

# **Methodological Pluralism and the History/Theory Link in the English School**

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General interest in the English School's (ES) approach to international relations has increased steadily over the past two decades, along with the number of its adherents. These two trends have given rise to contradictory developments. On the one hand, the growing interest in the English School has meant that there are now recurrent attempts by non-ES theorists to locate the ES in the pantheon of IR theory. In the process, however, much of the complexity and variation of the theory is overlooked. In the interests of providing an unambiguous image of the ES that is clearly differentiated from other approaches to international relations, key elements of its multidimensional theoretical perspective are excised to reveal what is considered to be the main core of the theory. Almost invariably when this happens, the ES is associated with a purely norm driven or institutional conception of international relations. On the other hand, as the ES has attracted a growing number of adherents, so too has internal differentiation within the school started to take place. Indeed, Buzan argues that there are now at least three different ways of understanding ES theory.<sup>1</sup>

ES theory may be considered first as a set of ideas to be found in the minds of statesmen; second, as a set of ideas to be found in the minds of political theorists; and third, as a set of externally imposed concepts that define the material and social structures of the international system.<sup>2</sup> Although Buzan believes that the ES has the potential to develop a powerful general theory of international relations, he also argues that the ES

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<sup>1</sup> Barry Buzan, *From International to World Society: English School Theory and the Social Structure of Globalization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p.12.

<sup>2</sup>Buzan associates the first theoretical perspective primarily with the work of Manning, see, for example, C.A.W Manning, *The Nature of International Society* (London:LSE/Macmillan, 1976); the second with the normative dimension of work by Bull and Wight, see, for example, Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., (London: Macmillan, 2002) and Martin Wight, *International Theory: The Three Traditions*, ed. Brian Porter and Gabriele Wight, (Leicester: Leicester University Press/Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1991); and the third with Bull and Buzan's own work, see, for example, Bull, *The Anarchical Society* and Barry Buzan, and Richard Little (2000) *International Systems in World History: Remaking the Study of International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000)

approach as it currently stands conflates normative and empirical strands of thought.

What he wants to do is unravel these two strands and follow the empirical line of thought, thereby using the ES to provide ‘the building blocks for a methodologically pluralist grand theory of IR’.<sup>3</sup> Buzan is certainly not opposed to normative thinking in IR, but in line with his adherence to a positivist methodology, he insists on the need to distinguish between empirical and normative theory. His aim is to clarify and extend the empirical approach to IR theory but he also challenges normative ES theorists to do the same for their approach to theory.

There is no doubt that Buzan demonstrates that some of **the** limitations **of** ES theory ‘hinge in one way or another around the weakly developed world society pillar’.<sup>4</sup> He endeavours to rectify **these limitations** by making a clear distinction between international society and world society and then differentiating world society ontologically in terms of interhuman and transnational societies. But although Buzan takes advantage of and extends the ontological diversity that characterises ES theory, he does so at the expense of some of its methodological diversity. Given Buzan’s commitment to methodological pluralism, this assessment may seem incongruous, but in fact, Buzan makes no systematic attempt to explain what he means by methodological pluralism or to evaluate the implications that follow from adopting methodological **pluralism**. By contrast, Wendt, who also argues in favour methodological pluralism, makes it quite clear what he means by the term.<sup>5</sup> Buzan uses Wendt extensively when endeavouring to recast ES theory **and it might be** inferred that Buzan subscribes to the

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<sup>3</sup> Buzan, *From International to World Society*, p. 14.

<sup>4</sup> Buzan, *From International to World Society*, p. 15.

<sup>5</sup> See Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

view of methodological pluralism that Wendt promotes. But there are very different meanings attached to methodological pluralism in the literature and Wendt's own view of methodological pluralism has recently undergone a major shift.<sup>6</sup> One aim of this chapter is to expose those different meanings and to examine the implications of describing ES theory as methodologically plural.

The other key aim of this chapter is to demonstrate that methodological pluralism is inherent in the ES's theoretical approach and follows from the commitment to a multidimensional theoretical framework as well as a multifaceted theory of history. As a result, ES theory generates, arguably, the most ambitious and far-reaching research agenda that can be identified at this time in IR. Neorealism and neoliberalism, for example, are both characterised by essentially one dimensional theoretical perspectives that are both ahistorical in character. Indeed, the prevailing methodological orientation in IR is encouraging an increasingly fragmented approach to research, as the history of the realist research programme over the past thirty years demonstrates.<sup>7</sup> The ES, on the other hand, has always been interested in developing an historically sensitive and comprehensive/general theory of IR and this has necessitated an eclectic or pluralistic approach to methodology.

The argument makes five moves. The first examines how theorists outside of the ES have promoted an image of the school that is overly circumscribed in terms of

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<sup>6</sup> See Alexander Wendt, 'Social Theory as Cartesian science: An auto-critique from a quantum perspective' in Stefano Guzzini and Anna Leander, eds., *Constructivism and International Relations: Alexander Wendt and his critics* (London: Routledge, 2006).

<sup>7</sup> In the first instance, a parsimonious neorealism overtook the much more expansive and historically sensitive approach promoted by classical realism only for neorealism then subsequently to splinter into diverse and more focused theoretical perspectives. Neorealism, for example, has divided into offensive and defensive realism, while both of these camps have been challenged by neoclassical realism. For a discussion of this development, see, for example, Stephen G. Brooks, 'Dueling Realisms (Realism in International Relations)' *International Organization* 51:3 (1997), pp 445–77.

both its theory and its methodology. A second move exposes the multidimensional ES approach to theory, and is followed by a third move that opens up its multifaceted theory of history. The fourth move **draws** attention to two divergent conceptions of methodological pluralism, one that aims at synthesising divergent methodological positions and another that acknowledges the need to access divergent methodologies. A fifth move then explores how methodological pluralism extends the range of methods needed to advance the **ES research agenda**.

## **Narrowing the ES Research Agenda**

Suganami(2003) is undoubtedly correct when he suggests that the prevailing well-defined image of the ES is a relatively recent phenomenon.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the ES now has global reach, and that even American theorists are willing to identify the English school, alongside neorealism and neoliberalism, in terms of ‘the best-known approaches to international relations’.<sup>9</sup> But this recognition comes at a price. So, for example, although Krasner has a sophisticated understanding of some of the pluralistic dimensions of ES thinking, nevertheless, when it comes to locating theoretical approaches in his typology of theories that assesses the significance of international norms and institutions, his nuanced, multidimensional view of ES theory gives way to a much more one-dimensional assessment (see Figure 1).<sup>10</sup> What the typology reveals,

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<sup>8</sup> See Hidemi Suganami, ‘British Institutionalists, or the English School Twenty Years On’, *International Relations* 17:3, (2003), pp. 253-271.

<sup>9</sup> See Stephen D. Krasner, *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), p.44.

<sup>10</sup> . Krasner, *Sovereignty* pp. 47-8.

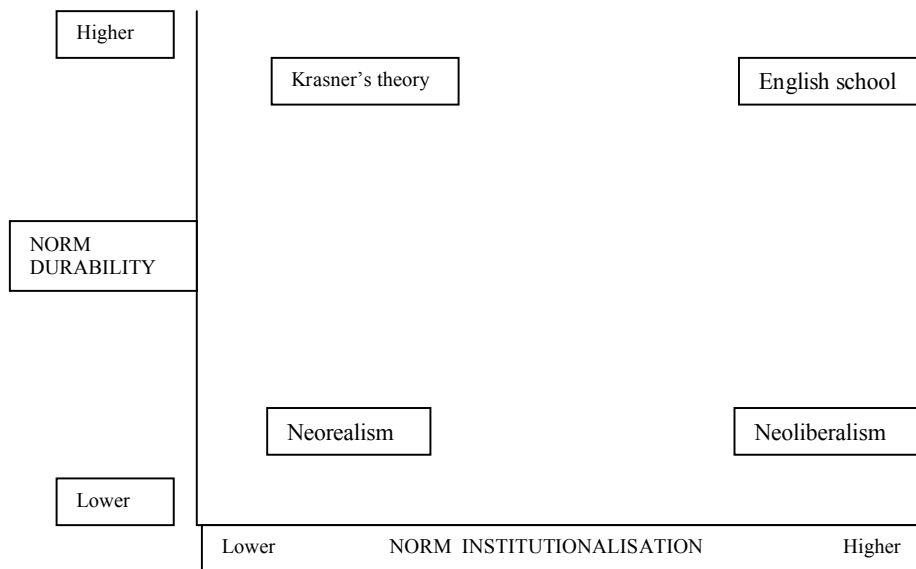


Figure 1 Krasner's typology of how competing theories assess the impact of norms in international relations.<sup>11</sup>

from Krasner's perspective, is that the ES presupposes that international norms are highly institutionalised and very durable features of any international society. By contrast, Krasner develops a theory that attempts to explain why international norms are highly durable despite the fact that they have little impact on state behaviour, as reflected in the low level of institutionalisation that he ascribes to them. The problem with this typology, from an ES perspective, is that it makes no provision for either the potential for norms, even deep-seated norms like the ones related to sovereignty, to evolve and transform. Nor does it allow for the interest that the school displays in international settings where norms do not develop.

<sup>11</sup> Adapted from Krasner, *Sovereignty* p.58.

The failure to take account of the pluralistic character of the ES is also evident in the typology that Wendt establishes in his analysis of some of the methodological assumptions that underpin the major IR theories (See Figure 2).<sup>12</sup> In this context, Wendt

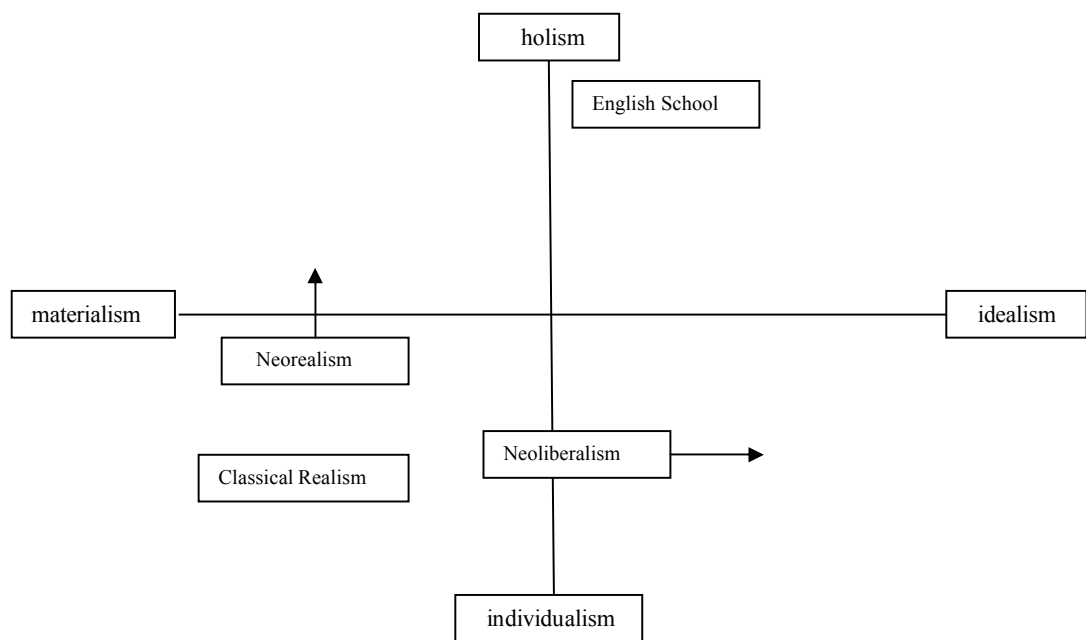


Figure 2 Wendt's typology of the methodological positioning of IR theories<sup>13</sup>

associates methodology with the fundamental philosophical assumptions on which any theoretical framework must build. In this instance, he is examining the competing philosophical assumptions that give rise to different social ontologies. From this perspective, the ontological position of an IR theory can be located along two intersecting continuums. One continuum links idealism and materialism and charts a spectrum of responses about the relative importance that can be ascribed to ideas as opposed to

<sup>12</sup> See Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*.

<sup>13</sup> Adapted from Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* p. 32.

material forces. The other continuum links holism and individualism and it charts a spectrum of responses that can be ascribed to the relative importance that can be ascribed to structures and agents. What Figure 2 demonstrates, in the first instance, is that there is a degree of uncertainty about where two of the key IR theories should be located. So Wendt acknowledges, for example, that whereas he himself is clear that neorealism operates at the individualist end of the continuum, others, for example, Hollis and Smith locate neorealism at the holistic or structural end of the continuum.<sup>14</sup> On the other hand, he has no problem with locating the ES. It is unequivocally considered to privilege structures and ideas.

## **The ES Theoretical Framework**

The main elements of the ES framework were essentially in place from the earliest stages of the school's development, although they were most clearly articulated by Bull **in the distinction he draws between** the international system, the international society and the world society. He insisted, moreover, that international politics is constituted by a mix of the divergent and sometimes competing practices that take place in these three arenas and that collectively they contribute to a complex and multidimensional reality. He also insisted that each arena had become associated with a tradition of thought; and that the thinking of theorists operating within each tradition has evolved over the past five hundred years and can be drawn upon, as a consequence, to help us to capture the essence of the changing reality of world politics. Bull insists, therefore, that it is important not to

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<sup>14</sup> See Hollis, Martin and Steve Smith (1990) *Explaining and Understanding International Realities* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990)

‘reify’ any of these arenas and so, for example, ‘it is always erroneous to interpret events as if international society were the sole or the dominant element’.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, although some of the central features of ES theory revolve around the interaction between these three arenas, there is no doubt that most attention has been focused on the idea of an international society.

Buzan has made the most serious attempt so far to **capture** the multidimensional aspects of its theoretical framework, but he does so at the expense of the ontological depth and diversity embraced by Bull.<sup>16</sup> Two very different kinds of moves are made by Buzan. First, he insists that there is a need to articulate much more fully what the ES means by world society and, as already noted, he then argues that world society is constituted by both an interhuman society and a transnational society. His second move has even more consequences for Bull’s framework because he questions the need to draw any distinction between the international system and the international society. However, Buzan is not the first theorist to make this move. James initiated the attack on the distinction, insisting that it is simply not possible to conceive of an international system that does not embrace the features that Bull associates with the existence of an international society.<sup>17</sup> By the same token, any meaningful conception of an international society must make the systemic assumption that its members will take each other’s behaviour into account. It follows, according to James, that Bull has set up a false dichotomy and the most practical step is to discard the idea of an international system because it is the societal dimension that needs attention.

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<sup>15</sup> Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, p.49

<sup>16</sup> See Buzan, *From International to World Society*.

<sup>17</sup> See Alan James, ‘System or Society’, *Review of International Studies* 19:3 (1993), pp.269-88.

Jackson, on the other hand, accepts that the two terms point up a useful distinction, but he argues that it is better captured by distinguishing between instrumental and non-instrumental behaviour. Instrumental behaviour is based on strategic conceptions of self-interest that necessarily take the actions of other actors into consideration.<sup>18</sup> Failure to take account of others will all too easily give rise to self-defeating strategies. By contrast, non-instrumental behaviour is based on legal and moral obligations that necessarily embrace the legitimate interests of others who will be affected by this behaviour. Jackson accepts that both forms of behaviour need to be accommodated in any analysis of international society. He objects to the use of international systems terminology, however, because it too easily gives rise to a mechanistic view of behaviour that encourages what Jackson considers to be the utterly mistaken notion that human beings can be pushed around by social structures. However, he insists that when Bull refers to the international system he is not suggesting that human behaviour can be structurally determined.

Buzan provides a third significant discussion of the distinction.<sup>19</sup> He acknowledges Jackson's view that Bull endeavours to capture two distinctive types of social behaviour, but he insists, nevertheless, that Bull's position on the international system does represent a 'physical mode of interaction typical of the mechanistic, realist-style analyses of the balance of power as an automatic process rooted in the relative material capabilities of states'.<sup>20</sup> Despite this assessment, Buzan then argues, in line with Jackson, that Bull's view of an international system can be captured perfectly well within

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<sup>18</sup> See Robert Jackson, *The Global Covenant: Human Conduct in a World of States*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp.113-6).

<sup>19</sup> Buzan, *From International to World Society*, pp.98-108.

<sup>20</sup> Buzan, *From International to World Society*, p. 99).

the context of an international society, thereby rendering the need for a system/society divide redundant. What he does, **in essence** is to establish a continuum of international societies and locate the international system at one end of the continuum, re-designating it as a power political international society. At the other end of the continuum is a convergent international society where the component states all broadly share the same values. Between the two ends of the continuum, Buzan establishes two interim

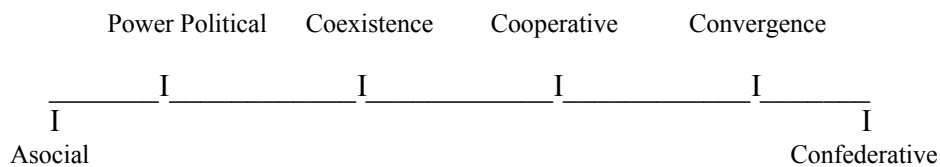


Figure 3 Buzan's continuum of international societies<sup>21</sup>

stages, one where the emergence of institutions permits coexistence and the other where institutions enable states to cooperate. Buzan also recognises, however, that the spectrum can be extended at either end, from an asocial world through to a confederative world, both operating beyond the limits of any society of states.

There is obviously a considerable utility in developing a continuum of this kind but it unquestionably moves away from the logic that Bull was employing and the multidimensional theoretical framework that he wanted to develop. From his perspective, to understand how an international society operates, it is necessary to examine the society in the context of both the international system and the world society (see figure 4) with

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<sup>21</sup> Based on the discussion in Buzan *From International to World Society*, pp. 159-160.

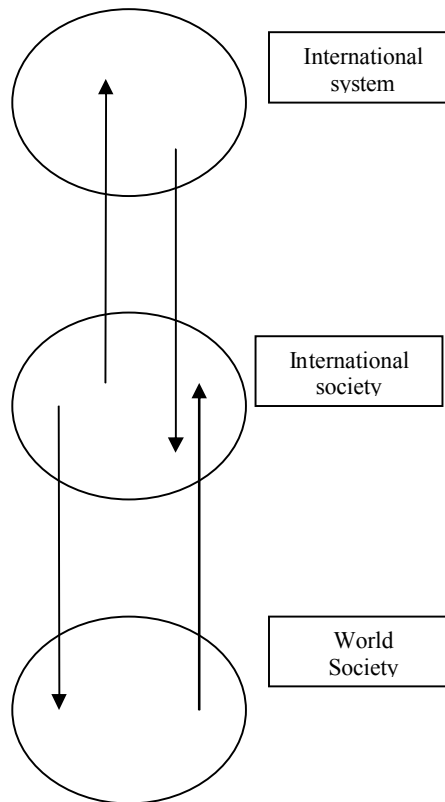
the international society coming under pressure from two directions. Whereas an international society involves the ‘institutionalisation of shared interest and identity amongst states’, an international system focuses on ‘the structure and process of international anarchy’ and a world society concentrates on ‘global societal identities and arrangements’ of individuals and non-state organisations.<sup>22</sup> But there are three very distinctive features associated with these three arenas. The first is that the arenas need to be examined in conjunction with each other and they must be seen as separate levels of analysis that help to capture the essential features of a more complex whole (see Figure 4). In other words, although the international system only focuses on the material distribution of power, it presupposes the existence of an international society that defines the existence of states in the first place. Neorealists have often been criticised for failing to acknowledge this assumption, although it is now suggested that it is, in effect, built into neorealist analysis.<sup>23</sup> In any event, Bull’s conception of the international system bears an uncanny resemblance to the one formulated by Waltz, albeit developed in a much less systematic form. It is, therefore, **not** surprising to find Bull identifying Waltz’s *Theory of International Politics* as ‘an important book’ that provides the ‘first, rigorously “systematic” account of international politics’.<sup>24</sup> **On the other hand**, the international society is not only linked to the international system, but also to world society and, indeed, a recurring theme in ES writing is the presumption that an international society needs to be underpinned by a world society that embraces a common culture.

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<sup>22</sup> Buzan, *From International to World Society*, p. 7.

<sup>23</sup> See Stacie E. Goddard and Daniel H. Nexon, ‘Paradigm Lost? Reassessing *Theory of International Politics*’. *European Journal of International Relations* 11:1, (2005), pp. 9-61.

<sup>24</sup> Cited in Andrew Hurrell, ‘Society and Anarchy in the 1990s’ in B.A. Roberson, ed. *International Society and the Development of International Relations Theory* (London: Pinter, 1998) p. 20.




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Figure 4 The ES theoretical framework – A levels of analysis perspective

A second distinctive feature of the ES theoretical framework emerges when the framework is reassessed in terms of Wendt’s typology of the methodological positioning of IR theories (See Figure 5). It is unquestionably the case that Bull views the international system, the international society and world society from a holist or structural perspective, but whether he identifies the international system as well as the international society and world society in idealist rather than materialist terms is perhaps more difficult to assess since the issue is not directly addressed. Indeed, if Buzan argues that the failure to articulate the idea of world society in detail represents a weakness in ES

literature, the same could be said of the international system. Nevertheless, given his response to Waltz's *Theory of International Politics*, there is a good ground for placing the international system at the materialist end of the continuum.

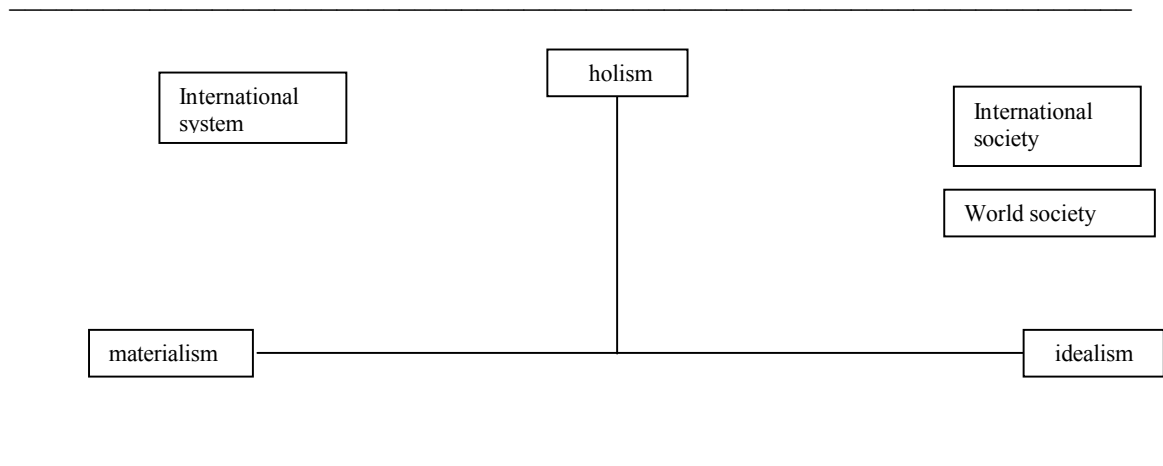


Figure 5 The methodological positioning of key ES concepts using Wendt's typology<sup>25</sup>

The third distinctive feature of the ES theoretical framework relates to its potential to develop an explanatory typology. In contrast to Buzan's framework, which only locates increasingly integrated international societies along a continuum, it is possible in principle to replicate this continuum but build it into the ES framework. So, in the case of Buzan's power political international society, it is possible to suggest that the impact of the international society and the world society is severely truncated and overpowered by the impact of the international system (see Figure 6). By the same token,

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<sup>25</sup> Adapted from Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* p. 32.

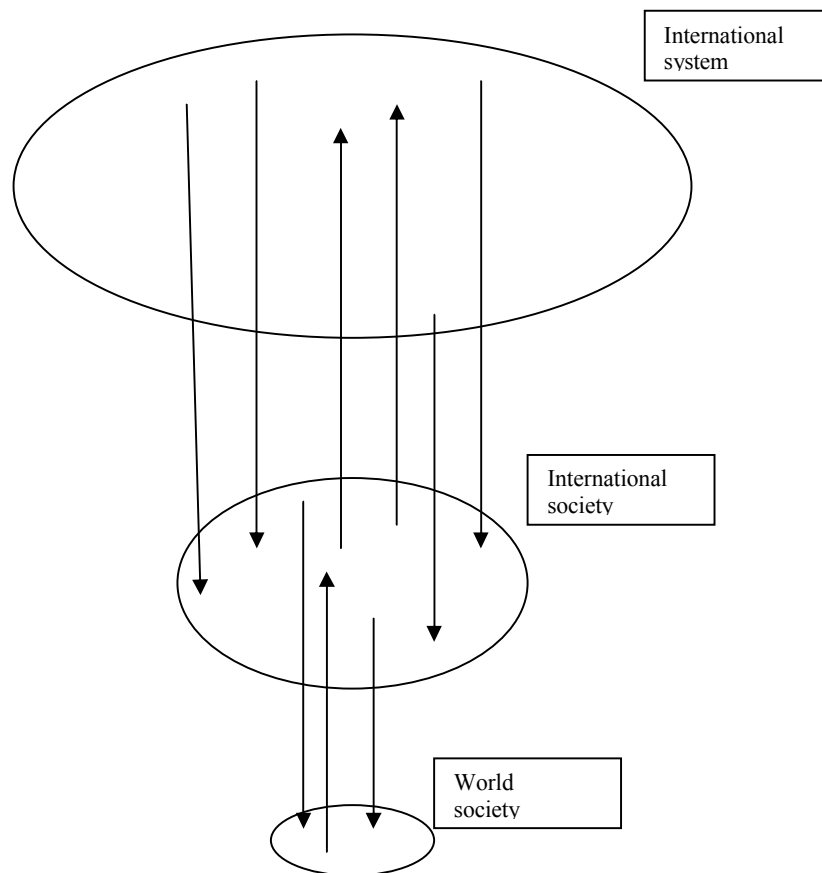


Figure 6 A power political international society – A levels of analysis perspective

in the context of Buzan's convergence international society, the situation is reversed with the impact of the international system being overwhelmed by the impact of the international society and the world society (see Figure 7). Both of these figures, however, are only indicative and are designed to serve the heuristic purpose of revealing that the ES theoretical framework is potentially much more flexible and resilient than Buzan acknowledges. Whereas Buzan's continuum is no more than a stipulative exercise Figures 6 and 7 can provide the basis for a series of research hypotheses and demonstrate

that the research framework has the capacity to generate an expanding research agenda. This feature of the research framework will be explored in more depth in the fifth section of the chapter.

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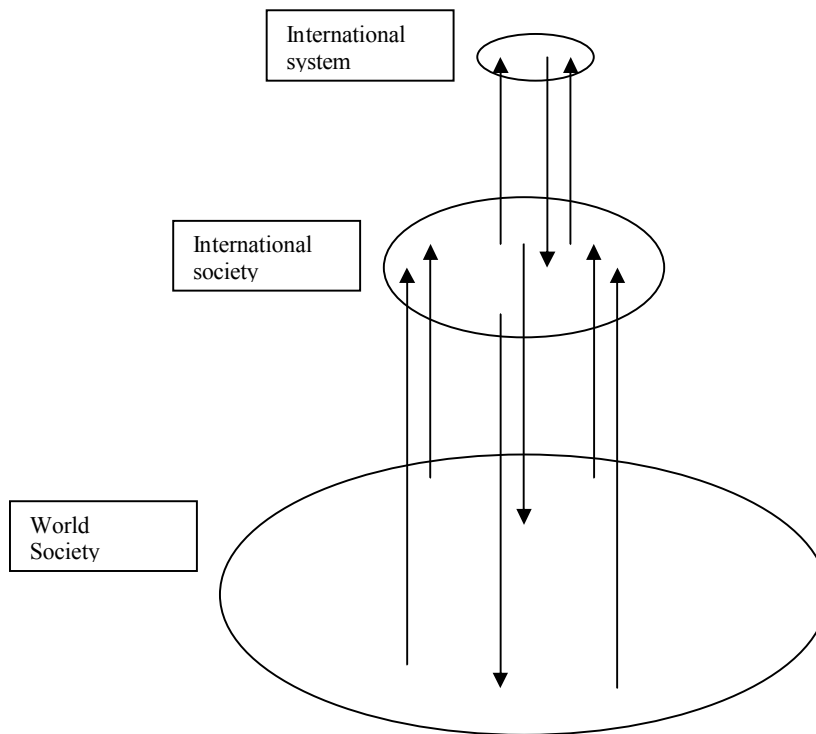


Figure 6 A convergence international society – A levels of analysis perspective

## **The ES and the theory of history**

Halliday argues that what one of the key factors that distinguishes the ES and renders it comparable with both liberalism and Marxism is a distinctive view of history and of

historical change.<sup>26</sup> As with the theoretical framework, however, it is necessary to acknowledge that members of the ES have a multifaceted view of history. First, there has been a persistent interest in world history, as demonstrated in the work in the work of Wight and Watson.<sup>27</sup> Both authors presuppose that the ES must break free of the Westphalian and Eurocentric straitjacket and come to terms with the very different forms that states systems have taken over the millennia. On the basis of his synoptic overview of world history, Watson generated an intriguing pendulum metaphor (see Figure 7). He insists that it is only a metaphor and, as a consequence, does not constitute a fully developed theory of history. Nevertheless, it does make some important claims about the

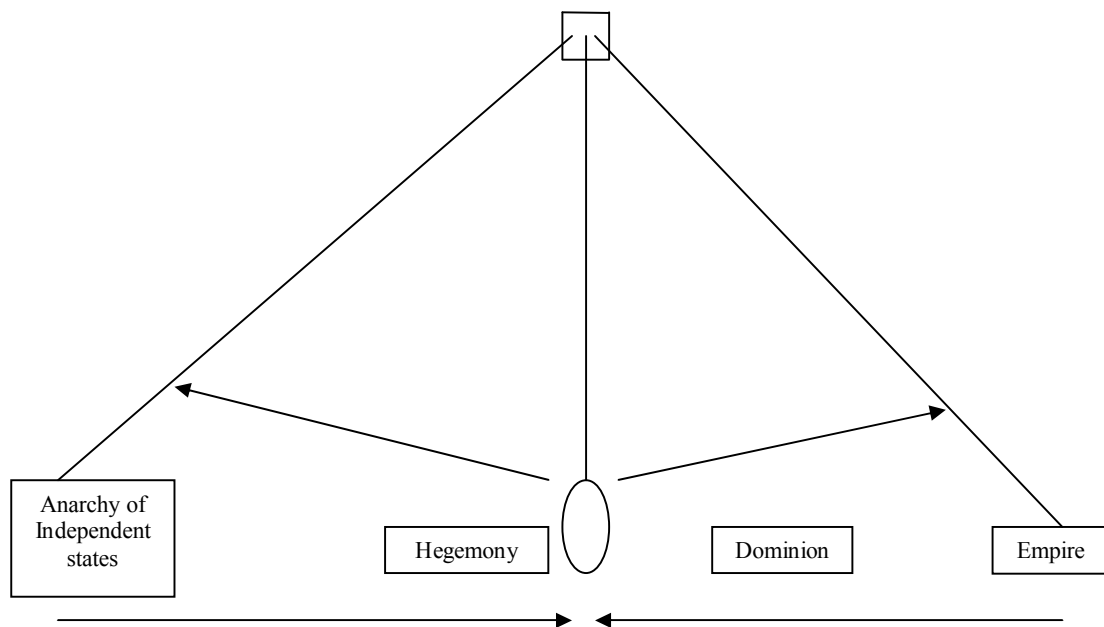


Figure 7 A theory of history: Watson's metaphorical pendulum<sup>28</sup>

<sup>26</sup> See Fred Halliday, 'The Middle East and Conceptions of "International Society"' in Barry Buzan and Ana Gonzalez-Palaez eds. *The Middle East through English School Theory: A Regional International Society* (2008)

<sup>27</sup> See Martin Wight, *Systems of States*, edited and introduced by Hedley Bull, (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1977) and Adam Watson, *The Evolution of International Society: A Comparative Historical Analysis*, (London: Routledge, 1992).

<sup>28</sup> Based on Watson, *Evolution of International Society*, pp. 14-16, 122-25.

course of world history. First he indicates that an international society defined by anarchy and constituted by independent states is not the sole subject matter of international relations, but simply represents one end of a spectrum. At the other end of the spectrum lies empire where independent communities are directly administered from an imperial centre. Between these two extremes lie a range of intermediate positions and as the pendulum moves from the anarchic end of the spectrum, communities increasingly come under the control of a dominant power. Under a hegemony, communities can no longer pursue independent foreign policies and, indeed, when the pendulum reaches the point of dominion, the dominant power begins to regulate the internal policies of the communities. The second key point that Watson makes is that the pendulum is only a metaphor and there is no notion that history can be characterised as a predetermined and regular movement from anarchy to empire by way of hegemony and dominion and then back again. The third and in many ways most important point made by Watson is that empire and anarchy represent extreme positions and for most of world history communities have operated between these two extremes. He postulates, moreover, that there are systemic pressures that push the pendulum away from the extremes and, as a consequence, there is a significant tendency for the pendulum to move to the lowest point in the pendulum's swing. If Watson is correct, then it is certainly the case that his assessment has not been taken on board by the vast majority of theorists in contemporary IR, although the orientation of IR has slowly been changing over the past thirty years.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> See Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Barry Buzan and Richard Little *International Systems in World History: Remaking the Study of International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); and Stuart J. Kaufman, Richard Little and William C. Wohlforth, 'Conclusion', in Stuart J. Kaufman, Richard Little and William C. Wohlforth, eds. *The Balance of Power in World History* (London: Palgrave 2007).

What also needs to be noted is that Watson's metaphor is effectively operating on the international system level of analysis.

The second facet of the ES approach to history focuses on modern history and provides an account of the development of the European states-system. In contrast to Watson's approach, it operates on all three levels of analysis articulated by the ES. This view of history is developed most clearly in the volume edited by Bull and Watson(1984). In essence, it is suggested that the history of the modern world can be depicted in terms of two waves. With the first wave, independent communities across the globe were linked together by the Europeans in the form of an international system. Then later, the system was overtaken by the expansion of the European international society, with the norms and institutions that were established initially in Europe being extended across the globe. This development was a source of considerable concern to Bull because of the importance that he attached to the idea of world society.<sup>30</sup> He was unclear whether a stable world order could be established in the absence of a world society that unequivocally extended across the globe. As will be made clear in the fifth move of the chapter, serious reservations have been expressed about this facet of the ES and it is in the process of being substantially revised by another generation of ES theorists. But, before looking at how the research agenda of the ES has been modified and extended, it is necessary to explore the methodological implications that flow from the conjunction of the multidimensional theoretical approach in conjunction with a multifaceted view of history as adopted by the ES.

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<sup>30</sup> See Bull, *The Anarchical Society*.

## Methodological pluralism and the ES

Theorists in the ES have traditionally not displayed very much interest in methodological questions, demonstrating ‘methodological quietism’ according to Spegele.<sup>31</sup>

Nevertheless, as intimated above, they have essentially adopted a pluralistic approach to theory building and this requires them to operate on the basis of pluralistic methodological assumptions, whether this is acknowledged or not. Their interest in a pluralistic approach to international relations, moreover, has developed on two separate but interrelated fronts. Not only has the ES promoted a theoretical framework that presupposes the need to proceed on three separate although interacting levels of analysis, but each of these levels also resonate with the distinctive approaches Wight identifies as realist, rationalist and revolutionist, with the realists then being associated by Bull with the international system, rationalists with the international society and revolutionists with world society.<sup>32</sup> Some contemporary political theorists, however, have been less than impressed with this attempt to establish a triptych of political theorists. Failing to recognise the link with the ES theoretical framework, Boucher argues, for example, that there is an inadequate attempt to explain either how the categories that define each tradition of thought are related to each other or how the theorists located within each category are identified. As a consequence, the traditions are considered ‘little more than classificatory categories into which thinkers are forced irrespective of the embarrassing elements which appear to be ill at ease in their putative homes’.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Roger D Spegele, ‘Traditional Political Realism and the Writing of History’ in Alex J. Bellamy *International Society and its Critics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 97.

<sup>32</sup> Martin Wight, ‘An Anatomy of International Thought’ *Review of International Studies* 13 (1987), pp 221-7; and Bull *The Anarchical Society*.

<sup>33</sup> David Boucher, *Political Theories of International Relations: From Thucydides to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1998), p.16.

Boucher, himself, endeavours to transcend this line of criticism by identifying three styles of thinking that highlight particular sets of criteria that are invoked to ‘guide, justify and recommend state action’<sup>34</sup> These styles of thinking are seen to have generated three traditions of thought that are linked in a dialectical relationship. A tradition of empirical realism focuses on the way that human desires inevitably give rise to conflicts of interest which need to be handled by rules of prudence and not moral imperatives. The second tradition allies justice with virtue and identifies the existence of ethical principles that are universally applicable. The final tradition, identified by Boucher as historical reason, is seen to provide a possible synthesis to the other two antithetical ways of thinking. This third mode of thinking recognises that morality is an historically emerging phenomenon and that what we observe today is a thick conception of particularistic morality that is embedded in the day to day practices of all societies operating alongside a very thin conception of universal morality that extends across a transnational global community of individuals.

Boucher associates this approach with an idea of methodological pluralism premised on the assumption that these are not independent traditions of thought.<sup>35</sup> Rather, they co-exist, and there is an inevitable tension amongst the competing ways of thinking about moral questions. As a consequence, the ideas linked to the three traditions of thought are seen to undergo considerable changes. Boucher contrasts his approach to the approach adopted by members of the ES whose traditions are made up of ideas ‘that recur with very little variation in different contexts, like coins that change hands, and whose

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<sup>34</sup> Boucher, *Political Theories of International Relations*, p. 23.

<sup>35</sup> See Boucher, *Political Theories of International Relations*, p 40; the approach drawing on David Boucher, *Texts in Context: Revisionist Methods for Studying the History of Ideas* (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1985).

value is little affected by inflation'.<sup>36</sup> Yet there are similarities between Boucher and the ES. Wight may be less explicit about this form of methodological pluralism, but without doubt he acknowledges that his three traditions co-exist in 'mutual tension and conflict' with each other. Moreover, he also refutes the idea that the traditions form 'railroad tracks running parallel to infinity'. Instead, he insists that although theorists tend to concentrate on one of the three political conditions at the expense of the others, there are inevitable 'cross-currents' that pull the divergent streams of ideas together.<sup>37</sup>

Boucher's idea of applying a dialectical approach to the task of classifying political theorists, moreover, was pre-empted by Ashley and then extended by Linklater.<sup>38</sup> Drawing on Ashley, Linklater pushes the idea of methodological pluralism much further than Boucher because, as he sees it, realism, rationalism and revolutionism not only 'disagree about the empirical nature of world politics – they possess radically different conceptions of the nature of international relations theory and contrasting notions of the right relationship between theory and practice'.<sup>39</sup> In line with this assessment, Linklater links realism to positivism because it analyses the 'recurrent and repetitive patterns of international relations', rationalism to hermeneutics 'because it analyses the language and culture of diplomatic practice and the conventions which states obey as members of an international society' and revolutionism to critical theory because it stresses that 'a series of interlocked crises may bring about the transformation of the modern international system'. He then places the three methodologies into a dialectical

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<sup>36</sup> Boucher *Political Theories of International Relations*, p. 17.

<sup>37</sup> Wight, 'An Anatomy of International Thought'.

<sup>38</sup> See R.K. Ashley, 'Political Realism and Human Interests' *International Studies Quarterly* 25 (1981) pp. 204-236 and Andrew Linklater, *Beyond Realism and Marxism: Critical Theory and International Relations* (Houndmills: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1990).

<sup>39</sup> Linklater *Beyond Realism and Marxism*, p.10.

relationship with each other, arguing that critical theory synthesises the antithesis that exists between positivism and hermeneutics.

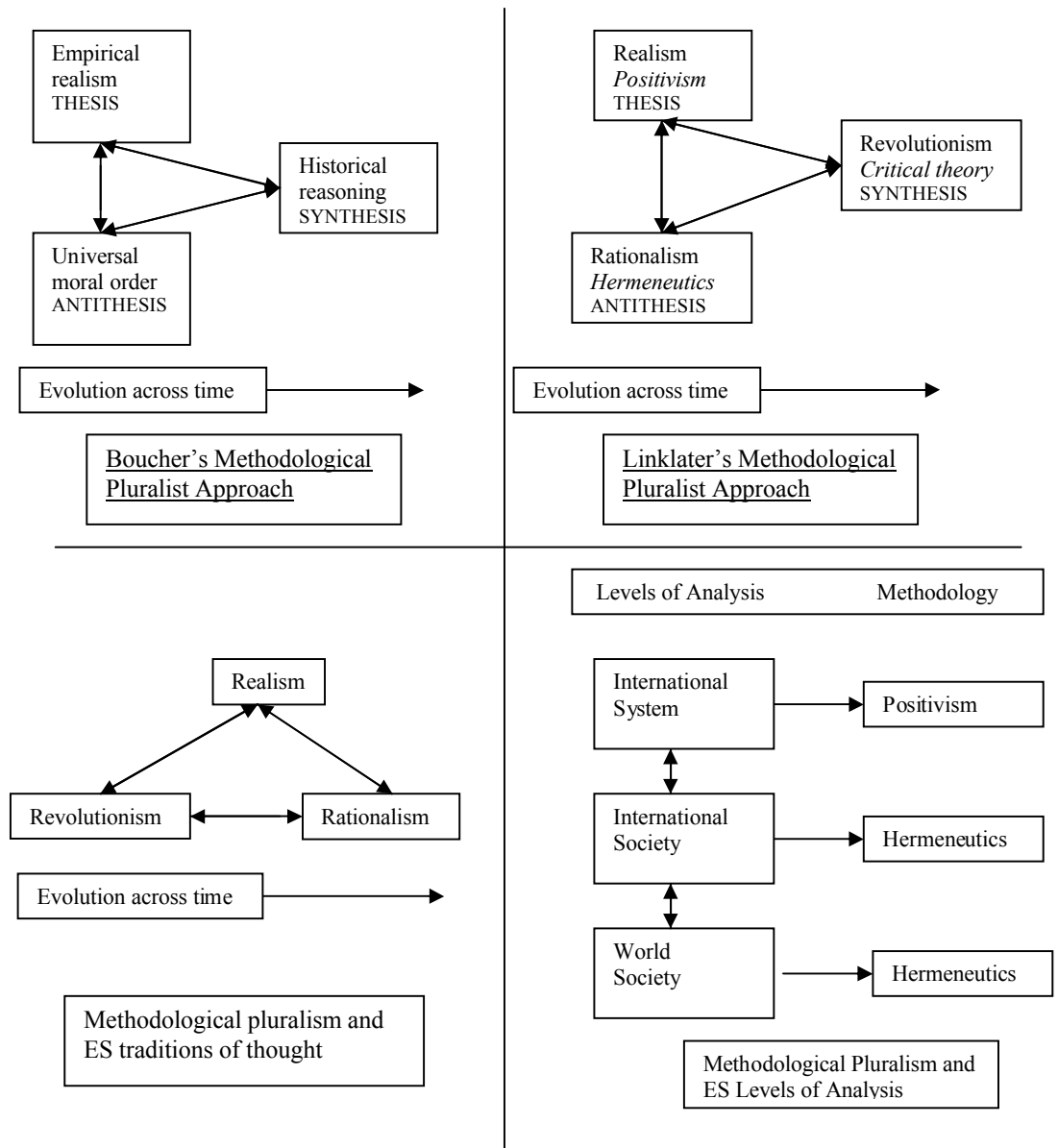


Figure 8 Divergent approaches relying on methodological pluralism

Although Linklater and Boucher provide intriguing ways of relating the very different traditions of international thought that developed across the history of the European states system, even Linklater's more complex resolution does not effectively capture the twin track orientation of the ES founders. On the one hand, the ES is interested in the contested and evolving ways that European thinkers have endeavoured to theorise international relations. At the same time, the ES is also interested in developing its own theoretical framework which presupposes that an anarchic international system, a rule-governed international society and a transnational world society co-exist in the outside world and are not simply competing normative assessments of world politics. Moreover, none of these elements are given ontological priority by the ES. It is assumed that they are operating within a single complex reality. The overarching methodological injunction which underlies this approach is that, as Bull puts it, the analyst must never 'reify' any of these elements.<sup>40</sup> Although attention may only be focused on one of these elements, it must never be forgotten that this element is lodged in the context of the other two. The point is reinforced by Watson, who argues that the distinctions are useful not because they have the effect of allowing the 'complex reality of international relations to be simplified into this category or that but because it allows that reality to be illuminated by considering it from a particular point of view'.<sup>41</sup> Watson's position is simply not compatible with Linklater's post-positive move which essentially conflates normative and empirical approaches to theory building whereas, by contrast, these approaches are effectively separated by the ES.

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<sup>40</sup> Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, p49.

<sup>41</sup> See Adam Watson 'Hedley Bull, States Systems and International Societies' *Review of International Societies* 13, (1987) pp.147-53.

But what this divergence reveals, however, is that there is a degree of tension both within the ES levels of analysis theoretical framework and also between the normative and empirical approaches to theory embedded within the ES. These tensions, moreover, are exacerbated by the reference to methodological pluralism. The tension can be addressed by the suggestion that methodological pluralism itself can be approached from more than one direction. This suggestion can be demonstrated, for example, by examining Wendt's work because he not only provides a discussion of methodological pluralism which is one of the most detailed and sophisticated in the literature but one that was also, initially, at odds with the approach adopted by the ES.<sup>42</sup> Even more significantly, he has recently presented a new approach that throws a very different light on methodological pluralism and, in doing so, potentially helps to clarify the tension in ES thinking about theory and methodology.

Wendt's starting point is that social scientists have no alternative but to make ontological and epistemological assumptions about the nature of social reality and how they themselves are related to that reality. Moreover, they must make these assumptions despite the fact that they involve deeply contested philosophical issues. Wendt initially made the ontological assumption that it is through ideas that states ultimately relate to one another and it is ideas that essentially determine who and what states are. The same, of course, must also be true for the way that individuals relate across state boundaries. But central to Wendt's position is that the ideas are shared ideas drawing on a common culture, thereby reflecting the importance of holist as well as idealist assumptions. In contrast to most theorists who occupy this space, however, Wendt resists the obvious conclusion that social scientists must, therefore, necessarily rely on a hermeneutic or

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<sup>42</sup> See Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, and Wendt, 'Social Theory as Cartesian science'

interpretivist epistemology, where social inquiry can be compared to reading a text as opposed to the positivist epistemology that is employed by natural scientists which rests on materialist ontological assumptions and where investigation involves the observation of physical objects. From Wendt's perspective, the importance attached to shared ideas will certainly mean that social scientists have to adopt very different methods to those used by natural scientists, but they do not require a distinctive epistemology. In other words, natural and social scientists have a common understanding of what they mean by knowledge. So what Wendt endeavours to show is that an idealist ontology can be harnessed to a positivist epistemology. This is what Wendt means by methodological pluralism and he goes on to argue that social scientists have become overly concerned about epistemological issues whereas he thinks that epistemology will take care of itself in 'the hurly-burly of scientific debate'.<sup>43</sup>

This is a distinctive interpretation of methodological pluralism. Whereas Boucher and Linklater associate the term with a dialectical linking of competing normative positions, Wendt associates it with a distinctive and unusual synthesis of an idealist ontology to a positivist epistemology. However, the ES generates yet another order of complexity for the idea of methodological pluralism. It presupposes a relationship between empirical and normative thinking. This is alongside a presumption that an empirical investigation of international relations requires us to operate on divergent levels of analysis and that we need to approach these various levels using different epistemological as well as ontological assumptions. The issue is further complicated by the fact that the ES also assumes that there are links between these different levels of

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<sup>43</sup> Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, p. 373

analysis, thereby raising the question of whether ontological as well as epistemological questions can also get sorted out in the ‘hurly-burly of scientific debate’.

Given the controversial nature of his position, Wendt has inevitably come in for criticism from a wide range of perspectives.<sup>44</sup> In responding to his critics, however, Wendt (2006) has argued that if his initial premises are accepted, then there is very little need for him to give much ground to his critics because they all broadly subscribe to a classical model of science which, in turn, rests on the Cartesian dualist position that draws a categorical distinction between mind and matter. The distinction rests, Wendt argues on four assumptions.<sup>45</sup> First, there is a subject-object distinction with the analyst (subject) investigating an external reality(object). Second, the scientific method is needed to acquire knowledge of the outside world. Third, to make progress in science it is essential to maintain a distinction between facts and values. Fourth, it is assumed that matter is purely physical and must be distinguished from the mind or consciousness which is not a material phenomenon and operates on the basis of laws that are different from the laws that govern the physical world.

Although these four assumptions, according to Wendt, are broadly accepted by both positivists and interpretivists, the dualist ontology on which they rest is almost certainly incorrect and generates an erroneous view of consciousness (although Wendt also argues that there is no secure ground at the moment on which to try to build a ‘more correct’ understanding of consciousness). Moreover, natural scientists no longer accept the materialist view of matter on which classical physics, as well as Cartesian dualism, depends. This is demonstrated in quantum physics, despite the fact that quantum

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<sup>44</sup> See, for example, Guzzini and Leander, *Constructivism and International Relations* .

<sup>45</sup> Wendt, ‘*Social Theory as Cartesian science*’ p.188.

physicists are unable to agree on what their theory is telling us about the nature of reality. But in essence, sub-atomic phenomena can be described in two irreducible and non-equivalent ways – as either waves or particles and, as a consequence it is not possible, in principle, to know both the position and momentum of a particle at the same time. It follows that the idea of unitary and integrated knowledge is inherently impossible, because we necessarily require conflicting narratives to describe sub-atomic phenomena. Moreover, in providing these narratives, it also has to be accepted that the subject-object distinction breaks down. Quantum physicists, therefore, have opened up a Pandora's Box to reveal, among other things, a post-modern world of alternative realities where the conception of causality breaks down.

Wendt insists that social scientists cannot ignore what is happening in the physical sciences because the social world operates within the physical world and he argues that although the material world cannot determine what happens in the social world, it certainly constrains what can and cannot be done.<sup>46</sup> Moreover, as a 'metaphysical constraint' the material world unequivocally 'plays a fundamental role in our work'. In the past, Wendt argues, like most social scientists, he has taken the assumptions underpinning classical physics for granted. However, having now examined the no-doubt heroic assumption of brain theorists that a quantum explanation for human consciousness is possible, he believes that there is now a need to explore the implications of this assumption for the social sciences because it has such very significant consequences for social theory. It is not possible here to follow the details of Wendt's argument, which in any event only provide a sketch of the book-length argument that he is developing, but the conclusion of his argument is important. In essence, it has led him to shift his position

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<sup>46</sup> Wendt, '*Social Theory as Cartesian science*' p. 218.

on methodological pluralism and to reject the attempt to achieve a synthesis of positivism and interpretivism. Instead, he argues that quantum naturalism reaffirms the position that explanations sought by positivists and the understanding pursued by interpretivists are both necessary and complementary ways of viewing the social world.

This is a conclusion that might not come as much of a surprise to the ES. The founders were, in essence, intuitive or perhaps even unintentional methodological pluralists. The complexity and diversity of the ontological and epistemological assumptions that underpin the ES approach to theory and history have come about, to some extent, as a consequence of not paying close attention to ontological and epistemological questions. The same line of argument can also be applied to many working historians and, certainly, the impact of historians has been very important for the ES orientation.<sup>47</sup> Historians almost invariably acknowledge that there are always at least two stories to tell, one from the inside and the other from the outside. They know that they operate from a potentially privileged position because they can endeavour to recover the viewpoint of the historical actors, but they also have the luxury of knowing what happened after the event. So, self-fulfilling prophecies and unanticipated consequences, for example, can become crucial elements of any historical narrative. Indeed, historians necessarily have to make sense of events in the light of subsequent events. What is distinctive about the ES is not simply the focus on structural constraints, but also the recognition that the impact of structural constraints have to be examined in the light of both the separation and the interaction between facts and values, the relationship between the story told from the outside and the inside, the fact that actors have a conception of

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<sup>47</sup> See Spegele, 'Traditional Political Realism'.

both the past and the future, and the link between actors and analysts. These complexities map quite closely onto Wendt's quantum perspective on methodological pluralism.

Few if any ES theorists, however, are likely to engage with Wendt's quantum move. They are much more likely to be sympathetic with the view that epistemological and ontological problems will be resolved in the hurly-burly of doing research. It is necessary conclude, therefore, by exploring the methods needed to advance the ES research agenda.

## **Methods and the history/theory link**

The ES's theoretical framework embraces world history as well as being global in geographical scope (see Figure 9). From the ES perspective, for much of world history, international relations must be discussed in terms of states systems that are regional in extent. The framework presupposes that these regionally based states systems then need to be investigated on three levels of analysis. However, for the ES, the emergence of the European states system is particularly important because it has generated an enduring global states system. Perhaps inevitably, therefore, this system provides the main focus of attention for the ES. Although the majority of research carried out under the ES umbrella concentrates on the modern period, it is also argued that the world history framework needs to be amended and extended. Buzan and Little argue, for example, that the timeframe must also embrace the systems that preceded the emergence of states because there were extensive 'international' networks in existence before the formation of states.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, many of these networks persisted into modern times and, as a

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<sup>48</sup> See Part 2 of Buzan and Little *International Systems in World History*.

consequence, it is not possible to comprehend large chunks of world history without taking these networks into account. At the other end of the temporal spectrum, Buzan and

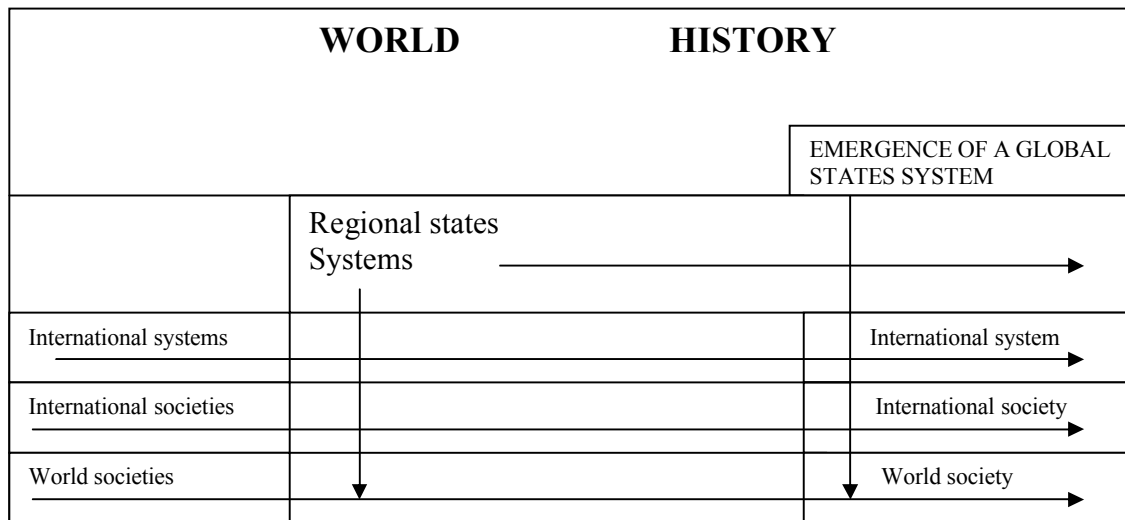


Figure 9 The historical and geographical scope of the ES framework

Gonzalez-Palaez argue that despite the establishment of a global states system it is important to recognise that regional states systems persist and maintain their identities.<sup>49</sup>

At the same time, the ES levels of analysis have also come under close scrutiny, particularly by Buzan, who argues, as discussed earlier, that the international system level should be absorbed into the international society level.<sup>50</sup> This position, however, is still contested.<sup>51</sup> On the other hand, Buzan stands on much more consensual ground when he argues that the theoretical framework needs to take account of international economics. It is also the case that once economics are taken into account a major boundary problem

<sup>49</sup> Buzan and Gonzalez-Palaez *The Middle East through English School Theory*

<sup>50</sup> Buzan, *From International to World Society*.

<sup>51</sup> See Tim Dunne, 'System, State and Society: How Does It All Hang Together?', *Millennium* 34:1, (2005), pp.157-170 and Richard Little, *The Balance of Power in International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

arises since, from a world historical perspective, it is evident that the boundary of an international economic system often extends beyond the boundary of the related international political system.<sup>52</sup>

There are no signs that these attempts to modify the ES theoretical framework are going to halt in the near future or be finally resolved. A further and significant example is Keene's challenge the framework used by Bull and Watson to trace the history of international relations over the last two centuries.<sup>53</sup> As they depict this period, the Europeans initially entered into systemic relations with outside world and then the

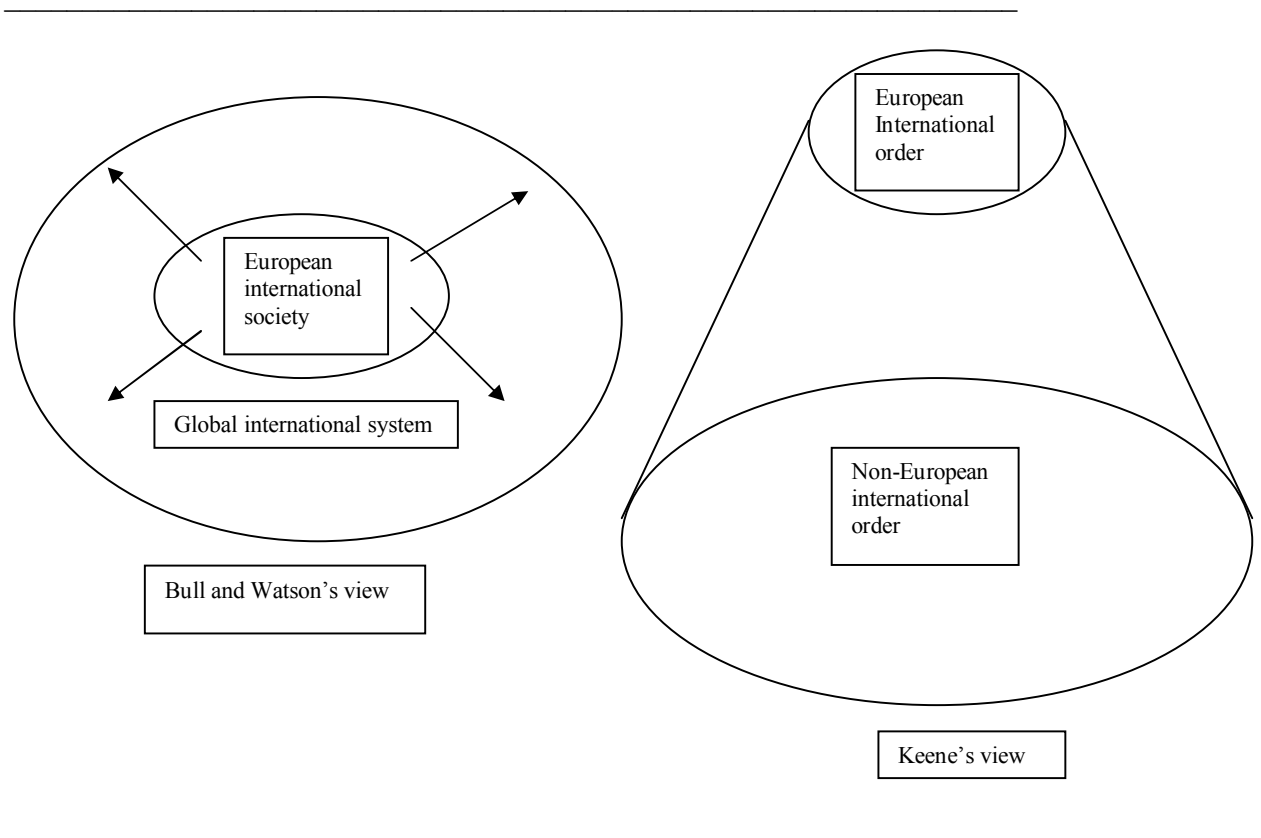


Figure 10 Two contrasting ES views of the 19<sup>th</sup> century international arena

<sup>52</sup> See Buzan and Little, *International Systems in World History*.

<sup>53</sup> See Edward Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society: Grotius, Colonialism and Order in World Politics*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), who challenges Hedley Bull and Adam Watson, eds *The Expansion of International Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984).

European international society extended beyond Europe and moved across the global international system (See Figure 10). As critics have argued this assessment effectively ignores the on-going process of colonialism.<sup>54</sup> As Keene sees it, the Europeans used the idea of a standard of civilization to justify the application of a very different set of rules outside of Europe to the one that operated within Europe. Inside Europe the rules promoted co-existence and a toleration of diversity. By contrast, outside of Europe there were a set of rules that permitted intervention in order to promote ‘civilization’. Far from a rule governed international society extending into an anomic international system, the Europeans established a hierarchical international order, with different rules operating in the two domains (See Figure 10).

There is no doubt that the clarification and modification of the ES research framework is an important and ongoing activity. However, progress also requires detailed empirical research and given the methodological pluralism associated with the research framework, inevitably this will involve the use of an imaginative range of research methods.

In the first instance, the founding fathers of the ES hoped to make progress by engaging in a systematic comparison of international societies from the past (See Figure

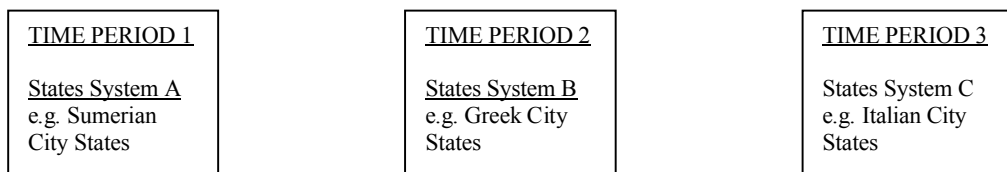


Figure 11 ES Comparative Historical Case Studies

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<sup>54</sup> See W. Callahan, ‘Nationalizing International Theory: Race, Class and the English School’, *Global Society* 18:4 (2004), pp.305-323.

11). Wight acknowledged the importance of the comparative method and Watson examined ten international societies from the ancient world.<sup>55</sup> Ironically, the most important general insight to emerge from the examination, however, relates not to the nature of rules and institutions but to the distribution of power and the suggestion that hegemony rather than polarity represents the norm in international politics – an assessment that perhaps resonates increasingly in the aftermath of the cold war. But, in any event, while the importance of systematic comparative research is certainly acknowledged much more needs to be done on this front.<sup>56</sup>

Watson recognised that he was only making a first step in establishing a comparative study of international societies. There will always be limits, however, to how far this exercise can be taken because of the paucity of information available about many aspects of the international societies that developed in the ancient world. Nevertheless, new information is always coming on stream and, in truth, the ES is only beginning to mine what is already available.<sup>57</sup> But obviously much richer sources of information exist when it comes to the analysis of the modern international arena. Here, however, the ES has hardly scratched the surface. The work of theorists from Bull to Buzan, moreover, has concentrated primarily on establishing a broad framework. But, as already noted, essential elements of the frameworks are in conflict and have also been challenged by other theorists. These ongoing tensions within the ES, however, can only

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<sup>55</sup> Wight, *System of States* and Watson *Evolution of International Society*.

<sup>56</sup> For an insightful example of what comparative historical analysis can achieve, see Christian Reus-Smit, *The Moral Purpose of the State: Culture, Social Identity and Institutional Rationality in International Relations*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

<sup>57</sup> For an illustration of what can be achieved, although in most instances not working from an ES perspective, see the case studies in Kaufman, Little and Wohlförth, *The Balance of Power in World History*.

be resolved **or transcended by a constant** interaction between **theorists** and empirical researchers.

There are inevitably problems of method associated with the task of engaging in empirical research. Gong, for example, considers that it is axiomatically true that an international system precedes the establishment of an international society and he focuses on how the idea of a standard of civilisation evolved and played into the expansion of the European international society.<sup>58</sup> But on what basis can we identify the expanding membership of the European international society? Gong argues that there are two key sources: first, the treaties that the European states signed with non-European countries and, second, the international legal texts written by leading international lawyers of the time that distinguished between civilised and uncivilised states.<sup>59</sup>

Keene, however, challenges the premises that Gong operates from, and is much more favourably disposed to the earlier work of Alexandrowicz who argued that prior to the nineteenth century many states around the world were acknowledged as fully fledged states by the Europeans, only to have this status removed once the standard of civilization had been elaborated.<sup>60</sup> What happened, according to Alexandrowicz, was that there was a shift from natural law to positivist international law and in the process the scope of international law shrank. In fact, it is clear that both Gong and Alexandrowicz are operating on a hermeneutic basis and they show very effectively that the inside story changed across time. It is then necessary to tell the story from the outside as well as from the inside. There is no doubt in my mind that Keene's outside story is more convincing

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<sup>58</sup> Gerrit, W. Gong, *The Standard of Civilization in International Society*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984).

<sup>59</sup> Gong, *Standard of Civilization*, p.25.

<sup>60</sup> See Keene, *Beyond Anarchical Society* pp. 26-8) and Charles Alexandrowicz, *An Introduction to the History of the Law of Nations in the East Indies* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967).

than the one that Bull and Watson provide. Moreover, it also opens the way to a very much darker account of what the expansion of the European international society involved, not only in terms of European colonization, but also in terms of the way that new members like Japan were able to justify their own expansion.<sup>61</sup>

Although there is no doubt that treaties and legal texts are important routes to the inside story, for the ES to progress, it is also essential to enter the diplomatic archives, particularly when it comes to assessing whether decision makers are being influenced by systemic changes in the international distribution of power or by the intersubjective norms that help to define and maintain the international society. Entering the archives, however, is a time-consuming activity and it becomes important to focus on critical case studies which provide important test cases. For example, the American Civil War has been identified as the last occasion when the Europeans had the potential opportunity to affect the distribution of power on the North American continent. How far were the European actors aware that the balance of power was moving decisively against them and why did they fail to go to the aid of the Confederates in an attempt to divide the continent? The issue is critical, in particular, for offensive realists whose theory predicts that a hegemonic power like Britain would intervene to prevent the consolidation of the United States as a regional hegemon. Mearsheimer argues that a crucial reason that the British did not go down this route was because they believed that the Confederates could not defeat the North.<sup>62</sup> What the archives reveal, however, is that while the key British decision makers believed during the initial stages of the war that the South would be

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<sup>61</sup> See Shogo Suzuki, 'Japan's Socialisation into Janus-Faced European International Society', *European Journal of International Relations* 11:1, (2005) pp.137-164.

<sup>62</sup> John J. Mearsheimer *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 2001), p.489

successful they were also very conscious of and responsive to the prevailing norms concerning neutrality and intervention.. Indeed, Britain paid substantial compensation to the United States after the war for an alleged breach of the neutrality laws.<sup>63</sup>

Nevertheless, contrary to the conventional image, the ES is, in fact, just as interested in the conditions when systemic rather than societal forces begin to influence the behaviour of states. In both cases, however, access to the archives is crucial to get a handle on the inside story.

A focus on the archives not only opens a window on the relative impact of the international system as opposed to the international society, it can also bring the world society into play. In the case of the American Civil War, for example, the British had been contemplating an offer to mediate between the two sides. It becomes very clear from documentary sources, however, that as soon as Lincoln made the Emancipation Proclamation, Palmerston, the British Prime Minister insisted that mediation was now out of the question because it would be impossible to devise a resolution that the South would agree to and which the British public would find acceptable.<sup>64</sup> As a consequence, while the British government was favourably disposed to the possibility of the United States dividing, they were not only constrained from becoming involved because of established legal norms but also because of pressure from the world society. Although Buzan is no doubt correct to argue that the ES founding fathers failed to theorise world society adequately, it is also the case that in addition to conceptual clarification it is necessary to identify methods that will allow us to study world society. Clark has started

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<sup>63</sup> See Richard Little, 'British Neutrality versus Offshore Balancing in the American Civil War: The English School Strikes Back' *Security Studies* 16:1 (2007), pp. 68-95 and Peter Thompson, 'The Case of the Missing Hegemon: British Nonintervention in the American Civil War' *Security Studies* 16:1 (2007), pp. 96-132.

<sup>64</sup> Little, 'British Neutrality versus Offshore Balancing' p.89.

to make moves in this direction and is convinced that to understand why some key international norms have come into play it is necessary to study more closely the relationship between world society and international society and he takes the abolition of the slave trade as one of his case studies because it reveals ‘a network of transnational actors seeking consciously to shape the policy of international society’.<sup>65</sup> From this perspective, to assess the effectiveness of the network, however, it is essential to identify a method that can reveal their impact on the key actors in international society. Unquestionably working in the archives represents a necessary if not a sufficient way forward.

## Conclusion

The aim of this chapter has been to indicate first that the ES has a much more expansive research framework than is often recognised and it follows that the framework gives rise to a very ambitious research agenda. The framework is expansive because it operates on a number of very different fronts. On the temporal front, it embraces a world historical timeframe, while on the geographical front it explores the movement from regional systems through to the establishment of a global system. Across these time and space dimensions, the ES also operates on three distinct ontological levels of analysis. Although the ES does effectively privilege the international society level of analysis, this is in part because it was felt by the founding fathers that the sociological dimension of international relations had been underplayed and partly because the international society was identified as an intermediate level that came under pressure from both the

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<sup>65</sup> Ian Clark, *International Legitimacy and World Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p.47.

international system and world society. In any event, the need to operate on all three levels is now increasingly acknowledged.

As the attempt is made to open up the three levels both theoretically and empirically, however, it becomes increasingly apparent that the methodological orientation of the ES, like its research framework, is also much more complex than is generally recognised. It is argued in this chapter that it is not inappropriate to identify members of the ES as intuitive methodological pluralists. Although methodological pluralism has been cast in a number of different ways, it is argued here that it presupposes the need for theorists and empirical researchers to operate on the basis of a range of divergent ontological and epistemological assumptions. It is also suggested, albeit tentatively that some of the more surprising implications of the ES approach to methodology have started to be teased out in Alexander Wendt's most recent work.

Finally, it is argued that for the ES to make further progress, it is essential to carry out empirical research in conjunction with attempting to develop a theoretical understanding of international action. These two activities need to go hand in hand, with theory helping to guide where empirical research needs to take place and empirical research revealing where there are problems for and lacunae in the theory. This task is further complicated, however, by the methodological pluralism associated with the theoretical framework which presupposes the need for an inside and an outside story on all three levels of analysis. Attention is focused in this chapter on how the diplomatic archives, in particular, provide a way to open up the international society from the inside and at the same time reveal a way of linking the international society to the international system and the world society.

There is no doubt that this chapter raises more questions than it answers. But although it is clearly much less problematic simply to see the ES as providing an idealist take on the international society, such an assessment denudes the school of the depth and complexity that the founding fathers ascribed to it. By embracing a world historical perspective, operating on three levels of analysis, and acknowledging the indispensability of a normative dimension, the ES establishes a theoretical framework with the potential to provide a holistic general theory of international relations.

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