

International Society and Global Governance: Neo-liberalism and the Problem of Global Poverty

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WE THE PEOPLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS DETERMINED ... to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom. - *UN charter Preamble* 1945

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, Art. 25 1948

The right to development is an inalienable human right by virtue of which every human person and all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized. - *The Declaration on the Right to Development* 1986

The World Conference on Human Rights reaffirms the right to development, as established in the Declaration on the Right to Development, as a universal and inalienable right and an integral part of fundamental human rights. *The World Conference on Human Rights* June 1993

We will spare no effort to free our fellow men, women, and children from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty to which more than a billion of them are currently subjected. – *United Nations Millennium Declaration*, September 2000

Since the end of the Second World War, states in international society have managed to repeatedly agree that global poverty is not a legitimate practice. Numerous articulations of human rights principles and other standards and goals have promoted the idea that despite differences in the culture, politics and economics of various states, that human dignity is not compatible with starvation and severe deprivation. Obviously despite this normative consensus global poverty persists. While there have been some improvements in the overall condition of the world's poor, "One in five people in the world—more than 1 billion people—still survive on less than \$1 a day, a level of poverty so abject that it threatens survival" and another "1.5 billion people live on \$1–\$2 a day" (UNDP 2005: 24). Such conditions lead to approximately 30,000-50,000 poverty related deaths each day. It is clearly the case that this international normative consensus is being unfulfilled in practical terms.

One of the apparent reasons that these global anti-poverty norms in international society have not been acted upon is that they clash with other norms and political priorities. While one may claim that wealthy states simply do not care about global poverty, this begs the question as to why so many states have repeatedly engaged in international efforts to delegitimize global poverty and put their actions up to scrutiny of this avowed normative standard. Rather, these global anti-poverty norms are confronted by other systems of norms and global governance. In particular, international efforts to promote a neo-liberal economic order have tended to marginalise human rights principles which would affect the operation of unfettered global markets. In this sense international society is interwoven not just with sovereignty and human rights, but economic principles as well.

This problem poses an important challenge to English School (ES) thinking which emphasises the dynamics of international society in world politics. Global forms of cooperation and governance are very much shaped and limited by the ongoing significance of sovereignty and the ways states “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). One of the fundamental insights of the ES is that there are multiple layers of norms and institutions in world politics, even if the ES has traditionally been focused on some institutions and norms, such as sovereignty and human rights, and largely excluded others like economic and regional institutions. Consequently, this paper will examine both traditional ES thinking as exemplified by Hedley Bull, as well as the recent work of Barry Buzan which has critiqued some of the shortcomings of traditional ES thinking and broadened the analysis of international society to include economic institutions and other transnational features of world politics important to the contemporary global context.

This paper will consider the utility of ES thinking against the background of the clash between neo-liberal and socio-economic human rights norms. This should enable an assessment of whether ES thinking can contribute to a deeper understanding of the political dynamics and ethical problems of contemporary global governance. This paper is going to first explore the tensions between socio-economic human rights norms and neo-liberalism in more detail. The second section will examine the nature of ES thinking about international society by paying attention to the conventional conception of Bull and the recent significantly ‘augmented’ line of analysis of Buzan. The third section will examine some of the insights and some of the limitations of Buzan’s approach within the context of the difficult case of the tensions between human rights and neo-liberalism in contemporary global governance. Attention will also be paid to the value of some of the insights drawn from Bull’s method of investigating international society.

Global governance and global poverty

In recent decades there has been a growing formation of an international consensus against extreme poverty – evident in a range of agreements and measures that proscribe hunger and extreme deprivation. While the origins of this concern are evident in the *UN Charter* and the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, it was the signing of the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* in 1966, *The Declaration on the Right to Development* in 1986 and *United Nations Millennium Declaration* in 2000 and the resulting Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which articulated a clear consensus against global poverty. A central motivation for this consensus is the rising volume of human rights principles and the activism of human rights movements - indications of an emerging ‘cosmopolitan culture’ which sees the infringement of human rights due to poverty as unacceptable. Socio-economic human rights were articulated and fully developed in the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* and more recently, the *Convention of the Rights of the Child*, which has been ratified by 192 states, insists that states “recognize the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and to facilities for the treatment of illness” and “combat disease and malnutrition” (Article 24, 1 and 2 C). The other previously mentioned human rights instruments relating to the alleviation of poverty also have a level of support in terms of signing and ratification.

These measures demonstrate considerable evidence that human rights surrounding the right to subsist and international concern about development have achieved wide-ranging recognition in world politics and are regarded as being an indivisible part of the broader human rights agenda. This indivisibility was especially highlighted at the 1993 *World Conference on Human Rights* in Vienna. The UN also recognizes human rights in the practice of UN agencies around the world

as well as part of the UN's agenda of promoting human rights and development to entrench international peace and security. Articulations of socio-economic human rights can be seen as indications of an emerging normative consensus which sees human dignity as being incompatible with starvation and deprivation. The essential point about this international consensus against extreme poverty and the right to subsistence is "that the right itself has obtained a broad based cross-cultural consensus across the society of states... controversy remains around the different economic, social and political questions involved in its implementation, but the right itself is not contested" (Gonzalez-Pelaez and Buzan 2003: 328).

However, while we can observe this international consensus against extreme poverty, at the same time there are large numbers of people suffering and dying because of poverty related pathologies. Indeed, Thomas Pogge (2005b: 718) is quick to indicate that "socioeconomic human rights, such as that 'to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family, including food, clothing, housing, and medical care' (UDHR, Art. 25) are currently, and by far, the most frequently violated human rights". In recent decades there are indications that levels of extreme poverty around the world, understood primarily as those living below 1 or 2 US dollars a day, have stagnated and inequality has worsened considerably (UNDP 1997: 16-7, 2005: Chp 1). The startling fact is "the extraordinary level of avoidable deprivation that prevails in the midst of an increasingly prosperous world", indeed it is the case that more than "40% of the world's population constitute, in effect, a global underclass, faced daily with the reality or the threat of extreme poverty" (UNDP 2005: 24). Indeed it is the scale of this problem which has added further urgency to international efforts to address this calamity and press for international action for the consensus against poverty to given practical expression. This gives us the sober realisation that at the same time that human rights principles have articulated a clear consensus against extreme poverty, this "consensus" continues to be violated on a massive scale.

It is important to differentiate between the reasons global poverty persists from the reasons the violation of the consensus against global poverty is seemingly tolerated or accepted – even though they obviously overlap. The reasons for the persistence of extreme poverty are manifold. There are a range of local reasons for extreme poverty in particular places - such as climate, the existence of civil conflict or discord and the effectiveness of local governance (Sachs 2005b), as well as global factors such as the nature of the global trading and financial systems, as well as the efficacy of international development programs. The reasons that there is the ongoing violation of the consensus against global poverty and basic human rights are also complicated. Fundamentally, the development of international law which seeks to delegitimize global poverty attempts to alter the local and global factors which play a role in constituting extreme poverty. However, the implementation of human rights against extreme poverty interacts with other components of global governance and other ideological forces in world politics in way that apparently frustrates practical measures to address extreme poverty. As Pogge (2005b) asserts: the human rights of the world's poor are "recognized and violated by international law".

One of the principle systems of norms and institutions which clash with the "consensus" against global poverty are the neo-liberal norms which inform much of the international law and institutions which underpin the contemporary global economy. The significance of neo-liberal norms rests not only on the sway of the number and power of states which have been influenced by these norms, but also the manner in which norms are enacted in practice. The impact of the legal and policy elements associated with global capitalism are asserted as one of the key frustrations of subsistence human rights because human rights agreements are largely soft-law rhetorical agreements whereas global capitalism is "embodied in much harder legal and organizational forms" (Gonzalez-Pelaez and Buzan 2003: 332). Furthermore, the importance of

neo-liberal norms to the question of why the “consensus” against global poverty is seemingly tolerated rests largely on the philosophical character of neo-liberal principles as well as the way these principles are enacted in practice.

Neo-liberalism is a philosophy and ideology based on the principle that human welfare is best promoted by economic growth, which in turn is best enabled by reducing the interference of governments in the private sector. As such, neo-liberals support government policies which enable trade and finance to have unrestricted movement across national borders. These policies of liberalisation and deregulation attempt to minimise the economic discretion of government, and leave decisions about allocation, production and distribution in the economy to the global market thereby excluding or limiting political measures that regulate, redistribute or intervene in capitalist markets (Scholte 2002: 9). These policies have been influential in by many western -- especially Anglo-Saxon countries -- and the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and have replaced Keynesianism and embedded liberalism which sought to balance economic growth and social stability by allowing an active domestic role for the state (Devetak and Higgott 1999: 488). Neo-liberals claim that an unregulated market is the best way to promote individual freedom and increase global economic growth, which will ultimately benefit - and "trickle-down" - to everyone. In order to follow this path of progress and development neo-liberalism contends that markets should be determined by prices and non-economic criteria or regulation should effect the operation of markets. Indeed, “an economy based on competitive individualism has unhappy implications for social justice, all the more since neoliberalism assigns priority to efficiency over equity when the two conflict” (Scholte 2002: 16).

There are two overlapping aspects to neo-liberal ideas. At one level neo-liberalism was a *policy solution* to the real inadequacies and problems of Keynesianism in relation to the stagflation evident in the western world during the 1970s. The goal was to increase economic growth by lifting government regulations so that it would increase employment without raising inflation. At another level neo-liberalism is a *transnational ideology* of capitalists in various western countries who were dissatisfied by Keynesianism, the welfare state and government intervention in the economy. The goal was to roll back the state and the promote economic growth and profitability by increasing global opportunities. In this sense neo-liberalism is an ideology that promotes the interests of transnational investors and corporations – so the goal according to these groups should be to promote a more unified global economic system that allows profitable capitalism to flourish. Scholars such as Stephen Gill have emphasised the role of business councils and think tanks since the 1970s as important elements in a developing a consensus between different national elites which opposed Keynesianism and the welfare state (Gill 1986: 215, See also Sklair 1997). These scholars cite the Trilateral Commission and the World Economic Forum, both think tanks incorporating wealthy and powerful individuals from Europe, North America and Japan, as being important forums for disseminating neo-liberal ideas. The WEF and other business groups were enthusiastic from the mid 1970s to advance free market alternatives to Keynesianism – these groups can be seen to have taken opportunity of the crises in the 1970s to promote global integration. Consequently, neo-liberal policies have been heavily related to contemporary notions of “economic globalisation” through the way this ideology promotes global economic linkages through free trade and a more open transnational investment regime.

Importantly, these overlapping aspects of neo-liberalism signify that the application of these ideas in practice is mediated by the political interests of states and capitalists – it “is not the pure, doctrinaire version of libertarian theorists” (Richardson 2001: 145). As such, the global economy is not completely or only influenced by neo-liberal principles as there are many cases where states have departed from neo-liberal policies and protected particular domestic constituencies from the liberalisation or deregulation (Scott 1998: 13). Such protection, as in the case of the

agricultural trade protectionism of the USA and EU, looks entirely hypocritical given the promotion of trade liberalisation by these countries more generally. Some NGOs claim that this double standard also contributes to global poverty in the developing world by closing these countries out of western markets (Oxfam 2002). There are also other states which have rejected – or not conformed to – the neo-liberal orthodoxy and who consequently exist on the margins of global capitalism. In sum it is important not to overstate the universality or actual intensity of neo-liberal ideas.

Nevertheless, neo-liberal policies have been institutionalised through a range of international regimes and organizations as well as in domestic political and legal systems. Neo-liberal principles are important to WTO efforts to advance reciprocal trade liberalisation of its 150 member states. Another high profile articulation of neo-liberal principles was their underpinning of the “Washington Consensus” orthodoxy of the World Bank and IMF in the 1980s and 1990s which asserted that minimum government and free markets are necessary across the developing world in order to promote development (Richardson 2001: 86). Practical manifestations of this orthodoxy were evident in the ways the World Bank and IMF ensured that poor and heavily indebted countries undertook ‘structural adjustment’ in their economies as a form of ‘conditionality’ required for receiving funds. Structural adjustment entailed measures aimed at the reduction of both inflation and government expenditure in addition to promoting neo-liberal policies that transformed the role of the government in the economy towards policies that included trade liberalization, privatization and deregulation (Richardson 2001: 118). The highly interventionist influence of these institutions and the discipline of conditionality have served to entrench neo-liberal principles. Amendments to the neo-liberal orthodoxy of these bodies during the late 1990s, dubbed the ‘Post Washington Consensus’, have kept the core aspects of neo-liberalism intact despite being more attentive to strengthening the rule of law and public institutions in target societies. Consequently it is better to refer to these policy shifts as “neo-liberalism plus” (Scholte 2002: 17, See also Jayasuriya 2001).

Many observers of neo-liberalism emphasise the interventionist nature of international efforts to promote neo-liberal ideas and policies (Gill 1997, 1998, Gowan 2001). Indeed, Stephen Gill’s concept of “new constitutionalism” emphasises that since the 1980s that neo-liberalism has not just been a policy set by governments but it has been embedded in domestic and international law. This legal dimension immerses states within a new context which attempts to filter out influences to government economic policy except market ones. According to Gill (1998: 5) this legal shift separates “economic policies from broad political accountability in order to make governments more responsive to the discipline of market forces and correspondingly less responsive to popular-democratic forces and processes”. Gill (1997: 11) argues that NAFTA, GATT/WTO, the European Union’s Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), as well as “constitutional amendments requiring balanced budgets and autonomous central banks (with low inflation targets)” are all examples of the legal embedding of neo-liberal principles which removes important areas of economic policy from elected governments who may seek to reverse the neo-liberal agenda in whole or part. Furthermore, competitive market forces also act to reinforce these legal measures and transnational market friendly policies more generally (See Cerny 1996, 1997).

Observing the ways neo-liberal ideas and policies are embedded in law not only demonstrates the degree to which neo-liberalism is entrenched in both local and global forums in a way that prioritises profit seeking behaviour of private market actors, but also the degree to which states are constrained in relation to their economic policies. Neo-liberal norms articulate a context where the global economy should be shaped overwhelmingly by market signals and actors, with an explicit rejection of the “interference” of all distorting political and social interests. While it

would be cavalier to say that the neo-liberal perspective does not care about global poverty, it is the case that this perspective is not in favour of human rights principles that reshape global capitalism away from unfettered markets. It is important clarify that this is not to suggest that neo-liberal ideas and policies, nor Western efforts to shape the global economy more generally, cause poverty directly. Rather, the claim here is that neo-liberal principles have been more robustly developed and more rigorously enforced than socio-economic human rights or specific human development goals.

As a result of the above points, it is the case that we exist in an extremely contradictory global context. The wide range of international agreements and measures arrayed against extreme poverty, that we can claim to be a international 'consensus', rest alongside neo-liberal principles which are more fulsomely supported by states, more elaborately institutionalised and philosophically has little apparent room for socio-economic rights. Proponents of neo-liberalism claim that in the long term markets alone will remedy global poverty through the expansion of economic growth. In the meantime people are dying from poverty related pathologies which contravene declared human rights principles. How can we make sense of this contradictory context and the role of anti poverty norms therein?

International society theory and global governance

The English school offers an interesting position from which to explore the tensions between neo-liberalism and the normative consensus against global poverty. At a theoretical level, when it comes to international law and norms, the ES steers a course between Marxism and constructivism. Marxism typically argues that international law is little more than a system of domination: "The attempt to replace war and inequality with law is not merely utopian but is precisely self-defeating. A world structured around international law cannot but be one of imperialist violence" (Miéville 2006: 319). On the other hand constructivists see international law as an inter-subjective normative system which shapes the interests and behaviour of states over time (Reus-Smit, 2004: 21-2). By contrast, while the ES leans towards constructivism, there is a sense that international law and norms play a primary role in establishing international order and stability, not only justice or the interests of dominant states. In fact the ES has traditionally focused on issues relating to the relationship between human rights and sovereignty. Indeed, ES scholars have focused upon the ways sovereignty is being challenged by the strengthening of the moral pull that supports stopping immense humanitarian suffering (Wheeler 2000, Bellamy 2003). Nevertheless, this focus has not broadened to human suffering stemming from extreme poverty. Conventional ES thought initiated by Hedley Bull is beset by a lack of engagement with economic matters and its conception of transnational politics is also not clearly developed. As such, the recent work of Barry Buzan is an important addendum to the ES and especially relevant to the issue of contemporary global poverty.

Before turning to the insights of Buzan's approach it is necessary to first examine the key aspects of conventional ES thought. There are four key aspects to the 'conventional' ES approach authored by Bull. First, the practice of an international society where states recognise the sovereignty of other states and the working of common institutions is one aspect of world politics (Bellamy 2005a: 8-9), as international society is paralleled the conflictual logic international system and transnational logics of world society. These dynamics have been referred to by Martin Wight (1991) as the 'three traditions' of IR theory: Realism, Rationalism and Revolutionism. Bull (1995: 49) notes "the element of international society is real, but the elements of a state of war and of transnational loyalties and division are real also". The second key aspect of Bull's conception of international society was his focus on the common interests of states and the ways these interests lead to common rules and institutions. The common rules

include “constitutive rules” which stipulate who is included in this society and reflect that only states have sovereignty and are included in an international society; the “rules of coexistence” which stipulate how states can act to accommodate each other – through the creation of international law and diplomatic relations – for instance; and “rules of cooperation” that facilitate international institutions to pursue common goals for mutual benefit (Bull 1995 64-8). The ES has traditionally focused overwhelmingly on constitutive rules and the rules of coexistence and the “fundamental institutions” of international law and diplomacy, management of great powers, the use of war and the conscious balancing of power – basic institutional practices which sovereign states employ to facilitate coexistence and cooperation under conditions of international anarchy – although these have varied significantly over human history (Bull 1995: 71, see also Reus-Smit 1998).

A third preoccupation of the ES has been the focus on international aspects of order and justice. Bull defines ‘international order’ as a “pattern of activity that sustains the elementary or primary goals of the society of states or ‘international society’” (Bull 1995: 8). These goals are: the preservation of the society of states itself which ensures states remain the “principal actors” in world politics, maintaining the independence of individual states in this society, maintaining peace as the normal condition between states as well as ensuring that promises are generally kept between states and that possession of territory is mutually recognized by states (Bull 1995: 16-9). Ultimately, order and stability in international society is fragile and the question of international order sometimes directly conflicts with international justice (the rights of states) or world justice (the rights or welfare of human beings) (Bull 1995: 78-82). ES scholars have different responses to the tensions between order and justice and whether states can move beyond a common acceptance of sovereignty and coexistence to more cooperative purposes. These tensions are articulated in the positions of pluralism and solidarism. The pluralist-solidarist divide examines whether states can only agree upon sovereignty or whether broader moral and political purposes can exist between sovereign states (Bellamy 2005a: 9-10). Pluralists such as Hedley Bull for much of his career and Robert Jackson claim that states can only agree upon a minimal set of principles – essentially a resolute conception of sovereignty and other fundamental rules of coexistence, so international order is elevated in practical and moral terms. Solidarists such as Andrew Linklater and Nicholas Wheeler claim that states actually do agree upon a wider constellation of principles than sovereignty and as a consequence international society is thickly institutionalised over a range of different principles like human rights – the argument here is that justice is important to promote international order (Bellamy 2005a: 11).

One last key aspect of the conventional account of the ES is the method of ES scholarship which is often referred to as the “classical approach” which according to Bull (1966: 20) “derives from philosophy, history, and law, and...is characterised above all by explicit reliance upon the exercise of judgment”. It must be emphasised that this development of a sense of judgement combines an analytical and ethical consideration as the classical approach is “concerned not just with what is, but with what might be, with how to act and how to act well” (Shapcott 2004: 273). The question of what values actually underpin society and what values could underpin society are important in this perspective. This approach is “deeply sceptical” of the utility of scientific methodology in the international domain evident in a range of rationalist International Relations approaches (Bellamy 2005a: 5), but is also sceptical of empirical focus of constructivism and the “subterranean normativity” that goes with much of the constructivist literature (Reus Smit 2002: 488). This method of conventional ES thinking considers the role of norms, rules and institutions in international politics, but also forces the attention “back to the first-order political questions of power, values and legitimacy” (Hurrell 2001: 481). This approach seeks to fully consider both the political and ethical aspects of international politics.

Barry Buzan's *From international to world society? English School theory and the social structure of globalisation* advocates a structural account of international society which challenges the conceptual ambiguity and untidiness of traditional English School thinking. Buzan (2004: 202) claims that international society is a very specific form of social structure in which states create a political-legal order which gives specific forms of recognition to states, transnational actors and individuals rather than being a formation of the common interests between states. Specifically Buzan argues the distinction between international system, international society and world society is unhelpful and should not be based on philosophical grounds as it has tended to be articulated by Bull as Hobbesian/Grotian/Kantian logics or by Wight as realist/rationalist/revolutionist logics. Instead of these demarcations, Buzan (2004: 133) argues that these forms of society should be defined by the type of actor that inhabits them: "interstate society" (instead of the term of international society) comprising states, "transnational society" comprised of transnational actors and "interhuman societies" comprised of humans unmediated by other actors or structures. Buzan also removes the structural distinction between international system and society because all state-to-state interaction – even strategic/military interaction – is a weak form of society in his view.

Buzan (2004: 141) also significantly reconfigures the pluralist–solidarist debate as being an analytical continuum between 'thin' and 'thick' forms of shared norms and institutions rather than on the promotion of a particular *type* of values. As such, he differentiates solidarism from being equated with world society, cosmopolitanism or human rights as it has tended to be argued in conventional accounts of the ES. Consequently, he asserts that different international societies exhibit different degrees of thickness or thinness across history, within particular areas or regions typified by particularly dense norms and institutions, and within particular sectors which may have dense forms of institutionalisation. In doing this, Buzan not only creates the capacity for a much more precise examination of prevailing patterns of shared norms and institutions, but also opens up debates about regionalism and about the economic sector – especially the dense incidence of shared norms and institutions evident in the post 1945 liberal international economic order (Buzan 2004: 141 and 2005). It must be emphasised that while conventional accounts of the pluralist–solidarist debate saw this debate in both normative and analytical dimensions, that Buzan's account hives off the normative aspects in its focus on institutional density. Indeed, turning Solidarism into an analytical concept which marks institutional and normative density (thickness or thinness) of interstate societies is problematic in that it goes against and subverts traditional usage in nearly all previous ES writing. However, in emphasising that solidarism entails shared values and collective action rather than cosmopolitan values, Buzan opens up the possibility that there are various forms of solidarism – some of which are not necessarily virtuous or focused on human welfare.

While this later observation is especially salient when it comes to the tensions between neo-liberal and socio-economic human rights, Buzan's recasting of the pluralist–solidarist divide has the further implication of expanding what international society can be understood as. In particular Buzan seeks to expand the range of institutions in international society beyond the conventional pluralist package of sovereignty, territory and international law to include contemporary ones which are solidarist in Buzan's understanding of solidarism as entailing a thick density of shared norms and institutions. As such, contemporary international society is more extensively solidarist than normally acknowledged (Buzan 2005, Bellamy 2005b). He claims that human rights, the market and environmentalism are actual primary institutions in contemporary international society (Buzan 2004: 185-7). Buzan (2004: 234-5) emphasises that "the market has become a global institution in the sense that most states conform to market rules, and powerful secondary institutions exist to support this (IMF, WTO, World Bank)". Indeed Buzan (2004: 230) argues that the contemporary international society is "modestly

cooperative” and is heavily influenced by liberalism. Liberalism robustly constitutes both world society and interhuman societies by giving considerable space to transnational actors and individuals (through the market and human rights). Transnational actors in turn are important drivers of globalisation which are at minimum re-interpreting the primary institutions of world society and at maximum seek to overturn them in favour of some form of liberal world society (Buzan 2004: 261).

One last key aspect of Buzan’s contribution to ES thinking is to consider how international societies are sustained. In doing so, he goes beyond Bull’s emphasises on the role of common institutions in sustaining international society or the impact of specific ideologies, and considers the differing social forces which sustain international society. Borrowing from Alexander Wendt, Buzan (2004: 108 and 131-132) argues that different types of society have differing depths of internalisation in that they are held in place by coercion, calculation or belief which he refers to as “binding forces” which motivate agents. While Buzan believes that all societies are based on a combination of binding forces with leading powers using coercion to implement certain types of interstate society, and the rational calculation of states as also important, he contends that international societies based on belief generally have more stability. This allows Buzan to focus on quite specific patterns of shared norms and institutions which will have different patterns of binding forces. In relation to the significance of the market for instance, Buzan (2004: 234-5) claims that “while many states support this out of belief, it could be argued that many others adhere to it because of calculation or soft forms of coercion”. Overall, Buzan’s re-articulation of ES thinking is a dramatic one, which offers a range of concepts which enable contemporary international society to be examined in new ways.

Clashing norms, global governance and global poverty

This paper will now assess the conventional and augmented approaches of Bull and that of Buzan respectively against the background of the clash between neo-liberal and socio-economic human rights norms. This will allow us to see if these ES approaches offer additional insight into the political and ethical dynamics of contemporary global governance. There are aspects where Buzan opens up significant scope for discussion but there are also places where the more conventional approach of Bull still has much credence. It is important to emphasise from the outset that Buzan’s re-articulation of ES thinking considers a much wider range of contemporary dynamics of global politics than traditional ES thinking by examining the forms of capitalism, globalisation and regionalism, and clearly demarcates transnational politics from interstate politics. Relating Buzan’s analysis to the global governance mechanisms which simultaneously delegitimize poverty and promote neo-liberalism, the clear demarcations of interstate, transnational and interhuman domains reinforces that the socio-economic human rights mechanisms and indeed neo-liberal mechanisms exist at the level of interstate society. Buzan allows us to broaden the picture of global governance to include, for instance, the role of NGOs and other advocacy groups in the transnational sphere and the interhuman dynamics of individuals seeing the lives of poor individuals mediated only through transnational media networks. This latter dynamic has been important to creating a higher level of awareness of tragedy of contemporary global poverty in recent times – although obviously NGOs have also often mediated these images. It is also important to focus upon the dynamics of transnational society in pressuring states to create human rights legal instruments in relation to poverty and other humanitarian issues. However, Buzan (2004: 81-2) is quick to point out that transnational society itself is torn between the social liberalism evident in global poverty activists and the economic liberalism of neo-liberal think tanks and business interests.

Buzan's argument for a broader conception of solidarism also opens the door to identifying clashing solidarisms in the sense that there norms and institutions of a high density for both human rights and liberal capitalism (Buzan 2005: 250). This avoids conventional ES pluralist – solidarist debate which quickly descends into a 'dialogue of the deaf' in the respect that the conventional account of solidarism focus on human rights and humanitarian concerns alone and pluralism has very little to say. At best one could say that pluralism represents a form of economic nationalism or mercantilism, at worst it is incapable of presenting an account of how a liberal international economic order affects an international society typified by coexistence (Buzan 2005: 119, see also Bellamy 2005b: 290). In doing so, Buzan (2004: 247) removes the pluralist bias embedded in the conventional depictions of international society and highlights the ways transnational and interhuman societies have argued for or created new solidarist institutions such as human rights, the market and environmentalism. This not only indicates that contemporary international society is created by actors other than states but that international order is also provided by other actors and that

this way of thinking supposes (rightly) history has moved on, and that the sources of international order have evolved substantially since Bull was observing the international system...In this perspective, international society is represented not just by states, but by 'Davros culture' comprising both the dominant structure of ordering ideas, and all of the providers of order within that framework, whether states, IGOs or INGOs (Buzan 2004: 247).

At one level this view bears a resemblance to a Gramscian vision of an 'historic bloc' where hegemonic ideas are central to the stability of a prevailing social order, but at another level one could argue that this view overstates the power of IOs and NGOs – in the respect that the capacity of these agents to affect change or affect policy is dependent upon state compliance. However, what cannot be argued with is the crux of Buzan's contention: that these agents have a much greater capacity to affect international order than in the past. Placing international order within the ambit of markets – which by Buzan's (2004: 264) reckoning are "always fractious and turbulent – is problematic, particularly for the global poor who do not directly benefit from the operation of these markets.

Buzan's claim that the overlapping "binding forces" of coercion, calculation and belief as all being required to sustain the contemporary liberal international society is also important. He claims that while liberalism attempts to temper force, it "is not immune from the lure of coercion" (Buzan 2004: 255). However, if anything, Buzan understates the coercive aspects of liberalism, especially in relation to the dissemination of neo-liberal ideas and policies. One does not have to be influenced by Marxism to see the coercion seemingly inherent in the liberal system especially in the sense that compulsion takes on a variety of softer forms. Andrew Hurrell and Ngaire Woods (1995: 453) argue that capitalist practices occur through a process of "coercive socialisation" which involves "a range of external pressures (both state-based and market-based) and a variety of transmission mechanisms between the external and the domestic" (Hurrell and Woods 1995: 457). The role of the US remains paramount to the extent that "so long as it has no geopolitical rival, it can exercise its power by its preferred means, economic and cultural" (Richardson 2001: 169). At its most extreme and international society resembles "a global protection racket" conducted by western governments and the elites around the world for their benefit, rather than the common interests of all societies or individuals (Ken Booth cited in Wheeler 1996: 129). In relation to this the philosopher Thomas Pogge (2005a: 7) claims that "international resource, borrowing, treaty, and arms privileges" are extended by the international system to local rulers which provides them with the money and arms they need to retain power. This is especially the case with the way these privileges allow governments to "freely to dispose of the country's natural resources (international resource privilege) and freely to borrow in the country's name (international borrowing privilege)" (Pogge 2005b: 737). This observation

highlights a point that Pogge sees local institutions are very much being constructed and bestowed by a global institutional order created and sustained by the affluent countries. We can see from these observations the central claim that coercion is systematically permitted in the contemporary liberal international society. From a neo-liberal mindset these forms of action are not substantially coercive. Consequently one could argue that belief can determine the way the other binding forces are interpreted, in that differing forms of belief influence the ways that calculation and coercion are interpreted by states. Furthermore, such a contrast of interpretation could bear out the way that deaths of extreme poverty are seen in a different light to deaths by physical violence in a liberal capitalist world.

There is also a sense in which Buzan overstates the coherence of solidarist institutions such as human rights, the market and environmentalism. Considering these as institutions could be seen to overstate the coherence of these patterns of human thought/ideology. These are forms of thought which are very much contested in international politics. To say that there is an institution of *the* market is problematic given the existence of different markets for different commodities with differing levels of legitimacy and different consequences for the maintenance of international order. Likewise with environmentalism, while there are certainly some norms with reasonable intensity of intersubjective recognition – such as sustainable development and the precautionary principle, to say that they are an institution is to understate the normative debates about the significance of these ideas. In addition to talk about human rights as an institution masks the differences within human rights. As this paper has already pointed to, socio-economic human rights are held to with a lower level of concern and vigour than civil-political ones. So while there is certainly a human rights regime, to talk about human rights principles as an institution or indeed, as an international bill of rights, is to grossly overstate the coherence and structuring influence of these norms. Furthermore, as the issue of socio-economic human rights, especially in relation to neo-liberal norms show just how uneven contemporary global governance is. Nevertheless, the moral impact of these purported institutions is certainly a very real and important influence within contemporary international politics but this influence is both uneven and gradual – largely because they are dependent significantly on the political actions of NGOs and other transnational actors in relation to the sensitivity of these issues to particular states.

There are also aspects of the issue of global poverty where the conventional account of ES thinking and the classical method championed by Bull are still crucial to understanding how certain norms are prioritised over others. The ambit of the classical approach is wide in the sense it considers the range of values which actually underpin the norms and institutions of international society as well as the purpose of these underlying values especially in relation to questions of order and justice. Richard Shapcott (2004: 283) claims that such evaluations cannot be only considered philosophically in the abstract because “ultimately, the meaning and utility of both justice and order must be decided in their applications and concrete circumstances”. This weighing up of politics and ethics is at the heart of conventional ES thinking. There is a sense in which the macro structuralist approach of Buzan shifts away from the conventional account which sees institutions and norms as being purposive. Chris Brown (2001: 438) claims that “ES theory characteristically uses the same terminology of rules and norms to describe both the ways in which states *actually* behave (a matter for empirical observation) and the way in which they *ought* to behave (the product of a moral discourse)”. The focus of Buzan’s approach to studying norms and institutions shifts decisively in the direction of how states actually behave. This is problematic in two main respects in relation to the tensions between neo-liberal and socio-economic human rights norms.

Firstly, while Buzan's approach clearly highlights the clash of solidarisms it struggles to perceive the deeper philosophical tensions inherent in these clashes of ideas. As mentioned in the first section there are important contradictions between an economic order significantly influenced by rights and entitlements and one defined by the absence of nearly all government interference in the operation of markets and correlated efforts to promote and extend neo-liberal capitalism. Furthermore, the balancing of "economic objectives and market liberalisation with liberal political and social goals" and human rights is a fundamental tension within liberal thought (Hurrell and Woods 1995: 454, See also Devetak and Higgott 1999). Should social justice considerations and principles be included in economic policy making (eg should we impose minimum rules on labour, or on transnational corporations, or minimum levels of development assistance)? Or should we accept the outcome of markets regardless of the immediate social impact, given the considerable economic gains to be made by excluding political or moral intrusions in the market? Furthermore, there are global extensions of these moral and political choices, where efforts to fulfil socio-economic human rights or reshape the global economy affects the living standards of those giving resources, or those losing jobs overseas (Brown 2007: 11). In relation to the apparent prioritisation of neo-liberal capitalism over and above internationally recognised human rights, it must be remembered that it is the leaders of these states – especially powerful and wealthy states – which have made very explicit choices between these institutions. While calculation, coercion and belief are important to general structures that states work within, these categories do not determine the moral choices within these structures, let alone resolve the moral responsibility for the policies that stem from these choices. I would contend that the classical approach has a significant theoretical capability to explain the political and ethical tensions of these philosophical questions.

Secondly, the conventional approach of Bull also emphasised the importance of justice to international order not merely on the level or durability of order (Shapcott 2004: 274). In his 1984 *Hagey Lectures*, Bull emphasised the importance of addressing developing world demands for justice so that international order can be realised in a world where decolonised states had achieved full membership in international society. His claim was that for the acceptance of international order to be legitimate, more attention needed to be paid by Western governments to claims by developing world countries for action in relation to addressing poverty and under-development because of the "unprecedented prosperity of the Western industrialised countries" and developing world awareness of this prosperity in relation to their poverty (Bull 1984: 15). While Bull discussed the importance of addressing Third World demands for justice in relation to sustaining international order, inequality (within and between states) has worsened considerably since then (See UNDP 1997: 16-7 and 2005 Chp 1). In addition to these concerns of maintaining legitimacy in the face of developing world concern the transnational domain has risen in prominence. The moral and practical political problems of international inequality in relation to international order have also risen in prominence with the impacts and public concern about economic globalisation (Devetak and Higgott 1999: 488). In particular it is the case that it not only disadvantaged states which are highlighting the issue of global poverty as the activities of human rights activists are important in promoting human rights values in a number of specific domains, including subsistence rights (Keck and Sikkink 1998). Furthermore the high profile protests mounted by NGOs and individuals around the world in the streets of Seattle, Genoa and Cancun (among other places) under the umbrella of the 'anti capitalist movement' have put particular attention on the issue of poverty in an ongoing effort to contest the neo-liberal orthodoxy (See O'Brien 2000, Khagram 2002, Esty 2002). Not only are these political struggles against the legitimacy of the neo-liberal economic order hard to ignore but they also represent challenges against the viability of a society of states being able to withstand such fundamental

disagreements about justice. Interestingly, the question of stability and legitimacy of the global economy has also been approached by liberal economists seeking to defend the viability of economic globalisation. As James Wolfenson, the one time President of the World Bank, maintains “if we do not have greater equity and social justice, there will be no political stability and without political stability no amount of money put together in financial packages will give us financial stability” (Cited in Devetak and Higgott 1999: 483). Furthermore, in addition to the concerns of NGOs and IOs, it is now the case that since the 9/11 terrorist attacks that international order is perceived by the geo-political concerns of leading powers as being threatened by the connections between terrorism, failed states and poverty (See Krasner 2005). We can see that the appropriateness of a prevailing economic order is being challenged by interstate, transnational and even interhuman (personal) dynamics, to use Buzan’s typology. The impact of poverty and social justice on international stability has become sharper since Bull identified it over twenty years ago.

Bull also identifies some of the practical problems which underpin global poverty and its impact on international order. Specifically he indicates that promoting economic justice is beset by range of problems, most notably the problem of their being “no distributor” in international society which can ensure rights are upheld and resources allocated appropriately (Bull 1984: 15). Indeed, it is important to see that this practical problem looms large in relation to the outlay of resources required for socio-economic rights to be fulfilled – whether by redistribution of resources or a regulation of the global economy which shifts resources away from the wealthy to the poor. This obviously leaves power to fulfil these rights in the hands of powerful and wealthy states (see Pogge 2004, 2005b and Sachs 2005a). He also offers some insight to an issue which has haunted this paper: why has there been a proliferation of legal instruments which seek to address global poverty despite the failure of preceding international meetings and measures to gain obvious traction? Bull (1984: 18) claims that

it is common to view the conflict between [the] Third World and the West as one between the values of justice and of order in international relations... This is too stark a way of presenting the contrast: the Third World states, devoted they are to promoting change, also have a stake in international order; and Western states, attached as they are to the status quo, nevertheless regard it as entailing certain principles of justice.

I take this to mean that there are strong pragmatic incentives for all parties to sustain international order, even if it does not adequately satisfy the basic needs and basic rights of those suffering extreme deprivation or offer equal opportunity to developing states. Likewise international society reflects not just our institutional practices but our intentions and morality as well. This sense of justice is a crucial element of contemporary international society. The rise of neo-liberalism is a historically significant structural shift which cuts across but does not extinguish this sense of morality.

Conclusion

The tentative position of this paper has been to argue that Buzan’s approach offers much to those examining global governance in generic terms but that in ‘hard cases’ – such as the tensions between human rights and neo-liberalism, the older tradition of Bull’s articulation of the ES still possesses an importance resonance. There is much to commend in Buzan’s approach. This approach clearly sees the ways contemporary international society and global governance is infused with multiple – often contradictory – norms and institutions. Nevertheless, the approach articulated by Bull is crucial to teasing out some of normative and ethical dilemmas evident in contemporary global governance and the choices which are made by world leaders. While there may be some in the ES who would not accept the “structural” approach of Buzan in favour of

the “normative” approach of Bull, I think it is crucial to consider these two approaches together. Alone either of these two approaches offers less than endeavouring to utilise them together.

From the point of view of the global poor, this paper offers little comfort or consolation. The uneven nature of global governance means that the efforts created to ameliorate global poverty are going to continue to defer to efforts which promote unregulated capitalism. While socioeconomic human rights may, over the long-term shift the moral sensibilities of world’s leaders, at the present, to talk about the ‘tensions’ between differing sets of norms are probably interpreted by the world’s poor as little more than institutionalised insincerity. From the perspective of a focus on the role of neo-liberalism in global governance, it is not obvious that international order is compatible with modes of governance that privilege neo-liberalism over human rights. Ultimately, neo-liberalism and the market rely upon an international society which is typified by a very high level of international order such as that economic competition can occur within a rule governed context where military interstate competition is minimised (at least among great powers). It may be the case that persistent global poverty and the vicissitudes of global capitalism demonstrates the limits of neo-liberalism. In this sense socio-economic human rights and other means to address the plight of the global poor may be crucial to the future of international order and global capitalism.

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