

The English School in IR Theory



International society theory (the English school)

- focuses on the shared norms and values of states and how they regulate international relations. Examples of such norms include diplomacy, order, and [international law](#). Unlike neo-realism, it is not necessarily positivist. Theorists have focused particularly on humanitarian intervention, and are subdivided between solidarists, who tend to advocate it more, and pluralists, who place greater value in order and sovereignty.

The 'English School'

- Particular strand of international relations theory, also known as **Liberal Realism**, **Rationalism**, **Grotianism** or the **British institutionalists**, maintains that there is a 'society of states' at the international level, despite the condition of 'anarchy' (literally the lack of a ruler or world state). Its strongest influence is functionalism, maintains that there is a 'society of states' at the international level, despite the condition of 'anarchy' (literally the lack of a ruler or world state). Its strongest influence

Literaturtipp: Key Works

- Hedley Bull, [*The Anarchical Society*](#) (1977).
- Herbert Butterfield, Martin Wight (eds), *Diplomatic Investigations* (1966).
- Martin Wight, *Four seminal thinkers in international theory : Machiavelli, Grotius, Kant, and Mazzini* (2005)
- Martin Wight, *Systems of States* (1977)
- Martin Wight, *Power Politics* (1978)
- Martin Wight, *International Theory. The three traditions* (1991)

Literaturtipp

- **Adam Watson: The Evolution of International Society. A comparative historical analysis. London 1992**
- **Hedley Bull/Adam Watson (eds): The Expansion of International Society. Oxford 1984**
- **Tim Dunne: Inventing International Society. A History of the English School. Basingstoke 1998**
- **Barry Buzan: International Society and World Society, Cambridge 2004**

Website

- www.polis.leeds.ac.uk/research/international-relations-security/english-school/

International Society

- International relations represents a society International relations represents a society of states. This international society can be detected in the ideas that animate the key institutions that regulate international relations: war International relations represents a society of states. This international society can be detected in the ideas that animate the key institutions that regulate international relations: war, the great powers International relations represents a society of states. This international society can be detected in the ideas that animate the key institutions that regulate international relations: war, the great powers, diplomacy International relations represents a society of states. This international society can be detected in the ideas that animate the key institutions that regulate international relations: war, the great powers, diplomacy, the balance of

International Society II

- There are differing accounts concerning the evolution of those ideas, some (like Martin Wight) arguing their origins can be found in the remnants of medieval conceptions of *societas Christiana*, and others such as [Hedley Bull](#) There are differing accounts concerning the evolution of those ideas, some (like Martin Wight) arguing their origins can be found in the remnants of medieval conceptions of *societas Christiana*, and others such as Hedley Bull, in the concerns of sovereign states to safeguard and promote basic goals, especially their survival. Most English School understandings of international society blend these two together, maintaining that the contemporary society of states is partly the product of a common civilization - the Christian world of medieval Europe, and before that, the Roman Empire - and partly that of a kind of [Lockean](#) contract.

Reexamination of traditional approaches

- A great deal of the English School of thought concerns itself with the examination of traditional international theory, casting it into three divisions (described by Buzan as the English schools' triad):
- Realist or Hobbesian Realist or Hobbesian (after Thomas Hobbes)
- Rationalist (or Grotian, after Hugo Grotius)
- Revolutionist (or Kantian, after Immanuel Kant).
- In broad terms, the English School itself has supported the rationalist or Grotian tradition, seeking a middle way (or via media) between the 'power politics' In broad terms, the English School itself has supported the rationalist or Grotian tradition, seeking a middle way (or via media) between the 'power politics' of realism and the 'utopianism' of revolutionism.
- Later Wight changed his triad into a four part