation” in a regional context is nothing but a reference to the concept of norms localisation. Indeed, “regional specificity is a hallmark of norm diffusion” (Acharya 2004: 207).

Therefore, further theoretical links with social constructivism are explorable⁷ with the regionalisation of international society, especially if we are to understand how norms, rules and institutions are reinterpreted and adapted to distinct, local normative environments and how these reinterpretations impact world order. Adopting the concept of norm localisation within regional ES theory would also enhance and entrench the foundational argument of the need of enquiring on regional international societies, i.e. the progressive communitarisation of world politics as a counterbalance to cosmopolitan pressures, especially normative and cultural. This communitarisation of world politics is linked to the “society of societies” framework I dealt with above, and the theoretical instrument of norm localisation can help analyse and discuss

7 I say “further” because strong relations between the ES and Constructivism have been already noticed: see for example Dunne (1995), Suganami (2001) or Reus-Smit (2002). I have recently reflected on this, too (Costa-Buranelli 2012).

how norms and institutions that are believed to be universal in character and meaning are in fact differently adapted to previously existing and established cultural and institutional environments⁸.

In this respect, the work conducted by Barbara Allen Roberson on how Egypt adapted the Western model of rule of law in the years of early independence (2009) is indicative of how the regional agenda of ES can and should deal with these trans-normative dynamics, and with those “normative conjunctions”, or “normative turnouts”, which make possible to speak of a regional international society in light of the different understanding of a norm, or institution, present at the global level. Needless to say, the adoption of the concept of norm localisation within the ES analytical toolkit would perpetuate and consolidate the tradition of considering the ES as an autonomous but nonetheless multifaceted, open and osmotic theoretical framework, capable of borrowing and using different concepts developed by other theories and therefore helpful in providing more comprehensive analyses and description of international relations (Suganami 2005), thus configuring itself as plural not only methodologically (Little 2000) but also theoretically.

The *re-novated*, *re-invigorated* link with constructivism would also reinforce the argument that institutions, as ES conceptualizes them, are durable but by no means eternal patterns of social behaviour (Buzan 2004), and therefore are subject to content-based and performative renegotiation not only *diachronically*, and therefore across time, but also *synchronically*, i.e. can assume different connotations in different places (regions) in the same time frame. The link with constructivism is also interestingly connected with the metaphor borrowed from linguistics I used above: as a matter of fact, institutions in regional international societies seen through the lenses of norm localisation are, like linguistic elements, “not mere reflections of the properties of phenomena; rather, they reflect [the] conceptualization of the phenomena, and in that sense they are subjective” (Lichtenberg 1991: 477).

In sum, the link between conceptualisation of institutions, their regional interpretations and the intervening role of norm localisation constitute an inextricable nexus that can help avoid the danger of a “one-size-fits-all” approach in verifying the presence/adoption of a given institution in some regional contexts, and in fact allows for investigating its different use and interpretation distinct from those at the global level.

8 Here I deal only with the concept of norm localisation; however, one should keep in mind that the ES could borrow also the concept of norm subsidiarity, defined as “the process whereby local actors develop new rules, offer new understandings of global rules or reaffirm global rules in the regional context” (Acharya 2011: 96), especially to deal with those regional international societies in which some regional institutions are born out of the substitution/rejection of others present at the global level.

Figure 3: how contemporary RIS are formed



THE THIRD ANSWER

The third critique to address is what I would call the methodological challenge that the concept of regional international society poses to the whole ES. It has been mentioned that the ES has been, historically speaking, quite refractory to definite and one-for-ever methodological labels. It has been also noted that, more recently, the very concept of international society can be “positivised”, making it more visible and more amenable to analytical discernment. However, as stated above, this position elicits two questions: is this positivism, or another methodological stance? and secondly, whatever methodology it is, is it the most appropriate to investigate regional international societies? I would argue that the answer to both questions is “no”, and I will try to justify this answer by linking this problem with the two dealt with above.

To me, the methodology proposed by Buzan and the positivists of the “new ES” is a form of *analyticism*, meaning by this the attempt to investigate reality through the adoption of “a model the worth of which lies not in the correspondence to the world, but in its pragmatic consequences for ordering the facts of the world” (Jackson 2011: 115). More than establishing a causal relation between two or more variables, of which one is called independent and the others dependent linked by a cause-efficient mechanism, or proposing nomothetic generalisations, analyticism assumes that the reality is investigated through a set of predetermined analytical elements that function as a model for what we find in the real world, something akin to a Weberian idealtype. Buzan is indeed aware of this (although still speaking of positivism), when he argues that international society can be seen “as a set of *externally imposed* concepts that define the material and social structures of the international system” (2004: 12, italics added). The model, the analytical blueprint, serves to help us find our way in the complexity of reality, looking for those features and characteristics that are able to prove our theory as valid and true.

In my opinion, therefore, the new ES is on the path of analyticism more than that of positivism. True, an analytic methodology shares with positivism the idea of “phenomenalism”, i.e. “the reliance on empirical observation and directly apprehendable data” (Jackson 2011: 44), and it is exactly the phenomenal, visible and observable character of international society that leads Buzan to speak of a soft-positivisation. However, the two methodologies differ in two respects: the first one is in the nomothetic character of positivism absent in analyticism, given the latter’s predisposition to describe and elucidate. The second one is the different relationship between mind and world: for positivists, the reality “out there” is to be analysed, discussed and studied using intellectual categories and concepts detached from it, while an analytical enterprise assumes that the theoretical instruments we use to investigate the world are informed by the world itself, and therefore modelled by the reality itself in which we live (Jackson 2011).

Now, we know that an international society is said to exist when states (or socially organised communities, reasoning on a diachronic historical perspective) coexist in a social framework constituted by norms and social institutions that somehow regulate, channel and make their behaviour predictable warranting a minimal degree of order in their relations (Bull 1977). With this in mind, the researcher can somehow “spot out” a regional international society by looking at the practices of states in a given region and comparing them to the institutions he or she has in the model in his/her mind. This approach is indeed visible in Buzan and Gonzalez-Pelaez’s book when, while dealing with the primary institutions of the Middle Eastern region⁹, they look for those institutions present at the regional level and state their presence or absence on the basis of correspondence with international society at the global level, i.e. “the model”. The problem is that for those institutions that are interpreted differently, or adopted regionally but absent at the global level, there can be only a weak account, as an analytical methodology is based, first of all, on correspondence with the original model¹⁰. The methodological procedure is the following: a global international society, by definition, constitutes a single social field, in which categories, concepts (such as institutions), and notions are meaningful and knowledgeable through common social understanding. But if this global international society is broken down into several regional domains, it means that the social field has become plural, with the consequence that meanings and interpretations of the same concept may vary (and here we come back to what said above about institutional polysemy) and therefore our analytical concepts used to depict the reality may fail to fully account for *other* realities. As it has been rightly said, “the whole procedure of ideal-typical

9 The whole point made here about the limits of analyticism in dealing with ES institutions is concerned with “primary institutions”, i.e. those social patterns sustained by the actors to regulate their mutual behaviour, and not with “secondary institutions”, which are more similar, conceptually, to regime-theory’s institutions (Krasner 1983). This is because the limits of analyticism are measured by analyticism’s ability to account for the social dimension of world politics. Waltz himself, the champion of analyticism, affirms that states are in relation with one another in a process of socialisation, but this socialisation is not accounted for in his book.

10 For a first attempt to link ES international society and Weberian ideal types, see Keene (2009).

analysis is all about the transmutation of cultural values in useful analytical tools” (Jackson 2011: 144). Therefore, the risk is for the ES to lose complexity and intra-theoretical dynamism, reducing the analysis of regional international societies to a matter of correspondence with the global level, merely looking for the presence or absence of those institutions present at the global level.

In applying a pure analytical methodology, in my opinion there is also another risk, a consequence of what was explained above, which is that of applying *etic* categories to the research domain, i.e. those deductive categories of analysis that are meaningful for the researcher but not accessible to the people (or, more in general, unit of analysis) that constitute the research field as opposed to *emic* categories, that is concepts or ideas borrowed from the field of investigation, and therefore reflecting more accurately the domain we are inquiring on (6 and Bellamy 2012). Both terms come from the discipline of anthropology, and this is relevant for what will be said in the end of this section.

Now, the reasoning is the following: if international society is broken down in several regional international societies (hinging on the same, pluralistic and communitarian global international society), and each of them is distinct because of the presence, absence or different interpretation of a global norm, rule or institution due to a process of norm localisation as described above and because of its cultural, historical and social uniqueness, then we need a methodology able to capture and convey the essence of these interpretations, the motivations of choosing a slightly different understanding from the commonly accepted one (usually, the Western one) and the effects of these interpretive diversions. And if regional international societies are formed due to a process of norm localisation (albeit not only due to that), and if norm localisation is based on a different *interpretation*, I think that the best methodology to grasp the “societiness” of a regional international society has not to be invented. It has been already used. It is exactly an *interpretive, reflexive* one, based on Weberian *Verstehen*, one that would be also capable, by virtue of its interaction with direct protagonists (i.e. diplomats, statesmen) and direct sources (archives, words, treaties), to grasp the *etic* aspect of the regional international society, i.e. that which is meaningful for the actors constituting the suggested regional international society.

As a consequence of this, I assert that a researcher in the ES domain should adopt those methods that are most capable of revealing the perception, the acceptance and the “internalisation” of those institutions that are said to constitute the regional international society: interviews, fieldwork, exploration of archives and hermeneutical analyses are, in my opinion, the most relevant techniques to discover the *etic* aspect of the society under investigation, thus having the possibility to account for the different understandings/ interpretations of some globally established institutions and the presence of those rules and norms peculiarly regional that are adopted by states.

An interpretive methodology can also help to verify and test how norms are internalised by the regional actors. As a matter of fact, Buzan has reminded us that norms can be shallowly or deeply internalised, following a descending path (from

the most superficial to the deepest way of internalisation) going from coercion, then calculation, to belief (2004). Whereas an analytical methodology, based more on the observance of the phenomenon in search for the correspondence with the model can only account for the presence of the norm, an interpretive methodology, being closer to the “hearts and minds” of statesmen can also enhance the ES regional agenda by showing not only if norms and institutions are adopted and respected, but also to what extent, with what meaning, and in light of what motivations (on this matter, see also Dunne 2005).

To be sure, the analytical element can be definitely retained and indeed should be retained if a given regional international society is to be not only sustained by the normative stance of the actors, but also visible through its practices. However, what is argued here is that while the researcher can still maintain a phenomenalist component, and therefore consider the regional international society as something discernible and identifiable in world politics, the *inductive, transphenomenalist reflexivity* of the diplomat (or statesman, or state representative) should be the pivotal element in assessing the presence and the “perceptibility” of the regional international society. The interpretivism argued for here can be therefore a *pragmatic* one, i.e. one that accepts the phenomenism proposed by the analyticists and Buzan, but not at the expenses of a great and solid interpretive component, which should act as the compass with which one finds the normative underpinning of the society under investigation, its etic dimension and its institutional variability. As Dunne says, “[t]here is no a priori reason why an interpretive approach cannot incorporate the existence of systemic logics such as brute facts and material capacities, while showing how these impact on the behaviour of individuals and communities” (Dunne 2005: 170).

This last point allows us to link this third reflection to the first one made about a comparative agenda of regional international societies: usually, comparison in analytical research is done “in the pursuit of what Charles Tilly (1989: 82) calls “individualising comparisons” that are useful for “grasping the peculiarities of each case” (Jackson 2011: 153). It has already been noted that one of the fundamental conditions for the existence of any regional international society is, apart from a difference from the global level, a difference from other regional international societies. And if this difference is due to a different interpretation of the same institution, or to a different meaning of a norm, then interpretivism becomes the crucial factor that allows us to grasp the peculiarities mentioned by Tilly.

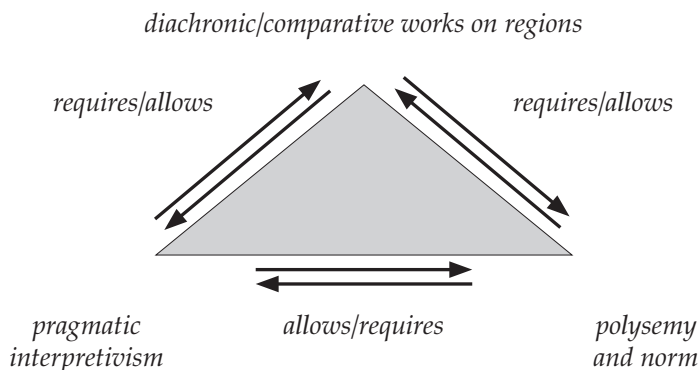
CONCLUSION - THE THREE ANSWERS AS A NEXUS

In the first response, it was explained that one way to differentiate the “new” ES (the second wave of regional research) from past ES undertakings (the first wave) was to pursue a diachronic regional agenda, or alternatively a comparative one, alongside a better conceptualisation of “region”. In the second one, it was noted that a better conceptualisation of institutions was necessary to better appreciate

their different understandings in different regions, and that the borrowing of the concept of “norm localisation” was the best way to account for the formation of regional international societies. In the third one, it was affirmed that a more interpretive methodology was better equipped to investigate the differentiation of meanings and institutional behaviours in regions in comparison with the global level, and also to understand the degree of internalisation of institutions and norms. The emic/etic distinction, in my opinion, is of the utmost importance if ES researchers are to provide careful and substantial analyses of regional international societies. As the world is progressively structuring itself on a regional scale (Hurrell 1995, Ayoob 1999, Hettne and Soderbaum 2000, Fawn 2009) where culture, diversity and difference are playing the most prominent role, then providing accurate depictions of this incipient second-order pluralism using methodologies and methods reflecting the thoughts and the intellectual domain of the unit of analysis, rather than imposing the researcher’s analytical categories, would not only give more theoretical and empirical solidity to ES works on regional international societies, but would also be in line with the ES spirit.

With regard to the emic/etic distinction made above, it must be stressed that surprisingly (or maybe not), some 20 years ago Robert Jackson referred to the analysis of international systems as international anthropology (1995: 113), referring to the need to use categories of analyses meaningful for the communities under study. The fact that I am suggesting keeping in mind the emic/etic distinction, indeed borrowed from anthropology means, then, to be back to the future. The *interpretive variations within the same analytical construct* (international society), therefore, make possible a comparative agenda of regional international society which is spurred by the regionalisation of international society and the consequential polysemy of institutions, which in turn is approachable with the application of etic categories and a more interpretive methodology. And here the circle is closed. With reference to figure 1, and substituting the three “questions” with the three respective “answers”, the three aspects are linked in the following way (as shown by figure 4):

Figure 4: the RIS conundrums revisited



For those who are acquainted with Watson's pendulum, it can be said that the world has moved from a community of independent (regional) international societies (up to the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries), to a unique, global one based on the European experience (in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries), to swing, once again, back to incipient regional international societies (the Twenty-first Century), although hinging on the same, global one. As noted in the introduction, this chapter has tried to show how the recent move of the ES towards the analysis of regional international societies brings with itself important questions, both theoretical and methodological, that should be kept in mind if the ES agenda on regions is to develop fruitfully. Moreover, the ES and regions can serve as a venue for a trans-boundary conversation between different intellectual domains: by using references to international history, linguistics and anthropology, I made an attempt to elucidate those areas in which there is potential for theoretical innovation within the ES, and I tried to show how this potential is spurred exactly by the "regionalisation" of international society.

The critiques, or problems, I dealt with are by no means definitive, nor are they the only ones; rather, they should function as a springboard for more accurate, more precise and more in-depth reflections on the analytical and theoretical coherence of the ES than those I humbly made here, with more intellectual sophistication than I was able to show. However, if the ES, as a research program, is to contribute to the advancement of the IR field not only by focusing on new realms such as regional international societies, but also by *posing new questions and proposing new puzzles* in perfect conformity with Lakatos' idea of a progressive research programme (Lakatos 1970), then I believe that the questions posed above and the tentative answers provided here are a good starting point to revitalise and consolidate the ES framework scaled on a regional level, and to entrench methodological and analytical reflections with a more coherent, stable and at the same time flexible research framework.

To conclude, I turn back to where I started from, stating that the analysis of regional international societies, other than being a good innovation within the ES *per se*, is a precious source of reflections, speculation and fresh, new theoretical thinking. Twenty-two years ago, Roy Jones called for the closure of the ES (1981). Yet, the regional path newly commenced shows how much there is still to reflect on, to debate on, to ameliorate, to investigate. By continuing to question and reinvent itself, the ES is proving to be more alive than ever, and the new regional challenge is only the latest, and hopefully not the last, proof of its prolific, polyhedral and constantly developing character.

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3 | Towards a Regional International Society: Making Sense of Regionalism(s) in East Asia

Yongjin Zhang

INTRODUCTION¹

Regionalism(s) in Asia² in their various manifestations has been the subject of a plethora of recent publications in international political economy and in security studies. While the study of regionalism has been back in fashion for a while, different IR theoretical perspectives have been brought to bear upon the examination and interpretation of economic and security regionalisation of Asia. The favored empirical canvas for neo-liberal institutionalism, rationalists and constructivists for example, is regional economic integration and open-regionalism (Garnaut and Dyrstyle 1994, Ravenhill 2000, Katzenstein, 2000, Katzenstein et al. 2000). This body of literature examines the increasing economic integration of the region, the political process of regionalism, and the institutionalization of regional economic cooperation. It explores both ideational and material factors in the making of regionness in the Asia-Pacific. The testing ground for realists and constructivists alike is the construction of a regional security community in the prime example of the Association of Southeast East Asian Nations (ASEAN). Rationalists and regime theorists have also intervened in the debate. The mixed fortunes of regionalism(s) in Asia have been a subject of intense debate recently, particular after the Asian financial crisis in 1997.

The English School's (ES) concept of International Society as a theoretical perspective³, or more broadly, the ES in general, seems to have little to say about the regionalisation of world politics. It has not engaged the empirical purview of European integration as much as it should have, and it has so far remained relatively silent, if not entirely absent, in current discussions and debate on regionalisms in Asia.⁴ This seems unnatural, given that International Society has it as its principal interest and investigation how a society formed by and of states develops common interests, rules, norms, common institutions to foster

1 This paper (except for the last section) was first drafted in 2002 in preparation for a panel presentation at the 2002 International Studies Association Convention at San Francisco. It mainly remains as it was except for some editorial changes and the last section. The last section has been added to reflect on the thriving discourse on regionalism in the last ten years or so, and the ES' engagement or lack thereof in the studies of regions and regionalism in global politics.

2 Asian regionalism, though now an often-used expression, is at best very ambiguous. Throughout this paper I use regionalisms in Asia to indicate divergent practices and experience of regional integration in Asia as well as different perceptions of such practices.

3 I use International Society with capitalised I and S to refer to the theoretical perspective. This should be differentiated from international society with small i and s.

4 Higgot (1998), for example, comes very close to evoke Bull's ideas about international society in his study of comparative regionalism.

regional cooperation and to mitigate the anarchic nature of the international system. This is precisely the goal that variants of regionalism, in Europe, Asia and elsewhere, attempt to achieve. Why then such relative silence? Does it have anything interesting to say about regionalism in general? If it does, what and how does it differ from other theoretical perspectives? Can it tell us more about regionalisms in Asia? Equally significantly, how will its engagement with studies of regionalism help fulfill its theoretical promise?

This paper draws the two discussions together: International Society and regionalism, more specifically, Asian regionalism(s). The main assertion I make in the discussions below is that there has been a mutual apathy between International Society studies and studies of regionalism. Such apathy has a great deal to do with the nature of the regionalisation of the global economy and world politics. It also owes an equal amount to the embedded weakness of International Society as a theoretical approach as it stands today to dealing with the emergence of regionalism. That may explain why it has maintained its relative silence. But that should not be taken as a denial of the theoretical promise of International Society in providing significant insights into what the emergence and maturity of regionalism(s) in Asia means for the construction of a regional international society.

This chapter is structured as follows. First, I discuss three faces presented in the current studies and discourse of regionalism(s) in Asia in international political economy, security studies, and, most recently, in the arguments of legalization of world politics. This is followed by an examination of what I believe is the case of apathy between international society and regionalism, asking how and why this has happened and arguing that overcoming such apathy holds promise to make the perspective of International Society theoretically more robust, and studies of regionalism empirically more revealing. In the third section, I offer tentative interpretations of the deepening, strengthening, and maturity of Asian regionalism(s) within the analytical framework of International Society. While the first three sections are derived from the original version of the text (see footnote 1 of this chapter), the last section of the chapter provides an up-to-date postscript which allows a certain level of understanding of regional dynamics during the last decade and comparative reading between East Asia then and now.

REGIONALISM(S) IN EAST ASIA: THREE DIFFERENT FACES

That some manifestations of regionalism exist in Asia, and that they differ in significant ways from that which has been evolving in Europe, are now widely acknowledged. It is also generally accepted that states, peoples, and societies of Asia (particularly the Pacific Asia) have been brought together first and foremost by unprecedented regional economic integration and increasing economic interdependence between economies of the region and the global economy. The economic regionalism that has emerged in Asia is seen at the same time as

part and parcel of the “new wave of regionalism” that is concurrent with the globalization of the world economy (Mansfield and Milner 1999). It is perhaps not surprising that it is in the discourse of regionalisation of the world economy and in international political economy of the rise of a world of regions (Katzenstein 2000) that the face of evolving economic regionalism in Asia has been presented.

Economic Regionalism

The existing literature on economic regionalism in Asia is quite rich. At the first level, there are more economics-oriented- accounts and explanations. This part of the literature depicts how foreign direct investment (FDI) has knitted the regional economies in Asia together and constructed production networks in the region that are closely bound to the world economy (Frankel 1998, Dobson 2001). Economic integration in Asia is therefore said to be market-driven. Preferential trading arrangements (PTAs) that underlay the emergence of a trading bloc embodied eventually in Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) are dubbed “open regionalism” (Garnaut and Drysdale 1994, Bergsten 1997). Such an account argues that “open regionalism” is Asia’s response to the steep reductions in logistical hurdles and the accelerated pace of international economic transactions and to economic globalization. Concerted unilateral trade liberalization of individual members of APEC is seen as Asia-Pacific’s special contribution to the world trade system (Garnaut 1996).

At the second level, the practice of economic regionalism(s) in Asia is seen as a political process whereby states and governments seek economic policy cooperation and coordination. In this light, neo-liberal institutionalists argue that regime and institutional building is the efficient response to fixed policy problems. They seek answers to questions such as why it is in the interest of regional actors in Asia to engage in collective action and what regimes are conducive to overcome collective action problems. They also examine what domestic and international political factors shape a particular actor’s approach to policy cooperation and coordination (Haggard 1997, Mansfield and Milner 1999). In the interpretations of neo-liberal institutionalists, Asia’s approach to regionalism, as seen in the working of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) for example, is at least ineffective, as institutionalization of such regionalism remains legally weak and perpetually thin (Katzenstein 2000, Ravenhill 2000).

Finally, at the third level, what Katzenstein calls “network power” is explored. This part of literature, though comparatively thin, looks at how various transnational social and commercial networks in Asia bring about, facilitate, or underlie “economic integration without explicit institutional links”. Chinese family and business networks in Asia, the so-called bamboo network, and Japanese kereitsu structures, it is argued, have played special roles in knitting regional economies together (Weidenbaum and Hughes 1996, Katzenstein 2000a).

What are largely missing in the current discussions and debates on economic regionalism in Asia are ideational factors.⁵ How much, for example, are the region and its boundaries socially constructed? How is APEC's identity as a distinctive regional grouping constructed in contradistinction to the European Union (EU) and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)? Is it possible that economic regionalism and increasing level of political and economic transactions at the regional level has a transformative effect on a state's understanding and identification of its interests? If it is, how and why? Even when Asian regionalism is "coming of age" (Katzenstein 2000), these questions remain under-researched in the existing literature.

Regional Cooperation in Security

Economic regionalism in Asia is no doubt the most recognizable face presented and most widely deliberated on by economists and international political economy specialists alike. The second face of regionalism(s) in Asia concerns the regional approach to security problems that continue to plague the region in the post-Cold War period. In this regard, ASEAN has become a classical case of regional security cooperation to be examined ever since its inception in 1967. This is partly because as a regional organization for political and economic cooperation, ASEAN is often regarded as the most successful example in the developing world. The mixed institutional experience of ASEAN and the ups and downs of its fortunes are, however, a subject of intense debate and controversy.⁶ At the center of the controversy is ASEAN's distinctive approach to regional cooperation in general and to security cooperation in particular: the much trumpeted "ASEAN Way". As a particular brand of institutionalism, it seeks to avoid formalistic political processes and legal procedures and emphasizes inclusiveness, consultation, and consensus in conflict resolution.⁷

What both realists and institutionalists find hard to explain is that this "soft regionalism", which deliberately shuns institutionalization, does seem to have succeeded in avoiding war and in managing intra-regional conflicts among ASEAN members in the last forty-five years, a turbulent period that has seen a number of fundamental shifts in the regional strategic environment. With the emergence of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in 1994, the distinctive strategic culture and peculiar approach to institutionalization as embodied in the ASEAN way became the model for the first and only multilateral security mechanism of the whole Asia-Pacific region. While many see the virtue of such an approach that brings together such heterogeneous memberships into one forum, others argue

5 One exception here is Higgot (1998)

6 See Higgot (2000).

7 As Acharya summarizes succinctly, "The ASEAN way stresses informality, organizational minimalism, inclusiveness, intense consultations leading to consensus and peaceful resolution of disputes" (Acharya 2001: 63).

that the ASEAN way is but rhetoric and hyperbole, and that the lack of formal institutionalization of the ARF will lead such regional approaches to security cooperation into a cul-de-sac (Foot 1995, Johnston 1999). The ARF is at best a talk shop. Interestingly, comparisons with the European experience that have been invariably made in many studies highlight as much the regional institutional variations that exist in their respective approaches to managing security challenges as they show the weak institutionalization of ASEAN and ARF, as those studies originally intended.

That ASEAN as a security organization and the ARF as an institutional product for regional security management embody different forms of institutionalism and that ASEAN and the ARF's rejection to formal institutionalization is a deliberate strategic choice, there is no dispute. The puzzle is why ASEAN, and for that matter, the ARF, should have chosen such a peculiar form of institutionalization and novel approach to national and international security when they have been repeatedly warned of its potential problems and inevitable failure, and what they try to achieve with it beyond immediate security goals. The most recent constructivist intervention in the discourse on regional security order in the ASEAN and the Asia-Pacific, particularly that of Amitav Acharya, takes current debates to another level. Acharya argues, contra realist and institutionalist explanations of the institutional "anomaly" in Southeast Asian regional security cooperation, that this deliberate choice is made because "ASEAN's founders were largely inspired by the goal of developing a social community rather than an institutionally integrated economic or military bloc" (Acharya 2001: 195).

In his view, the sheer diversity among ASEAN members in cultural, linguistic, demographic, religious, and political terms and the lack of background conditions for a security community building, such as the shared political culture and economic interdependence that exist in North America and Europe, predispose the Southeast Asian nations to adopt a non-traditional approach to security cooperation. Rather than looking at whether the ASEAN way is a credible approach to institutionalization, Acharya examines it in the light of its role in socialization among ASEAN members and in norms and identity construction within the region. He traces how the awareness of Southeast Asia as a region was created, and (imagined) boundaries in the process. He argues convincingly about how the building of a security community has been unfolding in this socially constructed region (Acharya 2001).

The Legalization of World Politics

The third face of regionalism in Asia is presented by Miles Kahler. In his recent article "Legalization as Strategy: The Asia-Pacific Case" published in *International Organization*, Kahler notes that "the density of institutions spanning the region remains lower than that in Europe or in Americas", but also concedes that the institutional differences with other regions have been narrowed with "a modest

wave of institutional building in the 1990s" (Kahler 2000: 549). Kahler agrees with most institutionalists that the weak institutionalization prevailing in the Asia-Pacific is problematic. There is, however, an even deeper problem, he argues. That is the explicit rejection or aversion to the legalization of regional institutions in the institutional design and the institutional culture of regionalism in the Asia-Pacific. The ASEAN way, in his words, is "collaboration without legalization", and the APEC simply "resists legalization". This is in sharp contrast to the EU and NAFTA. In so doing, Kahler attempts to put a "legal face" on the lack of formal institutionalization of regionalism(s) in Asia.

Kahler rejects functionalist, cultural, and domestic political explanations of low legalization of institutional designs in the Asia-Pacific regionalism(s). The inexplicable puzzle that contests these explanations, in his view, is why outside these regional institutions, states and governments of the Asia-Pacific region have embraced legalization in a large number of issue areas. He notes some recent instances where legalized institutions are preferred by states of the Asia-Pacific in regional and extra-regional contexts for strategic considerations. The World Trade Organization (WTO) is a typical example. Following the true rationalist logic, Kahler argues that the choice of legalization among states and governments of the Asia-Pacific is "both instrumental and strategic" (Kahler 2000: 562). Though Kahler is ambivalent about whether legalized institutions can solve the problems confronted by the region, particularly after the Asian financial crisis in 1997 and is skeptical of "a legalized future" for the region, he does imply that legalization of international institutions, regional and global, is not only a preferred option, but perhaps also inevitable.

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY AND REGIONALISM: A CASE OF MUTUAL APATHY?

If regionalism has indeed been "brought back" into academic studies of international relations recently in the company of a "new wave of regionalism" (Mansfield and Milner 1999), it is more than pertinent to ask where is International Society in current debates? What does it have to say about regionalism and the regionalisation of world politics? A cursory survey of the existing literature reveals a strange silence on the part of International Society scholars on regionalism. Deliberations by scholars of the ES on regional levels of international society in the Twentieth Century have been until very recently muted, if not entirely absent. Such silence is best reflected in an important essay on regionalism in 1995 by Andrew Hurrell. The comprehensive survey of *Regionalism in Theoretical Perspective* conducted by Hurrell contains no specific mentioning of either the ES or the International Society perspective. It is remarkable that Hedley Bull is mentioned only once towards the end of his book as "that arch-regional skeptic" (Fawcett and Hurrell 1995: 327). Even critical International Society as summarized nicely by Dunne (1995) does not seem to have made much of a dent in the studies of regionalism.

Such silence is strange on several accounts. First, classical studies of international society examine how historically a regional international society (the European society of states) expanded into a global one, and how in the process, it overwhelmed, incorporated, and in some cases destroyed other regional international societies. The transformation of international society constitutes the core of that historical inquiry. Second, for a group of scholars identified with the ES, international society, not the state, has always been the focal and starting point of their theorizing of International Relations. This is also how they try to distinguish themselves from both neo-realists and neo-liberal institutionalists. Third, International Society scholars have a keen interest in how a group of states come to form a society when they develop distinctive norms, common rules and institutions and when they perceive themselves to have common purpose in international life and to share the working of common institutions for the conduct of their relations. One can hardly find more a prominent example than the evolution of a regional international society. Fourth, the strength of International Society perspective lies in its "recognition of historical peculiarities in the evolution of different systems of states" (Waever 1992: 97). Such sensitivity to historical and contemporary peculiarities is what is badly needed in the study of the emergence and functioning of different regional international societies. Finally, regionalism has been so far driven largely by intergovernmentalism and neo-functionalism. This is the area of state cooperation in world politics to which an International Society perspective should have a lot to add.

What explains such silence then? Why should the "implicitly constructivist" ES remain silent when constructivists have made such an impact on studies of regionalism(s) in Asia? Is the International Society perspective inherently handicapped to deal with theoretical issues related to the regionalisation of world politics? Does the world of regions remain beyond the ontology of the ES? Even if answers to these questions remain elusive and subject to contestation, the following can be suggested.

First, the classical literature of the ES on international society does tell the story of how a regional society of states fashioned in Europe expanded into a global one. Once that story was told, however, the global international society, its strengths and weaknesses, its role in mediating anarchy, and concerns about the erosion of its foundational common culture, became almost the exclusive concerns of the deliberations in the literature. Regional international society simply fell off the research agenda. It may not be a surprise, therefore, that until recently, the International Society perspective has had quite narrow confines of debates. Even if the world of regions is not entirely beyond the ontology of the ES, the limited discussions of regionalism in the classical literature betrays strong skepticism about the regionalisation of world politics. It is telling that Hedley Bull discusses regional integration of states in his book section on neo-medievalism and the decline of the state system (Bull 1977: 264-66).

Second, given the self-referential nature of the ES in its classical phase, for those younger scholars and students looking for theoretical inspirations in study-

ing regionalism in its contemporary manifestations, there is not much there to excavate in the mines of classical masters' ideas. Rather, any engagement in the studies of regionalism from the International Society perspective would demand theoretically more innovative approaches. Third, the central analytical construct of International Society perspective has been and remains the state. This is equally true for both classical International Society and critical International Society. Taking states as the only analytical focus, however, is neither sufficient nor adequate in dealing with regionalism in world politics. One could argue that International Society perspective as formulated by its founders is ill-equipped in dealing with transnational issues and transformations in world politics.

Fourth, even if we acknowledge the strength of world society imagery of the ES in explaining and understanding transnational changes and issues, the International Society perspective will continue to be handicapped until and unless the concept of world society that remains murky so far is clearly defined and cleverly exploited to make it readily applicable to studying regionalism analytically.⁸ Fifth, it has been suggested that the ES in general and the International Society perspective in particular are particularly weak on international political economy. Such weakness has not worked in favor of the International Society perspective's engagement in studies of regionalism.

If International Society has until very recently left regionalism largely out of sight, discussions of regionalisation of international political economy and world politics have made evident their benign neglect of International Society. There is clearly apathy between the two. Why then does regionalism/regionalisation of world politics not engage International Society? One simple and incomplete explanation is that regionalism and International Society find themselves mutually unattractive. Such mutual apathy, however, deprives both of mutually enriching opportunities in terms of developing a better understanding of regionalism and in enhancing a more robust theoretical perspective of International Society.

For the International Society perspective, important theoretical openings are possible in engaging the studies of regionalism in world politics. How much global international society that is constructed by states is reducible, and to what level? What kind of tensions or conflicts is the co-existence of global and regional levels of international society likely to generate? Does the emergence of solidaristic and pluralist international societies in different regions strengthen or fragment global international society? In which way can these regional international societies co-exist upon the common foundation of a global international society? Can we see the emergence and maturity of regional international societies as a "halfway house" in the construction and emergence of a world society? How does it mediate or enable us to understand the difficult relations between international society and world society? What are the implications of evolving regional international societies for the transformation of world politics? These theoretically significant questions can be asked and answered only in the studies of regionalism.

8 In Buzan's (2001: 482) words, "[p]erhaps the first priority here is to unpack the still rather murky concept of world society and make more explicit what it actually contains".

For the studies of regionalism, engaging the International Society perspective can yield a clear understanding of the normative basis of variants of regionalism, and the working of elements of society in different practices in constructing and preserving regional international societies. Complementary to constructivists, International Society enables studies of regionalism to examine how and why ideas matter in the evolution of certain regional international society and in which way the society of states is also “states of mind” (Morgan 2001). This is helpful for studies of regionalism to escape from the straitjacket of rationalist explanations and neo-liberal institutionalist arguments about regional integration and the working of regionalism in world politics. It would in the final analysis help us make better sense of regionalism(s) in various manifestations, and thus put us in a better position to think through issues related to transnational governance in the increasing regionalisation of world politics.

There exist therefore compelling reasons as well as imperatives to draw together the two discussions: International Society and regionalism. This promises to be a mutually rewarding and enriching practice to both fields of studies and should open up an exciting research agenda. Sheer assertion of theoretical relevance and even establishing theoretical claims of the ES on regionalism is not sufficient. The hard work is how to sharpen International Society as an analytical tool imaginatively and apply it to the studies of regionalism in world politics in an innovative way.

TOWARDS A REGIONAL INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY?

In his recent comments on Asian regionalism, Paul Evans lamented that the Asia-Pacific:

has an inexhaustible supply of national rivalries, unresolved animosities, negative mutual images, political and ideological conflicts, divided states, incompatible economic systems, crumbling economies, and cultural and civilizational divides. It is a rough and unforgiving neighborhood where nationalism repeatedly trumps regionalism (Evans 2001: 246).

Further, Asian regionalism has developed in a context that is still lacking in “regional consciousness, regional institutions, deep economic integration, political community, effective leadership, or vibrant transnational actors” (Evans 2001: 246). If this is a true, though ultimately stark, picture of how diversified and divided this region is in political, economic, ideological, historical, religious and civilizational terms, it is remarkable how far regionalism(s) in Asia has come in such an inhospitable environment, as I have briefly discussed earlier.

How can we then make sense of regionalism(s) in Asia by using lenses that the International Society perspective provides us? What insights does it afford us? Is the emergence and maturity of regionalism(s) in Asia working towards building up a regional international society? How can we make sense of the emerging economic, political and security regionalisation of Asia in world politics and in international political economy? Conversely, in which way can studies of Asian

regionalism(s) throw light on theoretical questions that the International Society perspective poses above? One of the difficulties in attempting to answer these questions is that the existence of regional international society, particularly in the instance of the European Union (EU), is widely assumed, but rarely analyzed (Buzan 2001). However, even granting the underdeveloped nature of the International Society perspective as an analytical tool in the studies of regionalism, the International Society perspective enables us immediately to ask a different set of questions about the nature and practices of regionalism(s) in Asia. In the discussions below, I will adopt the International Society perspective in addressing following questions, the answers to which lead to interpretations of exercises and practices of regionalism(s) in Asia that differ significantly from those offered by the dominant neo-liberal institutionalist and rationalist ones. Is the weak institutionalization that is widely acknowledged and criticized of regionalism(s) in Asia an insurmountable obstacle to the construction of a regional international society? Are exercises of regionalism(s) in Asia efforts to construct regional identity, and regional awareness? To what extent does a society of states exist as states of mind? In what sense can we argue that regionalism(s) in Asia aims not only at creating a functional community for utilitarian purposes, but also at introducing elements of society with a normative and ethical basis that have transformative effects on the nature and character of regional international politics?

Institutionalization

The most noted, and also most controversial, criticisms of regionalism(s) in Asia are its weak or lack of formal institutionalization. This applies equally to three important regional institutions: the ASEAN, the ARF and APEC. Far too often, comparisons are made by juxtaposing the Asian experience with that the European one. The inevitable, and often simplistic, conclusion is that regionalism(s) in Asia is far less institutionalized than that in Europe. In spite of all virtues argued by Higgot, such a comparison is problematic, not in the least because the EU is, in the words of Barry Buzan, “the most highly developed, thickest, most solidaritist/progressive international society ever seen” (Buzan 2001: 485). It also obscures our view of how regional institutional differences in terms of density and complexity have been narrowed down between Asia and Europe. Further, institutionalization is certainly not the whole story of practice and exercise of regionalism.

Regional institutional variations on the other hand should not only concern themselves with the narrow confines of how weak or strong a regional institution is in terms of its formalization and legalization. They should also concern themselves with how institutions are conceptualized. As Tim Dunne argues, from the International Society perspective, international institutions are no more than “practices embedded in the fabric of international society” (Dunne 1995:

141).⁹ War and the balance of power are regarded in this light as fundamental institutions of the global international society not so much as they are formally institutionalized, but because they are deeply embedded practices that sustain the existence of the society of states at the regional as well as at the global level. This suggests that rather than looking at whether institutionalization of certain regional arrangements is formal or informal, we should inquire as to whether practices of regionalism are conducive to introducing elements of society into the management of regional international relations.

Such a perspective casts a different light on institutional practices of regionalism(s) in Asia. In the Southeast Asian context, the introduction of the code of conduct, the agreement of non-use of force and peaceful settlement of disputes, the doctrine of non-interference, and the eventual emergence of “the ASEAN way” – all are practices that encourage rule-governed behavior of states in regional international relations. Such practices become institutions when they are acknowledged to have become part of the fabric of a society of states. It would not be an exaggeration today to say that they underlie the very existence of the ASEAN as a regional security community, even though the practice of non-interference, for example, is being contested both within and beyond the region. The fact that the so-called “ASEAN way” has been modeled in the practices of both the ARF and APEC is testimony not to the weakness of the two forums, but to the importance and relevance of “the ASEAN way” to foster some basic practices in the conduct of relations among states in a wider region, which in due time may (or may not) evolve into common institutions for the emergence of a regional international society.

This interpretation of institutionalization and of the practices of regionalism in Asia contests the assumption that formal institutionalization and legalization as in the instance of the EU constitutes the only pathway to the emergence and establishment of a regional international society. It contends that since the emergence of regional international society does not necessarily dictate formal institutionalization, weak or informal institutional arrangements should not stand in the way to the construction of a regional society of states. This allows for different constitutional forms of regional international society.

Values, Norms, and Identity Construction as States of Mind

Values, norms, and identity are important considerations of the International Society perspective. The classical studies of the European society of states and its expansion emphasize in particular that the emergence and existence of an international society is sustained by common purposes and common values that

9 Also note Roger Morgan’s recent comments on Wright’s idea of an international institution. “For Wight, it meant not only formal institutions like the League of Nations or the UN (let alone the distinctively more supranational ones of the European Union), but also—and primarily—the customary processes and usages of a society of sovereign states” (Morgan 2001: 561).

states come to share, and laws, rules, and norms that states undertake to respect and abide by. Identity is crucial in the construction of a regional as well as global polity of society of states. Studies on the standard of “civilization” and its role in the expansion of the European international society make a salient statement of these points (Gong 1984, Bull and Watson 1984). In the deliberations on global international society, identity seems to have been low on the research agenda. The keen interest on identity and contentions and debates triggered by constructivists has further obscured the concern of the International Society perspective on identity.

In the Asia-Pacific, states remain the principal agents in the construction of the region. In view of the cultural and religious diversity, historical lack of regional awareness, and the social and political heterogeneity of the region, identity construction as well as creation of common values and norms is imperative and indispensable in the practice of regionalism in the Asia-Pacific. They also set the limits of their collective identity and norm formation. To what extent, then, do practices and exercises of regionalism(s) in Asia contribute to generating a new set of values and norms that are shared by member states in the region? In which way do they create a distinctive identity for the region?

Here, it is particularly helpful to look at the so-called “soft regionalism” as a social process. The informality, inclusiveness, intense consultation, and consensus-seeking that characterize ASEAN, and also consequently the ARF and APEC, are processes and procedures that cannot be achieved without concurrent socialization among member states. Socialization in such instances both generates and diffuses norms and values. It creates not only a functional basis of international society, but more importantly, as a normative one. As argued convincingly by Acharya, in the case of ASEAN and the ARF, socialization among member states is mostly responsible for creating and diffusing values and norms that come to be shared by member states and that have a transformative effect on a state’s behavior in the conduct of regional international relations (Acharya 2001). The so-called “track two talks”, such as the Council for Security and Cooperation of the Asia-Pacific (CSCAP) for example, become important sources of new ideas and play a significant role in the socialization and construction of norms and rules in regional security cooperation.

Socialization, on the other hand, has constitutive effect. By bringing those states involved together in the socialization process, a sense of belonging together and of “regionness” is created. “The ASEAN way” therefore can be seen as an assertion of a distinctive regional identity in the construction of a cognitive society of states – the so-called “states of mind” in the existence of a regional international society (Morgan 2000).

CIVITAS OR SOCIETAS?

What do practices and exercises of regionalism(s) in Asia do to the region as a whole and to those states and economies concerned in the region? Do they simply bring those states together into a functional community so as to realize their national interests? Or do they also create a normative basis and ethical purposes for regional institutional arrangements that may not be originally intended by their founders? Has the increasing intensity of regionalism(s) already had a modifying effect on power politics in the region? If practices of regionalism(s) in Asia are not creating a regional international society, then what exactly are they creating or constructing?

There are neither easy nor simple answers to these difficult questions. But increasingly, regionalism(s) in Asia is going beyond functional community building. It is true that no transfers of sovereign prerogatives or pooling or delegating of sovereignty to common institutions has happened in the Asia-Pacific. Most Asian states remain hyper-sensitive to the sovereignty costs incurred by formal and legalized global, transnational, as well as regional organizations. There are historical and strategic reasons to explain such sensitivity. But a nascent, "proto-" type of pluralist regional international society does seem to be emerging in Asia. No one should underestimate the difficulties that an emerging international society in Asia has to confront in the regional context. The evolution of a regional international society is anything but linear. It is a long way off to a full-fledged regional international society, which may never emerge in the Asia-Pacific region, and a regional international society in the Asia-Pacific may take a different constitutional form from that of Europe, which we are so familiar with.

POSTSCRIPT 2013: CURRENT RESEARCH AND EAST ASIAN REGIONAL INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY

The draft paper above and the tentative arguments made were presented at the ISA 2002 convention in New Orleans more than ten years ago. The key question that inspired the paper was: what, if anything, can the perspective of International Society tell us about the theory and practices of Asian regionalism(s)? The central claim I made then was that there was a mutual apathy between International Society and the studies of regionalism. I was also particularly interested in understanding the practices of Asian regionalism(s) as the purposeful construction of regional international society in Asia. With 2013 as the new context, what can we say about the practices of Asian regionalism(s)? To what extent does the claim of the mutual apathy between International Society and regionalism still hold true today more than ten years on?

The first and general point to note is that in contrast to 2002, the study of regions and the discourse of regionalism and regionalisation of global politics in 2013 no longer occupy just "a small, if not insignificant place, in international relations

theory and scholarship" (Acharya 2007: 629). Regions are now taken much more seriously in the studies of international relations than ten years ago. The claim that regions are important sites for governance, cooperation, and conflict management in global politics is much less disputed than before. While exactly what makes regions in global politics and the question of regional autonomy from global level power play remain contentious, it is generally accepted that regions are more than geographical and functional constructs and that regional orders, which have their own dynamics, security and economic, are constitutive of the global order. There is, in other words, "an emerging regional architecture of world politics" (Acharya 2007). Discourses of regionalism and its divergent practices in different regions have been greatly enriched by the critical intervention of constructivist and other theoretical perspectives (see for example, Ikenberry and Mastanduno 2003, Buzan and Waever 2003, Checkel 2005, Katzenstein 2005, Acharya and Johnston 2007, Fawn 2009). At the same time, studies of international political economy continue to make notable contributions to the regionalism discourse in their own way (Breslin et al. 2002, Katzenstein and Shiraishi 2006, De Lombaerde and Schulz, 2009, Dent and Dosch 2012). Not surprisingly, "the study of regions in IR", in the words of Rick Fawn (2009: 6), "offers a thriving if immensely heterogeneous literature". Comparative regionalism is claimed to be a field whose time has come (Acharya 2012, see also Solingen 2013).

Such intense interest in, and increased attention to, regionalism in recent substantive IR scholarship owes much to the dynamic and changing practices of Asian regionalism(s) in the last decade, which are in sharp contrast to its tentative attempts at economic regionalism and security cooperation through to the end of the 20th century discussed earlier in this paper. These are seen most notably in the instances of the proliferation of regional institutions with overlapping functions in a number of so-called "ASEAN-plus" arrangements. Emerging from the Asian financial crisis of 1997-98, both ASEAN plus One and ASEAN plus Three (APT) have since come a long way in promoting regional economic and security cooperation in East Asia. The evolution of the Chiangmai Initiative into the Chiangmai Initiative Multilateralization Agreement stands as a testimony of the achievement of APT in forging financial cooperation. APT has indeed developed an extensive and ambitious agenda for political-security, financial and economic, and social-cultural cooperation. One might lament that behind the ASEAN-plus arrangements exists "institutional racing", as China and Japan engaged in "mutual social denial" through oversupplying regionalism. The political logic and strategic rationale produced by such institution racing are particularly clear in the evolution of the East Asia Summit (EAS) first as ASEAN plus Six and now ASEAN plus Eight,¹⁰ parallel to APT, as a pivotal regional institutional development.

It is worth noting that in 2013, as in 2002, "the ASEAN Way" continues to dominate in institutional practices and regional institutional variations in Asia as noted before in terms of lack of formal institutionalization and legalization

10 ASEAN plus Six, i.e. ASEAN members plus China, Japan and Korea as well as Australia, India, and New Zealand, was joined by Russia and the United States in 2011, hence ASEAN plus Eight.

persist. There is certainly a power-political logic in the expansion from ASEAN plus Three to the East Asia Summit (EAS, the ASEAN plus Six) (Terada 2006, Zhang 2013). Even if the cold logic of power and interest may come to dominate the future vision and evolution of the EAS, it cannot be denied that the EAS was conceived as a normatively ambitious regionalist project and was a clear articulation of the aspiration to construct a regional community, not just for utilitarian and functional purposes, but as an attempt at a creative normative and ethical basis for a regional international society.¹¹

What has further instigated the interest in regionalism in Asia is the accelerated global power shift towards Asia in the last decade. With the rise of China, regional order in East Asia increasingly assumes global importance both in terms of power politics and in regard to its normative dimension and the question of legitimacy of the emerging global order (Ikenberry 2008, Mahbubani 2008). With the recent American rebalancing to Asia, how will power politics further contest and complicate the practices of regionalism in East Asia and its normative ambitions? Do the penetration and the pervasiveness of the sole global superpower negate the emergence of a distinctive regional international society in East Asia, or simply complicate its configurations?

It is unsurprising that amidst the thriving discourses of regionalism in the last decade or so, practices of regionalism(s) in Asia have continued to be “(re) discovered” as rich empirical sites for new experiments of regional cooperation and governance to be explored. Such practices and experiments have been subject to increasingly contentious interpretations and critical scrutiny from different theoretical perspectives. Regionalism in its various manifestations in East Asia has been labeled, for example, as “reactionary” (Beeson 2003), “regulatory” (Jayasuriya 2009), “normal” (Terada 2011) and “as disguised multilateralism” (Camroux 2012). Intensive negotiations for tighter regional economic integration after the Asian Financial Crisis in 1997-98 are said to be “much ado about nothing” (Ravenhill 2009). On the question of norms and institutionalization of regional cooperation in Asia, important claims are made in regard to local agency, in that Asian regional institutions are shaped by contestations and compromises between global norms and the preexisting beliefs and practices of local actors, and that global norm diffusion is conditioned by local beliefs as part of a legitimate normative order (Acharya 2004, 2011). There is also an important shift from looking at practices of Asian regionalism(s) through the lens of the EU model to recognizing that these practices represent distinctive approaches to regional cooperation and should be examined on their own merits (Breslin 2010). The creation of ARF, it is argued:

11 The centrality of APT in the practices of constructing East Asian regional community is affirmed in the following statement: “The APT countries reaffirmed at the 14th APT Summit in November 2011 in Bali that the APT process would continue as a main vehicle towards the long-term goal of building an East Asian community with ASEAN as the driving force. The meeting also reaffirmed their support for ASEAN centrality in the evolving regional architecture and recognised the mutually reinforcing and complementary roles of the APT process and such regional fora as ASEAN Plus One, East Asia Summit (EAS) and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in the East Asian community building process” (ASEAN 2012).

was an initiative of the weaker states of the region aimed at engaging and socializing both the U.S. and China into a system of regional order and thereby dampening not only their mutual rivalry but also their dominance over the weaker states of the region (Acharya 2007: 648).

Arguably, what has not changed is that East Asia remains characterized by “an overarching ambiguity” (Pempel 2005: 1) with “multiple ethnicities and overlapping but no coterminous religious, political, economic, and ethnic histories” (Johnston 2012: 64). It is still “a mosaic of divergent cultures and political regime types, historical estrangements, shifting power balances, and rapid economic change” and “the heterogeneity of political types is most striking”. It is a region enveloped by “security dilemmas, prestige contests, territorial disputes, nationalist resentments, and economic conflicts” (Ikenberry and Mastanduno 2003: 2, 15). Against these structural impediments to regional integration and cooperation, East Asia has clearly embarked on regionally distinctive attempts to achieve order, security, and prosperity, and it has developed “an increasingly dense network of cross-border cooperation, collaboration, interdependence, and even formalized institutional integration” (Pempel 2005: 2). East Asia, in other words, has become increasingly cohesive as a region on four levels, i.e. social, political, economic, and organizational (Hurrell 2007: 241), notwithstanding the persistent fracture. The claim of “a tale of two Asias,” i.e. economic Asia and security Asia (Feigenbaum and Manning 2012), tells us as much about the contradictions of Asian transformation as it does about the fractured nature of the emerging regional international society in East Asia.

It is therefore puzzling, and almost exasperating, that the mutual apathy between International Society and regionalism I identified and discussed more than ten years ago seems to have persisted, notwithstanding the considerable sharpening of International Society as an analytical tool in the last decade, and in spite of the thriving discourse on regionalism and the intervention of various theoretical perspectives in such a discourse. More than ten years on, English School scholars have remained largely disengaged in the study of regionalism(s) in Asia, and their contributions to the subject are at best marginal, if not negligible. That “the English School was not especially attentive to regional and area studies” (Hurrell 2007b: 135) remains broadly true, although it is no longer entirely silent on regionalism. Three recent engagements from the perspective of International Society with the study of regionalism are, however, worth mentioning. First, in *On Global Order: Power, Values, and the Constitution of International Society*, his magnum opus, Andrew Hurrell (2007a: 239-261) devoted a whole chapter to consider the place of regions in understanding the constitution of contemporary global international society.

Second are two collaborative projects that Barry Buzan and his collaborators have completed: *International Society and the Middle East: English School Theory at the Regional Level* (Buzan and Gonzalez-Pelaez 2009) and *International Society and the Contest over “East Asia”* (Buzan and Zhang 2014). Both projects interrogate two key questions from the perspective of International Society. One asks: if the world of regions is emerging, then what qualitative change the emergence of regional

order is likely to bring about to global politics? And the other asks: how have regional international society of various forms and depths been constructed alongside the global international society? Third, there are encouraging signs that studies of regions and regional level international society in global politics are now starting to be explored by a group of young English School scholars (let's mention panels at the 2013 International Studies Association Convention and at the 8th Pan European International Studies Conference in 2013 as recent examples).

In contrast to 2002, in 2013, "regions and the regional level of practice and of analysis have become more firmly established as important elements of the architecture of global political order" (Hurrell 2007a: 239). More than a decade after the study of regionalism was brought back in fashion in International Relations scholarship, various IR theoretical perspectives continue to be engaged in the critical examination of regionalism in theory and practice, contributing to a thriving discourse of regionalism. Over the last decade, the practices of Asian regionalism(s) have clearly moved on, with dynamic changes and more ambitious normative goals. As much as in 2002, such practices continue to be a subject of intense debate and they continue to be contested. Although the International Society perspective, and for that matter the English School, has not engaged in the study of regionalism in 2013 as much as I would have hoped for and expected back in 2002, it is encouraging and promising to see a range of converging efforts by both established and young English School scholars to study regions employing an explicit International Society perspective. As much as in 2002, such engagement with the studies of regionalism helps fulfill the theoretical promise of International Society. In 2013, there are more compelling reasons and intellectual justifications for adopting a regional approach to international society, and for the English School to go regional.

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4 | Unpacking South American International Society: A Historical Sketch

Federico Merke

INTRODUCTION

The main thrust of this chapter is to uncover the nature and function of the South American international society and to briefly sketch its history and development. It poses three main questions. First, to what extent can South America be regarded as a regional interstate society per se? Second, how can the English School (ES) help to understand the main dynamics of the South American regional society? Third, what can we learn from South America that is useful for the ES studies of regional societies?

This paper aims to flesh out the historical contours, or the *longue durée*, of the South American international society. Given space consideration I will only briefly examine the region's primary institutions, interspersing some historical evidence throughout the text to illustrate conceptual developments. In other words, my larger purpose is not to confirm the superiority of the ES over other theoretical traditions, but rather to lay out the main contours of the South American international society. Therefore, it is more of a taxonomical analysis than an explanatory research.

The rest of the chapter will proceed as follows. First, I briefly elaborate on the conceptual toolbox of the ES. Second, I look more closely at the working of the primary institutions that make up the South American international society. Third, I conclude by summarizing the arguments and evaluating contributions of the ES to the examination of the South American international society.

THE ENGLISH SCHOOL AND THE REGIONAL LEVEL

This chapter explores South American regional society using Barry Buzan's recent elaboration on the ES that – as one of the things – achieves accuracy and terminology improvements. Briefly put, Buzan's proposal basically departs from the classical ES in four ways. First, he drops the system/society dichotomy and locates the systemic logic as a realist extreme of *interstate society*. It, hence, follows the possibility of conceiving a spectrum of interstate societies that goes from Hobbes to Kant, from power politics to domestic convergence, and from pluralist to solidarist societies.

Second, Buzan makes a substantial reworking of the “world society” concept. He proposes to split this category into two clear dimensions containing different units of analysis. *Interhuman society* has to do with small and large patterns of shared identity among individual human beings, from small fragmented groups

through “imagined communities” to universal identities. *Transnational society* relates to non-state collective actors, such as firms and NGOs, but it also includes illegal or “uncivil” groups, such as terrorist organizations.

Third, Buzan considers pluralism and solidarism, two central concepts to understand the normative structure of international society, as “positions on a spectrum representing, respectively, thin and thick sets of shared norms, rules and institutions” (Buzan 2004: 139). Pluralism has a sceptical view on progress on the global level. It is based on a communitarian standpoint that supports plurality of self-contained values along Westphalian lines. Solidarism has a more positive view on the capacity for progress on the global level. It is based more on a cosmopolitan spirit and its aim is targeted on progress and domestic convergence.

Fourth, Buzan re-emphasizes a distinction between primary and secondary institutions. Primary institutions such as sovereignty, diplomacy of international law are “evolved rather than designed, constitutive rather than instrumental” (Buzan 2009: 27). These institutions allow for the creation of “secondary institutions” which are concrete intergovernmental regimes such as the UN, NATO, World Bank or the International Criminal Court.

Although this understanding serves to appreciate different regional configurations, regions are not isolated clusters of states playing with unique rules of interaction. If this were the case, the global level would simply collapse and there would be no international society with which to compare regional patterns.¹ It therefore follows that regional societies do share institutions with the global level, the difference being in how developed they are or how they are interpreted regionally which will be a main focus for this paper. It is also clear that the global level is actually a Western-dominated international society and thus regions should be compared with this Western pattern.

Barry Buzan suggests two ways to distinguish between the current Western/global international society and regional ones (Buzan 2012: 11). The first has to do with primary institutions. One could track and see whether regional societies contain primary institutions not present at the global level, or, vice versa, see global primary institutions not present at a regional scale. Further, it could also be possible to observe the same institutions on both levels but with regional societies interpreting them in a rather distinct way resulting also in distinct practices. The second way is to look at what type of state dominates the region. The assumption behind is that “the type of state dominant within a region tells us a lot about what the dynamics of the region will be like” (Buzan 2012: 14) and therefore different states can produce different societies. Buzan offers as useful typologies Robert Cooper’s differentiation among *pre-modern*, *modern* and *post-modern* states, and a distinction by North and his colleagues between *natural states* and *open access orders* (Cooper 1996, North et al. 2009).²

1 As Buzan observes, regional societies “lose their point if there are no significant differences between them and either their neighbors or the global level. But if the differences become too great then the global level disappears” (Buzan 2012: 34).

2 Simply put, pre-modern states are weak or failed states with a low degree of a “we feeling” and precarious institutions to deliver basic public goods such as order, justice, health or education. Modern states possess control over public order and rely on a strong adherence to Westphalian,

In sum, Buzan proposes to redesign the triad of the ES (system, society and world society) by forming a new scheme (interstate society, interhuman society and transnational society) in which the move from one domain to the other one does not constitute a continuum but is made up of separate constitutive units: states (from enemies to friends) individuals (from tribes to humanity) and organizations (from legal associations to organized crime). Buzan's toolbox includes also a spectrum of values as the key to defining types of interstate societies (from pluralists to solidarists) and two types of institutions (primary and secondary). Last, Buzan's analysis of regional societies considers how regions depart from, or converge on, the global western-dominated international society.

Building on some of these points, the next section aims to unpack the idea of South (and Latin) America and it does so by exploring how South American regional society is in part the result of the interaction between the interhuman and interstate domains.

MAKING THE CASE: INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY IN SOUTH AMERICA OR LATIN AMERICA?

The idea of something distinct called "Latin America" was coined by French intellectuals and statesmen willing to reorganize the American space along language and culture, dividing an Anglophone protestant North from a Latin Catholic South. Although this externally imposed division did not do much of an impact, it eventually came to signal what would later be a growing social and cultural distance between North and South America. At least until the mid-19th Century, it would not have been genuine to identify a strictly Latin American society which differed much from the American one. This is the argument of Charles Jones in *American Civilization* wherein he put emphasis on the fact that America (the continent) sought to bring about, with varied levels of success, a program similar to that of the political and economic liberalism seen in the context of highly racist societies (Jones 2007).

Yet geography, power asymmetries (i.e. the military and economic rising of the U.S.) and diverging paths in the construction of modernity eventually led

pluralist concepts of sovereignty, balance of power, and non-intervention. They have sophisticated institutional machineries to deliver public goods and enjoy stronger national identities than pre-modern states. Some of them are rich, stable countries (like United States or Canada) while others are developing economies pushing for greater international recognition (like Brazil, Russia or China). Post-modern states rely less on balance of power and non-intervention and more on governance and domestic convergence upon a liberal order. Sovereignty is no longer seen as an absolute and intrusive verification becomes a daily business. Division between "natural states" and "open access orders" presented by Douglas North et al. echoes Cooper's triad but heads into a different standpoint. Natural states are "natural" because power, government and privileges are based on personal exchanges. Elites control both political and economic system and are hardly subject to the rule of law. Dominant coalitions create property rights that favor constituent economic groups. Violence is limited mainly through rent-creation and political arrangements between dominant coalitions. Open access orders are instead subject to open political and economic competition. Impersonal exchanges and rules govern open orders and thus elites are also subject to the rule of law. Violence is limited through legitimate institutions.

to distinctive regional trajectories. As a post-colonial region, Latin America inherited much of the vanguard ideas brought by Europe. Buzan refers to an initial “cultural compatibility” between vanguard elites in Latin America and Europe, something that smoothed the path to fit the new states into the European international society (Buzan 2012). This compatibility, however, was not sufficient to fully embed the region in the West, as it happened with the U.S., and therefore Latin America remained a kind of peripheral region of the West. Buzan’s tentative explanation is that Latin America “failed to follow the revolution in the West from natural states to open access orders” and so it “became differentiated from an increasingly modernist Western core” (Buzan 2012: 7). At the beginning of the 20th Century the divisions between an English-speaking and a “Latin” America would be fully functioning.

Once we accept the idea of a Latin American specificity and its potential to conform a regional society, however, some limitations come to light. Regions are social constructions but regions are also venues for continuous interaction among its members. Barry Buzan defines a region as a “geographically clustered subsystem of states that is sufficiently distinctive in terms of its internal structure and process to be meaningfully differentiated from a wider international system or society of which it is part” (Buzan 2012: 22). This conception calls into question the idea that Latin America is *one* region going from Tijuana (México) to Tierra del Fuego (Argentina). This idea stretches the concept of region beyond breaking point. When examining a region with a wide-ranging geography, limited interaction capabilities and low economic and military interdependence, the utility of thinking in terms of a region faces diminishing returns. Central America, for instance, has been much more connected to North American dynamics than to South American twists and turns. Indeed, great power management and power balancing show clear divergent paths when North American (including Central America) and South American regional societies are compared.

A more precise analytical move would be to accept that “Latin America” as a whole is more a cultural region rather than a geographical one and therefore it is a tight interhuman society yet a loose interstate society. This is not to suggest that Latin America as a whole lacks shared practices and institutions, yet these commonalities do not suffice to make the entire region a tight interstate system. It is thus safe to say that Latin America is more a cognitive, interhuman regional society based on shared ethnic, religious and social traits. This tight interhuman society comprises two interstates societies, a Central American interstate society acting as a sub-complex within North America, and a South American interstate society. As a result, Central America clearly belongs to the Latin American interhuman society, yet its interstate dynamics are more attached to Central and North America than to South America.

Alternatively, South America seems to be a more self-contained region. Because of its geopolitical location and its degree of insulation from extra-regional influences, South America developed its own relatively autonomous regional balances of power. Charles Jones refers to South America as a “microcosm” with

its memories, institutions and *habitus* (Jones 2008). “South American republics”, he affirms, “provide an almost unique example of a society of states readily comparable to Europe because of shared history and culture” (Jones 2008: 6-7). From a similar standpoint, Buzan observed that South America “does not so obviously become seen as a part of the West, and therefore carries a much stronger sense of being a region than does North America” (Buzan 2012: 7).

Given space consideration, this chapter will examine only the South American international society. The primary focus will be placed upon interstate society and, secondly, upon interhuman society, leaving aside the transnational society dimension. The next section introduces the primary institutions of South America’s interstate society and the underlying logic that supports them.

SOUTH AMERICA’S PRIMARY INSTITUTIONS

The concept of primary international institutions has been a central idea in the ES’ tradition. The number and identity of these institutions, however, is still a contested terrain. For reasons of space, I will not revise alternative proposals for organizing primary institutions. Instead I will work with the five institutions listed by Hedley Bull in *The Anarchical Society* which should enable us to see a basic, but sufficient, picture of the South American international society. These institutions are balance of power, international law, war, diplomacy, and great power management. These primary institutions are part of the South American international society as they have been accepted as the Western standard model of international politics/society. However, I argue that other related institutions are present in South America in a way not seen in other regions, namely *concertación* and regionalism.

WAR IN SOUTH AMERICA

War in South America followed an alternative path to the one which developed in the Western part. Different international (regional) and domestic conditions help to explain this distinct pattern, which Miguel Angel Centeno dubbed “blood and debt” as opposite to the “blood and iron” path unfolded in Europe (Centeno 2012: 23). Whereas the European regional context was marked by an intense geopolitical competition and by the absence of external guarantors, the South American scenario was characterized by general acceptance of colonial administrative borders.

Moreover, while the European domestic context was marked by the progressive unification of the elites under a coherent concept of nation and administrative centres which expanded territorially, the domestic context in South American witnessed presence of factions, regionalisms, deep class and race divisions and post-colonial chaos which took several decades to overcome.

The outcome in Europe was an intense organization and breakout of massive wars, while the consequence in South America was a weak organisation and the breakout of limited wars which affected limited states. Incentives to go to war were more concrete and had to do with settlement in uninhabited territories (because of post-colonial juridical confusion) and with seizure of rich uninhabited territories (strategic information). This means that “uncertainty in borders only translated into fighting when there was something to fight about” (Centeno 2002: 75).

There is abundant evidence about the relatively peaceful character of South America. Literature depicts South America as a “zone of peace” or as “no war zone”. South American states have only rarely fought one another and this observation becomes more accurate over time. Wars were mainly “land grabs by more powerful neighbors seeking to increase their access to resources” (Centeno 2002: 44). “None of the international wars experienced by Latin America”, says Centeno, “featured the intensity of ideological, nationalistic, or ethnic hatreds so much a part of the history of other parts of the globe” (Centeno 2002: 44).

This relatively peaceful trend very much contrasts with the virulent internal conflicts experienced by South American states. Civil wars occurred under the form of regional rebellions, ideological battles, *caudillo* wars, and revolutions. “As far as states elites are concerned, the greatest threat to their power has not come from a competing elite across a border, but from the masses below.” (Centeno 2002: 90) Simply put, violence occurred *within* states, not *between* them. Centeno’s lists sixty five civil wars, which contrast with fifteen international wars. “There were simply too many conflicts occurring within each Latin American state for these countries to have much energy to fight one another.” (Centeno 2002: 263) Further, the military gaze was more frequently directed inwards than outwards, protecting an “ill-defined sense of nation from internal enemies”. Centeno observes that the development of states was more linked to the relationship with metropolitan centers than among Latin American countries and concludes that “the Latin American peace is in many ways the ultimate expression of *dependencia*” (Centeno 2002: 25).

Benjamin Miller reverses Centeno’s thesis and suggests that “a major explanation for the emergence of normal peace in South America is growing state strength and coherence during the twentieth century in this region” (Miller 2007: 7). Miller sees the workings of a “state-nation balance” as a driver for peace. Simply put, this balance has to do with the level of congruency which exists between the division of the region into territorial states and the national aspirations of their respective population. Miller’s central argument is that “state-to-nation imbalance is the underlying cause of regional war proneness” (Miller 2007: 18). This state-nation imbalance makes the balance of power and security dilemmas more important. On the contrary, when the state-nation balance prevails in a region, democracy and institutionalized conflict resolution become more important. (Miller 2007) Miller’s central finding is that “South America was better disposed than Europe to enjoy peace relatively early because it entered the twentieth century with a higher level of state-to-nation balance than Europe did” (Miller 2007: 328).

This balance took place for two reasons. Firstly, both the Spanish Empire and the independent republics progressively eliminated the original population, with the exception of Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador. Secondly, because the mass flow of European immigrants that arrived in the region did not feel any type of identification with the land or with its pre-Hispanic identity. These two circumstances significantly reduced the irredentist or revisionist claims based on historical or nationalist arguments that come with ancestral memory. (Miller 2007: 329) Put in the language of the ES, what Miller suggests is a sound fit between interhuman and interstate societies that worked against nationalist, revisionist and separatist forces. In his words, the “combined effect of national congruence and state consolidation makes it easier for states to resolve territorial and other conflicts peacefully”. Also, “[t]he record of South America”, says Miller, “is impressive in this respect, and the outcome has been normal regional peace during most of the twentieth century” (Miller 2007: 336).

INTERNATIONAL LAW IN SOUTH AMERICA

If war evolved more or less as an “arrested institution” judging by the Western standard, international law run parallel to the Western legal evolution and even went beyond normal acceptance. Adaptation and innovation have been constant features in how South American elites conceived international law. Part of the explanation has to do with the timing and character of the process by which decolonization took place in South America and how the region related to the West. South America became independent well before the transformation to open access orders in Europe and the United States took hold. Thus, South American elites did not see themselves as radically different or inferior but rather as an arrested version of the transformation that was only starting to take place in the West. The discourse and practice of international law was fundamental in the construction of South America as a regional society because it came to represent the very idea and practice of the Western civilization. This civilizing discourse, according to Liliana Obregón, “was appropriated by Creole (or *Criollos* in Spanish) élites to avoid being excluded from the rights and entitlements assigned (by Europe) to other members of the “community of civilized nations” (Obregón 2006: 248).

Yet there is more than this. Obregón claims that “a close reading of the precursors of Latin American international law shows that they were not simply following or copying” Europe and the United States, “but rather were also participants and producers of a transnational legal consciousness that they re-created and transformed with their regional interests in mind and directed back as acceptable to the metropolitan center” (Obregón 2006: 157). Obregón actually makes the case for the existence of a Latin (and similarly South) American international law (LAIL) as “a regionalist approach to the international law” (Obregón 2009: 154).

This legal regionalism was already apparent in the colonial period, when local elites, (the *letrados*) adapted the meaning and use of Spanish laws to the changing realities of the colonies. Later, during much of the 19th century, international law in South America was central to nation building, sovereignty recognition and peaceful conflict resolution. The revolutionary spirit, the ideas of freedom and justice, together with a shared cultural heritage, put forward an ambitious solidarist program based on a regional system of law and working principles. José de San Martín and Simón Bolívar, the leaders of South American revolutions, did not pursue fragmentation along national states but rather sought to (re)unite the new republics into a scheme of a loose political integration. This pattern is far from being one of conflict formation and it is somehow closer to a convergence interstate society based on a common identity and a transnational solidarity.

And yet the dream of a confederation of republics was to be dissolved as soon as Spain was no longer a threat to the independence of the new states. For a number of reasons, nation and state building followed another, more complex pattern and therefore as states progressed towards national unification and stability the discourse and practice of solidarism lost momentum and gave place to a more pluralist interstate society.

By the end of the 19th Century, the U.S. ascendance was already clear. This relative ascent made the alarm bells go off regarding the U.S. interventionism and shaped a relations pattern based on offensive solidarism on the part of Washington and on a defensive pluralism on the part of the region. It is in this sense that "Latin America can be placed firmly within a traditional pluralist conception of the international law and international society" (Hurrell 2007: 255). Andrew Hurrell pins down the most salient, pluralist norms, namely "sovereign equality, strict non-intervention, increasingly tight restrictions on the use of force; territoriality and the pragmatic use of *uti possidetis* to stabilize borders" (Hurrell 2007: 255).

The evolution of international law in South America, however, was shaped not only by the European and American standpoints but also by high doses of domestic instability. State weakness encouraged Latin/South American doctrines, namely the Tobar Doctrine (1907), the Guaní Doctrine (1943) and the Betancourt Doctrine (1961) to prevent regime change.

The last point to make has to do with democracy and human rights. The return to democracy in the 80s and the end of the Cold War in the 90s helped to increase the gamut of institutions, mechanism and commitments to consolidate and strengthen democracy and human rights. Human rights instruments and democratic charters were signed both on the Organization of American States (OAS) level and at more regional bodies. Moreover, the interests of states in South America seemed to coincide with the interests of the global economy and the promotion of global governance. Unilateral liberalization, state reforms, integration initiatives and participation in the global economy went hand in hand and reinforced each other. A movement from a classical, pluralist society to a solidarist one was underway. Hurrell (2007) observes, however, that twenty

years on, the picture is significantly different. The unilateral turn of the U.S, the rise of Brazil as a regional power, the crisis of the Washington consensus plus the rise of left wing governments across the continent worked more in favour of returning to an already known pluralist, nationalist regional society.

In sum, international law has been a fundamental institution in South American regional interstate society. Arie Kacowicz aptly captures this feature when he says that:

[the] core of the Latin American international society has been its common values, norms, and institutions characterized by its legalistic tradition, with a very formalistic and sophisticated corpus of legal norms enhancing the principle of sovereignty and nonintervention (Kacowicz 2005: 70).

In a similar vein, Arnulf Becker Lorca affirms that international law “played an important role [...] in laying down one of the languages through which Latin Americans have discussed and contested their identity, politics, and place in the international world” (Lorca 2006: 284).

Some of today’s international norms are South American contributions: *uti possidetis*; the ban of conquest as a valid mode of territorial possession; the limitation to the exercise of diplomatic protection in favour of foreigners (Calvo Doctrine); the prohibition of foreign intervention for collecting debts (Drago Doctrine); diplomatic asylum, the ruling out of colonialism, and the extension of sovereign rights for coastal states. The possibilities, however, for a move towards more solidarist principles are still a contested terrain. The point here is simply to note the difficulty of translating the normative evolution (such as commitment to democracy and human rights) into operational and fully institutionalized patterns of behaviour.

BALANCE OF POWER AND GREAT POWER MANAGEMENT IN SOUTH AMERICA

There are empirical grounds for arguing that the North American regional society has been subject to the great power management (namely on the side of the U.S.) and that almost no balance of power has existed in the two hundred years of existence of independent North America. This region exhibits high levels of unipolarism, unilateralism, intervention and offensive solidarism on the side of the U.S. It also exhibits some degree of concessions, cooperation and dialogue among its members and thus the picture is more complex than a single “the one against the many” dimension.

Conversely, South America displays an even combination of great power management and balance of power in a way that both institutions overlap each other in sometimes unrecognizable ways. Yes, the U.S. has many times attempted to intervene in the domestic affairs of the region, and yet the type and aggressiveness of its maneuvers has no comparison with the level of intervention in Central America. The obvious example here is Richard Nixon’s intervention in Chile to avoid the country becoming “another Cuba”. Yet this intervention

involved not a single marine, several CIA officers and a Nixon's command: "make the economy scream" (CIA 2000). Another and more recent example is the U.S. intervention in Colombia's fight against guerrilla and drug production, but this has been more of an "invited intervention" rather than a unilateral one (Tickner 2007). There are surely more cases to include and a definite list is out of the reach of this chapter. But rough figures indicate that between 1798 and 2007, the U.S. intervened militarily in Latin America in 101 occasions of which only ten interventions took place in South America (Russell and Calle 2009: 34).

The focal point of power politics in South America has been the shifting relations between Argentina and Brazil. For most part of their history, these two countries combined a good dose of rivalry and competition with formal diplomatic ties and even mutual neglect. Robert Burr observed that "the theme of Argentine-Brazilian rivalry and struggle for influence in South America is the oldest of all the Latin American conflicts" (Burr 1955: 98). Although war was avoided, both countries understood politics pretty much through the grammar and practice of power balancing. This picture becomes clearer when we include the U.S. inroads in the Southern Cone. From the years of Rio Branco (Brazil's Foreign Minister between 1902 and 1912) to the 70s, "Brazil looked to the United States as a prime means of balancing the power of Argentina, a tactic which only served to reinforce the distance and difference between Brazil and its neighbors" (Hurrell 1998: 391).

This scenario, however, dramatically shifted by the 80s only to be deepened by the 90s. The return to democracy in Argentina and Brazil, the signing of bilateral economic agreements, the implementation of confidence building measures and the definition of defensive military postures made a huge impact on how Argentina and Brazil saw each other. The end of the Cold War brought a momentum in the Southern Cone to shift politics and economics towards the liberal side of the ideological spectrum. A free trade area, the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) included Paraguay and Uruguay and served as a focal point to ensure institutionalized cooperation. A similar pattern was followed by the members of the Andean Pact (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela) renamed as the Andean Community (AC) in 1996. These two groupings, together with Chile and Venezuela, formed the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) in May 2008. This bloc is far from replicating MERCOSUR and AC neoliberal orientations. It is based on a consensus seeking political body with intergovernmental commissions working across the board – defence, energy, health and infrastructure to name a few.

While power politics still does much of its work in the region, particularly through still problematic dyads (i.e. Chile-Bolivia, Chile-Peru, Colombia-Venezuela, Peru-Ecuador and Peru-Bolivia) the point to make is that balance of power has notably receded since the 80s and great power management (in the hands of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Venezuela) became apparent. There is thus much more than relative power in South America's leaders' way of thinking. Diplomacy, international law and political identities have done a lot to alter what a hundred years ago seemed to be a typically European way of playing the game. This

distinction between a more conflictive balance of power game of the 19th Century and a more cooperative great power management of the 20th Century suggests that South American regional interstate society has evolved beyond the typical dynamics of power balancing and it is thus placed closer to a security regime.

DIPLOMACY IN SOUTH AMERICA

Diplomacy has been a central discourse and practice in the historical evolution of South American international relations. It has provided a complex repertoire of formal and informal mechanisms to channel conflict within a framework of agreed norms and rules, namely non-intervention, *uti possidetis*, and peaceful conflict resolution. These and other rules have been fundamental in crafting regional, multilateral schemes of dialogue and cooperation. In this sense, South America's international organisation served to escape from the destructive dynamics between state-building and war-making which took place in Europe. Yet South America, together with the U.S., was a venue for experimentation, designing an "intercontinental system of conferences and treaties long before these became standard international practice" (Centeno 2002: 70). Next paragraphs explore three particular derivative institutions from diplomacy, namely *concertación*, hemispheric organization, and regionalism.

Concertación

Concertación (literally concertation) can be presented as a unique institution of South America. It can be defined as a loose form of international organization based on consensus-seeking and peaceful settlement of disputes. Its normative instrumental followed predictable lines, namely *uti possidetis*, non-aggression, non-intervention and arbitration. As a practice, *concertación* is embedded in a deep-seated imaginary of South America as a *Patria Grande*, namely a nation (inter-human society) split into twenty two republics (an interstate society). This idea has been a source of inspiration for many intellectuals and statesmen who have put forward countless initiatives of integration (below), however it may be defined.

Concertación depicts South America as *Gemeinschaft*, a community sharing a language, a religion and a homogeneous cultural trait. It is therefore an institution that belongs to interstate society but with a firm connection with interhuman society. *Concertación* does not advocate the need for transcending sovereignty and the nation-state, nor relies on a strong individual nationalism. *Concertación*, according to Arie Kacowicz, has limited the recourse to interstate war and explains "the relatively peaceful settlement of disputes that has characterized the international relations of the region, especially in South America, since 1883" (Kacowicz 2005: 63).

Concertación therefore is a key practice that forms the core of diplomatic culture in South America. Historian Greg Grandin advances the hypothesis that this unique pattern of *concertación* is the result of a tension between two competing values, namely an ideal of territorial fundamentalism and a normative notion of justice. The surrounding question making this tension apparent was: “what right did an unjust ruler or aggressive nation have to sovereignty?” “As an answer”, says Grandin, “they held up multilateral arbitration as a solution” (Grandin 2012: 83). It follows therefore that *concertación* as an institution comes close to the pluralist end of the normative spectrum in that it advocates peaceful coexistence, yet avoids intervention in domestic affairs. In this sense, *concertación* was also a diplomatic practice to avoid U.S. intervention in South America and was very much reinforced by intellectual traditions militating against hemispherism, namely South-Americanism, Europeanism, internalism, territorialism, and Yankeeophobia (Corrales and Feinberg 1999: 19).

Although each of the above tradition points to a particular combination of ideas, texts, and intellectuals, a common ground was forged among them, namely the idea that the U.S. was unreliable, militarist, and interventionist. While during the 19th century Yankeeophobia and South Americanism were prevalent mainly among intellectuals, the 20th century saw these ideas being absorbed by diplomats, state officials, the military, and the ruling elites. U.S. hegemony served somehow to put together left and right wing parties under the influence of nationalism. The consequence was that these intellectual traditions reinforced the idea of sovereignty and non-intervention. They also reinforced the idea and practice of a defensive multilateralism to contain the U.S. Javier Corrales and Richard Feinberg affirm that this preference “proved devastating for hemispherism because it ruled out collective actions on behalf of basic tenets of the Western Hemisphere Idea, namely democracy, free trade, and collective security” (Corrales and Feinberg 1999: 21).

Hemispheric organization

At certain points in time, however, partly because of alternative ideas growing in attention, partly due to anti-hemispherism failing in delivering public goods, a favorable intellectual climate arose. The ascendance of liberalism in each of the period is part of the explanation and points to a convergence with the U.S. along more solidarist lines, namely democracy, market capitalism, human rights, collective security and limited sovereignty.

Departing from a different historical perspective, Greg Grandin comes to similar conclusions. He suggests that the 20th century American-led multilateralism can be seen in part as a result of how the United States and South America constrained each other’s normative complexes (Grandin 2012). The U.S. claimed for itself, at least until 1933, the right to intervene in Latin America when security and commercial interests dictated so. Latin/South America, instead, claimed the right to non-intervention and took every necessary step to be heard and respected in Washington.

The rest of the history is very much known. As a result, “Latin America’s containment of the United States’ intervention-individual rights complex was historically consequential, leading to the creation of a multilateral order that allowed Washington to accumulate unprecedented global power” (Grandin 2012: 88). Historical evidence highlights how Woodrow Wilson’s vision of the League was very much shaped by his understanding of how Pan American conferences organized the Hemisphere (Gilderhus 1986, de Lima 1921). Said otherwise, the concept and practice of international organization as opposed to the concept and practice of balance of power was initially incepted in the U.S.-South America interaction and institutionalized, albeit in a loose form, through the Pan-American conferences held between 1889 and 1938.

Firstly, there was the institutionalisation of hemispheric cooperation in 1910 with the formation of a General Secretariat of the Pan-American Union. Secondly, there was the codification of an emerging international law in the hemisphere. Thirdly, there was the development of the principle of non-intervention, through the Calvo and Drago Doctrines, accepted by the United States in 1936. Fourthly, there was the juridical equality of states, accepted in 1933 as part of the Convention on the Rights and Duties of States. Fifthly, there was the call for a peaceful resolution of disputes, formulated in 1902; in 1923 in the Gondra Treaty; in 1933 in the Saavedra Lamas Pact; in 1936 by the strengthened collective security system, subsequently in 1948 by the Inter-American Treaty for the Pacific Resolution of Disputes, and in 1947 by the Rio Pact. These agreements created the basis of the Pan-American system which would later be institutionalised through the Organization of American States.

Although today the “Western Hemisphere” idea is pretty much contested in a number of South American countries, such as Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador and Venezuela, other countries are still very much engaged with the United States and rely on Washington in enhanced cooperation in a number of policies, including trade, security, and aid. This cleavage between pro-U.S. and anti-U.S. standpoints has been a recurrent pattern in South America and has been a function of the shifting political identities governing these countries.

Regionalism

Another important variant of *concertación* has been regionalism. Simply put, regionalism “is a political process marked by cooperation and policy coordination” (Mansfield and Solingen 2010: 146). It entails a top-down view on how regions are constructed. Efforts in South America to advance some idea/practice of regionalism and regional integration have been abundant and the number and repetition of regional integration initiatives tell us a number of things. First, regional integration in South America evolved in a manner distinct to the evolution of the European Union. Whereas Europe could manage to form a concentric regionalism with a center symbolically and institutionally located in Brussels, the

South American experience shows a succession of decentralized regionalisms in which previous agreements survive new schemes in a manner resembling geological layers (Malamud and Gardini 2012: 121).

Second, Gian Luca Gardini and Andrés Malamud refer to South America's "inflated regionalism" (Malamud and Gardini 2012: 122). This "region inflation" allows states to actively seek membership in different regional projects, such as Bolivia being a member of the Andean Group, the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), the Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas (ALBA) plus an associated status with the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR). In the economic domain, each bloc supports alternative visions ranging from free trade, to inclusive development to plain barter. In the strategic sector the U.S. is treated alternatively as an enemy, a competitor, or a distant neighbor.

Third, South America, as is surely the case in other post-colonial regions, exhibits a structural decoupling between interstate and interhuman regional societies on one hand and transnational society on the other. Said otherwise, while politics, security and identity are to a large extent regionally driven dynamics, trade, investment and finance still follow a core-periphery pattern which inhibits the formation of deeper level of regionalization, i.e. trade integration.

Fourth, regionalism arose from a regional interstate society designed to strengthen states (not markets), sovereignty (not its surrender) and non-intervention (not transnational governance). Here, as in so many more aspects, the difference with Europe is striking as regional integration projects in South America ended up strengthening sovereignty instead of diminishing it. In other words, South American regional integration has been a means to project national concerns and ambitions and not an alternative to the existing state-centred system.

If the observations made above are sound then *concertación* in the economic domain exhibits a substantial gap between ideas of unity and limited achievements. As Gardini asserts, "Latin America is divided between a rhetorical, almost theatrical, support for continental solidarity and integration and a strong, practical preference for national sovereignty and interest, accompanied by a traditional aversion to supranationality" (Gardini 2011: 250). The challenge therefore is not to answer the question of why South America regional integration is so fragile but to explain its inextinguishable strength or, as Andrés Malamud aptly framed it, it is "neither failure nor success: inconsequential endurance is what theory ought to explain" (Malamud 2010: 643).

The ES has been reluctant to examine the economic domain of international societies. In presenting the main institutions of international society Hedley Bull did not consider global market for its inclusion. And yet the simultaneous interplay of political, economic and social forces should be taken more seriously while examining the development of international society in post-colonial regions. Buzan's intellectual reworking of the ES included the market as a master institution and placed trade liberalization as its derivative institution, together with financial liberalization and hegemonic stability (Buzan 2004: 187). This inclusion is crucial to understand the development of South American interstate society, located at the

periphery of global capitalism and thus placing development as a key diplomatic concern. This may explain why South America's early multilateral initiatives have been related to economic integration, development and industrialization via import-substitution and how the uneven spread of modernity between South America and the West continues to be a central, external driver that shapes interstate relations in and out of the region.

Conclusion

This chapter presented an ES interpretation of the South American international society. It fleshed out historical contours of South American primary institutions and offered a historical sketch of how they evolved. There are three general observations to point out. First, Latin America, of which South America is a main part, as a whole is more of a cultural region rather than a geographical one and therefore it is a tight interhuman society yet a loose interstate society. Second, and related, the South American case reveals a fascinating dynamic between regional interhuman and interstate societies. On the one hand, it supports Martin Wight's thesis that "a states-system will not come into being without a degree of cultural unity among its members" (Wight 1977: 33). On the other hand, however, interhuman society is more than a background condition in that it shapes interstates society in many significant ways. Third, primary institutions in the South American interstate society exhibit an important degree of convergence with the global international society yet they also show unique regional patterns, namely *concertación* and regionalism.

Upon examining South America's primary institutions with some detail, five conclusions follow. First, compared with the European experience (and also with the U.S.), war in South America has been an arrested institution and therefore it did not work in favor of stable, centralized states. The "blood and debt" pattern made war an expensive, unpredictable alternative. The other side of the equation is that the social construction of the "Other" has been domestically driven and civil wars therefore proved to be much more devastating than international wars. Moreover, while the West could move beyond warfare and formed a security community, South America is still a zone of negative peace.

Second, international legalism was not only instrumental for enhanced cooperation but also it was constitutive of the very sovereignty that South American states claimed to uphold. In contrast with the more instrumental use of international law in the West, legal regionalism in South America was a fundamental practice of identity building. Compared also with the West, international law in South America is still firmly placed in the pluralist side of the spectrum. Democracy and human rights have made important inroads in the juridical edifice of South American international law, yet there is still a long way to go before solidarist principles can work within a still pluralist diplomatic culture of non-intervention and *concertación*.

Third, while power balancing has been an absent practice in the Northern side of the continent, it has been an important practice in the South. Yet balance of power has not exhibited the level of confrontation present in Europe or other post-colonial regions. A possible explanation might highlight the importance of a dense interhuman society in smoothing power politics.

Fourth, diplomacy seems to show alternative traits to the ones followed by the Western core. *Concertación* shows a continuing preference for organizational contacts to maximize scarce resources, to convey the existence of a regional identity, to increase the significance and leverage of individual nations within and outside the group, and to gather and act upon information more effectively. From the IR perspective, *concertación* goes beyond power politics yet it stops short of liberal institutionalized cooperation. Simply put, South America's diplomatic culture contains much more than realists would admit and much less than liberals would prefer. Although *concertación* may be a sound derivative institution from diplomacy, however, its power to evolve into secondary, institutionalized arrangements is still weak.

Regional integration, also, exhibits an alternative pattern. While in the Western core regional integration has meant sustained regionalisation (namely free trade and economic interdependence) and multiple secondary institutions, in South America it meant resilient regionalism and almost no secondary institution. There is a "decentred", "decoupled", and "inflated" regionalism and therefore much of the regional story of South America could be narrated as a case of robust (interstate) regionalism and weak (transnational) regionalisation.

And yet regions are not only discernible by how they relate to Western institutions but also by the type of state that forms them. Taking the risk of simplifying, historical evidence suggests that South American states were "natural" because power, government and privileges were substantially based on personal exchanges. Politics and economics were under the elite control and were hardly subject to the rule of law. Government coalitions created property rights designed to favor constituent economic groups. Violence was a recurrent phenomenon but it was also limited mainly through rent-creation and political commitments between competing factions. John Coatsworth captures this natural condition well by pointing out that the concentration of wealth "led to concentration of political power in the hands of narrow elites and thus to the creation of institutions that served elite interests and failed to protect the property rights of most citizens" (Coatsworth 2005: 138).

How did this condition impact on the international society? Natural states have been poorly resourced to design and carry out massive, professional wars and therefore the geopolitical tendency to peace and the arrested process of state building have been closely related in South America. Furthermore, domestic instability, recurrent *coups*, local rebellions, and fierce ideological cleavages made balance of power calculations a grid of intelligibility to examine both domestic and external political dynamics. Paradoxically, natural states' poorly internalized norms found refuge in a more stable, pluralist regional society. The South Ameri-

can case suggests, therefore, that a sound regional interstate society can be a solution for modern, developing states (Buzan 2001: 482).

In sum, the South American case suggests that regions may be embedded into primary institutions set forward by the West. Yet regions can also exhibit distinct patterns of interactions. This paper suggests that these patterns can be the product of how interhuman and interstate societies develop together. They can also be the consequence of what type of state evolves in the region. And they can also be the result of uneven distribution of global power and uneven distribution of modernity. In this light, and seen from the centre-periphery standpoint, the nature of regional societies may be the consequence of how anarchy is ameliorated through primary institutions, but it may also be the consequence of how modernity and development take hold in multiple, contradictory ways. Both dynamics should be central to tell regional stories.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX | Questioning Regional International Society in Central Asia

Katarzyna Kaczmarek

INTRODUCTION

An important part of the classical English School analysis of world politics has focused on the process of international society expansion to the point where, in the post-WWII and the decolonization period, it was said to have become global (Bull and Watson 1984). As a consequence, the regional dimension – present in Wight’s states systems (Wight 1977) or in the depiction of the European society of states – has been neglected. More recent scholarship was compelled to draw attention to the fact that elements of international society at the global level are also to be found at the sub-global scale. It has been observed that some societal aspects may be more pronounced regionally than globally (Buzan 2004: 134). Certain regional states’ groupings may represent “greater normative content” or increased consciousness of common interests and values and, thus, a propensity for the joint formulation of specific common rules and institutions (Ayoob 1999: 248). Together with the greater regional integration observed in practice, the need arose to take sub-global structures into consideration in order to account for the regional dynamics at play in global international society (Dunne 2005: 159). Arguably this trend may be regarded as a return to the classical “comparative sociology of states systems” (Wight 1977).¹ The question, “what is regional international society?” – to paraphrase a well-known Wightian query: “What is international society?” (Wight 1991: 50) – remains, however, an open one.

The latest studies of the English School (ES) regional perspective have taken, as their point of departure, the structural version of the ES introduced by Barry Buzan (2004). Buzan aimed to systematically organize the ES field of study and construct a framework based on refined concepts proposed by Charles Manning, Martin Wight, and Hedley Bull.² The key elements of Buzan’s approach are the three domains of interstate, transnational, and interhuman societies, as well as primary and secondary institutions of international society (Buzan 2004, 2009: 25-27). This recent theoretical contribution is said to allow for a consideration of international order globally with a simultaneous appreciation of the regional perspective and the profound exploration of “sub-global” societies (Buzan 2004).

1 Despite the justified criticism voiced with regard to the confusing and imprecise way in which the concept of “region” has been used by scholars (Hameiri 2013: 313), the English School has the potential to present a coherent, though not all-encompassing, framework for the discussion of regionalism.

2 These are by no means the only representatives of the classical ES. For an elaboration of the ES “membership” question see e.g. Dunne (1998, 2005), Linklater and Suganami (2006), Suganami (1983, 2003).

The two key analyses exploring the Buzanian version of the ES in a regional context study the Middle East (Buzan 2009) and Scandinavia (Schouenborg 2012).³ Since, in the regional domain, the linkages between the interstate and non-state domains are more visible, e.g. due to the cultural unity among the members, the Middle East was thought of as a good candidate sharing the Islamic religion and Arabic heritage. The close application of Buzan's theoretical advances on primary institutions resulted with a conclusion that the Middle East can be thought of as a sub-global interstate society, as the regional features are pronounced and strong enough to distinguish the Middle East from the current global international society (Gonzalez-Pelaez 2009: 114-15). An analysis of secondary institutions, however, contested this conclusion (Murden 2009).⁴

It is important to note that, in spite of the application of a sophisticated theoretical approach, the results of the study were inconclusive. The Buzanian model relies on primary and secondary institutions, which require time to emerge and must be preceded by the realisation of common interests and agreement on common norms of the classical definition of international society. Moreover, there is no clear differentiation between the notions of transnational and interhuman domains in the model, which creates obstacles for the discussion of regional groupings with potentially more developed non-state spheres. For these reasons, the present study of Central Asia refrains from the close application of a structural framework developed by Barry Buzan. Instead, it suggests going "back to basics" in the attempt to analyse the "international society" character of particular regions and to focus on Hedley Bull's classical definition of international society. Although mentioned in the first chapter of the book, it may be useful to repeat that according to Bull, international society:

exists when a group of states, conscious of certain common interests and common values, form a society in the sense that they conceive themselves to be bound by a common set of rules in their relations with one another, and share in the working of common institutions (Bull 2002: 13).

Since common institutions proposed by Hedley Bull (especially the balance of power, international law, and diplomacy) refer to the consequences of long-term processes and interactions between states, the focus will be on common interests and a common set of rules as the starting point for tackling the question as to

3 Other regional groupings approached from the ES perspective, though not necessarily the structural version of it, include: the European Union (Czaputowicz 2003, Diez and Whitman 2002, Stivachtis and Webber 2011), broader European international society (Sakwa 2011), the Association of Southwest Asian Nations (Narine 2006), Southeast Asia (Quayle 2013). An analysis of East Asia by Barry Buzan and Yongjin Zhang is forthcoming.

4 The primary institutions have been identified as: "durable and recognised patterns of shared practices rooted in values shared commonly by the members of interstate societies" (Buzan 2004: 181). The Middle East was studied taking into consideration the "master institutions" of: sovereignty, diplomacy, territoriality, great power management, war, nationalism, equality of people, market, and environmental stewardship (Gonzalez-Pelaez 2009). The notion of secondary institutions refers to international organizations, being "the products of certain types of international society" (Buzan 2009: 27).

whether international society has been emerging in Central Asia in the post-Soviet period.⁵

In addition to common interests, norms and rules, including those of an unwritten and informal character, are at the core of Ayooob's characterization of regional society. Importantly, Ayooob makes a clear reference to the role of domestic order in the emergence of regional international society (Ayooob 1999: 247-48). This definition of regional international society has been further supplemented by the element of states' self-identification with the region (Czaputowicz 2003) or regional identity (Ayooob 1999).

This chapter is motivated by the curiosity as to whether the ES framework can be helpful to understand a distinct Central Asian context, one which defies straightforward conclusions regarding regional cooperation or integration (Allison 2004, 2008, Collins 2009, Libman 2007). It is premised on the assumption that there is a need to study specific aspects of coexistence or cooperation between states in order to avoid the elusiveness of "regionalism" which, as Hurrell noted, is a "blanket term covering a range of very different developments and processes" (2007: 130). In this endeavor, the paper also postulates a return to the classical, less structured view of international society.

The argumentation will develop in three steps. First, following Bull's definition, this paper analyses the nature of interstate relations in Central Asia and the process by which the five states under study intended to join the global international society after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Second, it will be demonstrated how differences in the type of statehood posed obstacles to the building of regional international society. Finally, the chapter will provide a more detailed analysis of the role of the Russian Federation in the region.

BECOMING REGIONAL INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY?

Nowadays, claiming that all five Central Asian states – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan – are recognized members of the United Nations is stating the obvious. This was not apparent in the early 1990s, when the primary preoccupation of regional leaders was to gain international acknowledgement. They wanted to be admitted, as the classical English School would put it, to global international society (Fawn and Mayall 1996).⁶ Each state approached the task differently and in an individualist manner. Kyrgyzstan intended to build its image of a democratizing state and to enter, at any cost, the international economic system. Uzbekistan refrained from introducing

5 This does not mean that certain types of institutions have not been formed already under the Soviet rule. Jones Luong points to the specificity of Soviet institutions – both the formal and informal ones (Jones Luong 2004). It would be interesting to analyse the role of these institutions in the process of the formation of societal relations between the states of Central Asia but this would require a much broader research project than this dictated by the scope of this publication.

6 This process was closely related to intrastate politics as international recognition was seen as reinforcing domestic regime security (Allison 2008).

both democracy and free market economy. Kazakhstan was balancing between these two options, gradually liberalising the economy but maintaining strong authoritarian leadership behind the façade of “democratic” institutions. Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, shortly after gaining independence, engaged in a struggle for regional leadership (Olcott 2005). Tajikistan and Turkmenistan were perhaps less preoccupied with their international standing, with Tajikistan entangled in civil war and Turkmenistan having taken a largely isolationist course. Differences in the strategies embraced in order to adapt to the perceived universal rules of global IS formed one of the key obstacles to regional international society building.

Before proceeding to Bull’s definition of international society, this section starts with the issue of common identity. There has been no agreement among the ES classical scholars regarding common identity as a necessary component of international society.⁷ With regard to regional international society, shared regional identity is considered a necessary building block (Ayoob 1999). In the Central Asian case, this particular area, at first glance, is an unproblematic one. All the states are Muslim and share the Soviet cultural and institutional legacy. Whether this aspect has strengthened regional unity and the creation of so-called “we-feeling” is debatable.⁸ All the states and its respective populations have distinct attitudes towards Islam (Khalid 2007, Louw 2007). The common Soviet legacy has doubtful unifying potential. First, after the fall of the Soviet Union there was an urgent need to create distinct national identities which led to the downplaying of commonalities inherited from the Soviet period, and furthermore, the affirmation of national identities was far higher on the priority list than efforts to sustain or create a regional one. Second, the dissolution of the USSR created a shared feeling of disappointment, loss and to some extent shame, which was not a solid foundation for the re-building of regional ties. The Russian language might have been a uniting factor, but language policies implemented as part of the nation-formation effort by regional states have hindered the role of Russian as a *lingua franca* of Central Asia.⁹ The aspiration to express and maintain a sphere of regional cultural difference is thus difficult to identify in Central Asia.

7 Wight, in his historical analysis of states systems, maintained that a degree of “cultural unity” was necessary for such a system to come into being. But he also agreed that the states system organized in the United Nations was qualitatively different as “diplomatic and technological interdependence have today outrun cultural and moral community” (Wight 1977: 33-34). Bull focused on commonality of interests and values rather than that of culture (Bull 2002).

8 The differences and changes in the region’s territorial ordering, as implemented by the Tsarist and Soviet empires respectively, diminished the potential for regional identity formation (on the Soviet border-making see Hirsch 2000). The pre-Soviet political entities of Central Asia have a rich history but one which does not point to strong regional ties, especially if one is to transpose it onto the contemporary political geography map of Central Asia. The question about the extent to which the Tsarist legacy contributed to the nurturing of Central Asian identity among the political entities remains debated. Prior to the Russian conquest, the polities of Central Asia differed to a large extent. Present day Tajikistan and parts of Uzbekistan were under the cultural and political influence of Persia. The territory of present day Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan was exposed to nomadic culture and political organisation. These differences are exploited in the present day interstate relations often with the aim of masking the unifying Soviet past.

9 On language policies implemented in Central Asia, see e.g. Dave (2007).

More recently, external actors, especially the European Union, have contributed to the construction of the idea of the five Central Asian states as parts of one region.¹⁰ Following the constructivist claim of identity as relational, it is possible to claim that outside powers, such as the EU, have, to a limited extent, contributed to regional identity formation not only in that they have used their leverage to persuade regional leaders to hold joint EU-Central Asia regional summits, but also in that they frame certain problems as in need of a regional approach. Thus such areas as the terrorist threat came to be identified by the governments as “regional” problems.

Having sketched the identity question, it is important to move to other aspects contained in Hedley Bull’s definition of international society. The recognition of common interests is fundamental to the building of international society. Analyses of the region and its numerous interdependencies, mainly but not exclusively in the water and energy sectors (Laldjebaev 2010, Martin 2009, Mosello 2008), suggests that a number of interests could be satisfied by means of cooperation:

The economies, borders and populations of the Central Asian states are highly intertwined, largely as a result of seven decades of Soviet policies and the suddenness of the Soviet collapse. International actors [...] have recommended regional cooperation on multiple issues, ranging from trade and transit to water policy, the Aral Sea, refugees, labour migration, terrorism, drug trafficking, border policies, and even human rights and democratisation (Collins 2009).

Central Asia states, however, have experienced diminishing levels of trust towards each other, and consequently declining interest in cooperation (CAP 2012: 2). One important example is the prolonged dispute between the upstream and downstream states of the Syr-Darya and Amu-Darya rivers (Mosello 2008). Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, both upstream states, regard the development of hydropower as a key path to national wealth. Downstream Uzbekistan, which depends on water for its agriculture, perceives the construction of dams as a direct threat to its security. The lack of trust is perpetuated by competition in state-building activities. State-building endeavours pursued by one state, are seen as undertaken at the expense of another one. Boundary disputes between states sharing the Ferghana Valley provide but one of the illustrations of this argument. Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan – all sharing the valley – have become increasingly sensitive with regard to the territorial aspects of their respective statehoods.¹¹ This, in turn, triggers initiatives of clear territory demarcation,

10 The EU’s administrative practices have played a prominent role in how Central Asian states are classified. The European External Action Service maintains relations with separate countries as well as with regions. “Central Asia” finds itself within the second category. In 2005, the EU decided to establish a position of the “EU Special Representative for Central Asia”. Additionally, a number of EU documents address the region rather than separate states, e.g. European Union and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership; The Regional Strategy Paper for Assistance to Central Asia 2007-2013 and the accompanying Central Asia Indicative Programme. While the EU maintains that the 2007 strategy has given impetus to both regional and bilateral dialogue, the strategy’s stated aim is to address “key regional challenges” (EU 2007).

11 For an ethnographic study of nationalization or, as the author prefers to call it, “étatization” of space, see Reeves (2007: 291-96).

and the dividing of formerly common water distribution facilities, grazing and cultivation lands, despite the fact that an agreement on common management of these facilities has the potential to benefit all sides. One may see these problems as rooted in Central Asia's post-colonial legacy.¹² The Soviet period left these states feeling insecure in terms of equal gains from cooperation or common management of resources. Moreover, the Soviet policies of boundary setting were largely interpreted as an exercise in *divide et impera*, which has a bearing on how these states interpret the more recent aspects of their border security.

The lack of a single regional organisation demonstrates the insufficient recognition of the existence of common interests and the reluctance to introduce common rules, which form an important component of Bull's definition of international society. There are a number of inter-state organisations, such as the Eurasian Economic Cooperation, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, but none has been created by and for the five states. Even one of the strongest regional states, Kazakhstan, has failed in its initiatives to create a regional organisation independent of powerful extra-regional actors such as Russia and China.¹³ This was the basis for drawing stark conclusions such as the one suggesting that, "the Central Asian states are incapable of organising themselves" (CAP 2012: 2). Secondly, the creation of numerous political, economic and security organizations in the post-Soviet space did not allow for clear regional boundary setting. The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), encompassed – until the exit of Georgia in 2009 – the entire post-Soviet space with the exception of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. Other organisations do not include all five the Central Asian states – e.g. the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the Eurasian Economic Cooperation (EurAsEC). Finally, membership in some organizations overlapped, as in the case of CIS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). The only organization grouping solely the five Central Asian states was the Organization of Central Asian Co-operation, established in January 1993; Russia joined that organization in 2004. Regardless of the fact that neither Uzbekistan nor Turkmenistan were members of the Eurasian Economic Cooperation (EurAsEC), it was decided, in 2005, that the Organization for Central Asian Cooperation would merge with the EurAsEC. This demonstrates negligence on part of Russia and the Central Asian states of the institution of international organisations. Most of the organisations created in the post-Soviet space are hollow. Summits organised under their auspices may end with well-worded declarations which never become implemented; joint agreements remain without the necessary ratification of national legislation (CAP 2012: 4). As a result, a number of interstate agreements have been of an "ephemeral" nature, which

12 The post-colonial nature of Central Asia states has been discussed in Dave (2007) and Heather-shaw (2010). These analyses of the post-colonial legacy combined with statebuilding activities are elaborations of Ayoob's argument (1999: 258) put into the Central Asian context.

13 Regionalism in the post-Soviet space has been described as formal or top-down and hence insignificant or even adversely impacting coordination in political, social, and security issues (Libman 2007: 401).

means that they have only remained on paper. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan may be willing to engage themselves in different regional groupings, but with no intention of making pragmatic use of this cooperation other than for their respective domestic audiences (Allison 2008).

Membership in regional interstate organisations is supposed to be based on rational assumptions, the calculation of interests and, as a result, agreement on common rules. None of this has materialised among the Central Asian states. Potentially, these states had an excellent starting point to establish common rules. They emerged from a single state system and it would be difficult to imagine a more advanced level of homogenisation. Nonetheless, as soon as the ties holding the units together broke down, and despite numerous bonds and links between the states still present after the fall of communism, divergence took the place of uniformity. The countries embarked upon different paths of political and economic development, with Kyrgyzstan occupying the most democratizing and liberalizing end of the spectrum and Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan the most authoritarian and to some extent even an autarkic one.

One of the important discussions within the ES is centred on the distinction between solidarism and pluralism.¹⁴ Regional international societies, as the study of the European Union has shown (Diez and Whitman 2002), should be expected to exhibit solidarist features. One of the definitions of solidarism places emphasis on collective interests taking precedence over particular ones (Hurrell 2002). Central Asia states, however, have been focused on securing their own interests, often at the expense of the neighbours. Despite the potential for the states to build a regional international society, its emergence is hindered by two additional factors: the particular trajectories of establishing statehood, and Russia's role in the region.

ESTABLISHING STATEHOOD

The ES approach tends to privilege the state as key to international order and a starting point for the discussion of the society of states.¹⁵ The fact that neither states nor nations were consolidated in Central Asia halted the formation of a regional international society. Local regimes invested tremendous effort in strengthening national and state consciousness, which left little time for intraregional initiatives. The absence of a longer-term vision prevented state leaders from considering possible gains from a regional approach to international politics. This proves

14 Solidarism is an assessment of world politics which suggests that "there is much solidarity in the world" (Linklater and Suganami 2006: 60), which allows for greater extent as well as deeper substance of cooperation between states. Pluralism, in contrast, perceives diversity as the fundamental feature of international society, to the extent that states can agree on coexistence but not on cooperation.

15 The state-centric view of international society is a legacy of Bull, Manning (1962), James (1986) and more recently of Jackson, who identifies the state as a citizen of international society, similarly to an individual contracting and forming part of civil society (Jackson 1990: 9).

Hurrell's apt observation of the paradox of regionalism: "a successful move beyond the state depends on the existence of reasonably well-functioning states" (Hurrell 2007: 143). It also reaffirms the argument that "weak states" do not make good partnerships (MacFarlane 2004: 447) and feeds into Ayooob's discussion of the importance of intrastate dynamics for regional international society construction (Ayooob 1999: 250-251).

A characteristic feature of Central Asia's post-independence period was the considerable difference in the strength or quality of statehood which emerged following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. In some cases, particularly in Tajikistan, the state was not consolidated enough to contain domestic violence. Indeed, the state suffered a five-year-long civil war between 1992 and 1997.¹⁶ Kyrgyzstan was a stage for two revolutions, ending in the overthrowing of presidents Askar Akayev (in 2005) and Kurmanbek Bakiyev (in 2010). More recent assessments of the capacity of these states point to serious deficiencies in what has been accepted as desired characteristics of modern statehood and, hence, descriptions such as "weak" or "awkward" proliferate in the academic and policy discourse alike.

International society relies on a well-functioning, capable state, one which is not only willing but also able to engage in tightening its relations with its neighbours. The lack of the experience of statehood during the Soviet period understandably precluded the development of sustained practice of interstate relations. As a result, consensual interstate politics have been difficult to build in the period of independence, and the materially stronger states (Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan) have imposed themselves on the weaker ones with no clear indication nor desire to create a strong, goal-oriented regional grouping. This also allowed Russia to play an important part in mediating regional international relations but, again, without a benevolent idea of the building of regional ties.

Moreover, Central Asia is an example of how a society of states has not come about among states. Some of the states have been attempting to democratize while others have maintained strong authoritarian control over their populations. This suggests that variance in the ideological underpinning of polities is an important aspect to take into account when discussing the characteristics of a regional international society. The Central Asian states also vary significantly in terms of the international aspirations of their elites. Some leaders have had much broader ambitions than just at the regional level. For instance, in 1991 Kazakh president Nursultan Nazarbayev proposed the Commonwealth of Independent States going beyond a Slavic union to include Central Asia (Page 1994), and in 1994 he also suggested the creation of the Eurasian Union. Kyrgyzstan, aspiring to the role of the champion of transformation processes and in need of securing sources of income, very early on in its history of an independent statehood decided to join the World Trade Organization.

¹⁶ Lack of state control over violence has manifested itself on several occasions in different parts of the region; for an analysis of the issue with reference to Tajikistan, see Dadmehr (2003), Heather-shaw (2009).

The emergence of independent statehood influenced the relations among the former republics to a great extent. The new states engaged in perpetual balancing between the need to become self-standing, independent, and to conform to the Western vision of global international society with the reality of being closely tied to one another and to the previous “master”, which did not cease to be actively engaged in various aspects of the new states’ political reality.

BEING “NOT QUITE FOREIGN”

Hedley Bull stressed that states forming international society should respect one another’s claims to independence (Bull 2002: 13). Indeed, sovereignty and reciprocity are two key components of international society. Viewed from this perspective, Russia’s perception of the five states as “not quite foreign” (Page 1994: 789) exposes how their “near abroad” status was an obstacle for the five new states to joining global international society.

The Russian Federation, in the years following the breakup of the Soviet Union, lacked economic capacities and a constructive vision for the region. This did not, however, prevent Moscow from declaring ambitious foreign policy goals. Instead of focusing on affirmative steps which could lead to the formation of regional international society, in the early 1990s Russia was determined to internationally legitimize its sphere of influence regarding its vital interests in the post-Soviet space. In 1992, Evgenii Ambartsumov, Chairman of the Supreme Soviet, declared that as the legal successor to the USSR, Russia had the right to a sphere of influence where its vital interests were concerned, and it “must seek the world community’s understanding and recognition of its interests in this space” (*Izvestia* 1992).¹⁷ The fact that Russia was internationally seeking the status of the guarantor of peace and stability in the region cannot be fitted easily into the framework of regional international society, even if one accepts that hegemony may be a feature of such a society (Clark 2011). The arrangement guaranteeing the recognition of interests of one state meant that the regional power was interested predominantly with securing the status quo, understood in this case as preventing other actors from establishing their political or security presence in the region, and not with the process of legitimization of its power in the region. While there is no doubt as to the existence of common regional security interests, in this case they were articulated mainly by Russia, and were not agreed to through a social process of interstate relations.¹⁸

17 Interestingly, a similar argument was voiced in 2008 by the Russian President at that time, Dmitry Medvedev (2008).

18 Additionally, a number of practical arrangements secured Russia’s preponderance. The signing of the Treaty on Collective Security meant that the High Command of the CIS (in practice Russia) coordinated military security in the Central Asian region. Russia was policing, directly or indirectly, most of the Central Asian borders and at one point declared the Tajik-Afghan border its external border and intervened militarily in the civil conflict in Tajikistan (Page 1994).

The ES approach is tolerant with regard to the exercise of power. It accepts that great powers have a major role in the preservation of order on the global level. Regional powers have been identified as playing a potentially positive role in the formation of regional international society (Ayoob 1999). More controversial, perhaps, is the claim that interventionism need not be seen as definitively obstructing regional international society formation (Halliday 2009).¹⁹ The ES “permissiveness” goes even so far as accepting that coercion is but one of the means by which society can be formed (Buzan 2004).²⁰

In this particular case, however, the fact that the Central Asia region was under the excessive influence of one great power has worked as a serious impediment to regional international society formation. The inferior position of the five states was not accompanied by the great power’s sufficient leadership or vision for the region. Having lost its previous ideological underpinning – Communism – Russia had no viable ideology on which to build stronger interstate relations. It has not embraced any worldview apart from the aspirational and overambitious claim to world-power status. The region, described so often as a power vacuum, was in fact also a “value-vacuum”. Russia was neither economically viable nor principled enough to inspire.²¹ It could not provide substantial economic benefits to the states it sought to subdue, and the overwhelming influence and presence of Russia in the region has not been accompanied by any viable set of principles and values upon which trust and the project of closer regional cooperation or integration could be built. On the one hand, Moscow’s ambitions did not allow focusing on anything less than the CIS; on the other hand, diminished economic might did not allow for effective action with regard to e.g. the Tajik-Afghan border. As a result, Russia very often opted for the tactics of directly influencing the ruling elites rather than working towards rules formation and legitimation. It acted as an external patron for regional regimes, relying on strong personal ties and weakening institutions (Collins 2006: 293, Marat 2008: 51).

A noticeable and, arguably, intentional Moscow’s approach was to build “empty shell” international organisations leading to “virtual regionalism” (Allison 2008). In the 1990s, Russia was the major player orchestrating regional institutions, which meant that they did not arise out of the recognition of common interests or values.²² Nor were they meant as a forum for discussing possible future cooperation and easing regional tensions or solving local problems. On the contrary, Russia did not stop short of abusing differences of interests and did not refrain from playing the states against each other. This is but one of the reasons why Russian-led organisations are seen in the region as vehicles for the

19 Halliday, analysing distinctive features of the Middle Eastern region, pointed to high levels of sustained intervention and interference of regional states into each other’s internal affairs, which did not prevent the formation of regional international society.

20 However, in comparison Andrew Hurrell’s discussion of regions centred on powerful states refrains from employing the concept of “regional international society”.

21 This phrase is borrowed from an analysis of the Indian state (Thakur 1997).

22 On the Russocentrism of integration projects in the post-Soviet space, see Libman (2007: 402).

carrying out of its own interests. The second obstacle, which prevents any radical advancement in cooperative or integrative arrangements, is the wariness of the Central Asian member states of Russian attempts to impinge on their sovereignty (Allison 2008: 193). The more recent Russia-inspired integration processes (the Customs Union replaced by the Common Economic Space) definitely strengthen Russia's bargaining position vis-à-vis particular states but, since it is highly likely that not all the five states will join in, the potential for deeper and more durable divisions of the region remains high.

Against the backdrop of complex relations between Central Asian states, Russia has not established itself as a provider of collective goods for the region or as a neutral third party. Instead, Moscow's engagement in the solution of existing conflicts and interstate disputes was in the 1990s and continues to be superficial and led by geopolitical considerations. The case of disputes over water resource management illustrates the instrumental use of Russia's preponderance in the region. Moscow uses its political and economic support for Kyrgyzstan's and Tajikistan's hydropower plant projects as leverage against Uzbekistan, rather than as a way to demonstrate its strong-term commitment to enhancing regional stability (Laldjebaev 2010, Spoor and Krutov 2004).

CONCLUSION

The classical English School, largely due to its holistic agenda, has traditionally focused on the global level, neglecting regional dimensions. Nor has it been attentive to area studies. An analysis of Central Asia through the lens of the ES exposes the difficulty of applying the concept of international society to the relations between newly formed states.

This chapter challenged the rigidity of Buzan's approach to the study of regional international society, following instead the characteristics of societal arrangements between states specified by classical ES authors, namely: common values, interests, and rules. Despite the divergence of approaches, both this analysis and the structural approach proposed by Buzan have shown that a regional international society is not an easily attainable phenomenon. Central Asia can be compared to the Middle East in that states in both regions have emerged following the fall of empires, and they have struggled with the post-colonial conditions affecting the development of national statehood (Cole and Kandiyoti 2002, Cummings and Hinnebusch 2011, Kandiyoti 2002). The difference between the two lies in the fact that the institution of a modern state is better established in the Middle East (Gonzalez-Pelaez 2009: 95), while in Central Asia the state still needs to assert itself.

This chapter has argued that, while there are certain indications of the potential for Central Asian states to form a regional international society, three major elements have prevented the creation of societal arrangements between Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. The first is that the

type of intraregional relations, which – while underpinned by a substantial level of cultural and historic commonalities – have not been dressed in the framework of interstate relations for a substantial period of time. The region has never experienced long-term interstate relations, which appear to be more important to the forming of an international society than bonds between people or cultural unity. While identity and domestic order are treated as separate characteristics in the definition of an regional international society, it is necessary to emphasize how these two are intertwined. Discontinuity in the type of state has been an additional obstacle towards the emergence of Central Asian identity. Paradoxically, while the founding of states and the building of interstate relations may contribute to the formation of international society, the abrupt transformation from non-sovereign Soviet “republics” into sovereign states in Central Asia exacerbated some disputes and hindered recognition of common interests. In this particular case, the effort to join the global international society remained in contradiction with the building of regional international society. Secondly, an analysis of any regional arrangement in Central Asia has to take into account the role of Russia, which – in this instance – has not taken the role of responsible great power/manager. The aspirations of some of the five Central Asian states to become members of the global international society was not compatible with the status of being “not quite foreign” imposed by Russia. Russia, far less interested in constructing a regional international society, preferred benefiting from its regional position in ways that would enhance its global standing. Finally, the strength of statehood, the particular type of regime emerging, and differences in terms of international aspirations were an additional negative factor impeding the emergence of regional international society.

Although we have come to the conclusion that there is no common vision of regional international society among the Central Asian states, the very process of analyzing its aspects has been revealing with regard to certain regional dynamics as well as the very concept of international society. One may conclude with a quotation from Hurrell, who noted that “[r]egional expertise provides the foundation for the detailed, case-study based knowledge on which the discipline [political science] depends. Arriving at different perspectives of the world, including international order, requires good case-studies, and these in turn require regionally specific knowledge that involves history, language and culture” (2007: 136). This essay has aspired to enrich the understanding of what regional international society is by pointing to the role played by the type of statehood as well as that exercised by powerful (extra)regional actors.

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