

Regime Theory and the English School of International Relations: A Comparison

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In recent years several authors have drawn attention to the resemblance between regime theory and what has become widely known as the English school of international relations.¹ In particular, it has been suggested that these two schools of thought could, in a number of ways, learn from one another and that they could, in some respects, be profitably synthesised.² With the purpose of getting a firmer grip on what might be involved in such a synthesis, this article seeks to identify and clarify the main conceptual, methodological and substantive similarities of the two bodies of thought, and similarly to identify and clarify the principal ways in which they differ.

At the outset, however, it should be emphasised that both regime theory and the English school are quite diverse bodies of thought. In examining the similarities and differences between the two schools it is important not to overlook certain significant differences within them. It is to these internal differences that the article first turns.

Diversity Within the Schools

Regime Theory

The earliest articles drawing attention to the existence of international regimes were stimulated by calls for pragmatic solutions to what many considered new and genuinely global problems such as environmental degradation, resource depletion and problems associated with the spread of scientific and technological

The authors would like to thank Ian H. Rowlands, John Simpson and Roy Smith for their comments on an earlier draft of this article.

1. See Roger Tooze, 'International Political Economy', and Michael Clarke, 'Transnationalism', in Steve Smith (ed.), *International Relations: British and American Approaches* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), pp. 121-4, 153-6 and 163-6.

2. J.L. Richardson, 'The Academic Study of International Relations', in J.D.B. Miller and R.J. Vincent (eds), *Order and Violence: Hedley Bull and International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 184.

knowledge.³ For early regime authors, international regime formation represented a reaction to increasing complexity, coupled with an accelerating rate of change, which threatened to overwhelm humankind's capacity to respond to new economic, social and political conditions. Noting that 'on our "only one earth" we are, for the first time, living a single history',⁴ these early authors turned to regimes, conceptualised as 'management' structures, as possible means by which to avoid the bleak future predicted by many natural and social scientists.

From the outset, however, it became clear that not one, but several bodies of regime theory were emerging. In the introduction to a special edition of *International Organization*, Stephen Krasner identified three distinct models of international regimes: structuralist or realist, modified structuralist or modified realist, and Grotian.⁵ The realist model assumes a world of unitary state actors each engaged in power maximization. According to this model, regimes, to the extent that they exist at all, are little more than formally constituted structures in which dominant international actors promote and maintain the rules and procedures that best suit their interests. International regimes are merely arenas for acting out power relationships. Conceptualised in this way the idea of regimes has little to offer over and above that which can be discovered through traditional, state-centric and interest based, means of analysis. They are neither autonomous nor intervening variables: they do not have a life of their own, nor do they in any significant sense effect international outcomes. Such outcomes are always determined by the basic causal factors of national interest and power.

For modified realists, regimes 'constitute the general obligations and rights that are a guide to states' behaviour' and should be understood as 'something more than temporary arrangements that change with every shift of power'.⁶ Modified realists attempt to distinguish themselves from the realists by stressing the effects of international institutions and practices on state behaviour.⁷ States are understood as self-interested utility maximizers engaged in a continuous process of sifting possible alternative actions as a means of maximizing their own welfare. However, in an international environment characterised by both anarchy and interdependence, the single-minded pursuit of self-interest often leads to sub-optimal outcomes.

3. John Gerard Ruggie, 'International Responses to Technology: Concepts and Trends', *International Organization* (Vol. 29, No. 3, 1975), pp. 557-83; Ernst B. Haas, 'On Systems and International Regimes', *World Politics* (Vol. 27, No. 2, 1975), pp. 147-74. Although the publication of Haas' article pre-dates that of Ruggie by some three months, Haas acknowledges that Ruggie was the first to coin the term 'international regime'.

4. Ruggie, *op. cit.*, in note 3, p. 557.

5. Stephen D. Krasner, 'Structural Causes and Regime Consequences: Regimes as Intervening Variables', *International Organization* (special issue), (Vol. 36, No. 2, 1982), pp. 185-206. The terms 'realist', 'modified realist' and 'Grotian' will be used throughout this article.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 186.

7. Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony: Co-operation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), p. 26.

According to the modified realists, entering into a regime is a rational choice, particularly in areas of international life where scientific and technological progress increase complexity and transform social expectations. Regimes are the outcome of bargaining and negotiating processes in which utility maximizers, cognizant that the environment in which they operate denies any possibility of achieving their preferred options through self-help, adopt instead a strategy of 'satisficing'. Although modified realists often display some ambivalence towards identifying the central actors in international regimes – acknowledging, for example, that regime rules are commonly directed at regulating the behaviour of non-state actors⁸ – their approach remains predominantly state-centric.⁹

The final model identified by Krasner is the Grotian model. Those who employ this model maintain that regimes are an unavoidable feature of international life. For example, Oran R. Young begins one of his articles: 'We live in a world of international regimes', and Raymond Hopkins and Donald Puchala suggest that 'regimes exist in all areas of international relations, even those such as major power rivalry, that are traditionally looked upon as clear-cut examples of anarchy'.¹⁰ Grotians stress the social context of international relations. They argue that when engaging in any social practice actors are necessarily constrained by rules and norms. These rules and norms should not be understood as empirical facts but as 'attitudinal phenomena' that 'exist primarily as participants' understandings, expectations or convictions about legitimate, appropriate or moral behaviour'.¹¹ Thus they claim that a purely formal understanding of regimes – one that concentrates on bargaining and negotiating procedures, legal rules and concrete international organizations – does not take proper account of the prevailing social environment as a determining factor of outcome.¹² For example, formalism deflects attention away from the part played by non-state actors who collectively contribute to the social environment in which international relations are practised. Grotians do not deny, however, that the state is the central actor on the international stage. Rather, they argue that analysis of regimes must also take account of domestic and transnational actors,

8. Keohane has suggested that regimes would be a necessary feature of international life even if the state was not the dominant actor. See, Keohane, *ibid.*, p. 111, n. 1.

9. The propensity of modified realists to utilize 'game theory' in their analysis is evidence of this. See Joanne Gowa, 'Anarchy, Egoism and the Third Image: The Evolution of Co-operation in International Relations', *International Organization* (Vol. 40, No. 1, 1986), pp. 167–86.

10. Oran R. Young, 'International Regimes: Problems of Concept Formation', *World Politics* (Vol. 32, No. 3, 1980), p. 331; Raymond F. Hopkins and Donald J. Puchala, 'International Regimes: Lessons from Inductive Analysis', *International Organization* (Vol. 36, No. 2, 1982), p. 270.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 246.

12. Oran Young, for example, attaches great importance to the distinction between organisations and institutions. This will be discussed in more detail later. See Oran R. Young, *International Co-operation: Building Regimes for Natural Resources and the Environment* (London: Cornell University Press, 1989).

since both influence the bargaining positions of state negotiators engaged in forming and maintaining a regime.¹³

The English School

As with regime theory, it would be incorrect to suppose that the English school forms an entirely cohesive whole. The main assumptions, ideas, and arguments of the English school, and indeed the question whether such a school in any theoretically significant sense actually exists, have been much debated and there is no need to recount these debates here.¹⁴ However it is important to note that if it makes sense to talk of such a school then there are some important differences within it. For example, whereas Wight and Bull see institutions as central to the maintenance of international order, Manning and James simply point to rules. Moreover, although Wight and Bull agree that institutions in general are highly important, they disagree on the particular institutions actually in operation. For Wight they are diplomacy, alliances, guarantees, war and neutrality, whereas for Bull they are the balance of power, international law, diplomacy, war and the concert of great powers.¹⁵

Differences of a more fundamental kind are also apparent. Manning's conception of international society is derived interpretively from the meanings statesmen give to and the assumptions that underlie their actions. In Manning's view, an international society exists because those who speak and act in the name of states assume that it does.¹⁶ This interpretive approach is also evident, though less strongly, in the writings of Wight and Bull. Bull, for example, argues that the answer to the question 'Does the idea of international society conform

13. The importance of domestic actors in regime formation was recognized in the early literature on regime theory. See Peter A. Gourevitch, 'The Second Image Reversed: The International Sources of Domestic Politics', *International Organization* (Vol. 32, No. 4, 1978), pp. 881-911. More recently see Geoffrey R. D. Underhill, 'Industrial Crisis and International Regimes: France, the EEC and International Trade in Textiles, 1974-84', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* (Vol. 19, No. 2, 1990), pp. 185-206.

14. For analysis and discussion of the English school, see Roy E. Jones, 'The English School of International Relations: A Case For Closure', *Review of International Studies* (Vol. 7, No. 1, 1981), pp. 1-12; Hidemi Suganami, 'Developments in the Study of International Society in England: A Critical Exposition of the Views Advanced by Manning, James, Northedge and Bull', Unpublished Paper, (1980); Hidemi Suganami, 'The Structure of Institutionalism: An Anatomy of British Mainstream International Relations', *International Relations* (Vol. VII, No. 5, 1983), pp. 2363-81; Gene M. Lyons, 'The Study of International Relations in Great Britain: Further Connections', *World Politics* (Vol. 38, 1986), pp. 626-45; Sheila Grader, 'The English School of International Relations: Evidence and Evaluation', *Review of International Studies* (Vol. 14, No. 1, 1988), pp. 29-44; Peter Wilson, 'The English School of International Relations: A Reply to Sheila Grader', *Review of International Studies* (Vol. 15, No. 1, 1989), pp. 49-58.

15. Martin Wight, *Power Politics*, edited by Hedley Bull and Carsten Holbraad, (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1978), p. 111; Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society* (London: Macmillan, 1977), pp. 101-229; and Alan James, 'International Society', *British Journal of International Studies* (Vol. 4, No. 2, 1978), pp. 97-106.

16. C.A.W. Manning, *The Nature of International Society* (London: Macmillan and the London School of Economics, Reissue 1975), pp. 28-44.

to reality?' depends on whether or not practitioners of foreign policy think in terms of an international society.¹⁷ In contrast Alan James takes a much more positivistic approach. According to James, all societies have three ingredients: a plurality of members, communication between them, and a set of binding rules. These ingredients are present at the international level in the form of sovereign states, communication through diplomacy, and binding rules of international law. Therefore, the existence of international society can be demonstrated empirically.¹⁸

One further difference is that while the political predisposition of the English school is generally conservative, some members of the school are more conservative than others. Northedge and James, for example, reject unequivocally the possibility of creating a more cosmopolitan world order. The anarchic nature of international society strongly precludes such a possibility. In any case, there are no good reasons for thinking that the quality of life in such an order would be any better than that which pertains in the present society of sovereign states. Mayall and Vincent, on the other hand, express the view that a more cosmopolitan order may be preferable and, indeed, may not be completely beyond the realm of the possible.¹⁹ In his later work Bull also seemed to be moving in this direction when he emphasised the growth, at least in the 'advanced' countries, of a 'cosmopolitan moral awareness'. Although governments did not always live up to their responsibilities, they were beginning to acknowledge an obligation for promoting development and welfare beyond their own frontiers. Bull also suggested, though not without a note of caution, that states have the potential to act as 'local agents of a world common good'.²⁰

Comparing the Two Schools

When comparing regime theory and the English school, therefore, it should be borne in mind that not every scholar associated with either one or the other necessarily subscribes to their characteristic features in exactly the same way or to the same degree. Some of the most significant internal differences will be

17. Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, *op. cit.*, in note 15, pp. 40–1; Wilson, *op. cit.*, in note 14, pp. 52–4. Note also that Wight talks of 'an international social consciousness'. See his 'Western Values in International Relations', in Martin Wight and Herbert Butterfield (eds), *Diplomatic Investigations* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1966), pp. 86–98.

18. James, *op. cit.*, in note 15, pp. 97–106; Suganami, 'Developments in the Study of International Society', *op. cit.*, in note 14, p. 7.

19. See Alan James, *Sovereign Statehood: The Basis of International Society* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1986), pp. 257–65; F.S. Northedge, *The International Political System* (London: Faber, 1976), p. 32; James Mayall, 'International Society and International Theory', in Michael Donelan (ed.), *The Reason of States* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1978), pp. 122–41; and R.J. Vincent, *Human Rights and International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 124–5, Chs 7 and 8.

20. Hedley Bull, *Justice and International Relations: The Hagey Lectures* (Waterloo, Ont.: University of Waterloo, 1984), pp. 12–4. Bull's note of caution was that states have to be treated with suspicion when they purport to act on behalf of the international community as a whole since they are 'notoriously self-serving in their policies'.

further commented upon as the analysis proceeds. The presence of such differences, however, does not rule out the possibility of making a broad comparison of the two schools, and it is proposed that this can best be done by reference to six areas. These are (i) Grotianism, (ii) power and interests, (iii) institutions, (iv) interdependence, (v) intellectual origins, and (vi) methodology.

Grotianism

The starting point for identifying what the two schools have in common is the claim, often made, that they both fall within the Grotian tradition of international thought. There is, however, disagreement over the principal characteristics of the Grotian tradition, and therefore to say that both schools are products of this tradition does not necessarily take us very far in determining what exactly they have in common. There is no space here to undertake a detailed examination of the various accounts of the Grotian tradition but two main approaches can be identified: a broad approach and a narrow approach.

The broad approach finds its clearest expression in the work of Martin Wight. Although not the first to identify Grotianism as a distinctive outlook, Wight more than anyone else established Grotianism as one of the main categories of international thought.²¹ Wight described Grotians as the 'law and order and keep your word men' to be distinguished from the Hobbesian 'blood and iron and immorality men' and the Kantian 'subversion and liberation and missionary men'.²² Accordingly, Grotians reject the Hobbesian view that in the absence of a common sovereign, moral and legal rules are meaningless. The lack of a common sovereign does not preclude the possibility of rule-making. For Grotians, normative rules exist in the international realm and they have their source in either state practice or natural law. These rules are meaningful in two senses: on the one hand, states consider themselves to be bound by them; on the other hand, states are consistently restrained by them in practice.

The narrow approach to the Grotian tradition also stresses the importance of rules but places particular emphasis on their enforcement. According to this approach the Grotian tradition is concerned with the solidarity or potential solidarity of the society of states with respect to the enforcement of international law.²³ In this narrow sense the Grotian tradition underlies such things as Article 16 of the League Covenant, Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, the Charter of the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg, and, more recently, the action of the Coalition in the Gulf War.

21. For an earlier account of Grotianism, see Hersch Lauterpact, 'The Grotian Tradition in International Law', *British Year Book of International Law* (London: Oxford University Press, 1946).

22. Hedley Bull, 'Martin Wight and the Theory of International Relations', *British Journal of International Studies* (Vol. 2, No. 2, 1976), p. 104.

23. See Hedley Bull, 'The Grotian Conception of International Society', in Wight and Butterfield, *op. cit.*, in note 17, pp. 51-2.

Whether or not a certain body of theory can be described as falling within the Grotian tradition, therefore, depends on what is meant by that tradition. Perhaps with the exception of the realist camp within regime theory, both schools of thought under examination here deem rules to be important in guiding and restraining states in their international relations. Therefore they can both be considered, with the above proviso, to be part of the Grotian tradition broadly defined.

The two schools also share common ground in rejecting the Grotian tradition narrowly defined. Both regime theory and the English school maintain that enforcement – in the hard sense of collective application of coercion by the international community as a whole against a miscreant state – is not generally practicable. Enforcement is realistic only in the softer senses of decentralised enforcement and peer pressure. Decentralised enforcement involves resort to the sanction of self-help by the victim of an illegal act if the violating state refuses to make reparation or appear before an international tribunal. Traditionally this sanction has usually meant war. Nowadays, however, with the resort to war outlawed except in self-defence, self-help means retortion and reprisals.²⁴ Peer pressure involves making the acceptance of international rules, norms and practices a condition of legitimacy, and making legitimacy a prerequisite for sustaining valued relationships. In the case of regime theory, repeated transgression of regime rules can lead to being 'named out' of a regime and consequently losing the benefits that follow from continued membership. Wight makes a similar point, arguing that membership of international society is dependent upon playing by the rules, the ultimate sanction for deviance being delegitimation.²⁵

However, there are some important differences between and within the two schools with regard to their Grotian credentials. Four such differences can be identified. First, it is sometimes claimed that natural law has a central place in Grotian thought.²⁶ Regime theory, however, ignores natural law. Rule-creation is seen purely in terms of rational calculation of interest. By contrast, some members of the English school have been much interested in natural law – though the extent to which it informs their thought is probably limited. Nonetheless, Vincent's attempt to find a philosophical grounding for human rights ultimately rests on the notion that human beings ought to have them by virtue of 'right reason'.²⁷ Though critical of many aspects of natural law

24. For an excellent summary of the status of decentralised sanctions in international law see Michael Akehurst, *A Modern Introduction to International Law*, 4th edition, (London: Allen and Unwin, 1982), pp. 5–7.

25. Martin Wight, *Systems of States*, edited by Hedley Bull, (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1977), p. 170.

26. See A. Claire Cutler, 'The "Grotian Tradition" in International Relations', *Review of International Studies* (Vol. 17, No. 1, 1991), pp. 41–65; and Hedley Bull, 'The Importance of Grotius in the Study of International Relations', in Hedley Bull, Benedict Kingsbury, and Adam Roberts (eds), *Hugo Grotius and International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 78–93.

27. Vincent, *Human Rights*, *op. cit.*, in note 19, pp. 53–7.

doctrine, elements of natural law thinking can also be found in the work of Bull. Following H.L.A. Hart's 'minimum content of natural law', Bull argues that international society, like any other society, is based on certain elementary, primary, and universal rules – those protecting life, property and the sanctity of agreements.²⁸ Bull contended that one of the contributions of the natural law tradition was '[t]o draw attention to the fact that these widely shared rules seem to reflect not the conventions of particular times and places but the nature of human beings and the perennial situation in which they find themselves'.²⁹

Second, with respect to the scope of the international social realm, regime theorists do not talk in terms of a universal international society but rather in terms of issue-areas where cooperation, rule-making and regime creation may generate what amount to specific, and perhaps temporary, societal realms. The English school, on the other hand, associates the idea of international society with the state system as a whole, though they tend to see universality as an historical development rather than a normative claim.³⁰

Third, with respect to the membership of regimes or international society, there are differences both within and between the schools. Modified realists tend to see regimes as being predominantly composed of states, whereas the Grotian model takes a wider view and emphasises the role played by non-state domestic and transnational actors. Hopkins and Puchala, for instance, see elites as the 'practical actors' of regimes, though they also recognise that 'nation-states are the prime official members'. The significance of this view is that elites are seen as having domestic and transnational as well as international ties.³¹ For the English school, Manning and James conceive of international society as a society exclusively of states. Wight stands alone in upholding the view that while states are the immediate members of international society, the ultimate members are individual human beings. Bull and Vincent occupy an intermediate position in

28. Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, *op. cit.*, in note 15, pp. 3–22, and footnote 2, p. 321. See also Hidemi Suganami, 'A Normative Enquiry in International Relations: The Case of "Pacta Sunt Servanda"', *Review of International Studies* (Vol. 9, No. 1, 1983), pp. 43–6.

29. Hedley Bull, 'Natural Law and International Relations', *British Journal of International Studies* (Vol. 5, No. 3, 1979), p. 180. The tension in Bull's thought on the question of natural law is clearly revealed only two paragraphs later when he seems to contradict his earlier claim in saying that '[t]o establish the validity of these rules we can appeal only to other rules, whose validity is established in the same way: there are no rules that are valid independently of human will, that are part of "nature".'

30. A caveat is required here in that Wight and especially Bull maintain that international society is not the only element in world politics but one of three – the other two being the Hobbesian element of a war of all against all and the Kantian element of transnational solidarity and conflict – which are constantly in competition with one another for predominance. See *The Anarchical Society*, *op. cit.*, in note 15, pp. 40–6 and 315–7. See also A. Claire Cutler, *op. cit.*, in note 27, pp. 59–62, for an excellent brief account of how regime theory conceives society as limited to 'pockets or areas of actual agreement'. It should also be noted that some regime theorists talk of regimes 'nesting' within one another, and this, taken to its logical conclusion, may suggest some notion of international society. See Keohane, *After Hegemony*, *op. cit.*, in note 7, pp. 90–1.

31. Hopkins and Puchala, *op. cit.*, in note 10, p. 247.

suggesting, though with great caution, that in some respects international society may be giving way to a more inclusive world society.

Finally, while the Grotian character of regime theory has been largely imputed, it is for the most part a self-conscious element within the English school.

Power and Interests

Although regime theory and the English school can both be described as Grotian in the ways outlined, they nonetheless consider power and interest to be concepts central to a proper understanding of the international scene. With respect to regime theory, both modified realists and Grotians see power and self-interest as the basic causal factors of international co-operation.³² Even for Hopkins and Puchala in many ways the most Grotian of the Grotian regime theorists, regimes are 'closely linked to two classical political concepts – power and interest'.³³ Similarly, Young asserts that regimes offer an opportunity for us to 'come to terms systematically with power and changes in the distribution of power'.³⁴ Though the exercise of power may be more important for the creation of regimes than for their maintenance, and though perceptions of interests, and indeed the distribution of power, may change as a result of involvement in a regime,³⁵ power and interests, rather than, say, justice, propriety or an overriding concern for the welfare of the system of the whole, are the factors which ultimately determine outcomes.

The most widely employed explanation of regime formation and dynamics is the theory of 'hegemonic stability'.³⁶ For the realist model, regimes emerge when a dominant state utilizes its power by ordering the actions of other, weaker, states through co-operative, rule-governed institutions. In contrast, modified realists accept that hegemonic power is a necessary, if not sufficient, condition for the formation of regimes, but they reject the 'crude' realist version of hegemony. They emphasise that the concept of hegemony should be defined in terms of willingness to follow as well as capability to lead. As Keohane asserts,

32. In his introductory chapter to the special issue of *International Organization*, Krasner asserts that 'calculations of egoistic self-interest emerge as central elements in most of the articles in this volume'. See 'Structural Causes', *op. cit.*, in note 5, p. 196. However, on the previous page Krasner suggests that 'values' are also 'basic causal variables' along with interests and power.

33. Hopkins and Puchala, *op. cit.*, in note 10, p. 90.

34. Oran R. Young, 'Regime Dynamics: The Rise and Fall of International Regimes', *International Organization* (Vol. 36, No. 2, 1982) p. 294.

35. Stephen D. Krasner, 'Regimes and the Limits of Realism: Regimes as Autonomous Variables', *International Organization* (Vol. 36, No. 2, 1982), pp. 499–500; Mary Anne Tetreault, 'Regimes and Liberal World Orders', *Alternatives* (Vol. 13, No. 1, 1988), pp. 5–26.

36. Stephen Haggard and Beth A. Simmons, 'Theories of International Regimes', *International Organization* (Vol. 41, No. 3, 1987), pp. 429–517. For a view of hegemonic stability see Robert O. Keohane, 'The Theory of Hegemonic Stability and Changes in the International Economic Regimes, 1967–77', in Ole Holsti, *et. al.*, *Changes in the International System* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1980), pp. 131–62.

in understanding hegemony we 'should seek not only to analyze dominant powers' decisions to engage in rule-making and rule-enforcement, but also explore why secondary states defer to the leadership of the hegemon.'³⁷ Thus, understanding hegemony in regime formation in terms of military or economic capabilities alone fails to take account of moral, social and ideological conditions as a basis for obligation.³⁸ But as Young has observed,³⁹ since the world capitalist system remains the overwhelmingly dominant mode of production, weak states have no alternative structures through which to pursue their interests. Therefore, while regime maintenance may require the deference of weaker states, regime formation occurs only in areas of international life where the hegemon is willing to use its power in ordering international preferences.⁴⁰

For the English school the emphasis on power is different. The balance of power and the role of the great powers have a special place in the thought of the school, but they tend to be conceived as institutions rather than empirical facts or 'basic causal factors'. Power is not seen principally as something that determines 'behaviour' – there is a sense in which the English school takes this for granted – but rather as something with which the society of states has had to come to terms. This has been done through the creation of institutions such as the balance of power and the special rights and responsibilities of the great powers. These institutions have served, though in some periods more effectively than in others, to harness power for the interests of the society of states as a whole. They have enabled a degree of order to be secured that otherwise would have been lacking. The English school, like the modified realists and the Grotians, rejects the crude realist thesis that states are constantly pursuing power almost as if it were an end in itself. For the English school states are concerned about their power, but not pathologically so, and not to the exclusion of all else.

37. Keohane, *After Hegemony*, op. cit., in note 7, p. 39.

38. Keohane, in particular, turns to Antonio Gramsci's account of hegemony maintained as much through the legitimization of 'intellectual and moral' leadership as through 'coercive force'. See Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, trans. and ed. by Quintin Hoare and G. Nowell Smith (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1971), pp. 57–8; Joseph Femia, *Gramsci's Political Thought: Hegemony, Consciousness and the Revolutionary Process* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), Ch. 2; Robert Cox, 'Gramsci, Hegemony and International Relations: An Essay on Method', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* (Vol. 12, No. 2, 1983), pp. 161–175.

39. Oran R. Young, 'International Regimes: Towards a Theory of Institutions', *World Politics* (Vol. 39, No. 1, 1986), p. 120. See also Stephen D. Krasner, 'Transforming International Regimes: What the Third World Wants and Why', in W. Ladd Hollist and James N. Rosenau (eds), *World System Structures* (London: Sage, 1981), pp. 172–201.

40. Keohane notes that coercive hegemony cannot be sustained under conditions of complex interdependence. He puts forward four reasons: i) increased complexity in the world economy means that power is now disaggregated across a wide range of issue-areas; ii) existing co-operative institutions are prized for their functional utility; iii) the costs of forming new co-operative institutions are considered too great; and iv) with the advent of weapons of mass destruction, the traditional method of establishing the dominance of a new hegemon – war – has become unthinkable.

Though states do make power calculations, and from time to time act solely out of concern for their power, in the main they are concerned with a variety of matters, not least their obligations, their standing, their honour and the general propriety of their actions.⁴¹

In a similar vein, the English school's attention to the concept of 'interest' tends to be in terms of 'common interest', whereas regime theorists, and especially modified realists, concentrate on self-interest, and in particular the self-interest of hegemonic powers. Grotians tend to give less weight to self-interest and more to long-term or enlightened self-interest. Young, for example, argues that regimes should be seen as a response to situations where the 'pursuit of interests defined in narrow individual terms characteristically leads to socially undesirable outcomes'.⁴² Regimes for Young are a product of states being able to conceive their interests in broader terms. This coincides with the English school's view of common interests. According to Bull states have a common interest in ensuring that the rules of diplomatic practice are observed and treaty obligations respected, even though ignoring particular rules and obligations can sometimes be of short-term benefit. This is because without respect for international rules, states would become increasingly unwilling to trust one another, effective communication would be impaired, international relations made unpredictable, and order jeopardized.

Above all else, the differences over the concepts of power and interest between regime theory and the English school are explained by a significant difference in general approach. Whereas regime theorists are concerned with the causes of co-operation, and for the most part specific areas or episodes of co-operation, the English school seeks to account for the prevalence of order, and especially for the prevalence of order in international society as a whole. Furthermore, although regime theorists ascribe much importance to the role of the hegemon in fostering co-operation, and members of the English school attach much importance to the role of the great powers in maintaining order, the former have tended to be more reflective than the latter about the quality of the order that co-operation produces. Regime theorists have recognized that regimes may arise because a hegemon may be armed with a dominant ideology through which it consciously or unconsciously determines the political agenda. Though aware of the possibility that activities of the great powers can degenerate into imperialism, members of the English school have not enquired into the possibility that the institution of the great powers may itself be a form of imperialism and that international society may be little more than a rationalisation of the interests of the powerful.

41. See Alan James, 'Power Politics', *Political Studies* (Vol. XIII, No. 3, 1964), pp. 307-26; and Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, *op. cit.*, in note 15, pp. 111-2.

42. Young, 'Regime Dynamics', *op. cit.*, in note 34, p. 281.

Institutions

Both regime theory and the English school give a special place to the role of institutions in their accounts of the international system. However, the way in which institutions are understood by regime theorists does not always coincide with the way in which they are understood by the English school. For most regime theorists, and especially the modified realists, institutions include such things as the UN, GATT, the CSCE, the IMF and NATO. Thus, for these theorists institutions are formal structures, and analysis is largely concerned with their constitutions, institutional structure, decision-making procedures and bureaucratic practices. Institutions in this sense are empirically observable phenomena.

However, more Grotian-orientated regime theorists put forward a different view. Young argues that a distinction should be made between institutions and organizations.⁴³ He contends that an institution can be thought of as an expression of prized social values found in shared convictions about some aspect of social behaviour. To describe an institution requires an examination of the patterns of social relationships which are the customs and habits found in social life. The existence of an institution 'sets up a network or pattern of behavioral relationships that lends order or predictability to human affairs'.⁴⁴ Organisations, on the other hand, are physical entities possessing offices, personnel, equipment and budgets. They are bureaucratic creations designed to achieve specific ends and satisfy well articulated goals or needs. In attempting to understand regimes, or any other form of international co-operation, commentators 'make a mistake when they say that international society features few effective institutions; what they mean to assert is that it has few effective organizations'.⁴⁵ Thus, if international regimes are to be understood in terms of institutions then they cannot be found in the practices and bureaucratic arrangements of international organisations alone. Rather, they are to be found in the attitudes, convictions, expectations and social needs of actors expressing themselves in ways understood as moral and apposite to their social environment.⁴⁶ In short, institutions should be understood as 'conceptual creations not concrete entities'.⁴⁷

One of the difficulties in proceeding in this way is that it is unclear whether a regime should be regarded as synonymous with an institution or something separate. For example, in a recent article Young has suggested that institutions are broader than regimes. However, when it comes to defining the two it is not

43. Oran R. Young, *International Co-operation: Building Regimes for Natural Resources and the Environment* (London: Cornell University Press, 1989), Ch. 2.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

45. Young, 'International Regimes', *op. cit.*, in note 39, p. 108.

46. Hopkins and Puchala, *op. cit.*, in note 10, p. 246.

47. Friedrich V. Kratochwil and John Gerard Ruggie, 'International Organization: A State of the Art on the Art of the State', *International Organization* (Vol. 40, No. 4, 1986), p. 763.

easy to tell the difference: regimes are 'interlocking sets of rights and rules that govern interactions among their members with regard to particular issue areas'; institutions are 'interlocking sets of rights and rules that serve to guide the interactions of parties in specific issue areas'.⁴⁸

Formal institutions, or organisations, such as GATT or NATO, are considered important by the English school but only to the extent that they contribute to the efficacy of a wider, and more fundamental, set of institutions. This is particularly clear in the writings of Wight and Bull who contend that organisations like GATT and NATO are important to the extent that they strengthen and render more efficient the more basic institutions of diplomacy, international law and the balance of power. The creation of organizations that run counter to these institutions, however well intentioned, are bound to have a deleterious effect on the maintenance of order. This is the basis of Bull's rejection of the collective security arrangements of the League of Nations and the United Nations, and related attempts to outlaw war. Such attempts hinder the smooth operation of the balance of power which, for Bull, is the premier institution of international society.

As mentioned above, there is some disagreement over which particular set of institutions are at work in contemporary international society, Bull proposing a more elaborate set than Wight. However, it is quite clear what the English school means by institutions. In Suganami's words an institution is:

a cluster of social rules, conventions, usages and practices..., a set of conventional assumptions held prevalently among society-members... [that] provide a framework for identifying what is the done thing and what is not in the appropriate circumstances.⁴⁹

This understanding of institutions is, of course, virtually identical to the one put forward by Grotian regime theorists. Within regime theory, however, there is considerable uncertainty as to the relationship between institutions, regimes, and indeed, organizations, and although there is agreement between some regime theorists and some members of the English school over the nature of institutions, there is little agreement as to what institutions are actually up and running. This difficulty is compounded by the fact that the literature on international regimes overwhelmingly focuses on formally negotiated international agreements and tends to ignore the social and political processes that underpin them.

48. Oran R. Young, 'Global Environmental Change and International Governance', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* (Vol. 19, No. 3, Winter 1990), pp. 337, 339 and 344. The problem is further compounded if the notion of 'governance' is introduced. See James N. Rosenau, 'Governance, Order, and Change in World Politics', in J.N. Rosenau and Ernst-Otto Czeinpiel (eds), *Governance Without Government: Order and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 8-9.

49. Suganami, 'The Structure of Institutionalism', *op. cit.*, in note 14, p. 2365.

Interdependence

Interdependence is one of the main questions upon which regime theory and the English school diverge. Regime theorists assume a world of growing interdependence in which the traditional principle of self-help is increasingly dysfunctional. Indeed, as mentioned earlier, the impetus for developing regime theory came in part from concern over the burgeoning rate of scientific and technological change and the implications of such change for international co-operation. It is the fact of growing interdependence that makes the formation of regimes both possible and desirable. Most importantly, the political implications of interdependence are profound since, as two recent commentators have put it, 'growing interdependence means the erasure of the boundaries separating international and domestic politics'.⁵⁰

In a sense the English school takes interdependence for granted insofar as they assume that states form a system in which 'interaction between them [is] sufficient to make the behaviour of each a necessary element in the calculations of others'.⁵¹ They also concur with some of the more specific claims of interdependence theory. Bull, for example, asserts that there is 'no doubt that there exists among all societies today a high degree of interdependence or mutual sensitivity in the pursuit of basic human goals'. Moreover, in one of his last works Bull asserts that the principle of self-help has to be rejected given 'the degree to which the politically separate communities of the world are dependent on one another for their security, their prosperity and their ability to control the environment'. Similarly, James Mayall considers the degree of interdependence in the modern world to be not only high but also unprecedented.⁵²

However, the English school is, for the most part, sceptical of the proposition that the international system has been transformed in any fundamental way by the growth of interdependence. This is most clear in their position on the phenomenon generally regarded as the concomitant of interdependence: transnationalism. Northedge argues that transnationalism is far from a new phenomenon in international politics and that it is in decline rather than on the increase.⁵³ Bull, too, maintains that transnationalism is not a new phenomenon and seriously doubts whether it plays a greater role in world politics today than it has done in the past (for instance, in Europe of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, or in the 'transnational society that existed in 1914'). It is true that international relations are nowadays more concerned with social, economic and

50. Haggard and Simmons, *op. cit.*, in note 36, pp. 515-6.

51. Suganami, 'Developments in the Study of International Society', *op. cit.*, in note 14, p. 8. See also Bull's definition of 'international system' in *The Anarchical Society*, *op. cit.*, in note 15, pp. 9-10.

52. Bull, *Anarchical Society*, *op. cit.*, in note 15, p. 280; Bull, *Justice and International Relations*, *op. cit.*, in note 20, p. 12; James Mayall, *Nationalism and International Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 72 and 84.

53. F.S. Northedge, 'Transnationalism: An American Illusion', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* (Vol. 5, No. 1, 1976), pp. 21-7.

ideological matters, but Bull contends that this is largely a product of the growth of state involvement in these areas rather than a sign of the increased importance of actors other than the state.

Moreover, Bull questions the extent to which transnationalism promotes global social integration. There can be no doubt, Bull claims, that in certain parts of the world a high degree of social integration has occurred. Taking the world as a whole however, the forces of integration are more than matched by the forces of disintegration. The general implication of this for the political structure of the world, according to Bull, is nothing more than a relatively small decrease or, more likely, increase in the total number of sovereign states. The principle of sovereign statehood is not under threat from any other principle of political organisation. In any case, to the extent that integration has been global in its reach it has consisted of the consolidation of the dominant culture which 'as it draws closer together at the same time draws farther apart from those social elements left outside'. Bull concludes that '[i]t is difficult to find evidence of transnational relationships whose effect is to promote an evenly distributed social integration throughout the world as a whole'.⁵⁴

The different weight given to interdependence by regime theorists on the one hand, and the English school on the other, is, to a large degree, a product of the relative importance they attach to economic factors in international relations. Clearly, regime theorists pay far more attention to economics than members of the English school, but this does not amount to a fundamental difference. The fact that in the past the English school has not paid much attention to economic factors is not evidence in itself that these factors are regarded as intrinsically unimportant. Nor does it suggest that a greater concern for economics cannot be incorporated into the school's approach. After all, both Wight and Bull claimed that trade was the most characteristic feature of the Grotian conception of international society.

The lack of attention to economics may be accounted for by the historical context of the Cold War in which the principal figures of the school were writing. For anyone that felt that the international system was shaped primarily by the great powers, the shadow of the Cold War from the 1950s to the mid-1980s was omnipresent. It is due to this that scholars such as Bull, James, Northedge and Wight stressed political, military and ideological factors far more than economic factors. This is especially so for those writers, like Bull, where the interpretive approach to social analysis is quite pronounced – if the superpowers were not talking about economics then this was evidence that economics were not particularly important. However, this is not to say that economics were considered to be intrinsically unimportant.

Thus, while regime theory and the English school both accept that certain features of international society are captured in the ideas of transnationalism and interdependence, they disagree on the implications of these phenomena for the

54. See Bull, *Anarchical Society*, *op. cit.*, in note 15, pp. 270–81. See also James, *Sovereign Statehood*, *op. cit.*, in note 19, Part III.

political organization of the world. Many regime theorists argue that the world is currently witnessing a period of international relations qualitatively different from the past where the boundaries between domestic and international politics are being constantly eroded. For the English school, however, transnationalism and interdependence have always been present, and although the latter may be growing it does not pose any serious challenge to the principle of sovereignty. This disagreement is partly explained by the fact that regime theorists have largely concerned themselves with political economy issues, whereas the English school have been more concerned with order and security.

Intellectual Roots

Both regime theory and the English school have been influenced by a complex range of intellectual traditions, movements, ideas and individual thinkers. It is not the intention here to give a full account of their complex histories. However, with regard to both schools, two sets of intellectual roots can be broadly identified and a brief discussion of them may help to throw some light on the substantive points made above.

The roots of regime theory can be found in both political realism and what is sometimes called 'new liberalism'. The influence of realism is quite clear-cut. As noted earlier, two of the three models of regime theory have been labelled realist and the influence of realism on the remaining Grotian model is not insignificant. The concepts of power and self-interest, as discussed above, are central to regime analysis. Regime theory as a whole is predominantly interest based.

However, although realism is important, it does not account for some of the finer points of regime theory. For example, it does not account for the importance that many regime theorists attach to non-state actors, technological change and the growth of knowledge. These aspects of regime theory have their origins in new liberalism. By 'new liberalism' is meant that body of thought which, from the late-nineteenth century onwards, initiated and consolidated the shift in mainstream liberalism away from classical laissez-faire towards greater interventionism. A harmony of interests, it was argued, could no longer be assumed, but through the development of scientific, technological and social knowledge it could be purposefully created. Leading new liberal exponents included L.T. Hobhouse, J.A. Hobson and J.M. Keynes.⁵⁵

The direct antecedents of the new liberal wing of regime theory can be found in four related bodies of thought: functionalism and neo-functionalism, integration theory, interdependence theory and transnationalism. All these bodies

55. See David Long, 'Towards a New Liberal Internationalism: The International Theory of J. A. Hobson', University of London, Ph.D., 1991, esp. Ch. 3; David Long, 'J.A. Hobson and Idealism in International Relations', *Review of International Studies* (Vol. 17, No. 3, July 1991); Michael Freeden, *New Liberalism: An Ideology of Social Reform* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986); and Michael Freeden, *Liberalism Divided: A Study in British Political Thought 1914-1939* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986).

of thought are products of new liberalism in their rejection of both economic and political laissez-faire (as manifested respectively in the doctrines of free trade and self-help), and their advocacy of various forms of international co-operation, including the setting up of international organisations, international non-governmental organisations and other forms of conscious intervention in the international realm. However, it should be noted that regime theorists have rarely drawn directly from earlier new liberal writers and do not seem to be particularly aware of the intellectual pedigree of their thought. For example, in their discussion of interdependence, regime theorists rarely refer to seminal works such as Norman Angell's *The Great Illusion*; nor do they refer in their discussion of transnationalism to Leonard Woolf's ground-breaking *International Government*.⁵⁶ Many of these ideas became common currency and when they began to acquire a new relevance in the 1970s they were simply picked up, largely via functionalism and neo-functionalism, and modified to suit contemporary circumstances.⁵⁷

A clear example of the imprint of new liberal thinking can be found in Robert Keohane's work. Keohane distinguishes between classical liberalism and 'neo-liberal institutionalism', and he argues that regimes offer a legitimate and effective means of reconciling interests in an international environment where the prerequisite for the satisfaction of human welfare is order.⁵⁸ If classical liberalism understands order as the spontaneous outcome of market mechanisms, neo-liberal institutionalism understands it in terms of management practices, such as regimes, that allow conflicting interests to be harmonised and regulated.

Like regime theory, the English school seems to have two sets of origins: first, what might be called the 'sociological' approach to international law; and second, Grotianism. The former was pioneered by C.A.W. Manning. Manning was not interested in the actual content of international law, nor the question of whether it ought to be binding, but rather its sociological basis. He argued that the nature of a legal system is determined by the nature of the society in which it operates. Given this, Manning maintained that international law could not be understood as a primitive kind of domestic law any more than table tennis is to be understood as a primitive kind of tennis. Rather, international law is a

56. Norman Angell, *The Great Illusion* (London: William Heinemann, 1933 [first published as *Europe's Optical Illusion* in 1908]); Leonard Woolf, *International Government* (London: Allen and Unwin and the Fabian Research Department, 1916).

57. Krasner suggests that regime theory grew out of various liberal approaches (e.g. interdependence theory and transnationalism) of the 1970s. He also acknowledges that regime theory is 'compatible' with such things as functionalism, neofunctionalism and interwar idealism. See Krasner, 'Regimes and the Limits of Realism', *op. cit.*, in note 36, p. 497.

58. Robert O. Keohane, *International Institutions and State Power* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1989).

fully-fledged body of law and any peculiar features it has can be accounted for by examining the peculiarities of the society that produces it.⁵⁹

This idea informs not only the English school's approach to international law, but also its approach to other types of rules, and indeed values in general. For example, it accounts for Bull's statement in *The Anarchical Society* that in examining order in world politics he was not thereby recommending that order ought to take priority over justice, or for that matter any other value. What mattered to Bull was what international society itself saw as its rules and institutions and how they contributed (or in some cases failed to contribute) to the maintenance of order. It is of interest that in adopting this positivistic approach to rules, Bull was not only influenced by Manning but also by Hans Kelsen. Like Manning, Kelsen was not interested in prescribing what the rules ought to be, at least not in his capacity as a scholar, but in describing what the rules are and furnishing an account, sociologically, of their internal logic.⁶⁰

The infusion of Grotianism into the School came from Wight. In his 'International Theory' lectures at the London School of Economics, Wight argued that international relations were best understood in terms of a debate between the three well known traditions of thought which, since the formation of the modern state system, could be seen as competing for pre-eminence. Wight felt that no single paradigm had a monopoly of truth about international relations and that the only truth that one could be sure of was that the debate would never be settled once and for all and a final victor proclaimed. After saying this however, in his early years Wight felt that the Machiavellians were nearer to the truth than the others, and in his later years he shifted decidedly towards the Grotian position.⁶¹ Wight argued that one of the most important values of the Western philosophical tradition was the *via media*. In international relations the *via media* found its most consistent expression in Grotianism.⁶²

Hedley Bull took over Wight's mantle in the 1970s. Bull, like Wight, moved from a Machiavellian to a more Grotian position as his thought developed. He was, however, always more firmly in the Grotian camp than his intellectual mentor. As Vincent has argued, Bull's thought can best be seen in terms of a

59. See Manning, *Nature of International Society*, *op. cit.*, in note 16, pp. 101–13; F.S. Northedge, 'In Memoriam: Charles Manning 1894–1978', *British Journal of International Studies* (Vol. 5, No. 1, 1979), p. 2; and Suganami, 'A Normative Enquiry', *op. cit.*, in note 29, pp. 41–3.

60. See Bull, *Anarchical Society*, *op. cit.* in note 15, pp. xii–xiii and 318–20; Bull, 'Hans Kelsen and International Law', in Richard Tur and William Twining (eds), *Essays on Kelsen* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 321–36; and Suganami, 'Developments in the Study of International Society', *op. cit.*, in note 14, pp. 1–3.

61. Compare *Power Politics* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1946), with 'Western Values in International Relations', in Butterfield and Wight, *op. cit.*, in note 17, 1966.

62. Wight was not uncritical of the *via media* and summed up his feelings towards it as follows: 'The golden mean can be an overcautious and ignoble principle as a guide to action, but it may also be an index to the accumulated experience of a civilization which has valued scepticism and canonized prudence as a political virtue'. See Wight, 'Western Values in International Relations', *op. cit.*, in note 17, pp. 89–91.

tension between two strands of Grotianism: between the positivistic conception of international society as advocated by Oppenheim, and the more solidaristic conception as advocated by Grotius himself.⁶³

Methodology

It is tempting to suggest that in one respect regime theory and the English school differ in a way that underlies much of what has already been said: the methodology of regime theory is far more positivistic than the English school. However, on closer examination this difference turns out to be not a substantial one and more to do with form than content.

Krasner's now widely held definition of a regime, which includes such phrases as 'beliefs of fact, causation, and rectitude', 'standards of behaviour defined in terms of rights and obligations', and 'convergent expectations', suggests that regimes are more to do with ideas and beliefs than observable empirical facts.⁶⁴ This implies that answering the question 'How do we know when a regime exists?' demands an interpretive approach that infers norms from the meanings actors attach to their own actions and the actions of others. This is the view of Friedrich Kratochwil and John Gerard Ruggie who have argued that we know regimes exist when actors exhibit 'principled and shared understanding of desirable and acceptable forms of social behaviour'.⁶⁵ Norms in this sense can be inferred from a range of social attitudes, ideas about morality, values and shared meanings, such that it can be argued 'norms need not "exist" in a formal sense in order to be valid'.⁶⁶

Having said this, an examination of the literature demonstrates a propensity to claim the existence of regimes through pointing to international organisation, international law, declarations and formal agreements. This approach assumes that regimes are co-terminous with the existence of such phenomena and runs the risk of tautology through inducing the existence of regimes from examples of existing international organisations.⁶⁷ Importantly, such an approach tends to define regimes by their application rather than their legitimacy or acceptance. Moreover, it assumes that a regime reflects the values and serves the interests of all its members. But as James Keeley has observed, '[a]dopting this approach requires no assumption of voluntarism, benevolence, cooperation, or legitimacy'⁶⁸ and therefore fails to capture the normative and attitudinal elements that are claimed as an integral part of regime theory. Even if the positivist approach is accepted as useful in answering questions concerning

63. See R.J. Vincent, 'Order and International Politics', in Miller and Vincent (eds), *Order and Violence*, *op. cit.*, in note 2, pp. 40-1.

64. Krasner, 'Structural Causes', *op. cit.*, in note 5, p. 186.

65. Kratochwil and Ruggie, 'International Organisation', *op. cit.*, in note 47, p. 764.

66. *Ibid.*, p. 769.

67. Philip Acton, 'Regimes and Hegemony', *Paradigms* (Vol. 3, No. 1, 1989), pp. 47-57.

68. James F. Keeley, 'Towards a Foucauldian Analysis of International Regimes', *International Organization* (Vol. 44, No. 1, 1990), p. 93.

existing regimes, it has less to offer when considering their origins and formation – for example, in answering the question: why do some issues attract the construction of a regime and not others?

If regime theory can claim to be distinct from past approaches to international organisation, then it is difficult to see how the positivist approach adds anything to what we already know. Indeed, focusing exclusively on empirical issues for evidence of regimes may lead uncritically to the conclusion that some particular issue in international relations is well ordered, widely accepted, and provides adequate means for achieving desired ends. In positing a human rights regime, for example, it is possible to point to a wealth of international law, legal argument, constitutions, and the activities of the United Nations and its agencies, as evidence that such a regime exists.⁶⁹ However, in a world where both political and economic rights are violated on a massive scale by tyrants like Pol Pot and Emperor Bokassa, and where the reaction of the rest of the world is often to turn a blind eye, is it tenable to claim the existence of a human rights regime by pointing to formal arrangements? Positivist elements in regime theory that 'allow everybody to declare themselves in favour of truth, beauty, goodness, and world community'⁷⁰ may be of interest as political symbols but they do not necessarily tell us anything about the way a state or its people understand a particular issue, or about the relationship between that understanding and their subsequent actions. If regimes are anything to do with 'expectations', 'attitudes' and 'meanings' then interpretation must play an essential part.

As mentioned above, the English school's methodology also contains interpretive as well as positivist elements. This can be illustrated by reference to the central concept of the school: international society. For Manning, the existence of an international society is not something that can be decided empirically, only interpretively. In Manning's view, international society and domestic society are societies of quite a different kind. International society is not composed of phenomenal objects but rather of notional entities. Essentially it is 'a notional society of notional entities'. The state is a notional entity since it is a 'socially prevalent idea'. A state's territory, its population and its government, are observable facts but they are only aspects of the state and they do not, either separately or combined, account for the state in its entirety.⁷¹

If the society of states is a 'notional society of notional entities' how do we know that it exists? Manning argues that we do this by examining the thoughts and actions of those responsible for state policy and making a judgement on how

69. Helge Ole Bergeson, 'The Power to Embarrass: the UN Human Rights Regime between Realism and Utopia', paper presented to the International Studies Association, Rio de Janeiro, August, 1982; Jack Donnelly, 'International Human Rights: a Regime Analysis', *International Organization* (Vol. 40, No. 3, 1986); and N.G. Onuf and V. Spike Peterson, 'Human Rights from an International Regime Perspective', *Journal of International Affairs* (Vol. 37, No. 2, Winter 1984), pp. 239–45.

70. Susan Strange, 'Cave! Hic Dragones: A Critique of Regime Analysis', *International Organization* (Vol. 36, No. 2, 1982), pp. 479–96.

71. Manning, *Nature of International Society*, *op. cit.*, in note 16, pp. 11–27.

they conceive their environment. Manning's view was that statesmen thought and behaved as if they were acting in an international society and not merely a system.⁷²

This approach to the concept of international society is, however, by no means the only one. In a number of writings it is implicitly argued that the world is most accurately described as an international society regardless of the perceptions of the actors. According to this view it is incorrect to describe the world as merely an international system simply because there is much more to it than that. As mentioned above, this view finds clear expression in the work of Alan James. However, elements of interpretivism notwithstanding, it also finds expression in Bull's work. In answering the question 'Does the idea of international society conform to reality?' Bull implicitly employs two kinds of reasoning. On the one hand he seeks to demonstrate that the thought of philosophers, lawyers and historians in the Grotian tradition is reflected in the thought of statesmen. On the other hand, like James, he proposes a definition of society and then seeks to demonstrate empirically whether or not one exists at the international level. As with domestic society, an international society exists when the members, as well as being in contact with one another and affecting each others' behaviour, also have common interests, share common values and work in the operation of common institutions. According to Bull common interests such as mutual respect for sovereignty, common values such as the maintenance of peace as the normal condition of the system, and common institutions such as diplomacy, have been present throughout the history of the modern international system. Therefore the element of 'society' in the relations between states can be said to exist in an empirical sense.⁷³ Indeed, Bull sometimes suggests that the existence of institutions such as international law, diplomacy, international organisations, the balance of power and the concert of great powers, constitute 'concrete historical evidence' of the existence of an international society.⁷⁴

Given the elements of both positivism and interpretivism in regime theory and the English school it can be concluded that methodological differences are differences of form rather than substance. Essentially the question boils down to language. Regime theory is far more social scientific in its language than the English school. The pages of English school texts contain no graphs, equations or algebra.⁷⁵ There is no modelling, nor use of technical terms such as 'causal schemata', 'organizational allocational modes', 'operationalization' (and certainly not 'exogenously determined preference orderings' or 'turbulent fields with multiple feedback loops'). However, the English school, though rather more elegant in its choice of words, is not completely averse to technical language. Terms such as 'international system', 'international society', 'world society',

72. *Ibid.*, pp. 57–8 and 132. Manning called the socially prevalent ideas of statesmen 'diplomats' or 'diplomatic theory'.

73. Bull, *Anarchical Society*, *op.cit.*, in note 15, pp. 40–52.

74. See, for example, Bull, 'The Importance of Grotius', in Bull, Kingsbury and Roberts (eds), *Hugo Grotius*, *op. cit.*, in note 26, p. 90.

75. Jones, 'The English School', *op. cit.*, in note 14, p. 1.

'international political system', 'world political system', 'diplomats', and 'diplomatic theory' are in a sense technical terms: they are terms not generally used by practitioners of international relations ('international community' being the preferred term of statesmen when referring to the collectivity of states), and they have meanings specific to a particular discourse. Furthermore, although the school is dismissive of the 'powerful generalisations' and 'penetrating insights' of social science, they nonetheless extol the virtues of judgement and wisdom which may amount to much the same thing.

Conclusion

The questions regarding what the two schools can learn from one another and how some kind of synthesis can be accomplished are closely related. The foregoing analysis shows that answers to such questions are heavily dependent on the particular strand of regime theory or the particular aspect of the English school being focused upon. Both schools of thought have a number of aspects to them and, indeed, they can only be regarded as schools of thought in a broad sense. Regime theory has at least three strands to it: realist, modified realist and Grotian; and the English school has a conservative wing and a more progressive wing as well as elements, in its methodology, of both positivism and interpretivism. Given this diversity it is clearly the case that scope for mutual learning and for forging bonds is wide indeed.

However, there are a few points that can be made about the two schools of thought as a whole, and their actual or potential relationship. One of the main weaknesses of regime theory is its lack of historical perspective both in terms of the evolution of the international system and the history of international thought. Regime theory has been primarily concerned with the question of the management of technological, scientific and economic 'progress'. This contrasts sharply with the more traditional English school concerns of order and security. One of the implications of this, though by no means an inevitable one, has been that while English school thinkers have been consciously engaged in a dialogue with historically developed ideas, regime theorists have been more concerned to explain 'new', real world, phenomena. In regime theory there is a tendency to assume that historical investigation of such phenomena is largely redundant. There is little reflection on whether such phenomena are objectively 'new' or, either in whole or in part, a product of consciousness (and, in particular, the *evolution* of consciousness).

It is important to note that regime theory has been developed largely in America where ideas of liberalism and laissez-faire have long informed economic and foreign policy. The rise of new liberalism brought a change in the way these ideas are understood, but they nonetheless continue to have an intellectual predominance in America and are generally regarded as nothing short of

'common sense'.⁷⁶ As 'common sense' regimes are therefore 'good' for everyone and those who fail to recognize this should be treated with suspicion.⁷⁷ In short, having achieved the status of 'common sense' the necessity of engaging with the historical development of these ideas is obviated.

The principal weakness of the English school is its relative disregard of economic and technological factors and the various types of international co-operation that these factors either induce or necessitate. If the characteristic feature of the Grotian conception of international society is continual international intercourse such as trade, as Wight held, then it is quite an omission for the English school to largely ignore the growth of trade and other economic relations in their account of the evolution of international society. Bull was favourably impressed by the international society of the nineteenth century but he rarely referred to the growth during that century of a great commercial international (and transnational) society. The famous conferences of that century were concerned with commerce as well as war and peace, and for the most part these two questions were inextricably linked. An understanding of nineteenth century balance of power politics, for example, that does not take into account commercial competition between the great powers, is an incomplete one. It might be argued that in ignoring the commercial aspects of international society Bull was depriving his analysis of a highly important dimension.

The weakness of the one school is the strength of the other and it is on this basis that a synthesis could be most effectively constructed. Such a synthesis would seek to furnish an historical account of the rules, norms and institutions, to buttress the more rationalistic account, along the lines of rational choice or game theory, currently supplied by regime theory. Such an account would pay attention to ideas as well as practice, and most importantly the often complex relationship between them.

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76. See Enrico Augelli and Craig Murphy, *America's Quest and the Third World*, (London: Pinter Publishers, 1988), esp. Chs. 2 and 3.

77. Keeley, 'Towards a Foucauldian Analysis', *op. cit.*, in note 68.