

OVERVIEW

In this article, Buzan seeks to relate the concept of international society, from the English school, to structural realism and regime theory, from the American academia. He does this by 1) establishing definitions for international system and international society 2) examining how international society relates to world society and 3) using the logic structural realism, show how international society can emerge as a natural product of the logic of anarchy. Buzan argues that regime theory and international society are part of the same tradition, the latter stagnating due to its largely historical rather than theoretical nature, while the former has had some success. Why should the idea of international society be adopted to understanding IR? 1) it works well as an empirical tool; fits with observed data 2) more normative political reason: it constructs a way of thinking about IR, that if widely adopted, would have a beneficial effect on the practice.

INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY

Bull and Watson's definition: a group of states not merely forming a system, in which the behavior of each is a necessary factor in the calculations of the others, but also states have established by dialogue and consent common rules and institutions for the conduct of their relations, and recognize their common interest in maintaining these arrangements. System (which requires existence of units, among which significant interaction takes place and that are arranged or structured according to some ordering principle) is logically the more basic and prior idea. Interactions among states include war, diplomacy, trade, migration, and the movement of ideas. The consequences of anarchy vary according to the level and type of interaction in the system.

Before answering how an international system acquires an international society, how does an international society come into being:

- *Gemeinschaft* (civilizational) understanding sees society as something organic and traditional, involving bonds of common sentiment, experience, and identity; essentially a historical conception: societies grow rather than being made. Examples: classical Greek and early-modern Europe, units of subsystems that shared significant elements of culture (esp. religion and language). But even without sharing a common culture, regularity and intensity of interactions can lead to evolution of international society. Though there is no historical example, international society could evolve functionally from the logic of anarchy without preexisting cultural bonds.
- *Gesellschaft* (functional) understanding sees society as being contractual and constructed rather than sentimental and traditional; more consciously organizational—societies can be made by acts of will. "A minimal desire for order begins to emerge when leaders realize the disadvantage of permanent chaos if interstate relations remain wholly unregulated." Development of international society as a rational long-term response to the existence of an increasingly dense and interactive international system with Bull's three societal goals (refer to Bull summary). So, what about "common identity" that is central to a society? Two possibilities: 1) a la Waltz competition in anarchy generates like units; mutual exchanges of acceptance of this form a community 2) neomedieval system of unlike units, in which shared identity arises in acceptance of a set of rules that legitimize the differentiation of units and establish the distribution of rights and responsibilities among functionally differentiated actors; this, however, is unlikely to come about from scratch; in *Gesellschaft* shared goals and identity could converge at some point (development of common norms, rules, and institutions must eventually generate (and be generated by) a common identity; while civilizational international society will be confined to a region, a global international society has to have strong *Gesellschaft* elements

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY AND WORLD SOCIETY

"World society" takes individuals, nonstate organizations, and the global population as a whole as the focus of global societal identities and arrangements. International society and world society: civilizational view—some element of world society is a precondition to international society; functional view—possible to imagine primitive international societies existing without any elements of world society. International society as a kind of way station on the historical road away from anarchy to a world society, but Buzan argues that an international society cannot develop further without parallel development in its corresponding world society. International society of states (sovereigns in anarchy) seems conflictual with world society of individuals (possible hierarchy of world government). Individuals, however, can hold layered set of multiple identities, so world society can develop alongside existing national ones. But an international society cannot develop past a primitive level without being supported by the development of elements "world" culture at the mass level. A world society cannot emerge unless it is supported by a stable political framework, and the state system remains the only candidate for this.

SYSTEM BEFORE SOCIETY

At this point, Buzan goes through a conceptual history of development of an international system: a system of states starts out with a low level of interaction and relative peace; as the interaction capacity increases, the probability of conflict increases and a level of strategic interaction is reached and states come under the pressure of the balance of power. While a primitive international system of this asocial madhouse could persist, it is not imaginable without the system developing a few basic elements of international society. This system can range from a hierarchy under an empire to an anarchy, with hegemony, suzerainty, and dominion in between. Under anarchy with Waltzian socialization and competition, states are forced to recognize each other's existence at the least and to develop some conventions for communication and negotiation.

THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN I SYSTEM AND I SOCIETY: MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF SOVEREIGN EQUALITY

This eventual society is not a *Gemeinschaft* international society; interaction (trade, tech transfer, intermarriage, hegemony, imperial rule) has homogenizing effects, generating "like units." Because anarchy dominates in the short term, international societies are more likely to develop within regional subsystems first, which has three implications: some regions may have international society while others may not; civilizational international societies face the challenge of expanding into alien regions; some part of the system (core) will have more developed international societies than others. But how does one demarcate international system and international

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society: based on the idea of shared identity. In the functional model, the shared identity is based on behavioral criteria: units not only recognize each other as being the same type of entity but also are prepared to accord each other equal legal status on that basis. This sets the minimum conditions for societal relations among culturally diverse units. The transition occurred in Europe with the emergence of sovereignty, which is a clear in principle but complex in practice. So what is different under this international society? Balance of power and war still carry over due to anarchy, but the possibilities for formalizing and extending diplomacy and international law are much improved by the institution of sovereign equality: diplomatic representation becomes more secure and regular and international law moves from natural law to positive law. Great powers carry the responsibility of maintaining the framework of order in the society, while less powerful states not have some protection against elimination (external sovereignty even keeps in existence extremely weak states.). While at the most basic level, the development of international society can proceed with no parallel evolution of world society, some minimal elements of common culture among ruling elites is required. Another major change is that political order and balance of power become explicit foreign policy goals for many states (balance of power is recognized as a possible basis for order; great powers can consciously manage their relations through agreements over e.g. territory or nuclear armament). Last difference: reproduction of anarchic structure is automatic in presocietal international system, whereas the reproduction becomes conscious and intentional.

CONCLUSIONS

Present day international society is a hybrid: part stems from the *gemeinschaft* international society developed in modern Europe and another part reflects *gesellschaft* process by which different cultures in a system of high levels of interaction have come to terms with one another. In this society, the bottom line is the mutual recognition by nearly all states of each other as legally equal sovereign entities. The European (Western) core is much more highly developed in terms of number, variety, intensity of rules, norms and institutions binding its members, but the overall cohesion in the society has increased since the demise of the Soviet Union. Only a small number of pariah states are on the outer fringes the society consisting of concentric circles. e.g. North Korea and Myanmar accepting very little of international regimes; Argentina, China and India selecting carefully what regimes to accept and what not to; core countries generating and supporting the global network of regimes. Buzan employs the example of the Persian Gulf war and divides countries into seven different circles, depending on their willingness to fight, pay, support, be neutral or oppose. In this sense, international society is more than a regime; it might be seen as a regime of regimes—providing legal and political foundation on which the whole idea of regimes rests. There has to be a sense of community before even a norm of reciprocity can emerge. Thus the conception of international society as a set of concentric circles defined by states' differing membership to regimes and norms opens up a new research agenda. What accounts for differing levels of international society and what explains either increase or decrease in international society? As the international society develops, the world society becomes a symbiotic partner of it. Another key research area is the question of intervention, which is not clearly defined even among the core group of international society. Buzan claims that this linking of the English school and structural realist theory is useful and is made possible by linking the *gesellschaft* conception of international society with the structural realist ideas of systemic pressure generating like units.