

REFLECTION, EVALUATION, INTEGRATION

The English School, International Relations, and Progress¹

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This essay evaluates the English School—a prominent approach to the study of international relations—as a “research enterprise” (James 2002). Our exploration begins with an introduction of a “continuum of aggregation” that conveys a given research enterprise, such as the English School, at different conceptual levels. The English School’s axioms along with its negative and positive heuristics are identified and evaluated based on the classics and more recent works from Wight, Bull, and others. Conclusions and prospects for further development of the English School complete the review.

After a long period of neglect, the social (or societal) dimension of the international system is being brought back into fashion within International Relations by the upsurge of interest in constructivism. For adherents of the English school, this dimension was never out of fashion.

(Buzan 2004:1)

The English School and the Concept of a Research Enterprise

As Barry Buzan suggests, the English School’s approach to theorizing is attracting greater attention in the last decade because of the rise of constructivism in the study

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of IR.² The English School, however, is still not very well known within the North American tradition of IR. This essay aims to provide a partial remedy to this gap in knowledge about the fundamentals and contributions of the English School and is directed toward three audiences: (1) North American scholars interested in the English School to whom we provide the fundamentals of the theory within a relatively more familiar framework, (2) those who work within the tradition itself to whom we offer an alternative way of evaluating the School, and (3) the reader interested in IR theory and philosophy of science to whom we propose the application of a robust framework (specifically designed to evaluate IR theories) to an increasingly popular school of thought, that is, the English School.

More specifically, we will assess the English School as a “research enterprise” (James 2002).³ The theoretical promise of the English School as a possible grand theory, articulated by Buzan (2004), is at least as important as the *quantity* of scholarly work that is related to the School.⁴ It is well poised for such a task with its three concepts (states-system, international society, and world society) and three traditions (Machiavellian/Hobbesian realism, Grotian rationalism, and Kantian revolutionism), which we will discuss in detail below. The interplay between the traditions and domains provides ample opportunities to theorize about state and nonstate actors within a single theoretical framework. Particularly, as Buzan (2004:3) has suggested, the English School can deal with both the analytical and normative aspects of globalization.

It keeps the old, while bringing in the new, and is thus well suited to looking at the transition from Westphalian to post-Westphalian international politics, whether this be at the level of globalization, or in regional developments such as the EU. English school theory can handle the idea of a shift from balance of power and war to market and multilateralism as the dominant institutions of international society, and it provides an ideal framework for examining questions of intervention, whether on human rights or other grounds.

Given the growing literature and theoretical promise associated with the English School, we are convinced that it is an important theoretical approach to IR that needs to be examined further. We propose to use the research enterprise, a frame of reference borrowed from the philosophy of social science, to evaluate the School.

Perhaps the best way to introduce the concept of a research enterprise is to show how it represents a synthesis of major ideas from the philosophy of science in the twentieth century (Kuhn 1962; Popper 1969; Lakatos 1971; Laudan 1977). Within a given worldview or ontology, a research enterprise consists of (a) a set of assumptions with parametric status, known as the hard core; (b) rules that prohibit certain kinds of theorizing, labeled as the negative heuristic; and (c) a series of theories, called the positive heuristic, for which the solved and unsolved empirical problems (along with anomalies)—focusing on the description, explanation, and

²Scholars such as Buzan (2004), Tim Dunne (1998), Richard Little (2000), Nicholas Wheeler (2000), and Christian Reus-Smit (2002) have pointed out this connection between the English School and constructivism, born out of their mutual concern for the social dimensions of the international system. Recently, however, there have been deeper explorations of the links and commonalities as well as differences between the School and constructivism in order to engage in a more fruitful dialogue beyond the recognition of similar concerns (see, for example, Reus-Smit 2002).

³A valuable summary and evaluation of this framework as applied to international relations is provided by Ewan Harrison (2004), who compares the research enterprise to the preexisting and standard concepts used within international relations to assess scholarly cumulation. For evaluation and application of alternative frameworks, see Colin Elman and Miriam Fendius Elman (2003) and Fred Chernoff (2004).

⁴A growing literature on the English School, as conveyed in the extensive bibliography on Buzan’s (2003) webpage (<http://www.leeds.ac.uk/polis/englishschool/documents.htm>) and in a special forum in the *Review of International Studies* published in 2003, provides substantial evidence for the increasing interest in and importance of the School within the discipline of international relations.

prediction of actions and events—continue to accumulate (James 2002:67). Each of these major components will be explained in turn with appropriate linkages to the classic expositions noted a moment ago. (The presentation that follows is based primarily on James 2002.)

Any research enterprise proceeds within a worldview or overall sense of what is going on around us. A worldview is not an intellectual apparatus of some kind that admits to empirical testing; instead, it is summed up in a *gestalt* or a particular word or phrase such as “Marxism.” All research takes place within some type of context that is belief-driven; this acknowledges the wisdom of Thomas Kuhn (1962) who identified the idea of a “paradigm” as something holistic and community-based forming the foundation for research. Derived from the worldview is an ontology or sense of being—that is, how to observe the world—that among adherents to a research enterprise is not questioned directly. Thus, for purposes of evaluation, the most relevant aspects of the research enterprise are items (a) through (c) listed above, although it is recognized that the quest for knowledge always takes place, however it is labeled, in the context of some worldview and ontology.

The hard core of a research enterprise includes a relatively small number of assumptions that cannot be violated without constituting a qualitative shift outside its boundaries. These axioms are not brought into question unless one or more is found to be at odds repeatedly with the propositions derived from them. The language here is that of Imre Lakatos (1971), but there also is a clear affiliation with Kuhn (1962) in terms of what the latter describes, at a sociological level, as fealty among researchers to a basic set of assumptions or to a “paradigm.”

In addition to what is believed, a research enterprise also must be clear about what it does *not* include. This point recognizes the importance of the concept of “falsification” as put forward by Karl Popper (1969) and Lakatos (1971). The negative heuristic, borrowing here the terminology from Lakatos, describes rules for work to proceed within the research enterprise. The rules within the negative heuristic may, but do not have to, pertain to methods of inquiry.

Finally, the positive heuristic consists of what the research enterprise has achieved in terms of describing, explaining, and predicting the empirical world. Whereas Lakatos (1971) put forward the idea of expanding empirical content as the criterion for choosing one paradigm over another, Patrick James (2002) has argued at length in favor of solved empirical problems (Laudan 1977) as the more relevant consideration. The reason for the latter argument is the ongoing inability to specify how much empirical content is encompassed by any given theory as opposed to another. Although solved empirical problems are not easy to quantify either, such an approach toward measurement becomes much more tractable in practice. Examples later on will clarify what is meant by addressing and solving empirical problems.

Taken together, a research enterprise reflects a basic belief about the world and how it operates, understood in terms of a worldview and ontology. Paradigms within the research enterprise compete, each offering a series of theories (for example, T_0 , T_1 , T_2 , . . .) that, if successful, include later entrants that surpass those arrived at earlier in terms of solved empirical problems. Such a process, in essence, is what is meant by the identification of progress in the study of the social world.

We are aware of the fact that the founders of the English School probably would be skeptical about any purportedly “scientific” approach in general and our re-assessment of their School in particular.⁵ However, four reasons convince us that the analysis that follows will dispel doubts. First, our framework, which is rigorous yet flexible in application, enables us to evaluate any school of thought within IR.

⁵James (2002) actually labels the framework as the “scientific research enterprise,” but that terminology is eschewed self-consciously here out of respect for the values and methods that characterize the English School. The marginally different language used here has no impact on the analysis that follows.

Second, the research enterprise framework is well grounded in widely accepted premises of modern philosophy of social science. Third, the general applicability of our framework allows the researcher to describe and evaluate the School from either within or outside its boundaries. Put differently, we base our arguments on the original assumptions as they appear in classic works of the English School itself. Fourth, we follow Martin Hollis and Steve Smith (1990:1–7) in the belief that the “outside” and “inside” stories to be told about IR—corresponding, respectively, to explanation and understanding—are challenging to combine but well worth the effort. Put differently, there is value in taking ideas normally associated with the natural sciences, such as scholarly cumulation and progress, and seeking connections between them and the accomplishments of creative work more in line with an emphasis on understanding.

We do not aim at an overall assessment of the English School. Rather, we focus on its foundational aspects and explore its coherence. The different generations and strands in the evolution of the English School—such as normative, historical, social, structural, and the like—rule out a full evaluation in any article-length essay. Also beyond the scope of this piece is a comparison of the English School with other schools, although the discussion here will facilitate that as a later goal. Thus, for our purposes here, we limit our agenda to the “classics” of the English School as identified through later patterns of citation within the School itself.⁶

We will begin our analysis with an introduction of the “continuum of aggregation” that conveys a given research enterprise, such as the English School, at different conceptual levels. In the course of the presentation, the School’s axioms are identified along with its negative and positive heuristics; these are evaluated on the basis of classic and more recent works from Martin Wight, Hedley Bull, and others. Conclusions and prospects for further development of the English School complete the essay.

The English School Along the Continuum of Aggregation

Concepts along the continuum of aggregation range from worldview, the most general, to hypothesis, the most specific (Rosenau 1997; James 2002). Table 1 shows the English School at different levels of aggregation. The table summarizes the meaning of each concept and provides illustrations from the School’s literature. The advantage of using the continuum to present the English School is that it brings clarity to theorizing facilitating comparison and enhances prospects for cumulation (James 2002:70).

At the bottom of the table, hypotheses stand out as the most specific, “if-then” kind of statements, whereas at the top, the worldview is the most universal statement. A worldview is the most encompassing among the table’s concepts; it designates patterns of belief or how its bearers perceive the world. It is the most holistic and least “based on fact” among the concepts along this continuum. Worldview is, thus, the most normatively oriented concept along the continuum as well.

English School literature reveals the influence of more than one worldview. Therefore, in this sense, the School is a fairly eclectic creation. Indeed, Martin Wight (1960) has presented three traditions in the study of IR throughout history. These are Machiavellian realism, Grotian rationalism, and Kantian revolutionism. The Machiavellian (or Hobbesian) tradition views the history of IR as one of conflict. For Kantian revolutionists, different groups of people living in varying states of the world are bound together by ideas, ideologies, or similar interests. The Kantian tradition does not see IR as a conflict among states but instead as varying

⁶The debates within the English School that have become more popular recently, such as pluralist-solidarist or the nature and operationalization of the world society, are left for the future. For more in-depth discussion of recent debates in the English School, see Buzan (2004).

TABLE 1. The English School Along the Continuum of Aggregation: From Worldview to Hypotheses

Concept	Degree of Aggregation	Summary of Meaning	Illustrations from the English School
Worldview	Most general	Understood by gestalt	Affected by realist, rationalist, and revolutionist worldviews
Ontology	General	Identification of what is to be observed: main issues, units, unit boundaries	States as the main actors of open societies, with imperial systems as other entities; relations among states form an international society; boundaries based on threat perception
Paradigms	Intermediate	Designation of parameters	Actors seeking maintenance of sovereignty and order. International society reflects common values and interests; diplomacy, commerce, laws, and institutions are used by states. Justice vs. order as dialogue
Theories	Specific	Designation of key variables	Common interests, values, sets of rules, institutions, order, cooperation
Hypotheses	Most specific	“If-then” statements	If international society is present, then cooperation is more feasible

Source: Based on concepts from James (2002:69); see also Rosenau (1997).

kinds of contact among different social groups or classes in the community of mankind.

Although influenced by the preceding two traditions, the English School asserts its affiliation more directly with Grotian rationalism. Inspired by Hugo Grotius—a Dutch legal scholar from the seventeenth century who wrote *De Jure Belli ac Pacis*, among other works—neo-Grotians of the twentieth century and beyond emphasize the society of states. Hedley Bull (1966:52) suggested that Grotians are “solidarist”; their main assumption is the existence or potential for solidarity among states comprising an international society with respect to enforcement of the law. Wight (1966) and Bull (1966) asserted that the Grotian tradition stands between realist and revolutionist thought. In essence, Grotians argue that (a) states are not in a struggle as described by realists, and (b) the utopian approach of the revolutionists does not reflect the reality of IR. By contrast, the Grotian approach describes international politics as a society of states or as an international society. Although English School scholars are close to Hobbesians in terms of accepting states as the primary actors, they agree with Kantians on the importance of how revolutions influence IR. However, the School accepts neither conflict of all states against each other nor complete identity of interests in accounting for IR. Rather, for this School, IR resembles a game partly distributive but also partly productive: economic and social intercourse between states accounts for the substance of what is observed (Bull 1977:26–27).

In the last row of Table 1, the reader will note hypotheses that are conditional statements about empirical phenomena. A hypothesis connects variables to each other and constitutes the most specific account of an observation for a given research enterprise. An example from the natural sciences would be that “water will boil at 100°C at sea level” or, from the literature of IR, “when states in a crisis are democracies, the likelihood of war is lower than otherwise.” When scholars hypothesize, they depend on formal logic and observation in some combination. This

contrasts with their worldview (whatever it may be), which is a holistic belief about how to understand the world in general—perhaps more analogous to a religious rather than a scientific way of knowing.

Given their properties as just described, neither a worldview nor a hypothesis is the appropriate point of aggregation at which to pursue assessment of progress in IR as a discipline (James 2002). The worldview is too holistic and, because of its primarily normative nature, does not facilitate analysis and comparison. At the other extreme, hypotheses are specific, positive statements about relationships between and among entities that can be tested through observation. Thus, neither end of the continuum is promising for purposes of comparison between or among different schools of thought. It makes more sense to move to a discussion of the other three concepts found in the table: ontology, paradigms, and theories.

An ontology is a worldview's account of the nature of existence. Like a worldview, it is a broad, philosophical, and normatively constructed concept. For present purposes, ontology comprises what is to be observed: the main issues, units, and unit boundaries in IR. What, then, does the English School stand for in this context?

Ontologically speaking, the English School is state-centric. International systems are regarded as the result of strategic relations among states. Although the importance of the world society concept is recognized, scholars still see the state as most fundamental. Richard Little (1995; see also 1998) makes a significant contribution to the analysis of the English School's ontological background by showing the difficulty of completing such a task in any definitive way. Put simply, English School scholars never have provided a systematic and detailed exegesis of their ontology. Heavily discussed in their literature, the states-system would seem to be the most appropriate starting point (Little 1995:18). Wight (1977) asserted that states-systems operate in a wide environment; they represent "open" systems and their boundaries have "indeterminate limits" that can expand or contract. Thus, states-systems are not closed entities and remain open to change. They can absorb or be absorbed by another system or an empire. English School scholars discuss whether a closed system can be expected to crystallize after reaching its ultimate boundaries, but even the post-World War II system, which seemed to do so, did not last (Little 1995). The sudden and chaotic fall of the Soviet empire serves as a reminder that even an apparently very stable system still can change.

With respect to units, prominent English School scholars, such as Wight (1977), Bull (1977), and Adam Watson (1987), have recognized another major form of political organization: international imperial systems. The English School sees an empire as a political unit that can co-exist with a states-system. The combination of the Hellenic states and the Persian Empire provides a prominent example (Wight 1977). Although scholars in the English School tradition appear to regard only states and empires as units, it also could be argued that Medieval Europe is recognized as a third and unique kind of international entity (Little 1995).⁷

Even more complex is the English School's designation of the boundaries of a system. Little (1995:23) observes that, in a now-classic exposition, Wight (1977) proposed that the boundary of the system is based on the threats surrounding it:

turning to the systemic level analysis, a much more confusing picture emerges. The boundary of a system is established primarily on the basis of threat perception. As a consequence, the systemic boundary can easily be extended if a peripheral state suddenly becomes more powerful. Throughout the history of the Greek city states, the Persian Empire posed a threat. According to Wight, however, this threat was only partially reciprocated. He insists that "the greater part

⁷Little (1995:19) suggests that the English School defines empire as an entity that bears features of a states-system, but is not exactly like a state itself. Empires constitute imperially organized societies of states and thus they cannot be analyzed on common grounds in tandem with a given individual state: "the English School sees empires as entities which need to be examined on the same continuum as state systems."

of the Empire lay beyond the system” [Wight 1977:90], presumably because the Greek city states lacked the capacity to mount an attack on the further reaches of the Empire.

Although the Persian Empire tried to dominate the Greek states by force, it failed. To avoid further Hellenization, the Persians adopted tactics intended to keep any one of the Greek city states from dominating the others. In ontological terms, this example shows how the system’s boundaries can change according to threat perception.

One further point about the English School’s ontology focuses on how the international system leads to a society of states. Whether common goals, interests, and rules are sufficient to form a society or similar cultural backgrounds are needed has been a significant issue within the English School. In this sense, the Wight–Bull–Watson discussion of the Ottoman Empire is instructive. Beginning with the fifteenth century, the Ottomans posed a significant threat to the European states-system for three centuries. The Ottomans gained control over at least a quarter of Europe and became heavily involved in European state affairs, most notably, balance of power politics. Given that English School scholars recognize that the Ottomans and the Europeans began to interact on a regular basis as well as shared rules, institutions, and diplomatic practices, can it then be said that the Ottoman Empire became a member of European international society? Wight (1977) said “no” because societies should—and do—share a common culture. In this case, Christendom and the Muslim Ottomans did not fit into a single picture.

However, intuition alone suggests that Wight could not entirely deny the existence of societal relations between Ottomans and Europeans. So English School scholars have used a concept from Grotius to solve this problem. The evolution of international society is represented by two circles: “There is an outer circle that embraces all mankind, under natural law, and an inner circle, the *corpus Christianorum*, bound by the law of Christ” (Wight 1977:128). Little (1995) has placed Europe and the Ottomans in the inner and outer circles, respectively, to explain societal relations between these rivals from the fifteenth through the seventeenth centuries. Along similar lines, Watson (1987) endorses Bull’s (1977) designation of Ottoman–European relations as a more “loose” kind of international society. Although persuasive, the preceding discussion of issues, units, and unit boundaries suggests that the ontology of the English School is evolving rather than permanently established. Discussion of boundaries and units continues as the research enterprise develops.

Next along the continuum is the concept of a paradigm. Here, terms like paradigms, paradigm-like creation, and paradigmatic entity mean something different from Kuhn’s (1962) research paradigm, which, in effect, contains elements from several points along the continuum of aggregation (James 2002). The concept here refers to a more specific point in Table 1; a paradigm or paradigm-like creation emphasizes variation at the “parametric” level. Paradigm, as articulated at this degree of aggregation, emerges as the optimal concept for organizing comparison among rival approaches. A focus on parameters creates the most useful balance between generality and specificity. In a given ontology, there might be different paradigms. Within a specific paradigm, researchers must agree on the units, their relations with each other in a system, and a maximum feasible agenda of issues (James 2002:74–76).

More precisely, a parameter is a determining factor or characteristic (Rosenau 1997). Parametric boundaries identify ranges for them. To give an example from IR, parametrically speaking, neorealism would assign a value approximating zero to the expected impact of nonstate actors in resolving security issues, whereas neoliberal institutionalism would designate a positive value significantly above zero. Paradigms set up in this manner are highly conducive to research that distinguishes

between and among them through varying performance in empirical testing. Thus, the paradigm provides a maximum feasible point of aggregation from the standpoint of assessing progress (James 2002:77).

Consider two illustrations from the English School for paradigms and parameters as indicated in Table 1. International society, in all likelihood the concept most uniquely associated with the English School, comes to the fore in such consideration. English School scholarship asserts that international states-systems become international societies because members have a common culture and develop (or realize the existence of) mutual interests. Member states use different means to maintain their society, that is, diplomacy, international law, institutions, and commerce. In this sense, the School sees states as the basic units and interactions among them as plausibly leading to an international society. Thus international society emerges as a paradigm-like entity for the School. A key parameter in this context would be the common culture among the states in the system. The English School would assign a fairly high value to the parameter for culture; if a high degree of commonality is not present, then neither is an international society.

Another illustration derives mainly from Bull's (1977) analysis of anarchy and society. Actors in the international system seek to maintain sovereignty and order. The main mechanism for this purpose is uninterrupted societal relations with other states. Bull (1977) argued that the maintenance of order in an international society presupposes, among its members, a sense of *common interest* in the elementary goals of social life. We are vulnerable to violence as well as prone to use it; people gain a sense of common interest in order to restrict such behavior. Bull's explanation suggests that order in international society is achieved and maintained because of each state's own need for and benefit from it. This brief account of the concepts of order and sovereignty in Bull's (1977) work provides an example of how paradigms and parameters are deduced from ontology. From the ontological premise that the international society exists, English School scholars deduce paradigmatic entities, such as the nature of relations, as maintaining sovereignty and order.

Theory is the second most specific concept along the continuum of aggregation. Theories within a paradigm share a belief in common parametric settings but differ in terms of the presumed network of effects observed in the empirical world (James 2002). A theory contains propositions about what variables are related to others. At this point, however, a complication emerges in terms of potential comparison between and among theories on the basis of empirical performance. Although it would be too bold to claim that the English School fully rejects positivism, its most prominent founders, Wight and Bull, publicly renounced that perspective. The School's dominant methodological approach continues to be "classical," a context in which "variable" is something fairly difficult to define. However, given awareness of the point that the English School's analysis usually has not included variables as understood by positivists, Table 1 does suggest common interests, values, sets of rules, institutions, order, and cooperation as variable-like entities. All these concepts have played explicit roles in the analysis of cause and effect by adherents of the School.

All the options allowing for comparison are now on the table. It is clear that worldview and ontology are not appropriate for analysis of research progress as conceived of within the philosophy of science.⁸ Intermediate concepts work better. Paradigms can be compared more effectively because parameters lend themselves

⁸Although three types of comparison can happen in principle, only the final one listed below will be explored in the present essay; details concerning the others are available in James (2002:81). (1) Pragmatic comparison refers to the assessment, through natural processes within a society as a whole, of performance between or among ontologies in respective worldviews. (2) Revolutionary comparison refers to the assessment, carried out by design within the research community, of performance between or among paradigms in an ontology. (3) Evolutionary comparison refers to the assessment, carried out by design within the research community, of performance between or among theories in a paradigm as manifested through testing of alternative hypotheses.

to such expression; theories within paradigms can compete with each other through testing of alternative hypotheses.

Mapping out the axioms, negative heuristic, and the hypotheses derived from the axioms (that is, the positive heuristic) in the following sections of this essay will help us understand what the English School is and which studies can be said to belong to it. To evaluate the School as a research enterprise, we need to identify its governing assumptions and whether ensuing phases of theorizing, which include derivation of specific hypotheses, are consistent with the foundations established at the outset and meet with some degree of empirical success.

The Hard Core or Axiomatic Basis of the English School

An axiom is a statement accepted as a self-evident truth. For example, in Newton's physics all things are regarded as in motion in an absolute time and space, whereas in the special theory of relativity Einstein brought in two novel axioms: (a) physical laws are valid in all inertial frames of reference, and (b) all inertial observers measure the same, constant speed of light. Sets of axioms that contradict each other, as this example from physics—a rather exact science, at least in comparison with the study of politics—shows, create rival paradigms. Within a given paradigm, however, all studies included must adhere to the hard core of axioms.

For the English School, axioms are traced to the earliest works that can be identified with the paradigm in its form from that point onward. The founder of the English School is Wight (1966, 1977, 1986, 1991). His exegesis of the as yet unnamed English School stands out as the paradigm's first full-fledged theory, designated as T_0 , with later variants being T_1 , T_2 , and so on.⁹ Bull (1969, 1977) is credited with formulation of T_1 .¹⁰ The four axioms with parametric status in the English School are as follows:¹¹

- (1) The primary actors in the international system are sovereign “states”—city states or nation-states (Bull 1977; Wight 1986).
- (2) In international relations, there is a “system of states” whenever two or more states have sufficient contact between them and have sufficient impact on each other's decisions (Bull 1977; Wight 1977).
- (3) There is “anarchy” in the international system, meaning no common government (Bull 1977; Wight 1986).
- (4) States in the international system exist in an “international society” in which they recognize the common interests and common values forming a society in the sense that they conceive themselves to be bound by a common set of rules governing relations with one another and share in the working of common institutions (Bull 1977; Wight 1977, 1986).

⁹Wight's lectures in the London School of Economics and his works published by the Royal Institute of International Affairs and the British Committee on the theory of international politics impressed scholars of international relations from a variety of backgrounds, both in the United Kingdom and abroad, in the early post-World War II era. His students, most notably Hedley Bull, developed the School as a distinct tradition in international relations. Thus we acknowledge that the English School is a collective enterprise. However, Wight's strong influence on both his contemporaries and on later generations who developed the School leads us to identify him as the creator of T_0 . Note that identification of a paradigm can proceed in a highly inductive way, with (a) designation of a founding exposition, and (b) research intended to confirm its status by identifying a corpus of work consistent with the hard core. The key initial question is whether the axiomatic basis of a *magnum opus* stands out as qualitatively different from other works; if so, it may have the potential to serve as T_0 within a new paradigm. Thus identification of a paradigm's founding, along with its continuation, is an inherently inductive process and the set of paradigmatic entities within a discipline represents an expanding taxonomy rather than anything approaching a formally derived typology.

¹⁰Both constraints on space and limitations on research to date prevent a confident designation for T_2 and beyond for the English School. Identification of further discrete theories in the series beginning with Wight must await further analysis of the vast reading list compiled for the School by Buzan (2003).

¹¹Here “parameter” is meant as a determining factor or characteristic.

These axioms with parametric status represent the hard core of the English School. In metaphysical terms, the axioms might be referred to as the “constitution” of the English School as a research enterprise (James 2002:121). Given the role ascribed to axioms within a research enterprise, the constitutional metaphor makes sense. The axiomatic basis of the English School is constructed in the very limited way associated with the creation of such a document. As will become apparent, the scholarship building upon T_0 and T_1 has complied with the hard core while also using auxiliary assumptions to generate an additional range of hypotheses.

Wight’s early writings resemble those of US realists such as Morgenthau (1985), although important differences also can be discerned. Axioms 1 and 3 reveal the resemblance. For both Wight and Bull, states are the main actors in IR. In *Power Politics*, Wight (1991) described world politics as run mainly by states or “powers.” This is an example of Wight’s proximity to realism (Freyberg-Inan 2004:67, 69) among the three traditions in international theories—Machiavellian realism, Grotian rationalism, and Kantian revolutionism—that he introduced so effectively (Wight 1991). Wight (1986:25) claimed that Machiavellian realism can provide a better account than the Grotian or Kantian traditions of the powers in international politics:

Thus the modern state came into existence; a narrower and at the same time a stronger unit of loyalty than medieval Christendom. Modern man in general has shown a stronger loyalty to the state than to the church or class or any other international bond. A power is a modern sovereign state in its external aspect, and it might also be defined as the ultimate loyalty for which men today will fight.

Even though Wight (1986) did not discuss nonstate actors per se, Bull and Holbraad (1986:514) in the introduction to *Power Politics* cite recognition of the other approaches:

[Wight] notes that in the broad sweep of history the state system is an exceptional form of universal political organization, that the idea of normalcy is an illusion. He contends that while states are the prime and immediate members of international society, its ultimate members are individual men.

Wight (1986) also recognized the effects of ideas like “unity of human society” in revolutions of modern times, such as in the French and Russian cases. Yet, in the end, Wight’s main and enduring assumption was that world politics reflected relations among states.

Bull (1977) took a similar approach, close to realism, in this matter. He contended that international relations consists of the politics of states with regard to their external aspects. Like the realists, Bull (1977) rejected all forms of utopianism and provided a critique of concepts such as world government, new medievalism, a regional construction of the world, and revolutionary schemes for change (see also Hoffmann 1990). Thus, we can conclude that both Wight and Bull agreed that states are the key actors in international politics.

As mentioned earlier, the English School is fundamentally eclectic. Its scholarship has benefited from bringing together insights from different traditions of thought on IR. Axiom 3, which pronounces the existence of anarchy, resembles the point of departure for Machiavellian realist thinkers. Both Wight and Bull emphasized the anarchical nature of the states-system. Their basic conclusion about the meaning of the anarchical states-system, however, differs from the realist vision. We will deal with this issue below.

Wight (1986:101) claimed that anarchy prevails in international politics; “the international system is properly described as an anarchy—multiplicity of powers without a government.” He also believed that the fundamental reason for war was

the absence of an international government or, in other words, the anarchy of sovereign states: “all particular causes of war operate within the context of international anarchy and Hobbesian fear” (Wight 1986:101). He agreed with realists, though, only to a certain extent. For Wight, if anarchy is understood as the absence of common government, then it is the preeminent feature of international politics. However, he rejected the notion that war and conflict must prevail in international relations; anarchy does not have to mean complete disorder (Wight 1986:105–106). Wight observed cooperation as well as conflict in the international system. Specifically, he emphasized the importance of a diplomatic system, international law, and institutions that modify the workings of power politics. Therefore, Wight’s explanation for an anarchical systemic structure acknowledges the lack of a common government in a Hobbesian sense but does not accept the notion of complete disorder.

Bull (1966:35–50, 1977:46–51; Hoffmann 1990:23–26) reached a similar conclusion in a discussion of anarchy with regard to international relations. He, too, rejected the Hobbesian view of international politics as a “war of all against all” and noted a certain pattern of anarchical behavior in the international system. Rejecting the Hobbesian understanding, he nevertheless used Hobbes’ own arguments about the state of nature. Bull (1977:46–49) claimed that (a) the present international system is different than Hobbes’s state of nature, (b) states are very unlike human individuals, and (c) the order among groups and individuals is not provided uniquely by the government but also reflects other factors like common interests or a sense of community. Therefore, Bull (1977:48) concluded that, if we compare international relations with an imagined precontractual state of nature among individual men, he would choose Locke over Hobbes:

Locke’s conception of the state of nature as a society without a government does in fact provide us with a close analogy with the society of states. In modern international society, as in Locke’s state of nature, there is no central authority able to interpret and enforce the law, and thus individual members of the society must themselves judge and enforce it.

So far we have reviewed Axioms 1 and 3. These two assumptions within the hard core of the English School are similar to realism’s and structural realism’s axioms to a significant extent. Axioms 2 and 4, by contrast, are *sui generis* and differentiate the English School significantly from other paradigms.

Axiom 2 asserts that an international system exists when the actors—states—interact with each other in a way that each has to consider the behavior of others. Wight (1977:22) outlined components of a states-system as follows: (a) the political units—states—forming it, and (b) the kinds of communication or intercourse arising from relations that are more or less permanent and that we consider systematic. Inspired by Wight’s work, Bull (1977:10) put forward a thorough definition: A system of states is formed “when two or more states have sufficient contact between them, and have sufficient impact on one another’s decisions to cause them to behave—at least in some measure—as parts of a whole.” Important here is that states must be sovereign to make a states-system work. In this context, Wight offered a classification of states-systems that have existed during the course of history. He suggested that the “international state-system” is different from the “suzerain state-system.” In suzerain state-systems, one power exercises domination over the smaller states surrounding it. The relations of the Roman Empire to nations labeled as barbarian and of imperial China to its tributary states are examples of this type of system. A second distinction is that there have been primary and secondary states-systems in history. Whereas the primary system is composed of sovereign states, the secondary states-system is made up of systems of states—often of suzerain states-systems (Bull 1977; Wight 1977).

Axiom 4 is the most original concept in the English School's foundation. Wight, Bull, and their successors' works have used international society to explain the nature of international politics. In T_0 , Wight (1986:29) brought forward the assumption that there is an international society embedded in the interactions among states and claimed it would be too extreme to suppose that statesmen are concerned exclusively with force and not moved by considerations of right and justice. He emphasized the existence of cooperation in the international system—manifested in diplomacy, international law, and institutions—as well as conflict.

For Wight (1986:106), “international society is a society unlike any other, for it is the most comprehensive form of society on earth.” It has four characteristics: (1) it is a unique society composed of other fully organized societies—states—that are its primary actors; (2) the number of members is small; (3) members are more heterogeneous than individuals; and (4) the members are immortals whose policies are based on the expectation of survival (Wight 1986:105–107). Wight's emphasis on international society shows his proximity to the Grotian rationalist tradition of IR. He believed that the main course of international relations is shaped by the dynamics of international society as opposed to the distribution of capabilities among states. Wight argued against Machiavellian realist accounts that denied the existence of international society; for him, the existence of international law stood as the most important evidence of its presence.

Bull (1977:13) expanded on the concept and provided an enlightening definition of international society:

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

In the terminology of Wight's three traditions, Bull's emphasis on international society shows his closeness to the Grotian tradition. He did not fully accept realist accounts of IR, disliked Kantian cosmopolitanism, and emphasized the importance of studying “society” rather than “system.” System meant simply regular contact among states, whereas society included more specific notions like common interests, common values, a set of rules, and institutions. Bull (1977) argued that international society presupposes an international system, but an international system can exist without an international society. It would not be too far fetched to say international society is like a subdivision of the international system that comprises the more developed relations among members.

Stanley Hoffmann (1990) identified the originality in Bull's work in two ways. First, unlike Raymond Aron's (1966) or Kenneth Waltz's (1979) emphasis on system, Bull's analysis starts at the level of international society. Second, Bull's emphasis on society over system makes him unique in terms of determining the source of significant change in international relations. Hoffmann argues that Bull's theory of change is very different from that of Waltz (1979) or Robert Gilpin (1981). Gilpin attributes change in international affairs to the rise and fall of hegemonic powers, whereas for Waltz it results from shifts in the distribution of power among states. However, Bull had an interest in the cultural change that shapes perceptions of different common interests in a context of coexistence and cooperation. Hoffmann (1990), therefore, argues that Bull effectively suggested a passage from a mere system to a society. This emphasis within the English School, as manifested by Bull's focus on culture, explains (as noted earlier) the School's appeal to constructivists. The English School and constructivism are linked by an emphasis on the power of *ideas* to affect change.

At this point in the discussion of the English School's hard core, further clarification of what is meant by states-system, international system, international

society, and world society—and the boundaries between them—is helpful. Providing some “real-life” examples of these analytical concepts should help readers better comprehend the fine distinctions made by Wight and Bull in terms of the three traditions and how they constitute the English School’s hard core. Little’s (1995, 1998, 2000) and Buzan’s (2004) treatments of the debate are illustrative.

For English School scholars, the earliest point of investigation was the states-system. Little (1995) suggests this term was associated initially with Pufendorf, a seventeenth-century German natural law philosopher, who used it to describe the relations among the German states after the Peace of Westphalia—“several states that are so connected as to constitute one body but whose members retain sovereignty” (Wight [1977:21], quote taken from Little 1995:10). In this setting, the emperor no longer enjoyed sovereignty over the princes, “but he continued to possess a residual authority which prevented the German princes from acquiring the sovereignty now lost by the emperor” (Little 1995:10–11). Although its evolution is not known, the term states-system began to refer to the European arena of states by the nineteenth century. The European states-system has been of great importance for English School scholars because it constitutes the origin of the current global states-system. Especially with the end of the Cold War, we have witnessed the expansion of the European states-system to the globe.¹²

The three traditions of the English School, and the three concepts related to them, are associated with the framework that describes the states-system. As discussed above, an international system emerges when there is continuing interaction between and among the states so that each must calculate the others’ behavior in operating within the system (Bull 1977). Wight suggests that international system is about power politics among states. He places structure (as an entity shaping individual states’ behavior) and anarchy at the center of his theory (Buzan 2004). As one can observe from this discussion, English School scholars make a fine distinction between the concepts of states-system and international system.

An international society, however, can exist only when the states constituting it recognize shared interests, values, and identity. An international system may (or may not) involve one or more international societies. Within an international societal framework, states recognize that they are bound by common rules (for example, international law) and maintain the working of common institutions (for example, regular exchange of diplomatic representatives). Alliances, along with international or regional organizations, constitute only one aspect of an international society. An international society is more than these institutions; perhaps, for Wight and Bull, shared interests, values, and identity might be regarded as the primary components of a society.

Lastly, the concept of world society puts individuals, the global population, and nonstate actors as the focus of “global societal identities and arrangements” and the “transcendence of the states-system” at the center of any analysis of the relations among states (Buzan 2004:7). This Kantian revolutionist approach assumes that there is a common good, common end, or values that belong to all mankind (Little 1995). This approach attempts to explain how some ideas (for example, communism) travel across state borders and demarcate some groups of people as pursuing a common aim. Obviously, the world society approach does not take states as an ontological priority and was not found particularly useful by Wight or Bull. However, with the end of the Cold War and the increase in global relationships, the English School may want to turn to this rather overlooked pillar of its theoretical

¹²The European states-system does not refer to what has become the European Union. Rather, it is the states-system developed after the Treaty of Westphalia, with norms and institutions that spread around the globe after World War II—although for some, it only became truly “global” after the Cold War. Similarly, European international society, which formed after the Congress of Vienna in 1815 in the eyes of some English School scholars, should not be equated with the European Union in the terminology favored by the School.

foundations. Buzan (2004), for example, offers a theoretical framework that can help the English School provide better explanations of state-nonstate relations in a globalizing world.

So far, we have explained how the three basic concepts have been defined and discussed by the founders of the School. Criticisms have emerged from both inside and outside of the School about a lack of clarity with regard to the demarcation between international system and society. In fact, it has been argued that such a delineation was not even possible. Our aim is not to resolve this debate. Whether this distinction can be made or not, we are able to safely propose that the English School accepts that an international system, an international society, and a world society all exist together simultaneously “both as objects of discussion and as aspects of international reality” (Buzan 2004:10). Also, as we will discuss below, the English School is methodologically pluralistic and accepts all three elements as different “levels of analysis.” Members of the English School recognize structural pressures at the systemic level, emphasize the importance of agents and processes within the international society (also the competition between the system and society), and analyze the effects of individuals and transnational groups on states within the world society context.

To sum up, Table 2 shows the axioms from the English School as defined in T_0 and T_1 and adhered to by further School research. In other words, these are the parameters for the English School as a paradigm.

The Negative Heuristic of the English School

The English School did not develop in the Lakatosian (1971) sense as a series of self-consciously expanding empirical theories. Thus, we find it challenging to identify the School’s negative heuristic. Neither Wight (1977, 1986) nor Bull (1977) have presented an explicit or detailed account of the negative heuristic of their tradition, that is, “what is ruled out.” Similarly, because the English School did not take a “scientific” path in studying IR, it also is not possible to infer its negative heuristic from researchers’ efforts to “protect the hard core from empirical refutation.” (This is the language favored by standard expositions in the philosophy of science as described by James 2002 and Elman and Elman 2003.) Thus, what we can do, at best, is determine whether the English School (a) rules out qualitatively different kinds of theorizing, and (b) explicitly takes a stance that inherently excludes other possible methodological approaches.

In terms of refuting different kinds of theorizing, our discussion of the three traditions of Wight and theorizing in the English School provides a starting point. The School embraces realism, rationalism, and revolutionism as ways of understanding IR. Wight (1966) in “Why Is There No International Theory?” suggested that these three worldviews reflect coexisting parts in the relations that shape international politics. In other words, cooperation and transnational connections all display a part of what is going on in international relations. The Hobbesian, Grotian, and Kantian outlooks provide important insights from which to benefit, and an English School account of IR must draw to some degree on all of these.

TABLE 2. The Hard Core of the English School: Axioms 1–4 as Parameters

Parameter	Meaning
P_1	States are the primary actors.
P_2	A system of states exists.
P_3	The international system is <i>anarchic</i> , meaning that there is no common government.
P_4	States exist in an <i>international society</i> .

Although English School scholars recognize various aspects of these respective traditions, their works have been closest to Grotian rationalism. Therefore, even though the English School accepts the value of all three constructs—that is, system, society, and world society—its work shows greatest allegiance with the societal account of IR. In this sense, studies that disavow the importance of international society in terms of understanding international relations and changes in it cannot belong to the English School. The School rejects theorizing that resonates exclusively with the international system, such as structural realism, or focuses only on the transnational bonds among people living in states, like communism. In particular, studies that deny the apparatus of international society, such as international law, institutions, diplomacy, or commerce, clearly are outside the English School's boundaries. The School's emphasis on both macro- and micro-linkages and issues spanning the macro- and micro-levels makes it a system oriented as opposed to holistic or reductionistic approach to international relations (Bunge 1996; James 2002).

Finally, the methodological position the English School does (or does not) take can help us define its negative heuristic. Little (1995; see also Hollis and Smith 1990) suggests that the classical/scientific dichotomy in terms of methodology is a false one in the IR literature. Little argues that scholars using this dichotomy mistakenly place the English School into the so-called classical box. This argument is significant in terms of understanding the School and reflects the reality of its rather vague methodological approach. However, we *can* observe that Wight, Bull, and their successors have not produced any work that uses logical positivist methodology. Wight's exclusive use of, and sympathy with, historical and philosophical analysis in IR and Bull's unequivocal rejection of behavioralism reinforce this observation. Put simply, English School scholars are at some distance from positivism and in close proximity to historical analysis.

Bull's insistence on the impossibility of there being value-free analysis in IR, while at the same time renouncing any moral stance with regard to research, conveys the negative heuristic of the English School in another way. Bull believed that social science inquiry cannot be value free and, if it could, the results would be of little interest. However, he asserted a dislike for scholars who offer moral generalizations. Bull did not like excessive "salvationism" or moral preaching in writings on international justice or arms control. For example, "the avoidance of war is not always the highest imperative [Bull was writing about Munich]; justice and order cannot always be reconciled" (Hoffmann 1990:20). We conclude that Bull repudiated the "scientific" approach, that is, the possibility of value-free analysis for the researcher while also arguing for restraint when it comes to moral generalizations. These beliefs constitute a part of the English School's negative heuristic.

Another methodological issue originates out of the ontological roots of the English School. It accepts the validity of Wight's traditions, with Little (1995) deriving this position's methodological consequences. Little argues that, because of its eclectic ontology, English School scholars are methodologically catholic in their tastes and naturally use each of the three levels of analysis. Thus, system, societal, and world society are all legitimate levels of analysis for the English School in terms of drawing methodological boundaries. This position leads us to suggest that any approach fully rejecting one of the levels of analysis cannot be placed within the School. In sum, the negative heuristic of the English School requires recognition of all three levels of analysis in international relations.

Analysis of the negative heuristic of the School reveals its eclectic nature and development. Thus, studies rejecting one of the three major traditions of IR—that is, realism, rationalism, or revolutionism—are ruled out. Parallel to this theoretical stance, methodologically, all three levels of analysis—system, society, and world society—are used by English School scholars and reveal the School's pluralistic approach. Exclusive focus on one of the levels is viewed as a contradiction in terms by members of the School.

The Positive Heuristic of the English School

Searching for Empirical Questions

Following the research enterprise model of James (2002), we will turn next to identifying the empirical questions related to the axioms derived from the hard core of the English School or, in other words, explore the positive heuristic of the School. Research reveals that “empirical” questions, as understood by the philosophy of science (James 2002), are not explicitly stated by scholars in the English School. Instead, we will examine the main theoretical questions asked by Wight (T₀) and Bull (T₁) and derive empirical questions from those queries.

Wight’s first question was “what is international society?” In considering this question, the reader needs to remember that Wight’s (1991) three traditions in IR theory are associated with different levels of analysis, respectively: the Machiavelian (realist) with international system, the Grotian (rationalist) with international society, and the Kantian (revolutionist) with world society. Wight’s main focus, however, is on international society, defined as follows (Bull and Watson 1984:35):

[a] group of states, which not merely form a system, in the sense that the behavior of each is a necessary factor in the calculations of others, but also have established by dialogue and consent common rules and institutions for the conduct of their relations, and recognize their common interest in maintaining these arrangements.

The role of balance of power, diplomacy, and international law in maintaining this common set of rules and norms was the main theme of Wight’s (1966, 1986) early works such as his *Power Politics*, first published in 1946, or his essays in *Diplomatic Investigations*, in 1966. He insisted that a common culture is necessary to talk seriously about an international society (Wight 1977). However, the distinction between system and society in reality was not clear in the works of Wight; the ability of the now-global European international society to survive despite the lack of a shared culture among its members needs to be addressed in a more compelling way.

Wight’s second question is this one: “How far does international society extend?” He explored this subsequent question in *Systems of States* (1977), *International Theory* (1991), and other later essays. Wight traced the evolution of various states-systems, both European and non-European, throughout history, reflecting on how far current international society extends from the perspective of each tradition. Even though Wight dealt with how to maintain the current international society, his main interest rested with historical development of states-systems and international societies rather than with those in place at any given time. The rules and institutions that underpinned international society, investigated through a rationalist lens, became focal points for Wight in his later works. Although he emphasized the importance of a shared culture in forming an international society, his answers to this question are far from clear. In short, the question of “how much society do we have right now?” was not answered by Wight.

Bull’s first question was “what does order mean in world politics?” Building on Wight, Bull (1977) focused on the current and future state of international society rather than its origins. Thus, he delved into order and ways of maintaining it. Two subquestions emerged from his works on the expansion of the European international society: (a) “does order exist?” and (b) “how is it maintained?” Bull looked at the possibility of order under an anarchical system and claimed that it could emerge even without shared culture or norms (given that common interests exist). He did not, however, evaluate how much society is likely to flourish in an anarchical structure. Bull (1977:316–317) argued that, currently, an elite culture exists, comprised mainly of an intellectual devotion to modernity. He also asserted that world international society is limited to the elite level. Moreover, the future of interna-

tional society will be determined by the extent to which a cosmopolitan culture is preserved and extended (Bull 1977:317). This assertion, however, did not answer the question of whether the anarchical structure of the current international system would allow such a development or not. With regard to maintaining order, Bull identified five instruments as being important: the balance of power mechanism, international law, diplomacy, war, and great powers. He saw no indication of a decline in the states-system and argued that, although alternative forms of international and world society exist in theory, we have to work within the current states-system and international society to bring about something better.

Bull's second question was "should one prioritize order over justice?" E. H. Carr's (1939) question "order for whom?" haunted Bull (1977), who asserted that he did not necessarily endorse the view that order is desirable at the expense of justice. Justice was central in his works on the "Third World," and he tried to answer the question of how justice can be achieved without overthrowing international society. One of Bull's central arguments was that justice in fact contributes to order and thus to maintenance of international society. He viewed justice as an enhancing element of order in world politics.

Whether Bull successfully argued that justice is attainable without disrupting the working of international society is debatable. Bull (1977) developed three levels of justice: human, international, and world. He provided an elaborate analysis of justice as both a destructive force in international society—if pursued in the sense of human or world justice—and a constructive, enhancing force in international society—if interstate justice is sought (Dunne 1998). Bull (1977:86–91) argued that the search for world justice is incompatible with current international society because it calls for a total transformation of the system and society of states. The search for human justice also can undermine order in international society because there is no agreement as to what human rights are and their relative importance in world politics. If we treat human justice as the primary goal and coexistence as the secondary one, "the result could only be to undermine international order" (Bull 1977:89). The following paragraph sums up Bull's (1977:91) ideas on the interaction between varieties of justice and order:

Whereas ideas of world justice may seem entirely at odds with the structure of international society, and notions of human justice entail a possible threat to its foundations, ideas of interstate and international justice may reinforce the compact of coexistence between states by adding a moral imperative to the imperatives of enlightened self-interest and of law on which it rests.

Hypotheses

In what follows, we will assess the theoretical progress of the English School by focusing on six hypotheses (two from Wight and four from Bull) derived from the empirical questions we have just discussed. Those hypotheses will be tested against evidence from four other prominent English School scholars: Herbert Butterfield, Adam Watson, R. J. John Vincent, and Barry Buzan.¹³ The purpose is to assess whether their work (a) supports, (b) does not support, or (c) does not address the hypothesis in question. The answers will be coded later in Table 3 as supported, not supported, inconclusive, and not applicable. To be categorized as "supported" and "not supported," we needed to see direct and compelling evidence that confirmed

¹³Butterfield and Watson are obvious choices as they were chairs of the British Committee that significantly contributed to the development of the English School. Vincent generally is regarded as the most direct intellectual heir to Bull and a major contributor to the School. Buzan is chosen because of his efforts to "reconvene" the English School, starting in the early 1990s. Each of the hypotheses will be "tested" by looking at the works of the four scholars.

or disconfirmed the hypothesis. If the author did not provide a clear answer or expressed contradictory opinions related to the hypothesis, we categorized their work as “inconclusive.” The “not applicable” category was used if a particular hypothesis was not discussed by the author in question. Rather than a central focus on, or even an explicit discussion of, a particular hypothesis, we have looked for the problems and questions central to the works of these scholars that show strong connections with the hypothesis in question. If that is not the case, or if the author slightly touches on the matter in a couple of pages in one of his works, we categorized the scholar’s work as being “not applicable.”

We do not expect to find exact wording in the works of our test scholars because neither Wight nor Bull explicitly formulated and expressed their ideas as hypotheses. We derived the hypotheses by first formulating empirical questions based in their work and then by going back to their writings to try to identify related and explicit arguments. A brief discussion of each hypothesis is provided in order to clarify any possible misunderstandings because of our wording of them. We also rely on other studies of the works of Butterfield, Watson, Vincent, and Buzan to cross-check our judgments about degree of support for a particular hypothesis.

Consider this first hypothesis from Wight:

H1: The existence of an international society will likely lead to greater cooperation and order between states.

This is a central argument that can be found in virtually all of Wight’s works. He tried to show that the three theoretical traditions he identified are in constant interaction at all three levels of world politics, namely, in the international system, the international society, and the world society. Nevertheless, as we have observed at several points before, his focus and main contribution pertained to international society. Wight (1966, 1977, 1986, 1991) contends that international society is the “playground” primarily for the rationalist (Grotian) tradition that—through common culture, shared values, norms, institutions, and the like—will promote and maintain order and cooperation among states. It can be argued, as Dale Copeland (2003) does, that this is the only clear, testable hypothesis common to the English School community. However, how and why the creation of an international society will lead to greater cooperation and a more stable order among states is not quite clear in Wight’s work. Other scholars in the English School tradition, such as Bull and Vincent, have tried to address this question.

With regard to H1, Butterfield has argued that the careful and conscious effort of statecraft in Europe created European international society (Dunne 1998). He noted indirectly that the existence of such a society is possible only if a certain level of order and cooperation exists among states, especially through the workings of statesmen (Butterfield 1966). Watson’s (1982, 1987, 1992; Bull and Watson 1984) various writings support this hypothesis and demonstrate that the historical trajectory of international society (see especially Watson 1992) confirms that international society leads to cooperation and order. Vincent (1974, 1986, 1990a, 1990b) also supports H1 and goes even further. He argues that, as it enhances order and cooperation, the evolution of international society also provides more justice.¹⁴ Finally, Buzan (1993, 2001) endorses H1 and tries to show that international society can be formed even from anarchy. He focuses on how international society can be enhanced to maintain order and cooperation among states.

The second hypothesis from Wight is as follows:

H2: The lack of a common culture among states is likely to hinder development of an international society.

¹⁴This judgment about Vincent’s position also is supported by Tim Dunne (1998) and Nicholas Wheeler (1992).

Wight (1977:33) observed that “we must assume that a states-system will not come into being without a degree of cultural unity among its members.” As Dunne (1998) and Buzan (1993) argue, Wight used “states-system” when he meant “international society.” For Wight, a common culture came before the creation of an international society, and so it is a fundamental property of any international society. A common culture is essential to the survival and maintenance of an international society. Even though most scholars in the English School agree that a common culture may be required for the creation of an international society, it is not a necessary condition and international society is regarded as able to accommodate different cultures.

None of the scholars listed in Table 3 supports H2. Unlike Wight, Butterfield is unsure about the necessity of a common culture, although he does not deny that it is an important attribute in the creation and consolidation of international society. In place of common culture, Butterfield (1965, 1966, cited in Dunne 1998:125) emphasizes the conscious efforts of enlightened statesmen, working together toward a set of common rules, norms, and values and even bringing “alien” cultures into international society. According to Butterfield (1965, cited in Dunne 1998:125–126), “effective forces making for some sort of combination *may be* the elements of an antecedent common culture. . . . [I]t looks as though (in the conditions of the past at least) a states-system can only be achieved by a tremendous conscious effort of reassembly after a political hegemony has broken down.” As is obvious from this quotation, for Butterfield, international society is something that needs conscious efforts on the part of statesmen to be created.

Even though Watson seems to endorse what Wight has said about the necessity of a common shared culture in the development of an international society, especially as articulated in the following quotation, there is more than meets the eye: “But was a common culture necessary for the formation of an international society? The evidence was that up till present this was always so” (Watson 1987:150). However, when this observation is considered within a larger framework, it becomes evident that, like others, Watson also denies the necessity clause. He asserts that, with the expansion of the European international society, different cultures are absorbed within the same international society. These cultures adopt and accept some of the norms, values, and rules of the old system and transform others (Watson 1987). Although historically a common culture can be observed, for Watson that does not create sufficient grounds for the inclusion of culture as *the* element necessary for the creation of an international society.

Vincent does not support the “conditionality” argument about culture either. In his discussion of the possibility of a global cosmopolitan culture, Vincent asserts that such a culture does not exist as yet but should emerge from the exchange between cultures in which global values are worked out (cited in Dunne 1998). Like Bull, Vincent maintains that, although a common culture is desirable and useful in the creation of an international society, such an expectation does not coincide with the current realities of the global international society.

Buzan (1993:333) explicitly opposes Wight’s idea of the necessity of a common culture: “whether or not it is a necessary condition, as Wight argues, is arguable.” He goes further and invokes the concepts of *gemeinschaft* in which culture is grown and *gesellschaft* in which culture is produced. He indicates that, from a *gesellschaft* perspective, it is plausible that international society is a result of “a rational response to the existence of an increasingly dense and interactive international system” (Buzan 1993:334).

A third hypothesis, this time from Bull, reads as follows:

H3: If there are common interests, then a universal society is possible even without a common cultural framework.

Bull was not satisfied with Wight’s formulation, which placed common culture at the heart of international society. Although Bull agreed that the creation

of European international society had included an element of common culture, it is far from homogenous. Culture, therefore, is not a necessary condition for development, expansion, and maintenance of any international society (Bull 1966, 1977, 1984a, 1984b; Bull and Watson 1984). Bull argued that the existence of common interests, especially in preserving the international system, will cause states to adopt norms, institutions, and values that in turn will lead to the creation or adaptation of international society. According to Bull, if culture is a necessary element, and if those who do not share a culture with members of the international society cannot join the “club,” then it is impossible to talk seriously about—let alone create—a global international society to the degree it exists today.

H3 elicits mostly favorable reactions. Although Butterfield rejected the necessity of a common culture for development of an international society, he did not clarify whether existence of common interests effectively can replace culture and ensure the survival and development of the international system. Butterfield argued instead, as noted above, that the “conscious efforts” of statesmen working with the instruments of European statecraft can create an international society.

Consistent with his not-so-clear but eventual rejection of Wight’s conditionality argument, Watson (together with Bull 1984) in the conclusion of *The Expansion of International Society* observed that “this book suggests that perceived common interest will often lead to the improvisation of the rules even in the absence of a common culture that already contains them.” This assertion indicates that, to a large extent, Watson shared Bull’s contention.

Vincent, indirectly at least, also supported H3. He argued for the necessity of creating common values, especially pertaining to human rights, or what he later called “basic rights,” while still holding to the principle of nonintervention as the norm (but permitting selected exceptions). However, Vincent (1974, 1986, 1990a) recognized that today’s world is not culturally homogenous and does not have the same conception of human rights. He contends that a lack of consensus, however, does not negate the development of an international society; “outsiders” are observed to accept the values and norms of the European international system while at the same time shaping them for the future (Dunne 1998).

In his argument concerning H3, Buzan (1993, 2001; Buzan and Little 1996) develops a *gesellschaft* understanding of society and argues that, once it is established, an international society gains a momentum of its own. An international society moves toward a self-consciously constructed route of integration that starts from only a minimal set of rules, namely, mutual recognition of each other as legal equals.

A fourth hypothesis, also from Bull, can be stated as:

H4: The search for human (individual) and world (cosmopolitan) justice will likely destroy order in international society.

The tension between order and justice occupied a central place in Bull’s (1977, 1984a, 1984b; see also Dunne 1998) works. Given that international society is based on sovereignty and the principal of nonintervention, any effort to legitimize foreign intervention into the domestic politics of other states, for whatever reason, will destabilize the very foundations of the system. Bull leaned toward a pluralist understanding of international society instead of the solidarist strand in the rationalist tradition.¹⁵ However, he did seem to take pause with his own claim that justice is

¹⁵The pluralist-soliarist distinction was put forward by Bull. However, as Buzan (2004:46) suggests, it was picked up by the next generation of English School scholars. As we mentioned before, our concern in this essay is with the “classics” of the School; therefore, we are not paying particular attention to this important and ongoing debate. However, given that the pluralist-soliarist distinction appears in a number of places throughout the present essay, we believe it is important to clarify these conceptions of international society. In a nutshell, the pluralist-soliarist debate “is about the nature and potentiality of international society, and particularly about the actual and potential extent of shared norms, rules, and institutions within systems of states. For the English School, this debate hinges mainly on questions of international law as the foundation of international society, and especially on whether

only possible within order (Bull 1977). This uneasiness led him to address the demands of the Third World more with time (Bull 1984b).

Although Butterfield hinted at H4 in some parts of his work, it never fully developed as an idea with him. As he puts it clearly in a letter to Kenneth Thompson, because he was an historian, he had less interest in current affairs (cited in Dunne 1998). The question of justice vs. order does not play a significant role in Butterfield's works, and that is interesting because of his self-stated fundamentalist Christian beliefs, which one might have expected would lead him to contemplate what is just and fair.

Watson is not clear on the issue, which forces us to classify his response to H4 as inconclusive. Although he is openly skeptical about the possibility of a universal understanding of justice—not only because of the different conceptions but its changing nature through time—he nevertheless did not argue that such an attempt would destroy international society (Watson 1982:49). Watson also did not differentiate between human, international, and world variants, making it nearly impossible to determine which kind of justice he is talking about in the brief passages in which it is mentioned.

Vincent (1974, 1986) painted different pictures in his earlier works on nonintervention from his later works on human rights. He reveals a strong pluralist stand in his famous *Nonintervention and International Order* and argues that states are not ready to sanction intervention to promote justice within their peers (Dunne 1998). By contrast, however, he leans toward the solidarist camp in his later works, especially in *Human Rights and International Relations*. Even then, though, he stops short of endorsing a “blank check” for intervention in the name of human rights. Vincent (1986:114) argues that doing so would “issue a license for all kinds of interference, claiming with more or less plausibility to be humanitarian, but driving huge wedges into international order.” He also maintains that little or no support exists for a doctrine of collective humanitarian intervention among states.

Buzan suggest that Bull's fears were largely exaggerated and intervention in search of human rights does not necessarily undermine sovereignty and international order. If human rights are safely embedded within the domestic constitution of each member state, that will become another norm or rule of the international society. He does not explain how we can reach such a community of liberal states that respects human rights. Nevertheless, it is clear that Buzan does not support Bull's hypothesis about the menaces inherent in a search for justice and intervention.

A fifth hypothesis, again from Bull, is as follows:

H5: Strengthening international (interstate) justice will likely help sustain and strengthen international order.

the international law in question should be (or include) natural law (as it was for Grotius), or positive law” (Buzan 2004:45–46). Pluralists tend to lean toward the realist side of rationalism; they are state-centric and assume that international law is positive law. They stress the primacy of states as the de facto dominant organizational unit for humanity, committed to the preservation of political and cultural difference and distinctness in the international system (Buzan 2004). Consequently, the pluralist perception of international society is minimal and pretty much restricted to “shared concerns about the degree of international order under anarchy necessary for coexistence, and thus largely confined to agreements about mutual recognition of sovereignty, rules for diplomacy, and promotion of the nonintervention principle” (Buzan 2004:46). Solidarists, on the other hand, lean toward the Kantian side of rationalism. Many solidarists believe that a certain degree of cosmopolitanism and a concern for human rights is necessary for international society (Buzan 2004). Therefore, they presuppose a wider scope for international society than pluralists envision, encompassing shared norms, rules, and institutions on matters such as limitations on the use of force and universally acceptable standards on human rights. As Buzan (2004:47) suggests “[s]olidarism focuses on the possibility of shared moral norms underpinning a more expansive, and almost inevitably more interventionist, understanding of international order.” To sum up, the pluralist-solidarist debate is “about whether one starts from a cosmopolitan position driven by ethical commitments, or from a state-centric position driven by positive law. In another, simpler and less politically charged sense, it is about the extent and degree of institutionalization of shared interests and values in systems of agreed rules of conduct” (Buzan 2004:61).

Bull differentiated between levels of justice. He argued that pursuit of human and world justice could cause instability and lead to the destruction of international society. However, improved living conditions in the Third World, along with decreasing inequality between North and South, could be expected to strengthen international society by providing the “latecomers,” poor, and have-nots with a reason—an interest—in maintaining the order of international society rather than totally overturning it (Bull 1984b; Bull and Watson 1984; Vincent 1990b; Dunne 1998). In this way, Bull effectively escaped from the order vs. justice dichotomy and Carr’s (1939) troubling question of “order for whom?”

Like the previous hypothesis, H5 does not have a central place in the writings of Butterfield. As noted before, Butterfield did not address the issue of justice very often. His interests lay within the history of international society rather than with the tensions between justice and order and how justice can be used to strengthen order. We can only speculate that, given his Christian beliefs, Butterfield (1953) probably would argue that fair and equal treatment for everyone should be the responsibility of the members of an international society. He hinted at that position when criticizing moralism and the portrayal of the Soviet Union as evil. He cautioned against such demonization of others because it can disturb the order of international society.

H5 also is not central to Watson’s work. He shows interest in the historical trajectory of international systems and societies rather than the theoretical tensions between order and justice. Watson also does not differentiate between human and world justice on the one hand and international justice on the other, so his overall response is not clear. He acknowledges the presence of this particular hypothesis from time to time without labeling it as such (Dunne 1998). So it is proper, we believe, to code this hypothesis as not applicable for Watson.

One would expect Vincent to support Bull’s argument, given his connection to Bull’s legacy of an agenda on justice and order. However, Vincent does not clearly endorse what Bull has proposed, although he comes close with his definition of “basic rights.” Vincent contends that, if we raise the standard of living and human rights within states, then there is no need to search for world justice and intervention that will destabilize international society. He is concerned genuinely about the Third World (cited in Dunne 1998) and concentrates on the notion of basic rights in order to overcome the relativism of human rights and justice assessed subjectively. But, once again, he stops short of clarifying who are the “bad guys” and what we should do about them. Vincent’s reluctance is an indication of the tension between the solidarist and pluralist sides of his position. Thus it seems unfair to list him as a supporter of Bull’s hypothesis when such tensions are present in his works.

Buzan does not place particular importance on international justice as a way to strengthen international society. He shows more concern with establishing that, even with minimal commonalities (such as mutual recognition of each other as legal equals) and allowing for the logic of anarchy, an international society can be formed consciously following a *gesellschaft* understanding (Buzan 1993, 2001; Buzan and Little 1996). Even in his call for reconvening the English School, Buzan (2001; Buzan and Little 1996) does not dwell upon either the question of justice or the tension between order and justice.

A sixth hypothesis, from Bull, is as follows:

H6: Order in international politics is more likely to be sustained by fortification of the institutions of an international society (that is, the practice of balance of power, diplomacy, and international law).

During his quest for sustained order in international society, Bull (1966, 1977) turned toward the classical instruments of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century

European international society, namely, balance of power, diplomacy, and international law. Although Bull is not the first scholar within the English School to address balance of power, diplomacy, and international law, he is the scholar who has most systematically investigated their role in maintaining and strengthening order in international society. He devoted about one-third of his most famous work, *The Anarchical Society*, to the discussion of such mechanisms (Bull 1977:101–233).

Discussion of H6 can be brief because, like H1, it also is supported by each scholar under review. Although from time to time they weigh one institution of international society against another, all four scholars endorse the classical English School wisdom that prioritizes mechanisms such as diplomacy, balance of power, and international law in maintaining order. This also is a reflection of methodological preferences; they rely mostly on historical accounts and narratives (with the possible exception of Buzan, who seems closer to US-style realism). Furthermore, the scholars' primary example of international society is European. Thus they naturally turn to the classical tools of European statecraft to understand how order was maintained throughout the development and expansion of that system's international society. Another common point (even for Vincent) is that international law has been undertheorized and underresearched. This point is interesting because, given the rationalist tendency among these English School scholars, one would have expected more work on international law and the presence of international lawyers within the School.

Consider the overall picture conveyed by Table 3, which sums up the performance of the hypotheses. H1 and H6 are supported by all four scholars. Indeed, H1 is the central argument of the English School as a whole, and H6 is a direct product of the School's methodological preferences, namely, relying on the classical approach. By contrast, it is clear from the results for H2 that the other scholars and Bull do not share Wight's conviction that common culture is a "must" in the formation of international society. (Of course, that does not mean they necessarily deny the importance of a common culture either.) H3 finds support in the writings of three out of the four scholars, a clear sign of Bull's influence. H4 and H5 receive mixed support and, with the notable exception of Vincent, do not occupy a uniformly central place on the research agenda. Vincent, however, is not always in agreement with Bull; this is precisely because he moved from a pluralist conception of international society toward a more solidarist base without fully embracing it even in his later writings.

We now check on how the scholars stack up across the hypotheses. Butterfield seems most at odds with the hypotheses, supporting only two of them. Watson holds different views on three of the hypotheses developed by Wight and Bull. Butterfield did most of his work well before Bull and was a contemporary of Wight, so it is probably unlikely that he would internalize their arguments explicitly. This also is true for Watson, who worked closely with Bull but still had disagreements with him. By contrast, Vincent, a student of Bull's, shows the most consistency with the hypotheses. Similar advantage is present with Buzan, who evidences more consistency with the ideas of Bull and Wight than Butterfield and Watson (although the latter two, interestingly enough, once served as chairs of the British Committee). We can infer that more convergence and implicit acceptance of these six hypotheses (perhaps with the exception of H2) might happen were our analysis to shift more toward contemporary scholarship within the English School.

Our analysis so far suggests that the English School is a progressive research enterprise. T_1 is a step beyond T_0 because Bull, building on Wight's works, not only refined but also followed them to logical conclusions and dealt with the problems of how we can achieve and maintain international society. Without violating the hard core of the School, Bull successfully revised Wight's argument about the necessary conditions for the formation of an international society. His revision is reflected in H3 and supported by others, as evidenced in Table 3. Bull then further assessed the consequences of international society by looking at the relation between order and

TABLE 3. A Survey of English School Research as Related to the Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Butterfield	Watson	Vincent	Buzan
<i>H1: The existence of an international society will likely lead to greater cooperation and order between states.</i>	Supported	Supported	Supported	Supported
<i>H2: The lack of a common culture among states is likely to hinder development of an international society.</i>	Not supported	Not supported	Not supported	Not supported
<i>H3: If there are common interests, then a universal society is possible even without a common cultural framework.</i>	Inconclusive	Supported	Supported	Supported
<i>H4: The search for human (individual) and world (cosmopolitan) justice will likely destroy order in international society.</i>	Not applicable	Inconclusive	Supported	Not supported
<i>H5: Strengthening international (interstate) justice will likely help to sustain and strengthen international order.</i>	Not applicable	Not applicable	Inconclusive	Not applicable
<i>H6: Order in international politics is more likely to be sustained by fortification of institutions of international society (i.e., the practice of balance of power, diplomacy, and international law).</i>	Supported	Supported	Supported	Supported

justice, a central issue that was not present in Wight. H3 and H6, the necessary conditions for the establishment of an international society and mechanisms for maintaining it, represent the solved empirical problems in Bull's scholarship. As Table 3 suggests, these hypotheses are supported by other scholars of the English School to a large extent. However, the hypotheses on justice and order, namely, H4 and H5, do not receive the same level of support as the others. So the issue of justice and its relation with order represents an unsolved empirical problem for the English School. Of course, future research will reveal whether that remains true for T_2 , if and when we identify it.

Conclusions

From the perspective of a research enterprise, analysis of the English School shows that its founding members exhibited theoretical and methodological diversity. Three major traditions in IR—realism, rationalism, and revolutionism—undergird the English School scholars' rich theoretical work. The state-centric approach to IR, emphasis on the anarchical nature of international politics, rigorous definition of states-systems, and, most important, the novel concept of international society have their roots in the three traditions.

Methodologically, the three levels of analysis on which the School focuses have been the states-system, international society, and world society. The scientific study of IR was renounced at T_0 and T_1 by Wight and Bull, respectively. During its early development, the School embraced a rather historical and comparative approach and seems to continue to do so today.

Empirically, the English School looks progressive so far. There is convergence among our test scholars, namely, Butterfield, Watson, Vincent, and Buzan on four out of six hypotheses. There is unanimous support for H1 and H6, almost unanimous support for H3, and unanimous rejection of H2. This shows a solid consensus among the English School community about the necessary conditions for maintenance of an international society, mechanisms for maintaining order within

an international society, and the belief that the existence of an international society will lead to greater cooperation and order between and among states. Not every problem, however, has been solved. The relation between order and justice, for instance, is still very controversial. Naturally, further empirical research, especially a survey of more contemporary scholars working within the English School, will help there and enable us to determine the School's degree of progress since the era of Wight and Bull.

Further analysis based on the concept of a research enterprise should probe more deeply into development of the English School after the advent of T_0 and T_1 . Interesting issues that deserve further study include the following:

- (1) Can we identify T_2 (and perhaps T_3 and beyond)?
- (2) What is the overall status of the English School as a research enterprise in IR?
- (3) Can approaches to the study of IR beyond historical analysis, such as rational choice and others not currently found within the School, contribute to its further progress?
- (4) What is the link between the normative strand of the English School and critical theory?
- (5) How can we clarify the concept of world society, and can it provide a link to constructivism?
- (6) What is the relevance of the English School in what might be labeled the "Post-Cold War International System" (Harrison 2004)?

Given the success of the English School as appraised in this review, reason exists to be optimistic that pursuit of answers to the preceding questions will produce further progress for this intellectually compelling and increasingly prominent approach toward the study of international affairs.

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