1 Introduction

This chapter has four tasks. The first, following on from the general background set out in the Preface, is to explain the approach of the book. The second is to set out the concepts, terms and definitions that I use to conduct the discussion, and explain some of the underlying theoretical positions. I appreciate that this long section makes a dry and difficult start to the book. Those who prefer, can skip these definitional essays now, and go straight to the historical chapters. They can refer back to the conceptual discussions as and when needed, using this section as a glossary. The third task is to give an overview of how the empirical part of the book is structured, and to explain the logic that defines the subdivisions into parts and chapters. The fourth is to set out the aims of the book. I hope this will give readers as clear an idea of why they are reading it as I have of why I wrote it.

Approach

This book is aimed at an audience interested in the study of how humankind works on the largest scale as a system/society. Its 'big picture' approach has resonance with the more macro-style of work in International Relations (IR), Global Historical Sociology (GHS), International Political Economy (IPE) and Global/World History. It uses ideas from the English School (ES) to build bridges among these fields. It is more abstract and less detailed than historical approaches, focusing mainly on the broader narrative of how the social structure of humankind has evolved. By social structure, I mean what the ES calls *primary institutions*: ideas ranging from kinship, territoriality and trade; through dynasticism, empire, diplomacy, law, religion, human equality/inequality and sovereignty; to nationalism, the market, sport, science and environmental stewardship. These ideas, and others like them, are the key both to what kind of collective entities and identities humans form, and what kinds of behaviour among people and polities are judged appropriate and legitimate, or not. This is further discussed in the next

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subsection. The narrative in this book is structured around the story of these institutions. There are thus almost no personal stories in here, whether about great kings and queens; victorious generals or warlords; heroic workers, women, soldiers, or intellectuals; wealthy merchants, or brave explorers. While it addresses war as an institution of global society, it does not focus much either on specific wars, big or small, or on the rise and fall of particular empires or great powers. Conversely, the approach taken here is much less abstract than the grand sociological theories of Marx or Wallerstein, or the IR ones of Waltz, that seek big and simple driving forces such as class, capitalism or power to explain history. In classical English School style, this book offers a middle path, developing an alternative way of telling the human story on the largest scale.

It is not the first book to venture into the space between History, IR, IPE and GHS. Some historical sociologists such as Michael Mann (1986) have tried it, and so have some 'big' historians, such as David Christian (2004, 2019), both making path-breaking contributions. So while this territory is not exactly new, neither is it yet fully or convincingly occupied. Global historians venturing there have the problem that their narrative method, for all of its many merits, comes under increasing stress as the scale of space and time covered increases. Those coming from the social sciences usually try to solve this problem by seeking big simplifications that somehow embrace all the differences. This book aims to split the difference by finding a level of simplifying abstractions that, on the one hand, solves the problem of how to deal with large scale in time and space, while on the other hand offering an approach that is sufficiently fine-grained to sustain a global narrative across a timescale of over fifty millennia. In that sense, it has quite a lot of resonance with Mann's 'IEMP' scheme in which he looks for ideological, economic, military and political sources of power as they define 'the capacity to organize and control people, materials and territories' (1986: 1–3). The key difference is that Mann uses the IEMP framing to concentrate on comparative civilisations. He is not particularly concerned with defining eras, and uses his scheme to look in detail at the differences across many cases. As Mann acknowledges, his scheme produces a very complicated picture of human societies as a 'patterned mess' with innumerable different combinations of factors in different times and places (Mann, 1993: 4). My approach aims to expose more pattern with less mess.

This pattern-seeking approach brings into focus, and combines, three broad factors:

1. The state of the planet itself as it provides conditions for human life and civilisation. This includes the climate, sea levels and the

biosphere, as well as the ability of the planet to provide resources in relation to human wants and needs. This material factor is a fairly orthodox and well-understood story that is not controversial except for the remaining deniers of contemporary human effects on climate change.

2. The material conditions of humankind in terms of the technologies possessed by humans, and what kind of materials, energy sources, and means of transportation these make available to them and their societies. This factor is likewise not particularly controversial, and is well documented by archaeologists and historians.

3. The social resources possessed by humankind in terms of the *primary institutions* that give structure to human societies. This is the most novel part of the approach, both in itself, and in the combination with material and planetary conditions. It is the key to opening up an analysis of the whole human story that is both abstract and quite fine-grained.

These three factors play into each other as both causes and consequences.

In the more than 50,000 years under surveillance here, all three of these factors have undergone major changes. They are not independent from each other. Each feeds into the others in myriad and significant ways, creating a Gordian knot that makes it extremely difficult to give simple answers as to what drives the historical changes in the human condition. That sounds dauntingly complicated, and in some ways it is. But the payoff for placing one's perspective in the space in-between historical detail and general abstraction is that larger patterns, along the line of what Bayly (2004: 1) calls 'global uniformities', come into view, simplifying the complexity. These patterns define long and durable eras in terms of a distinct set of material conditions and primary institutions that structure their societies. I broadly accept the conventional view that there are three such eras – hunter-gatherers, conglomerate agrarian/ pastoralist empires (CAPE), and modernity (e.g. Gellner, 1988). I depart from that view by emphasising that there are transitions between these eras, when material conditions and social structures, and sometimes the condition of the planet, undergo major conjunctural changes. At the time of writing, we are still in, or perhaps just emerging from, the transition from the CAPE era to modernity. These eras, and the transitions between them, are how the book tells the story of humankind. When looked at through the lens of this analytical scheme, eras come into a clear and detailed focus. So too do the forms of social glue that hold societies together. This allows a fine-grained assessment not only of

continuities and changes, but also of the essential material and social characteristics of both the eras themselves, and the transitions between them. Up to a point it also allows modest assessments of the driving forces behind eras and the transitions between them.

On this scale, causality is multiple and complex, emerging from the crystallisation of a range of contingent processes. For example, a warming and stabilising global climate played a big role in the transition from mobile hunter-gatherers to sedentary and, eventually, agrarian CAPE societies with bigger populations and more differentiated and hierarchical social structures. Technologies sometimes play a big role, as in the discovery of hard metals (bronze and iron) during the CAPE era, and the development of steam power exploiting the vast reserves of fossil fuel that launched the transition to modernity. This book offers a characterisation of the CAPE era that is more homogenous and precise than other interpretations. It makes a feature of the neglected question of how to track and understand the transition from CAPE to modernity, and how we might assess when 'modernity proper' has arrived. The opening phases of the transition to modernity were both a complex social transformation involving old and new primary institutions, and an unrestrained, often rapacious, pursuit of wealth and power. The emerging third phase confronts environmental limits that seem to be forcing a choice between some degree of planetary catastrophe, and a wrenching turn towards a much more constrained pursuit of sustainable development.

Concepts, Terms and Definitions

This subsection sets out the main terms and concepts that will be deployed in subsequent chapters. Many of these are drawn from the English School, which has a well-established and distinctive analytical vocabulary and taxonomy for thinking about international relations. But framing a very large-scale study like this one also requires concepts drawn from elsewhere in IR theory, but which are interoperable with the ES approach. The ES concepts are:

> *International system*, *international society* and *world society*
> *Interpolity*, *transnational* and *interhuman domains*
> *Primary* and *secondary institutions*
> *Solidarism* and *pluralism*
> *Raison de système and raison de famille.*

The concepts from elsewhere in IR theory are:

> *Interaction capacity*
> *Evolution*

Dialectics
Differentiation theory and sectors
Uneven and Combined Development

There are three other non-ES concepts that I have reconstructed to serve the particular purposes of this book:

Era
Social glue
Globalisation and Global society.

Finally, to help orientate the discussion at the level of humankind, I have set up a simple model of *five possible pathways* that the species can take: regression, extinction, empowerment, suicide and self-replacement.

English School Concepts

The core of the English School's approach to the study of international relations is the idea that just as people live in societies, which both shape them and are shaped by them, so too do states (or more broadly, polities).[1] In my view, society is what frames Baldwin's (2017 [1958]: 166) observation: 'People are trapped in history and history is trapped in them.' The same is true for the durable collective polities that people construct, and the societies that those polities form. This looks like an idea that should be rooted in Sociology. But in practice sociologists have not taken much interest in developing this perspective, perhaps because of antagonism to the idea of second-order societies (i.e. societies whose members are other societies, rather than individuals) (Buzan and Albert, 2010). The idea of a society of states emerged first during the nineteenth century among positive international lawyers. Positive legal thinking assumed that such law required a society to make it. The clear existence of international law thus easily led to the idea of international society, because if there was positive international law, then that must reflect the existence of an international society. Positive law is made by states and cannot exist outside a society of states. The term international society thus became intrinsic to discussions of international law well back in the nineteenth century (Schwarzenberger, 1951). Knutsen (2016: 2) argues that the nineteenth-century international lawyer James Lorimer (1884) already largely sketched out the concept of international society, in form similar to that which would emerge out of the work of the English School during the 1960s and 1970s, but that his pioneering work has been

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[1] The text in this section draws on that in Buzan (2014a: ch. 2) and Buzan and Schouenborg (2018).

forgotten. By the late nineteenth century, American legal and political thinking about IR had clearly identified the existence of an international society among 'civilised' states, and captured this in the term *internation-alism* (Schmidt, 1998: 124). Elsewhere, the German historian Heeren's (1834) discussion of states-systems set up the idea of international society picked up later by thinkers in the English School tradition (Keene, 2002; Little, 2008).

The ES does not focus on material conditions, but it does not exclude them either. It accepts that material power plays a big role in international relations, but then focuses mainly on the social structures that arise to try to deal with that. As noted above, for analytical convenience and clarity, I discuss material factors separately from social structures, though taking into account the strong interplay between them. I also divide material factors into two categories: planetary conditions, and the more general material resources available to humankind in terms of resources, energy and technologies. Most ES work has focused on the period since the transition towards modernity began, with occasional, but growing, excursions to earlier times (e.g. Wight, 1977; Watson, 1992; Linklater, 2016; Neumann, 2020). Since material factors vary so much when looking at the history of humankind as a whole, it is necessary to take them into account in a systematic way. Putting material factors back into the ES in a structured way is part of the purpose of this book. As I will show, variations in material conditions are part of what motivate, shape and define not just the social structure but also large historical eras. As the later discussions in the book demonstrate, the rapid rise of environmental issues during the past few decades is a major case of the interplay of material conditions and social structure.

A key reason for choosing the ES is that its societal approach to international relations and international history generates a taxonomy of concepts and types that is rich and distinctive compared to other IR theories. Taxonomy constructs what one sees and chooses to analyse (or not), and is the foundation of theory. I concentrate in this book on the ES's taxonomy of primary institutions as what defines global society, trying both to extend this, and apply it in a new way to the large-scale analysis of world history. In building on the ES, I follow two theoretical positions set out in my earlier work.

First, as argued in Buzan (2004a: 169–71) my approach adopts the same micro-foundations as Bull's in the propensity of humans to form societies on functional grounds to limit violence, establish property rights and stabilise agreements. Like him, I see the imperative to form societies working at multiple levels from small to large groups of humans, and including 'second order' societies, like Bull's 'anarchical society' of

states. My approach also draws on the functional argument from Buzan (1993: 340–3) about interstate societies being derivable from the logic of anarchy in giving advantages to the units that form them, which links to Waltz's (1979) arguments about socialisation and competition generating 'like units'. Some form of society is the default condition of human beings whether as groups, or as groups of groups.

Second, since this book emphasises social structure in the form of primary institutions, it requires a position on the agent-structure debate. I take the same position in this book as I have done in previous work (Buzan and Little, 2000; Buzan, 2004a), following the mainstream constructivist idea of structuration, in which agency and structure are co-constitutive. The mutual constitution of agents and structure was identified by Giddens (1979) and taken forward by (Wendt, 1999), and to my mind is the practical essence of the mainstream ES view: that the units of international society both constitute, and are constituted by, the social structure. As structure, primary institutions such as sovereignty, territoriality and nationalism constitute the state and shape its behaviour. As agents, states and other actors both reproduce those structures, or amend or even dismantle them, by their behaviour. Sovereignty is reproduced in uncountable daily statements and actions, but is also pressured and questioned by changing understandings of human rights and environmental stewardship. Imperialism and racism used to be reproduced daily, but became illegitimate after 1945. This process of reproduction and contestation goes on continuously across the interpolity, transnational and interhuman domains.

International System, International Society and World Society

Traditional English School thinking is built around this triad of key concepts: *international system*, *international society* and *world society* (Cutler, 1991; Little, 1995: 15–16). Broadly speaking, these terms are understood as follows:

- *International system* is about power politics amongst states/polities, and puts the structure and process of international anarchy at the centre of IR theory. This position is broadly parallel to mainstream Realism and Neorealism and is thus well developed and clearly understood outside the ES. It privileges the distribution of material power among states (polarity, balance of power) over all else as the main driver of international relations. If all international systems are also societies, it makes sense to downgrade this differentiation, and address the question as being about the relative weight of calculations about the distribution of power as against the influence of shared norms, rules and

institutions. There are now different views within the ES about retaining system, with some thinking it should be kept, and others that it is redundant.[2]

- *International society* is about the institutionalisation of mutual interest and identity amongst states, and puts the creation and maintenance of shared norms, rules and institutions at the centre of IR theory. Wight (1991: 137) nicely captures it with the idea that international society is a social contract among societies themselves each constituted by their own social contract. But because states/polities are very different entities from individual human beings, this international society is not analogous to domestic society (Bull, 1966; Suganami, 1989), and has to be studied as a distinct form. When units are sentient, how they perceive each other is a major determinant of how they interact. If the units share a common identity (a religion, a system of governance, a language), or even just recognise each other as like-units sharing a basic set of rules or norms (about how to determine relative status, and how to conduct diplomacy), then these intersubjective understandings not only condition their behaviour and identity, but also define the boundaries of a social system.

- *World society* takes individuals, non-state organisations and ultimately the global population as a whole as the focus of global societal identities and arrangements, and puts transcendence of the state system at the centre of IR theory. It is mostly about forms of universalist cosmopolitanism, which could include communism, but as Wæver (1992: 98) notes during the heyday of US primacy, was usually taken to mean liberalism. This position has some parallels to transnationalism, but carries a much more foundational link to normative political theory. World society has for long been something of a conceptual dustbin, useful as a moral referent (representing the great society of humankind) for normative theorists, but being too vague to be of much use to social structural approaches.

Following earlier work of my own (Buzan, 2018a, where interested readers can find a more detailed discussion), I disaggregate world society into three meanings:

1. *Normative* world society reflects both Bull's 'great society of humankind', and Buzan's (2004a: 118–59) idea of 'interhuman societies' mainly expressed in patterns of shared identity, which can be partial, such as nations, civilisations, races, and religions, or holistic, generally as humankind.

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[2] For a summary of this debate, see Buzan (2014a: 171–2).

2. *Political* world society comprises all the non-state social structures visible within humankind as a whole that have both significantly autonomous actor quality, and the capacity and interest to engage with the society of states to influence its normative values and institutions. It is therefore close to transnational perspectives. These non-state actors might be rooted in religion, or commerce, or civil society more broadly.

3. *Integrated* world society is an aggregating concept, representing the idea that the social structure of humankind can best be understood by linking together international and world society. It is what global governance, with its emphasis on the intermingling of states, inter-governmental organisations, non-state actors, and people, points towards as an eventual outcome of an ever-more densely integrated and interdependent human society on a global scale. This is one foundation for what I call *global society*, on which more below.

Interpolity, Transnational and Interhuman Domains The English School has so far mainly thought about integrated world society as something not yet achieved, but which might lie in the future as something to be aspired to (e.g. Vincent, 1986). In this book, I stand this assumption on its head by using the idea of *three domains,* defined by the type of actor and activity dominant with them (Buzan, 2004a: 118–28, 257–61; Buzan and Schouenborg, 2018: 27–8). The scheme of three domains is intended to replace the traditional ES triad, by clarifying and separating its essential components, and making them the component parts of *integrated world society*.

The *inter-polity/state domain* is about the second-order society of states/polities, which has been the main focus of the ES. Given that states are relatively recent, I use Ferguson and Mansbach's (1996) useful term 'polities' to cover the quite wide range of political entities, and the interactions among them, in play over the course of human history: chiefdoms, city-states, kingdoms, empires, states, etc. Generally, I will use the term *interpolity domain*, though in modern times I will also use *interstate* domain. The defining activity of the interpolity domain is politics, and the reason for treating it separately is that political actors usually claim primacy over all other types of organisation.[3]

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[3] This might – justifiably – be thought a vulnerable basis for making such a big taxonomical differentiation. While it is true that politics, broadly understood as the process of legitimate government in human societies, has been the dominant sector since the beginning of civilisation, its primacy is not automatic. It can be, and has been, challenged by commerce and religion. Europe at the time of the Crusades was arguably led by the Roman Catholic Church. Venice and many other city states and Leagues were dominated by merchants. It is entirely possible to imagine the dethroning of politics (e.g. Pohl and Kornbluth, 1960; Vernon, 1971), and therefore giving primacy to politics has to

The *transnational domain* is about collective non-state/polity actors (e.g. guilds, firms, religious organisations, many kinds of interest groups from sport to stamp collecting), and how they relate both to polities, and to each other as transnational actors (TNAs) across polity boundaries. The transnational domain does not have a single defining activity. Many of the organisations within this domain will have advocacy as one of their purposes, both up to the interstate domain (e.g. lobbying government, participating in diplomacy), and down to the interhuman one (e.g. proselytising/recruiting, marketing). Some of the actors here will be uncivil, such as criminal and terrorist entities.[4]

The *interhuman domain* is about people, and its defining activity is collective identity formation, a rather subtle and amorphous process, but one with big consequences for the social structure of humankind. In the interhuman domain, only individuals have actor quality, and the main social structure is patterns of collective identity ranging from the universal one of humankind as a whole, through civilisational and religious identities, to racial, national, tribal, and kinship ones, all of which are subglobal in extent. These identities do not in themselves possess actor quality, but they do act powerfully as constraints and opportunities to enable or restrain various kinds of actors in the transnational and interpolity domains, for example, religious institutions and nation states.

When the analytical lens of the three domains is deployed instead of the classical ES triad, it quickly becomes apparent that integrated world society has been around for a very long time, and that the nature of primary institutions cannot be understood apart from it. Demonstrating and illustrating this is a key theme of the book. These three domains are, like functional differentiation and sectors (on which more below), another way of approaching the social whole. The interhuman domain is the closest to the traditional sociological understanding of society as being composed of individual human beings sharing an identity. As noted, the classical ES's discussions of 'the great society of humankind' suppose that no such society exists at the global level in practice, and its

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be seen as a provisional categorisation based on empirical current conditions, and not something chiselled in stone. Given that both interstate and transnational are second-order societies (composed of collective actors), they could be merged into a single grouping differentiated from interhuman, and without primacy being given to any particular type of collective actor. Alternatively, religious, commercial, or even criminal actors could, in principle, or in fiction, or should empirical developments justify it, be elevated to prime position, and differentiated from the others. The tension between political and religious primacy is most evident in current global society in the Islamic world, and in the role of the Christian right in the US Republican Party. This is, therefore, only a provisional and contingent way of dividing up the social whole. For definitions, see under 'Differentiation Theory and Sectors' below.

[4] On the civil/uncivil distinction, see Buzan (2004c).

main function in the ES has been as a moral referent against which to judge interstate society. I think there is more to it than that. 'Humankind' is becoming a significant collective identity, and there are many powerful collective identities (e.g. religion, civilisation, race, nation) operating below the global level and across the political structures. Interpolity and transnational societies are both *second order* societies in which the members are not individual human beings but organised collectivities of people (polities of various kinds, and the various types of NSAs). In practice, as I will detail in the chapters that follow, there is a lot of crossover of both interaction and social structure, among these three domains. That crossover is the key to integrated world society, and eventually to global society. Seeing integrated global society as stretching across the three domains, rather than being largely located in the interpolity domain, brings into focus some primary institutions that have been obscured because they are not primarily located in the interpolity domain, religion, science and sport most obviously. The key to much of what follows is the idea that primary institutions are normally located across, and embedded within, not just one, but two or three domains.[5]

Primary and Secondary Institutions The English School's understanding of institutions differs from most of mainstream IR in focusing on the deeper rather than the shallower meaning of this concept. Its main concern is with *primary institutions,* which are deep and relatively durable social principles, and the practices associated with them. In ES work starting from Bull (1977), primary institutions have mainly been thought about as an artefact of the interpolity domain, and within that mostly the modern interstate one. A key aim of this book is to show how limiting a view this is: Primary institutions can and should be thought about across both the three domains and the history of humankind. This book emphasises that primary institutions are as much or more constitutive of the three domains, as constituted by them. In particular, I argue in the empirical chapters that for the interpolity domain, there is a useful

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[5] This argument is a major modification to that in Buzan (2018a), which was trying to push away from the standard path in ES thinking that, mostly unthinkingly, locates primary institutions in the interpolity domain. I took two paths there: one to try to identify primary institutions that might be located principally in other domains; the second to show how most of the currently acknowledged primary institutions in fact work strongly across domains. In this book, I am scrapping the first approach. Advocacy is not a primary institution of the transnational domain, and collective identity is not a primary institution of the interhuman one. Rather, these are characteristic activities of those domains, as argued above. Apologies to anyone whose work is affected negatively by this change of mind. For me it was perhaps a necessary venture down a dead-end before I could break through into the second path. Thanks to Joseph Haddon for making me think hard about this.

approach to polity-formation through primary institutions in which territoriality, sovereignty, dynasticism and nationalism play central roles.

Traditional English School thinking has not devoted much attention to whether primary institutions could also be embedded in, or even stem from, the other two domains. Nothing stops actors and ideas from crossing between domains. State and non-state actors interact with each other all the time, and it is difficult to understand primary institutions like religion, trade, nationalism and sport without seeing them as operating across the interpolity, transnational and interhuman domains. Both in theory and in practice, all sorts of mixtures are possible. Primary and secondary institutions stretch across domains, and that fact is the key to shifting the social structural perspective of the ES first towards an integrated world society framing, and then to a global society one.[6]

Primary institutions in ES thinking are deep in the sense of having evolved more than being designed. By evolved I mean that something like territoriality, or war, emerged out of practice, eventually becoming a recognised principle, in a way similar to the development of customary law. This is different from designed, where a secondary institution such as the League of Nations was negotiated into being at a specific point in time, and for a specific purpose, by a group of states. The distinction between evolved and designed might blur for latecomers to an international society who accept, or have imposed on them, institutions that evolved earlier. The obvious example here is sovereignty, which became both a prize, and a condition, of decolonisation. Primary institutions must not only be substantially shared amongst the members of global society, possibly across all three domains, but also be seen amongst them as defining both membership and legitimate behaviour. They are the axioms that human societies agree to live by, and are thus about the shared identities of the members of integrated world society within all three domains, and how those identities are understood to relate to each other. They are durable, often lasting for centuries or even millennia, but as will become clear in the chapters that follow, they are also malleable, and may undergo significant changes in how their basic principles are interpreted, and what practices they do and don't legitimise. Mayall (1990), and Holsti (2004), pioneered the study of how primary institutions arise, evolve and sometimes fall into obsolescence. Primary institutions are the key to understanding the classical ES's social structural approach to

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[6] The ES has given rather more thought to regional/subglobal international societies, largely within the interpolity domain: for a survey see Buzan and Schouenborg (2018: 96–122). In what follows, I do not specifically address the regional/subglobal level, and broadly assume that the main argument about global society and the three domains applies to it as well.

analysing interpolity society, but they also work across integrated world society, or global society, more broadly. I demonstrate in Chapters 2 and 3 how they work for the long span of human history preceding modernity. The classical 'Westphalian' interstate set includes sovereignty, territoriality, the balance of power, war, diplomacy, international law and great power management, to which can be added monarchy/dynasticism, nationalism, human (in)equality, science, sport, and more recently and controversially, the market and environmental stewardship. The featuring of primary institutions in what follows not only maps out the normative structure of global society, but also highlights those values and practices as they were understood and practised in the context of their own time.

It is important to flag up here what some might think of as my own perhaps idiosyncratic understanding of the question of how to define and classify institutions in general, and primary institutions in particular. In this book, I take the position argued at length in Buzan (2004a: 163–90), rejecting the differentiation in the literature between constitutive and regulatory institutions, and all similar constructions. I see this distinction as incoherent and unworkable because as regime theorists argue, and I concur, all social institutions have constitutive effects. My definition of primary institutions is therefore both fairly general, and more homogenous, than, for example, Holsti (2004: 9–10), and Reus-Smit (1997: 556–66), who prefer layered approaches to institutions in terms of their depth and function. I stick with the simpler distinction between primary and secondary institutions. As I have also argued earlier (Buzan, 2004a: 182–4), I accept the idea that primary institutions might well be arranged in hierarchies of master-derivative, and that there is important interplay between primary and secondary institutions (on which more below).

That said, how to identify whether something counts as a primary institution is still not straightforward (Buzan, 2004a: 161–204). After much thought on the question, my own conclusion is that primary institutions cannot be deduced from any prior set of principles or functions. Their potential number and variety are open to the infinity of human social inventiveness, and therefore identifying them has to be a matter of systematic empirical investigation. Societies will range across a broad spectrum, from relatively simple ones defined by a few institutions, to complex, elaborate ones with many institutions interwoven across the three domains. There is no basic, given, or minimal, set that can be put between bookends (Buzan, 2014: 173–8).[7] In this book, I am looking for

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[7] On this point, my disagreement with Laust Schouenborg remains, although we share the aim of building a better foundation for cross-cultural and transhistorical analysis, and the view that institutions are the best way to do that. He has for long been developing a functional approach to primary institutions (Schouenborg, 2011, 2017), which he argues

all of the highest level of primary institutions that define integrated world societies, and global society, generally. In order to answer this question, Robert Falkner and I devised a four-tiered analytical framework to test empirically the status of any candidate to be a primary institution (Falkner and Buzan, 2019). We were looking specifically at environmental stewardship in the context of modern interstate society,[8] but with a bit of flexibility, the general idea of this framework can be applied to pre-modern integrated world societies as well. First, we expect to find the emergence of a clearly defined value or principle applicable as a norm across international society (whether global or regional). Second, we expect to see the creation of secondary institutions reflecting and embodying the underlying norm. Third, we expect to see observable and significant patterns of behaviour by states (or polities) in accordance with the core norm. Fourth, we expect to see the new norm, and its associated practices and secondary institutions, making an impact on the existing array of primary institutions, whether reinforcing them, amending them, disrupting them, or making them obsolete. Like Holsti's (2004) approach, this analytical scheme uses a set of empirical criteria, albeit different ones from Holsti's, to show both the rise and consolidation of new primary institutions, and the decline and decay of ones becoming obsolete. I see no obstacle to applying it generally across the three domains.

The scale of this book prevents me from applying this scheme in close detail to all of the primary institutions discussed. But it sets the standard for the selections I have made, and how I have told the various stories along the way. It also gives the reader a standard by which to hold me to

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is a superior way to counter 'state and stage' approaches that impose a modern state teleology onto the past. I agree with him that this form of Eurocentrism needs to be tackled, and we both like the approach through 'polities'. But I still think that the best, perhaps only, way to capture primary institutions is empirically, and I want to retain the inside–outside distinction that he prefers to dissolve. For the purposes of this book, the distinction between societies composed of individuals, and societies composed of polities, is crucial to the argument. Rather than placing all of humankind into a single seamless society, I think that keeping the differentiation, and mapping the interplays across the three domains, pays bigger dividends in understanding what is going on. Schouenborg attempts only a limited range of functional institutions, thereby avoiding the problem of what I see as the inability of functional approaches to define a complete set. While he certainly demonstrates the flaws in the state and stage models, his limited selection of cases (all from the margins of what I describe below as the CAPE era) make him unable to provide either an alternative typology or an alternative sense of evolution. The empirical approach I use here both provides an alternative typology defined by eras, and a story of evolution that tackles the problem of imposing the present on the past. It does the latter by starting with the deep past, millennia before Schouenborg's cases, and working forward from them to the present.

[8] See Buzan and Falkner (forthcoming) for an application of this framework to the market.

account. By claiming to offer a complete list of primary institutions in human history, it also offers a foil against which others can either contest particular inclusions or exclusions, and/or contest the definitional criteria for identifying primary institutions generally. I would be very surprised indeed if mine were the last word on this issue!

Primary institutions in human history

This is the complete list of primary institutions and their derivatives (indented) used in this study, in order of their main introduction. Naturally, not all of these institutions apply to all times and all places, but keeping this complete set in mind, and in play where appropriate, is a useful way of both tracking the development of global social structure over time, and of comparing the different phases of the social development of humankind. It is also useful for tracking transitions, when some institutions go out of play, others are transformed in meaning and practice, and new ones arise.

Kinship
Human equality
Trade
Territoriality
War
Human inequality
    Slavery
    Patriarchy
    Racism
Monarchy/Dynasticism
Imperialism
Religion
Sovereignty
Diplomacy
International Law
Balance of power
Great Power Management
Nationalism
Market versus economic nationalism
    Multilateralism
Science
Sport
Development
Environmental Stewardship

Secondary institutions are usually thought of as those featured in regime theory and by liberal institutionalists, and relating to the shallower

organisational usage of the term. In this view, they are consciously constructed, instrumental arrangements. Within a classical interstate perspective on modern international society, secondary institutions are mainly the product of liberal orders, and are for the most part intergovernmental arrangements consciously designed by states to serve specific functional purposes. They include the United Nations, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization, the Nuclear Non-proliferation regime, and myriad others. This type of secondary institution is a relatively recent invention, first appearing in the later decades of the nineteenth century. They link to interstate primary institutions in the sense both that they are reflections of underlying primary institutions (e.g. the UN reflecting sovereignty, diplomacy, multilateralism, international law) and that they serve as forums where primary institutions are produced, reproduced, renegotiated and sometimes made obsolete (e.g. the role of the UN in promoting human equality, development, and environmental stewardship, and in making colonialism and human inequality illegitimate). A key function of modern secondary institutions is to reflect and reproduce the primary institutions that make up the international normative structure. They both socialise states into the norms and practices of international society, and are sites of political contestation and conflict over those norms and practices. Secondary institutions thus play important roles in the embedding, reproduction, development and sometime decay of the primary institutions of global society (Spandler, 2015; Navari, 2016; Knudsen and Navari, 2019).

Although the ES has not explored it, secondary institutions can also be found through a much longer run of history, mainly associated with religion and trade, and more recently, sport. The transnational domain is not new, but as I show in Chapter 3, has been there since the dawn of civilisation, and historically has been a significant source of primary and secondary institutions. Even for the modern era, work towards widening the understanding of primary and secondary institutions within a global society context has barely begun, and I hope this book will contribute towards it. It seems unlikely that a single set of primary and secondary institutions operates equally across all three domains. It is true that individuals can and do accept things like nationalism, sovereignty, territoriality and human equality, and that TNAs can and do accept sovereignty, international law, diplomacy, and so on. Individuals and TNAs thereby become part of the social processes that reproduce and legitimise these institutions. Clark (2007) has made a useful start on making explicit the role of the transnational and interhuman domains in the institutional structures of interstate society.

It seems unlikely, however, that this happens evenly across the three domains, and this question is explored in the empirical chapters of this book.

In what follows, I also make the radical move of including polities in the category of secondary institutions. The ES is mainly ambiguous about how to position the state within the scheme of primary and secondary institutions. Despite his huge contribution to developing the concept of primary institutions, Bull was party to this fudging. He does at one point say that 'it is states themselves that are the principal institutions of the society of states' (Bull, 1977: 71), but he does not develop the idea, and does not give either states or sovereignty (or, indeed, territoriality, monarchy/dynasticism and nationalism) a chapter alongside the other primary institutions he discusses, instead treating them as givens in his scheme (Buzan, 2004a: 52–6, 169–70). It strikes me that there is an unexplored opportunity here to formulate a distinctive ES approach to state, and more broadly polity, formation. Like other types of secondary institution, polities are consciously constructed for instrumental purposes. And also like other types of secondary institution, polities produce, reproduce, renegotiate and sometimes make obsolete, primary institutions. Thus, while primary and secondary institutions remain conceptually quite distinct, there is an eternal sense of practical co-constitution between them of which polities are an important part. If one counts polities as secondary institutions, then, as noted above, it becomes possible to analyse polity-formation in terms of the primary institutions that define and support different types of polity. In the empirical chapters that follow, the principal theme is how empires were generated by the primary institutions of sovereignty, territoriality and monarchy/dynasticism, while modern states were generated by sovereignty, territoriality and nationalism. This approach to polity-formation through primary institutions opens up a novel and quite powerful way of understanding not only both empires and modern states in their own terms, but also the nature and process of the transition from one to the other as the dominant form of polity during the first century-and-a-half of the transition towards modernity.

Solidarism and Pluralism Within the ES, and particularly related to the debates about order and justice, human rights and (non)intervention within modernity, two positions have emerged, which are labelled *pluralist* and *solidarist*. The terms were coined by Bull (1966), and have remained central structuring concepts for the core normative debates

within the English School (Wheeler, 1992; Dunne and Wheeler, 1996; Bain, 2010).

- *Pluralism* represents the communitarian disposition towards a state-centric mode of association in which sovereignty and nonintervention serve to contain and sustain cultural and political diversity. It is in this general sense *status quo* orientated and concerned mainly about maintaining interstate order, and the cultural diversity that is the legacy of human history. As a rule, pluralists, following Bull, will argue that although a deeply unjust system cannot be stable, order is in important ways a prior condition for justice. Pluralists see the prospects for international society as limited to a fairly narrow logic of coexistence.

- *Solidarism* represents the disposition either to transcend the states-system with some closer mode of association based on humankind, or to develop the states-system beyond a logic of mere coexistence to one of cooperation on shared projects such as managing a global economy, pursuing human rights as a universal principle, and/or environmental stewardship for the planetary ecosystem. In principle, solidarism could represent a wide range of possibilities (Buzan, 2004a: 121, 190–200), but in practice within the English School it has been mainly linked to liberal cosmopolitan perspectives and to concerns about justice. Solidarists typically emphasise that order without justice is undesirable and ultimately unsustainable. Most of the debate about solidarism has linked it to the interhuman domain in the form of universalist cosmopolitan values, notably human rights. But solidarism can also be rooted in the interpolity domain, in such projects as managing a shared global economy (Buzan, 2014: 114–20).

In the English School context, it is important to see pluralism and solidarism <u>not</u> as opposed and mutually exclusive positions. Their proponents may sometimes think of themselves as opposed, and the language of the debate may sometimes take oppositional form. But in a detached perspective, their core function is to define the central, permanent tension in the English School's 'great conversation' about how to find the best balance between order and justice in international/global society.

      Raison de système and raison de famille Raison de système was coined by Watson (1992: 14) and defined as 'the belief that it pays to make the system work'. This concept can be seen as a way of encapsulating the English School's core normative debate between pluralism and

solidarism. It stands as the main counterpoint to the idea of *raison d'état*, which is central explicitly to realism and implicitly to much Western IR theory. *Raison de système* is fairly specific to modernity. When taking a longer historical perspective, one should add to this set *raison de famille*, as the logic of kinship systems generally, and in particular the dynastic imperial systems preceding *raison d'état* (Green, 2013). *Raison de système* is not yet widely used in the ES literature, but has a good claim for more general deployment. It neatly encapsulates the logic underlying international and global society, and therefore what differentiates ES thinking from most other lines of IR theory, particularly realist and rationalist ones.

Other Concepts from IR Theory

Interaction Capacity The concept of interaction capacity developed with work that I and others did that was aimed mainly at neorealism: Buzan, Jones and Little (1993: 66–80); Buzan and Little (2000: 80–4). Interaction capacity is a way of looking at international systems/societies in terms of their carrying capacity for information, goods and people, and the speed, range and cost with which these things can be done. Interaction capacity determines not only the size of such systems, but also how loosely or tightly they are integrated, and consequently how weakly or strongly the neorealist logics of socialisation and competition can work. This concept was not initially inspired or framed by ES thinking about international society but is compatible with it. Interaction capacity is a key aspect of the material conditions of international systems/societies, particularly in determining the limits and shape of trade, war, empire and cultural exchange. There is a huge difference between systems/societies in which information can be sent instantaneously from anywhere on the planet to anywhere else, and those in which it might take nine months to get a message from London to Australia, or from Beijing to Istanbul. Interaction capacity also has a social side in the extent to which primary and secondary institutions facilitate interaction. International law and diplomacy work this way as primary institutions, and secondary institutions such as banking systems and forum organisations like the UN respectively facilitate financial transactions and diplomatic interaction.

Evolution The concept of 'evolution' as used in this book is not strictly Darwinian in the sense of being driven by mutation and natural selection in a struggle for survival. As Tang (2013) and Neumann (2020:

23–5) point out, the social world evolves in ways different from, and not analogous to, the biological one.[9] Social collectivities evolve not only in themselves, from their internal dynamics, but also in interaction with both other social collectivities and the material environment. Social evolution is Darwinian in the sense that it is partly about how living things adapt (or not) to the environment they inhabit, and to changes in that environment, however such changes might be caused. Evolution in this sense is not teleological (Tang, 2013: 28–9, 35). The idea that evolution is a process with outcomes that are contingent, rather than predetermined, fits well with the ES tradition that international society is a contingent phenomenon whose fortunes wax and wane over time. Evolution exposes the logic of change without supposing any particular outcome. The idea that it is the fittest that survive is contingent rather than absolute. What might be fittest for one set of conditions might be a weakness when those conditions change. Ask any woolly mammoth, or any empire, about that. Evolution charts the successes, but also the failures and extinctions. A non-teleological view of evolution also leaves open the question of how to evaluate progress: evolution as a process can move towards lower levels of complexity and diversity as well as higher ones. A useful way of approaching social evolution is through the idea of dialectics as the mechanism of social change.

Dialectics Since biological analogies for social evolution are a bit limited, dialectics offers a useful complement for looking at how social structures evolve. It is not my intention here to get involved in any deep philosophical rumination on the complexities of dialectics. Nor do I want to accept, or get involved in the debates about, the peculiarities of Marxian dialectical materialism with its assumptions that social evolution is teleological.[10] I do not want to go much further than the idea that in the social world one can often see the primary institutions of integrated world societies falling into paired contradictions, or even antagonisms, that have somehow to be worked out because the tensions they generate cannot be left unaddressed. In the contemporary context, think, for example, of globalisation and territoriality, or human inequality and human equality, or human rights and state sovereignty, or monarchy/

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[9] I broadly accept Tang's (2013: 3–40) theoretical case for a 'social evolutionary approach', though less so his rather Realist application of it.
[10] But see the useful contribution by Rosenberg (2013b).

dynasticism and popular sovereignty, and many more. These contradictions, and their dynamics, provide one of the engines, alongside changes in material conditions, that drives the evolution of societies at all levels.[11] The emphasis in what follows is on dialectics as process, <u>not</u> as teleology.

That leaves one complexity needing to be addressed. There are at least two ways of understanding the mechanism of dialectics, a situation that feels amusingly appropriate to the concept. The first is generally referred to as Hegelian, and reflects broadly how dialectics is understood in the West. The second is Chinese (*zhongyong* dialectics), and is probably not yet widely understood outside those familiar with Chinese culture.[12]

Hegelian dialectics is built around the resolution of contradictions, and starting the cycle over again from a new place. This is expressed in its concepts (not Hegel's terminology) of *thesis* and *antithesis* ending in *synthesis*, with the synthesis becoming the new thesis that restarts the cycle by generating an antithesis, and so on. This form of dialectics may or may not be progressive (a matter of normative judgment), but it is certainly a mechanism for continuous evolution. Its driving force is that contradictions are socially unsustainable and have to be resolved, and therefore its central mechanism is conflict. A potential problem with this form of dialectics is its assumption that each synthesis must start the cycle over again. This has an appealing dynamism and simplicity, but seems at odds with the fact that historically, many societies achieved sufficient stability and longevity to belie that kind of permanent turbulence. It seems possible that some syntheses will actually constitute islands of stability rather than springboards for a new contradiction. Constitutional monarchy, for example, might be seen as a durable synthesis from the contradiction between monarchy/dynasticism and nationalism/popular sovereignty. As I show in the empirical chapters, there can be mutually supportive clusters of primary institutions that form islands of stability. Hegelian dialectics are therefore sometimes resolvable by negotiation and compromise.

This idea of stabilised contradictions points to *zhongyong* dialectics. *Zhongyong* dialectics starts from the same idea that there are dyadic contradictions in society that need to be addressed if society is to be stable. From there, however, it takes a different route, based on the well-known *yin/yang* symbol in Chinese philosophy.

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[11] The argument about contradictions amongst primary institutions as a driving force in the evolution of international society is foreshadowed in Mayall (1990), and Buzan (2004a: 250–1).

[12] I draw heavily on the work of Qin (2011, 2018) for this discussion.
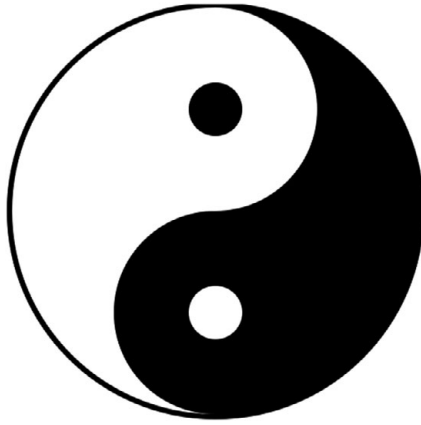
In the perspective of *zhongyong* dialectics, the polarity in Chinese dialectics is contradictory, but not necessarily conflictual. There is a *yin/yang* complementarity and co-evolutionary process, whereby the 'thesis' and the 'antithesis' always contains an element of the other, and the balance between them shifts according to circumstance. The point of *zhongyong* dialectics is not to resolve contradictions that are seen as intolerably zero-sum, but to manage contradictions that are seen as a permanent feature of the social structure. Good management in the light of ever-changing circumstances is the path to achieving social harmony in the presence of contradiction. That, and not a new synthesis, is the essence of Chinese dialectics. In contrast to Hegelian thinking, Chinese *zhongyong* dialectics favour 'co-theses' (Qin, 2018: xvii). As Qin (2018: xvii) puts it, 'while the Hegelian tradition tries to diagnose the key contradiction, which is key to crumpling the old and creating a new synthesis', the '*zhongyong* dialectics always tries to find the appropriate middle where the common ground lies'. Conflict exists but does not have any ontological status (Qin, 2018: xvii).

One clear implication of *zhongyong* dialectics as a way of thinking is in the perspective it gives on social contradictions. In the Hegelian perspective, contradictions are basically unsustainable. But in the Chinese perspective, contradiction is the natural condition of being in society. Contradictions change in form and significance, and need to be handled in order to achieve harmony, but they do not disappear. The Chinese way of thinking is therefore much more comfortable with contradiction than the Western one, and this might go a long way to explaining what to a Western eye often looks like the incoherence of China's

foreign policy.[13] But from a *zhongyong* perspective the pursuit of contradictory policies may not look like a problem at all, just the normal way of responding to complex situations in which policy needs to be continuously manoeuvred within standing contradictions.

In principle, both the Hegelian and *zhongyong* approaches look like viable understandings of dialectics. Yet in a dialectical perspective, each by itself, looks too narrow and extreme an interpretation. Not all contradictions have to be fought through to a new synthesis and a new cycle of conflict, and not all are endlessly manageable without needing some deeper resolution. The point here is not that all Western thinking is Hegelian and all Chinese thinking *Zhongyong*. Marxism, still influential in China, and especially in its ruling party, is strongly Hegelian in its view of dialectics. The point is that all contradictions and dialectics can and should be viewed in both of these perspectives. The example given above of constitutional monarchy as a stable synthesis, although a mainly Western one, might fit quite comfortably into a *zhongyong* perspective of managed contradiction. But the challenge of fascism in the 1940s had to be fought, and was a strong enough challenge to unite communists and liberals, albeit temporarily, to do so. I therefore keep in mind both understandings of dialectics, and apply them pragmatically. And since the evolutionary dynamics of societies are generally complex, and seldom reducible to simple dyadic contradictions, I add to this framework the idea that in either the Hegelian or *zhongyong* schemes, it is not uncommon for two or more dialectics to intersect in such a way as to entangle their dynamics. I will refer to such situations as *multilectic*.

Differentiation Theory and Sectors Differentiation theory and sectors are partly overlapping ideas, but with quite different origins and implications. Differentiation theory comes from Sociology, and is a deep idea aimed at defining the fundamental structure of societies. It offers three basic principles of differentiation applicable to all forms of society: *segmentary*, *stratificatory* and *functional* (Buzan and Albert, 2010; Albert, Buzan and Zürn, 2013):

- *Segmentary* (or *egalitarian*) differentiation is where every social subsystem is the equal of, and functionally similar to, every other social subsystem. This points to families, bands, clans and tribes. A segmentary form of differentiation is the one most prone to be

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[13] On the various reasons for the incoherence of China's foreign policy see: Buzan (2010); Wang (2011); Odgaard (2012: 2–4); Shambaugh (2013: 61–71); Garver (2016); Ren (2016); Jones and Hameiri (2021).

organised in terms of territorial delimitations, although this is not necessarily so.

- *Stratificatory* differentiation is where some persons or groups raise themselves above others, creating a hierarchical social order. Stratificatory differentiation covers a wide range of possibilities and can be further subdivided into rank and class forms distinguished by whether or not there is significant inequality not just in status (rank), but in access to basic resources (class). This points to feudal or caste, or aristocratic or religious, or military social orders. As this suggests, stratification can occur in many dimensions: coercive capability, access to resources, authority, status, level of skill, etc. In IR it points to the many forms of hierarchy: conquest and empire, hegemony, a privileged position for great powers, and a division of the world into core and periphery, or First and Third Worlds.
- *Functional* differentiation is where the subsystems are defined by the coherence of particular types of activity and their differentiation from other types of activity, and these differences do not stem simply from rank. It is closely related to the idea of a division of labour in the sense understood by economists, but when applied to society as a whole it points to its increasing division into legal, political, military, economic, scientific, religious and suchlike distinct and specialised subsystems or sectors of activity, often with distinctive institutions and actors (Albert and Hilkermeier, 2004). The study of functional differentiation is closely, and as I will show wrongly, associated almost exclusively with modernity.

The sense of history in differentiation theory involves an idea of evolution in which more complex forms grow out of the simpler ones that precede them. The orthodox view is that segmentary hunter-gatherer bands precede the stratified city states and empires of ancient and classical times, which precede the functionally differentiated societies characteristic of modernity. In this view, segmentary, stratificatory and functional differentiation form a sequence in that the higher tiers depend for their existence on having developed out of, and overcome, the ones that came before. The sequence is thus both empirical (roughly corresponding to the general pattern of human history) and qualitative (from simpler forms of differentiation to more complex ones). Although such evolution is common, it is certainly not inevitable. Specific societies can end up in stasis, or can revert back to simpler types (Diamond, 2005). Evolution does not mean that higher forms of differentiation eliminate those below them. The logic is structural: social orders are characterised by the co-presence of different forms of differentiation, the key question being

which form is dominant in shaping the social structure as a whole. Looked at the other way around, one can find elements of functional differentiation even in segmentary hunter-gatherer societies (shamans, tool-makers, pottery makers). As shown in Chapter 3, there was a lot of functional differentiation in the stratificatory societies of agrarian civilisation. Differentiation theory sets up a helpful context within which the social function of primary institutions can be understood.

The concept of sectors is more a practical taxonomy than a theory. Sectors differentiate on the basis of the type of relationship – military (coercion), political (power), economic (exchange), societal (identity), etc. – and therefore lean strongly towards a functional differentiation of society. Within IR, it was developed in the context of security studies to provide a functional parallel to the scale-based differentiations of levels of analysis that were widely used in IR (Buzan, 1991: 107–19; Buzan, Jones and Little, 1993: 30–3; Buzan and Little, 2000: 72–7).[14] Buzan and Little (2000) combined sectors and levels of analysis into a matrix in an attempt to capture the social whole. The practice of thinking in terms of functionally differentiated sectors is also not uncommon amongst historians and sociologists (e.g. Braudel, 1985: 17; Mann, 1986: ch. 1). In IR analyses of the social world, there are five commonly used sectors: military, political, economic, societal and environmental, with law as an arguable sixth. Similar to primary institutions, the concept of sectors neither specifies any particular set nor set limits to how many there might be, nor explains why we have this particular set. It merely observes empirically that modern society and academia operate in ways that reproduce this particular set, and so differentiate society functionally along those lines. Sectors provide a useful way of grouping primary institutions in functional terms.

- The *military sector* is about relationships of forceful coercion, and the ability of actors to fight wars with each other. It usually focuses on the interplay of the armed offensive and defensive capabilities of actors in the international system, and their perceptions of each other's intentions. Institutions are war, balance of power, and partly imperialism (because empires are mainly created and sustained by force).
- The *political sector* is about relationships of authority, governing status and recognition. It concerns the organisational stability of systems of

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[14] Although levels of analysis has featured quite strongly in some of my earlier work, it is relatively in the background in this book. That is partly because most of the focus here is on the global level, although the regional one comes up here and there, and partly because I have shifted the main emphasis to the three domains, which do some of the same work, but in a different way.

government and the ideologies that give them legitimacy. Do polities accept other polities as equal in law and rank? Or are relations hierarchical, with superior and inferior status acknowledged by both sides? Or do polities deny each other recognition, in effect treating each other as unoccupied territory available for seizure (*terra nullius*)? The political sector can be interpreted in a more state-centric sense as being about government, or in a looser, more liberal, sense as being about governance, including norms, rules, and institutions above, or instead of, the state. Some might wish to differentiate a *legal sector* from the political one. Institutions are sovereignty, territoriality, monarchy/dynasticism, diplomacy, international law, great power management. Partly also imperialism (when it is a legitimate framing for rule), religion (where tied to the polity), nationalism, and human equality/inequality.

- The *societal sector* is about social and cultural relationships. It concerns the patterns of collective identity by which humans place themselves into groups, and how those groups relate to each other: that is, the various principles of differentiation and stratification in social orders. It involves the sustainability, within acceptable conditions for evolution, of traditional patterns of language, culture and religious and national identity and custom. Interactions in this sector are about the transmission of ideas between peoples and civilisations. They may involve ideas about knowledge, technology or about political and religious organisation. Institutions are kinship (family to tribe/clan), partly religion, nationalism, human equality/inequality, science, sport.

- The *economic sector,* is about relationships of trade, production and finance, and how actors gain access to the resources, finance and markets necessary to sustain acceptable levels of welfare and political power. For most of history, economic interactions have been about trade and the financing of trade. Only in very recent times have they also come to be about the far-flung organisation of production and finance. Institutions are trade, trade diasporas, market/mercantilism, development, and partly imperialism, human equality/inequality (wages versus slavery).

- The *environmental sector* is about the relationship between human activity and the planetary ecosphere as the essential support system on which all other human enterprises depend. The most traditional environmental interaction is disease transmission, but since the Chinese and European voyages of discovery in the fifteenth century, one must add the intercontinental movement of plants, animals and peoples, and local and global pollution. The environmental sector, and the debates about an *anthropocene* era (Dalby, 2020), become

increasingly important in the later chapters on modernity. Institutions: environmental stewardship, sustainable development.

It is quickly apparent that sectors, despite their absence of theoretical grounding, fit quite comfortably within functional differentiation, even if as nothing more than convenient labels (Buzan and Albert, 2010: 316–18, 328; Albert and Buzan, 2011, 2013). Both are approaches to understanding the social whole by differentiating it in terms of types of functional relationships (Albert and Buzan, 2013). In this usage, they are close to being synonyms for sociological labels such as subsystems or function-systems. But sectors, like functional differentiation, also resonate widely within the social sciences, many of whose disciplines have set themselves up along functionally differentiated/sectoral lines: for example, Economics, Law, Politics, Sociology. Within IR, there is a long-standing division of opinion as to whether the discipline is a subfield of Politics (International Politics) or an amalgam of the macro-ends of most of the social sciences plus history. I am firmly of the latter view, and that will be reflected in this book. Neither IR as a discipline, nor the global society approach, can be confined to the political sector.

Uneven and Combined Development The concept of uneven and combined development (UCD) has been developed in several works by Rosenberg (2010, 2013a, b, 2016, 2020, see also Buzan and Lawson, 2016) to provide a framework for understanding modernity, and indeed the dynamics of international relations more generally. In terms of explaining the global historical dynamics of modernity, UCD stands as an alternative to Waltz (1979). Both Waltz and Rosenberg see 'socialisation and competition' as consequences of 'combination' (units unavoidably interacting with each other within the same system). But they disagree deeply about their effects: Waltz famously favours homogenisation into 'like units', while Rosenberg stresses that the particular timing and circumstances of socialisation and competition necessarily produce varied outcomes. The extreme conditions created by macro-historical transformations such as the one that took place during the long nineteenth century expose the logic of the latter with great clarity. Major transformations of this kind have a distinct point or points of origin in which a particular configuration emerges and is sustained. This configuration is produced and reproduced through inter-societal interactions across time and space, generating diverse outcomes. These interactions can be coercive, emulative and/or reactive, and each social order that encounters the new configuration has its own way of adapting to it. Some social orders resist the new configuration, and may be eliminated as a

result. Others develop indigenous versions of it. 'Late' developers are not carbon copies of the original adopters, but develop their own distinctive characteristics.

Interactions between different social orders therefore produce not Waltzian convergence, but (sometimes unstable) amalgams of new and old. Modernity sometimes displaces, but just as often reconfigures, ideas, rituals and symbols associated with 'tradition': monarchies, religions, class hierarchies, and suchlike. Each society finds its own blend of new and old: for example, the British version of constitutional monarchy, the modern Japanese emperor, the contemporary reworking of Confucianism in China. During the nineteenth century, German, American and Japanese industrialisations were not replicas of British development, but distinct amalgams. Even as they borrowed both from the British experience and from each other, they adapted modernity to their own contexts and traditions, often trying to use the modern state to accelerate the process so as to 'catch-up' with the leading edge. Likewise, Soviet and, more recently, Chinese developments also maintained their own characteristics, combining new technologies and productive forces alongside inherited social formations. As ideas spread, they are adapted to local cultures and conditions (Acharya, 2004). Each society has to find its own way of coming to terms with the multiple challenges presented by modernity, and each encounter is shaped by local histories, cultures and institutional contexts, as well as by the timing and circumstances of its encounter. There is both convergence (most obviously in the common assuming of aspects of functional differentiation, nationalism and forms of rational statehood); and divergence (ideological, cultural and organisational, and understanding of class structure).

Through the analytic lens of UCD, it becomes clear that development is multilinear rather than linear; proceeds in fits and starts rather than through smooth gradations; and contains significant variations in terms of outcomes. One indicator of the ways in which polities adapted in diverse ways to the nineteenth-century global transformation is the variety of ideologies that have emerged to define different assemblages of economy, politics and culture in the modern world: liberalism, social democracy, conservatism, socialism, market socialism, communism, fascism, patrimonialism, and more. Another indicator is the literature on varieties of capitalism (Jackson and Deeg, 2006; McNally, 2013; Buzan and Lawson, 2014b; Milanovic, 2019). A third is the idea of 'multiple modernities' (Eisenstadt, 2000). UCD underlines how and why the deep pluralist world order (see Part III) now emerging from the ongoing spread and deepening of modernity, will be as much, or more, culturally, economically and politically differentiated than homogenised.

The perspective of UCD resolves the long-standing, and politically charged, equation of modernisation with Westernisation, which assumed that adopting modernity must mean becoming a clone of the Western model. It doesn't.

Although this book focuses on the similarities that come into view when human history is observed through the lens of primary institutions, it is essential not to lose sight of the fact that primary institutions operate at quite a high level of abstraction. Underneath that, one must not lose sight of the widespread diversities of culture and politics that differentiate civilisations even when all face the pressures of modernity.[15]

Three Repurposed Concepts

Era The term era is commonly used in IR in a flexible way to define longish periods marked by a particular dominant characteristic, such as the nuclear era. It works alongside other, usually vaguely defined periodising terms such as 'age' (e.g. Bronze Age), 'epoch' (as in geology), and 'period' (e.g. interwar period). As Guillaume (2021) points out, history can always be periodised in various and overlapping ways, with common themes being modes of government (type of dominant polity), modes of production (Marxism), modes of destruction (weapons, wars), and modes of social differentiation (classical Sociology). Any subdivision of history presupposes a pattern of continuities and ruptures or transitions, and it is up to the periodiser to specify 'the working hypothesis and the conceptual premises behind it' (Guillaume, 2021: 565–6). Epple (2021: 49) helpfully sums up the act of periodising as follows:

Anyone who applies such a concept is claiming that there are criteria according to which a time span can be described as a cohesive period. Instead of merely pointing to a break, the epoch concept prescribes at least a minimum of inner consistency over the length of time in question. It becomes meaningful when it links up with some interpretation that goes beyond mere chronology. There are three possible ways of doing this: the weakest is to define an epoch as lying between two caesurae (as, for example, with the 'interwar period' or the 'Middle Ages'). An epoch concept is stronger when it invokes common features (for example 'feudalism'). However, the concept is at its strongest when it claims that a specific epoch is characterized by a general, comprehensive trend and can be conceived in terms of a process (for example, the 'age of industrialization').

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[15] The UCD debates accord with the mainstream view by generally assuming that what I called 'modernity proper' arrived during the nineteenth century. I hold this question open, seeing the nineteenth century as the beginning of the transition towards modernity.

Here I use the term era in a strong sense to identify long – often very long – time-spans. These are defined internally by a specific pattern of material conditions and social structures that remain dominant throughout an identifiable stretch of time; and externally by transition periods during which those defining variables change. My premise is that significant patterns of continuity and rupture/transition can be found even when one combines modes of government, production and destruction. In Epple's terms, I am less concerned with pinpoint dates, because I see eras as separated by transition periods. I am much more concerned to use my material and social-structural framing to find new patterns of common features and general trends. My working hypothesis is that the English School's concept of primary institutions can be used to open a detailed look at the social structure as a whole, and that patterns occurring there can be matched to developments in the material condition of humankind. The key to identifying such long eras is to differentiate between changes occurring within a relatively fixed set of material and social conditions, and changes that transform those conditions themselves. The dual framing of material conditions and primary institutions I use to shape the empirical analysis is designed to generate an analytical level of generality that brings these long eras clearly into view. An era is therefore defined by a specific form of socio-material order. The resultant level of analysis is higher than those used by most historians to identify continuities and ruptures.[16] My scheme also uses clusters of big changes that occur together not only in material conditions but also across a range of primary institutions, to identify the continuities and changes that define these long eras. The empirical material used in this exercise is not in itself new, though most readers will probably find things in it with which they were not familiar. It is the way that the material is organised that generates new insights about continuity, change and periodisation in the long view of history.

This usage makes eras the longest form of socio-historical periodisation for humankind. Each era may contain a variety of periods, phases, stages, etc. defined by narrower criteria. Eras are both separated and connected by transition periods in which one set of material conditions and social structures morphs into another. These transitions may themselves be quite long. In earlier eras, when humankind was scattered into separate civilisations with often very thin connections, they occurred at different times in different places, as for example with agriculture. The focus in what follows will be on the earliest transitions, and these were

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[16] For example, Bentley (1996); Parzinger (2020: 290–304).

usually in Eurasia. As with functional differentiation, each era contains legacies from its predecessors as well as the new material conditions and social structures that define it. In this sense, eras are a bit like genomes: the genome of *Homo sapiens*, for example, still contains significant traces of the DNA of extinct hominin species such as Neanderthals and Denisovans.

Social Glue The second repurposed concept, *social glue*, is not used much if at all in IR, though the idea that the term represents – what is it that holds social orders together? – is strongly present in many IR discussions.[17] Although he does not use the term social glue, Wendt (1999: 247–50) provides a simple and very useful answer to the question: coercion, calculation and/or belief.[18] Close to pure forms of these three types of social glue are imaginable: for example, coercion in rule imposed by alien conquest; calculation in pure systems of market relations; and belief underpinning religions and secular ideologies. But blendings are the standard form. Religions and secular ideologies might well have a core of belief, but also be supported and promoted by force, or adhered to out of calculation. Market relations start from calculation, but can also involve an element of ideological belief, and for others might be influenced by elements of coercion from criminals or political leaders. Invaders might find support from a 'fifth column' on the basis of calculation or belief. There is a strong general sense that these forms of social glue stand in a hierarchy of efficiency. Social structures held together mainly by coercion, such as empires of conquest, will be costly to maintain, will inspire resistance, and will evaporate once the coercion weakens. The Assyrian and Qin Empires are often given as examples of coercion-heavy social structures (e.g. Lieven, 2022: 49, 94–100). Those held together by calculation, such as markets, are stable only so long as they deliver the desired goods. They are vulnerable to changes in circumstance, such as war, that alter the calculations negatively. Those held together by belief are the easiest to maintain, and because they have the deepest roots they are likely to be the most durable. Christianity outlasted the Roman Empire, Islam outlasted the Abbasid Caliphate, Buddhism outlasted the Mauryan Empire, and Orthodoxy outlasted the Soviet Union. It is important to note that belief does not have to be nice. Warrior cultures and fascist societies often believe that war promotes the health and progress of a society, cultivates masculine

[17] See Buzan (2004a: 98–138) for a more extensive discussion of this.
[18] For other formulations see Kratochwil (1989: 97); March and Olsen (1998: 948–54); Hurd (1999).

values, leads to the survival of the fittest, and is therefore a desirable activity.

This hierarchy of forms of social glue is about the degree to which a social order is internalised within its members. Coercive orders are shallow. They can generate the conformity of behaviour that marks a society, but not in an internalised, self-sustaining, way. Calculated orders are by definition dependent on the maintenance of particular conditions. They are partly internalised, but not in a deep way. They might or might not be durable. Orders held together by shared belief are deep because they are internalised. This is one explanation for the relative durability of religion in global society, and for the success of nationalism since the nineteenth century. It is what secular ideologies such as liberalism, socialism, fascism and communism hope to achieve. In IR, neorealists, neoliberals and other forms of rationalist focus mainly on the shallower orders of coercion and calculation. Constructivists and the ES focus mainly on deep order.

In Wendt's scheme, 'belief' is very close to what Anderson (1983; see also Harari, 2011: 361–4) famously labelled *imagined communities*: groups of people who identify themselves as a society or community on the basis of some agreed myth that binds them together. The reason why these communities are 'imagined' is that they are too big for all of their members to have any chance of meeting or knowing each other personally, as they might expect to do in a local kinship community. Despite this limitation, imagined communities can develop great depth and power, easily forming the basis on which people will treat other members of the group as if they were kin, and kill outsider, non-members if they are thought to be threatening. Whether the binding myth is true, partially true, or pure invention, does not matter. All that matters is that the relevant group of people accept it. This myth could be an extended version of kinship, like a common ancestor. It could be a religion whose stories and god(s) and rituals all adherents accept and bind themselves to. It could be a national myth, where the shared identity is constructed out of some mixture of language, ethnicity, culture and history. It could be an ideological myth, in which the community defines itself by adherence to some secular doctrine. Like many conspiracy theories, it could be complete and unsubstantiated nonsense, but nonsense that is packaged into a compelling story. Some imagined communities are fairly closed and difficult to join (e.g. ethno-national ones), while others are relatively easy (e.g. proselytising religions, conspiracy theories).

The blends and mixtures of these three forms or social glue change over time and place, and at all levels of society from family to global. They are one factor in what can be used to define eras.

Globalisation and Global Society In IR, globalisation has many layers of meaning, ranging from the spread of humans across the planet in Neolithic times, through the connecting up of the continents by the opening of oceanic shipping during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries to the two modern views focusing on massive increases in the depth and intensity of global interactions of all kinds, one highlighting the nineteenth century, and the other the world since 1945 (Buzan and Lawson, 2015: 311–14). All but the first of these layers tends to privilege the economic sector, because that is generally the one in which humans connect on the largest scale, mainly through trade, in any given era (Buzan and Little, 2000; Acharya and Buzan, 2019: 181–2). In its economic meaning, globalisation allows space for the non-state actors who conducted trade, traditionally merchants, to be a significant part of the picture.

In what follows, I take a broad view of this concept embracing all of these meanings. I am basically interested in using globalisation to capture the increasing scale of how humankind organises itself across the inter-polity, transnational and interhuman domains eventually generating a global society. This encompasses much more than just trade. Global society enables an important differentiation to be made from the ES's *world society*. World society, and some other uses of 'world' in IR theory, suggests the encompassing of the whole of a social system without that necessarily requiring planetary scale. It is common to talk about the Roman or Sinic 'worlds' during classical times. Global society means planetary in scale. In what follows, therefore, globalisation in the sense of increasing scale works in tandem with the concept of *integrated world society* discussed above. Globalisation carries the factor of scale, and integrated world society captures the extent and intensity with which the organisation of humankind works in a connected way across all three domains. For much of human history these define mainly separate civilisational tracks that are lightly linked. At most there was progress towards planetary scale as the size of human societies increased. But once the scale of human society reached planetary extent, as it had by the early sixteenth century, these two tracks started to merge. By the nineteenth century, integrated world society had effectively become global society, turning the story from one mainly about expanding scale, to one almost wholly about intensification within global scale.

At this point many readers will be thinking about *global governance*, an idea that has been active in IR thinking for several decades. Such thinking emerged partly from IPE, where the role of non-state actors, particularly firms, was obvious; and partly from liberal cosmopolitans wishing to challenge the narrow state-centrism of realists (Gilpin, 1987;

Strange, 1988; Stopford and Strange, 1991; Rosenau, 1992; Held et al., 1999; Karns and Mingst, 2010; Zürn, 2010; Weiss, 2013). Global governance emphasised the deterritorialisation of world politics as states opened themselves to both economic flows and issues such as the environment that could not be dealt with effectively even by superpowers. It highlighted the significant roles played in contemporary international relations not just by some minor states as well as for great powers, but also by both intergovernmental organisations, and a wide range of non-state actors from multinational corporations to civil society actors acting not only as lobbyists, but also as providers of resources and expertise. The main drift of the global governance literature was to see great powers more as a problem than a solution to global troubles, and to emphasise that a much wider range of actors and networks were powerfully in play. It mostly wanted to see great powers as increasingly enmeshed in cobwebs of networks from which they could no longer escape. Great power management was seen as ineffective at best, and part of the problem at worst. The idea was of an emergent multi-layered form of global management that was more diverse, more democratic, and often more efficient, than great power interventions, and whose development should be supported.

The ES played little part in this. It was handicapped by its focus on the society of states, its failure to engage with IPE, and its relative disinterest in secondary institutions. Within the ES, Hurrell (2007) was notable for acknowledging and engaging with global governance. A few others within the ES noted the effective merging of global governance, on the one hand, and great power management, on the other hand, as the agenda of global governance issues grew ever wider (Bukovansky et al., 2012; Cui and Buzan, 2016). Global governance lost momentum within IR after the economic crisis starting in 2007–8 exposed the dependence of the global market on state management and rescue. It was further battered by the emergence and intensification of the second cold war after 2015.

The idea of global society that I am raising here has two resonances with global governance. Both focus on planetary scale. And both incorporate a wider range of actors than states/polities, bringing in corporations, intergovernmental organisations, and civil society organisations. But there are substantial differences too. I argue that the linked ideas of integrated world society/global society can and should be pushed back a lot further in time than the last few decades or centuries that preoccupy global governance. I also argue that the framing in English School terms as society, and the explicit analytical approach through the three domains (interpolity, transnational, interhuman), differentiates global society from global governance. The framing as society opens up for deployment

of the ES's concept of primary institutions, which, except for sovereignty and territoriality, are not much present in global governance. The three domains both transcend the narrowly political emphasis implied by 'governance', and bring in patterns of identity in a much bigger way. Global society could thus be seen as a way of putting global governance onto much firmer theoretical and historical foundations. Multi-layered governance involving a range of actors other than polities stretches back a very long way. In some respects, it is the norm of how humankind has organised itself on the largest scale for several thousand years. Global governance thus suffers badly from presentism. By focusing far too much on contemporary developments, it occluded a long and highly relevant prior history. It thereby set up as exceptional and unique, what was in many ways normal and routine.

Global society is thus aimed at re-founding global governance by putting it into a much wider historical and theoretical perspective. The term is not (yet) associated with the English School, though one purpose of this book is to argue that it should be, and to demonstrate how and why. Within an ES framing, global society means an integrated world society on a planetary scale, bringing the interpolity, transnational and inter-human domains under a single heading, and ensuring that all of them are given equal opportunity in analysis without any automatic privileging of one over the others. In the manner of the English School's three traditions, let the historical record set the relative strengths in any given place and time. Bull's differentiation between international society and world society has been extremely useful and productive in shaping ES thinking by creating space for normative concerns and dynamics. There was a definite need to fill the space left by Sociology's disinterest in second-order societies.[19] But as a result, the ES has tended strongly to privilege the interpolity/state domain as the practical site of international society, and to underplay both the non-state societal aspects in themselves, and the extent to which primary and secondary institutions in fact often operate together within and across the three domains in very significant ways. Global society is not about rejecting the interpolity domain, but about viewing the interplay of social structure – primary and secondary institutions – across all three domains. The aim is to shift the vocabulary

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[19] Shaw (1996) discussed global society in relation to the ES, but was essentially about using a weaker definition of society in order to elevate the standing of people and non-state actors against a declining state system (Buzan, 2004a: 68–70). A mainstream textbook on so-called Global Sociology (Cohen and Kennedy, 2007) has no index references to any aspect of international society.

of both the ES, and IR more generally, to talk about the three domains and institutions of global society within a single framework.

My purpose in this is to find a framework at a general enough level of analysis so that the similarities amongst the various polities, cultures and civilisations come into the foreground, putting their everyday differences into the background. It is these everyday differences – whether Rome and China, or Western and Confucian, or many others defined by polity, culture or civilisation – that normally structure historical analysis. This book is not about comparative civilisations, but about the history of humankind as a whole. Global society, and its history, is the book's contribution to making a more global discipline of IR. With an analytical level that foregrounds similarities, one can have more confidence that when discontinuities do appear, they are of major significance. My choice for the social element defining that transcendent analytical level is primary institutions. Alongside material conditions, primary institutions work nicely to highlight continuities and similarities, and to identify deep discontinuities and differences when they appear. Transcending the everyday differentiating approach in this way provides a firm grip on the kinds of changes that mark out eras.

A key idea here is that integrated world society, and eventually global society, is to be found in the way in which primary institutions integrate the three domains. Most primary institutions have their main roots in one of the domains (e.g. diplomacy, war, international law and great power management in the interpolity domain), but many of them stretch significantly into one or both of the other domains (e.g. trade, nationalism, religion, human (in)equality, sport). It is pretty obvious that some of the primary institutions rooted in interpolity society penetrate deeply into the transnational and interhuman domains. As noted, the obvious example of this is nationalism, which within the transition towards modernity, resonates powerfully between the interhuman and interstate domains. This has been a two-way street, with states promoting nationalism downward, and interhuman identity dynamics pushing it upward. Nationalism, like football, has almost everywhere now been deeply internalised and naturalised in both the interstate and interhuman domains. It meets more resistance in the economic and religious cosmopolitanism within the transnational domain. Similar, if less dramatic, cases could be made about several other interpolity institutions. The ideas of sovereignty and territoriality are pretty widely and deeply embedded in the public mind, and accepted as legitimising the organisation of political life within states. Think of the way Boris Johnson used sovereigntism to promote Brexit, and Donald Trump and Xi Jinping to promote their visions, respectively, of America and China. The values of

human equality and development are also embedded across the three domains. Increasingly environmental stewardship, despite many ongoing breaches in practice, is also accepted across the three domains (Falkner and Buzan, 2019). The right to war under specified conditions (e.g. self-defence), and not others (e.g. imperialism), also probably has wide support. Most of these institutions are widely and popularly supported as matters of belief almost everywhere.

The market and international law probably have less resonance in the interhuman domain, but are hugely important to the transnational one because they legitimise and support the non-state organisational forms and activities within that domain. Whereas many of the institutions just discussed are held in place mainly by belief, the market almost certainly has a more mixed profile, being held in place partly by belief, partly by calculation, and partly by coercion, and with complex possibilities for the distribution of support and opposition between and among people and elites. Some of the other institutions of interstate society are mainly of interest to state elites, and only occasionally resonate strongly into the other two domains. This might be said of diplomacy, great power management, the balance of power, and war. There are times when peace movements and organisations mobilise around these institutions, for example in the peace movement of the interwar years that opposed secret diplomacy and 'the merchants of death', and the various anti-nuclear movements that accompanied the Cold War. But these more technical institutions generally don't play strongly into the identity and organisational rights of the transnational and interhuman domains.

Looking at this traffic across the three domains, it is clear that there is also much that goes from the interhuman and transnational domains towards the interpolity one. Some collective identities, most obviously nationalism and religion, but also in significant ways humankind as a whole, have substantial legitimacy as the basis for making claims in the proceedings of interstate society. Think, for example, of the Kurds, the Tibetans and the Palestinians; or of Russia's claims concerning ethnic Russians living in neighbouring countries; or of organisations such as the Islamic Conference, the Arab League and the Nordic Union. Think also of the interstate machinery around human equality and human rights, which, since the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) are now embodied not only in the Charter of the UN (Clark, 2007: 131–51), but also in many UN Conventions and Committees, and in many regional bodies. The UN has a Human Rights Council, and there is a body of international humanitarian law. Nationalism, indeed, stands alongside sovereignty and territoriality as one of the key primary institutions that define the modern state.

Transnational diplomacy is now widely and deeply accepted in inter-state society. There is a very long history of political authorities negotiating not only with religious ones, but also with powerful guilds of transnational merchants. At times, indeed, such as in post-Roman Europe, the transnational authority of the Roman Church was the dominant social structure, and merchants controlled powerful polities such as the Hanseatic League, Venice and Malacca. For the two centuries of the transition towards modernity, states have welcomed, or at least allowed, non-state actors to participate in many of their diplomatic activities. From the Congress of Vienna, through The Hague Conferences and the League of Nations, to the UN system and the many specialised IGOs and international conferences, many INGOs and firms are now deeply and formally embedded in the processes of multilateral diplomacy. They are still there only by permission, making this fall short of a fully integrated world society. But they are now firmly part of the process, and play an important role in both strengthening its legitimacy and providing resources and expertise. It is on this basis that the term 'global governance' took on its meaning. When one thinks, for example, about environmental stewardship, it embodies a mix of state and non-state entities and activities: not just the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), but also the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the 1972 Stockholm Conference, the Rio summit of 1992, conferences in Copenhagen (2009) and Paris (2015), Greenpeace, and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), among others.

Global society in this integrated and open sense, with primary and secondary institutions stretching across and through the three domains on a planetary scale, is the guiding idea of this book.

Five Possible Pathways

Finally, to help navigate the story at the level of humankind, it is useful to step back a bit and consider the universe of possible pathways for our species. There are five such secular pathways for humankind:

- Species regression – in which humankind loses wealth, power and knowledge, and shrinks in numbers. This might have natural causes (e.g. environmental changes) or human ones (resource exhaustion). There are many specific examples of this in human history from the collapse of Western Mediterranean civilisation around 1200 BC, through the impact of the fall of Rome in Western Europe, to the downfall of the statues culture on Easter Island a few hundred years ago (see Diamond, 2005; Cline, 2014).

- Species extinction – in which natural disasters from which humankind is unable to escape or protect itself, destroy the living conditions for our species. Think of the dinosaurs – or the Neanderthals (Sykes, 2020).
- Species suicide – in which humankind destroys itself through its own actions such as nuclear war, unwise technological tinkering, or an inability to maintain a habitable planet (*Dr. Strangelove* [film, 1964]; *Battlestar Galactica* [TV series]; David Attenborough's 'witness testimony', *A Life on Our Planet* [Documentary]).[20]
- Species empowerment – in which humankind continues to increase in wealth, power and knowledge, and expands in numbers. Down this pathway lies both an extension of modernity and the possibility of transition to eras beyond modernity (*Star Trek* [TV series]; the 'Culture' novels of Iain M. Banks).
- Species self-replacement – in which species empowerment enables humankind to replace itself with some other form of dominant intelligence, whether an improved version of itself, or a machine intelligence or a 'cyborg' mix of the two. It would then be an open question about whether humankind was any longer in play, or the subject of history had become something else whose characteristics were so different as to open a gulf between its history and that of humankind (*The Terminator* [film, 1985]).

Regression, extinction and empowerment have been options throughout human history, and examples of all can be found. But species suicide and replacement are recent options, exclusive to the era of modernity.

Conclusions

In my mind, this toolkit of concepts, terms and definitions makes this book an English School project, albeit one that pushes beyond the normal boundaries of the ES in various ways. The aim is to build on ES theory and concepts in such a way as to enable the ES to engage more closely with World/Global History, IPE and Global Historical Sociology

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[20] It might be objected that 'species suicide' is the wrong term because humankind is not an agent in itself, and the scenarios for it, such as nuclear war, are therefore about some parts of humankind taking actions that destroy the whole. This is true, but I need a term that differentiates from species extinction. To the extent that states, firms and any other entities that pull the trigger are legitimate within the framing of global society, the term suicide is justified. The species dies by its own hand in the sense that it created the social structures that destroy it. Thanks to Rita Floyd for raising this question.

(GHS). These four approaches each have distinctive and valuable characteristics of their own, yet they also overlap in significant ways. In particular, they all make historical processes and timelines a central part of their analyses, and are concerned with the broad question of international order. All could probably subscribe to the idea that history is 'what the present needs to know about the past' (Maza, 2017: 6). All four approaches have needed to shed legacies of state-centrism, methodological nationalism and Eurocentrism (Conrad, 2016: 1–5; Go and Lawson, 2017: 1–3; Maza, 2017: 45–82), and make what Conrad (2016: 4) nicely calls 'an assault on many forms of container-based paradigms, chief among them national history'. For GHS this also involved differentiating itself from the more abstract, ahistorical and state-centric forms of sociology (Go and Lawson, 2017: 6, 12).

The English School is unusual within the mainly presentist field of IR in privileging history. As set out above, its distinctive contribution to understanding international relations is to impose a societal perspective onto the system one, with a well-defined society of states constituted by a set of primary institutions, resting on a much vaguer 'world society' comprising all of humankind. The ES has applied this societal mode of analysis to both the modern and classical worlds, and this approach fits quite comfortably within the general definition of GHS as a specific form. Go and Lawson (2017: 2, 5) define GHS as meaning:

the study of two interrelated dynamics: first, the transnational and global dynamics that enable the emergence, reproduction, and breakdown of social orders whether these orders are situated at the subnational, national, or global scales; and second, the historical emergence, reproduction, and breakdown of transnational and global social forms. The first of these dynamics provides the 'global' in our enquiry; the second constitutes the 'historical sociology'…. We conceive global historical sociology as the study of the transnational and global features of these processes. Such features vary widely, ranging from the global dynamics of capitalist accumulation to the role of transnational ideologies and social movements in fostering change within and across state borders – to many things besides…. Rather than starting analyses from the assumptions of methodological nationalism, global historical sociology starts from the assumption of interconnectedness and spatially expansive social relations.

Both the ES and GHS are in turn compatible with World/Global History, whose core concerns

are with mobility and exchange, with processes that transcend borders and boundaries. It takes the interconnected world as its point of departure, and the circulation and exchange of things, people, ideas, and institutions are among its key subjects. A preliminary and rather broad definition of global history might

describe it as a form of historical analysis in which phenomena, events, and processes are placed in global contexts. (Conrad, 2016: 5)

As the world has evolved more and more into a single political, economic, and cultural entity, causal links on the global level have grown stronger. And as a result of the proliferation and perpetuation of such links, local events are increasingly shaped by a global context that can be understood structurally or even systemically. (Conrad, 2016: 11)

Global historians thus see connectivity evolving into forms of integration (Conrad, 2016: 6).

In an argument that could also be applied to the ES, Go and Lawson (2017: 5–6) argue that the key difference between GHS and transnational/global history is that while 'GHS is concerned with temporality and historicity, it differs from these enterprises in its explicit focus on social relations, overarching patterns or structures, social forms, and causal mechanisms'…. [It occupies] 'a register at one remove from such studies through the overt deployment of conceptual abstractions, analytic schemas, and theoretical frames.' Even this apparently large methodological gap may not be all that big. World/global historians already have to resort to big themes in order to keep their work to manageable length, and such themes are already a substantial step in the direction of the explicit abstractions preferred by social scientists.

If this bridge-building move works, it will enable the ES to offer a way of filling in the space that now separates the fields of World/Global History, GHS, IPE, and IR, and to expand and enrich the intellectual and empirical space that they share. These fields already overlap and interweave in various ways. The aim is to thicken their ties sufficiently to enable a coherent subject on a larger scale – global society – to come more clearly into view. This is not an invitation to dissolve or merge these approaches in any wholesale way. Each has many strengths of its own and a lot of institutional momentum. Rather the aim is to encourage a joint project among them that will both interest a section of the scholars within each of them, and provide a shared perspective that will benefit all of them.

This is not the first book to venture into this space. Some 'big' historians, such as David Christian (2004) have tried it, and so have some historical sociologists such as Michael Mann (1986), both making path-breaking contributions. Various authors have sought to bridge-build between historical sociology and IR (e.g. Phillips, 2011; Zarakol, 2011; Buzan and Lawson, 2015; Phillips and Sharman, 2015; Spruyt, 2020). World/global historians mostly adopt a comparative civilisations

approach (e.g. Harvard University Press's six volume set on *A History of the World*;[21] Goody, 2010; Morris, 2010), as does the classical ES (Wight, 1977; Bull and Watson, 1984; Watson, 1992). Although a few manage to encompass all of human history, most retreat into narrower time frames (e.g. Kennedy, 1989; Bobbitt, 2002; Bayly, 2004; Osterhammel, 2014; Dunne and Reus-Smit, 2017). Those coming from the social sciences usually try to solve the problem of overwhelming detail by seeking big simplifications that somehow embrace all the differences (e.g. Wallerstein, 1979, 2004; Gellner, 1988; Frank, 1990; Frank and Gills, 1993). Mann (1986) is distinctive here in coming from Sociology, but attempting a comprehensive, comparative civilisations approach with all of its detail and complexity.

This book aims to split the difference between detailed historical narrative and over-simplifying grand theories by finding a level of abstraction that, on the one hand, solves the problem of large scale in time and space, while on the other hand offering an approach that is sufficiently fine-grained to sustain a subtle global narrative across a millennial timescale. This approach does not aim at comparative civilisations within eras, but at comparative eras in their own right. It does not offer a theory of global society, or indeed of history, in the sense that it identifies any single causal driver or predictable pattern of events. But I think it is a new way to write world/global history from a theoretical perspective. It provides an analytical framework and conceptual architecture for describing global society, tracking its material and social dynamics, and identifying criteria for differentiating periods of structural stability from times of change and transformation. Given that social dynamics are often sticky, and slow to change, it also offers a limited capability to look ahead.

I see this still very much as English School theory on the grounds that it is rooted in an ES understanding of society, and gives pride of place in its analytical framework to primary institutions. Even the three domains are essentially within the ES conceptual architecture, albeit here more clearly specified, and given a much more central place in the analysis of social structure and dynamics. But it is an enhanced and enriched ES, and I do appreciate that accepting all of this might be too big an ask for some within (and indeed outside) the ES. It is indisputable that while within the conceptual bounds of the ES, this global society approach also transforms it in quite radical ways.

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[21] www.hup.harvard.edu/collection.php?cpk=1493

The Structure of the Book

Part I contains two chapters, each structured around an era. Chapter 2 looks at the hunter-gatherer era, mainly since the last ice age, up to the onset of widespread settlement and agriculture after 10,000 BC. It also covers the seven millennia transition period to the conglomerate agrarian/pastoralist empire (CAPE) era. Chapter 3 looks at the CAPE era, running from the third millennium BC to 1800 AD. These two eras, and the transition between them, are discussed in terms of how they laid the foundations for the global society that has been the work of humankind since the nineteenth century. Part II contains four chapters that cover the opening of the transition towards the modern era from the late eighteenth century to the present, during which time an intense and highly penetrating global society was put into place. Chapter 4 covers the material transformation. Chapters 5a and 5b look at the changes in social structure. Chapter 6 assesses where we are now in the transition from CAPE to modernity. Part III contains two chapters. Chapter 7 looks at the material conditions going forward into a phase of *deep pluralism* over the next couple of decades. Chapter 8 does the same for social structure. Part IV contains the Conclusion chapter, which sums up the main contributions of the book. It sets out the case not just for the English School, but also for IR, to adopt a global society approach, and use it to build bridges towards GHS and Global/World History.

The general order is thus chronological, but within that, close attention is paid to how each new era incorporates, rejects or adapts the older institutions from the eras that preceded it. In the social realm, as in the material one, the arrival of the new builds on, as much as displaces, what was there before. To visualise this interpretation of eras, lay out a timeline 1 kilometre long, in which 1 metre represents a thousand years, the total therefore covering a million years. Modernity would occupy the last 20 centimetres of it, the CAPE era the next 5 metres, the transition to the CAPE era roughly 7 metres, and the hunter-gatherer era the remaining 987.8 metres.

The general story up to the present is one of rising human empowerment expressed in societies that get ever larger and more complex, albeit with a lot of ups and downs along the way. The overall trend is for the integration of world societies to become deeper and wider, until global scale is reached, at which point the intensification of integration becomes the main story. The general theme and question linking all this together, is how did these different eras contribute to, and build towards, the making of a global society that is planetary in scale, and integrated across all three domains? What material and social technologies did they

develop to extend the reach, speed, cost, and depth of transportation and communication (*interaction capacity*). What forms of social glue did they invent that could support the organisation of humankind on an ever-larger scale? What, in other words, did they contribute to the making of globalisation in its fullest sense?

I am fully aware that such an approach seems to place the book firmly on the teleological side of how history is told, thus contradicting my remarks in the previous section about evolution and dialectics not being teleological. But I am also fully aware that global society in a deep sense has not yet been reached, and may not be. The whole story could have come off the rails at many points along the way, and the fact that it didn't, by no means guarantees that it might not still do so in the decades and centuries ahead. If chance and personality had played differently during the Cold War, humankind might have bombed itself into a regression back to the Stone Age, or even to species suicide. This book certainly views the past as leading to the present (Whig history), and has a broad sense of evolution in moving from smaller, less complex and less capable societies, to larger, more complex and more capable ones. But it is not Whig history in the sense of seeing this either as inevitable, or as progress towards some societal and political golden age. In normative terms, the picture is, as shown in the following chapters, highly mixed across the eras.

The dawn of the nuclear era was the first time that humankind possessed the means for rapid species suicide, but before that, natural events could have terminated us in other ways. An unlucky strike on the planet by a large enough space rock could at any time have devastated the human race. As we move forward into modernity, an obliterating war seems less of a threat than during the twentieth century, though it has by no means disappeared. But the extraordinary material and energy resources now at our command could disrupt the globalisation story in an increasingly long list of ways, from climate change and pollution, through mass extinctions within the biosphere, to pandemics and the collapse of political order. It may be that humankind comes off the rails before it achieves a deep form of planetary-scale global society. What I hope to show in the chapters that follow is that despite these risks, and whether by skill or luck, there has nonetheless so far been a powerful momentum towards global society in human history. The empirical observation here is the general proposition that the structure of human society has, with significant ups and downs, tended over the long run to get bigger and more complex. That observation is, of course, an almost unavoidable characteristic of any attempt to explain the present in terms of how the past got us to where we are now. It necessarily discounts the

paths that might have been taken by humankind, but which for many contingent reasons were not. Whether or not, and how, humankind might yet achieve something deserving the name of a planetary-scale global society, is an open question, as is what it would look like. Along with the ES, I see global society as largely open and contingent in the longer run. In the shorter run, the social structural approach offered here does give some ability to anticipate whether the direction will be more pluralist or solidarist. Like any evolutionary process, this one can be thrown off course or terminated by events. But that does not mean that we should ignore it as a way of understanding human history.

There are some other obvious problems with this approach. One is about the temporal balance of the book. Part I covers more than twenty-two millennia of human history in two chapters, while Part II takes four chapters to cover less than three centuries. Part III uses two chapters to think about a few decades. Even allowing for the undeniable fact shown by the timeline given above that history has accelerated in an unprecedented way since the nineteenth century, this imbalance smacks of presentism. In my view, a degree of presentism is justified, because it is useful to focus on what the longer history means for where humankind is now. It is also justified, because analysing these last few centuries within the grand framework of eras, is a far from simple task. At this relatively close range in historical time, one has a lot more data and information but a lot less benefit from the wisdom of hindsight. Close range also means that it is harder to see the patterns, and tricky to tell whether the patterns one does see are stable, or ephemeral.

The era of modernity has barely begun. Compared to either of the previous eras, it is characterised by an extraordinary degree of dynamism and change. It is not at all clear how long modernity as an era will last. Using the definitional criteria for era set out above, modernity looks very much like a new era in terms of the changes in material conditions and social structure. But are the times we are in best characterised as modernity in some pure form, or as the transition period out of the CAPE era into modernity? In favour of modernity as an era is the extent and depth of the changes in material and social conditions that differentiate it from the CAPE era. In favour of our times being transitional are both the shortness of time since the change, and the extent to which institutional legacies from the CAPE era are still strongly in play in our 'modern' times. If we are now fully within the modern era, then the transition to it from the CAPE one was extraordinarily short and sharp. If we are not fully in the modern era, then we have to think hard about where the transition we are in is headed. The chapters in Parts II and III pay close attention to these issues.

My whole approach rests on the assumption that social structure matters to how international relations has been, is, or might be, theorised and practised. Those of a materialist disposition, whether simple like neorealists and neoliberals, or complex like Marxists, might well question this assumption. In their perspectives, the realm of international relations might be understood as having particular structural qualities that privilege material factors over social ones. Neorealists and classical economists, for example, treat international relations as a *system*, with all the mechanical implications that term carries. Even for those not ideologically wedded to materialism, the systemic approach has specific appeal for the realm of the international. As Martin Wight (1966: 26) memorably put it, the domestic realm is one where progress is possible, while 'International politics is the realm of recurrence and repetition'. If it is the case that the international realm is marked by extremely weak social and political structures, and consequently generates a high probability of conflict amongst whatever kinds of units compose it, then it might well display a relatively unchanging materialist and mechanical character, having some resemblance to a branch of physics.

My approach is neither mechanical in the simple 'system' sense of neorealists and classical economists, nor in the complex 'mode of production' sense of Marxists. I seek to keep the materialist dimension very much in play as a key part of the story, but without giving it any automatic priority over the social structure as the foundational line of explanation. Thus, the discussions of the three eras all share a similar framing. They open with a general discussion of the material and social conditions that define the era. They then focus more closely on the social structure defined in terms of primary institutions. This scheme takes inspiration from Tainter's (1988: loc. 1548) co-constitutive idea that:

From the simplest familial unit to the most complex regional hierarchy, the institutions and patterned interactions that comprise a human society are dependent on energy. At the same time, the mechanisms by which human groups acquire and distribute basic resources are conditioned by, and integrated within, sociopolitical institutions. Energy flow and sociopolitical organisation are opposite sides of an equation. Neither can exist, in a human group, without the other, nor can either undergo substantial change without altering both the opposite member and the balance of the equation. Energy flow and sociopolitical organisation must evolve in harmony.

My approach, thus, partly aligns with others who analyse history in terms of highly generalised framing assumptions that are assumed to have universal application. Examples include: Lasswell's (1935: 3) understanding of all politics as being about 'who gets what, when and how'; Bull's (1977: 67–71) understanding of all human society as requiring

agreements about security against violence, observance of agreements, and rules about property rights; and Waltz's (1979) understanding of all international politics as being driven by the distribution of power. Where it differs from these understandings is in having a much more detailed and open approach to the possibilities of both social and material structures.

Within this broad scheme, each primary institution is examined not only in itself, but also in relation to the others with which it cohabits. Each is also examined as to how it is located within the interpolity, transnational and interhuman domains. In which domain does it have its main roots, and to what extent does it play, or not, into the other domains? This technique is an important tool in being able to see global society not just as primary institutions located in separate domains, but as social structures that connect, and often integrate, the domains into a deeper sense of integrated world/global society. This is a significant departure from ES practice, which has tended to focus mainly on primary institutions in the interstate domain (*international society*). The ES has rather neglected both how those institutions played in the other domains, and what if any primary institutions might have their main roots in the transnational or interhuman domains. Doing this is much facilitated by bringing the economic sector more into play when thinking about international society than the ES has done so far.

Aims

The aim of this book is primarily theoretical. Although there is a lot of empirical material in what follows, none of it is original. All of it will be familiar to those who are experts in the areas covered. The book's contribution lies in the theoretical framings that enable this empirical material to be seen in a new light, and to tell some familiar stories in an unfamiliar way. It fuses together a big empirical story (the history of humankind), and a set of theoretical perspectives mostly derived from the English School. The resulting synthesis generates insights relevant not just to the ES, but also to the wider discipline of IR, including IPE, and beyond that to nearby cognate disciplines, particularly Global Historical Sociology and Global/World History. The aim is to demonstrate both to the ES and these other disciplines, what the analytical apparatus of the English School can do when enhanced and expanded in the way shown here.

For the ES, the main theoretical offerings are:

- To tell the whole story of primary institutions in much more depth and detail than has been done before, and to show how primary institutions

cannot be properly understood without seeing them as embedded across the three domains. Primary institutions are not just a phenomenon of the interpolity domain, but also of the transnational and interhuman ones. The three domains are thus a crucial part of the ES theoretical framework. Without them, one cannot see either the full extent or the full meaning of primary institutions.

- On this basis, to drive home the point that the rather stark differentiation between 'international' and 'world' society used by the classical ES has outlived most of its usefulness. It might still have some mileage in staging 'the great society of humankind' as a normative referent. But in structural terms, integrated world society has existed for a very long time. It is true that world society understood as global cosmopolitanism still has only a thin empirical existence. But if understood as including subglobal transnational and identity structures, its empirical existence is rich and long-standing. Understanding that integrated world society across the three domains has been around for a long time is crucial to understanding the shift to global society.
- To demonstrate how, after long neglect, the economic sector can and must be incorporated into the understanding of international and world society. It is crucial to understanding one of the main ways in which the interplay between the interpolity and transnational domains constructs integrated world society.
- To point out that the ES's conceptual framework contains a rather useful theory of the state, or more broadly, of polities, understanding them as secondary institutions that reflect particular combinations of primary ones. Changes in these combinations are an important marker of changes in eras.

For IR/IPE, the main theoretical offerings are:

- To show how the material and social worlds can be brought together in a complementary way that largely makes the distinction between system and society unnecessary. All social systems are societies and all societies are systems. The main question is about how the societal variables (primary institutions) and the systemic material ones (interaction capacity, distribution of wealth and power), interact.
- An additional theory of the state as described above.
- To reinforce the transition to a more Global IR by taking humankind as the object of study. That approach undermines many of the Eurocentric assumptions and perspectives that still blight the discipline. It also bypasses many of the pitfalls of methodological nationalism.
- To re-base the discussion of global governance. Governance, in the sense of extensive participation by non-state/polity actors is not recent,

but stretches back a very long way in human history. It is a historical norm that has been hidden by the analytical state-centrism of IR. Global is not recent either. In the planetary sense it has been in operation for half a millennium. In the meaning of integrated world society, it has been in operation for much longer than that. Global society provides a framing that can revive the discussion of global governance on a much sounder and deeper basis.

And for GHS and Global/World History, the main theoretical offerings are:

- An approach to defining historical eras that combines material and social factors in a complementary rather than oppositional fashion.
- To set out a planetary dimension of the material and social worlds that is distinct from the usual understandings of material conditions, and plays a key role in defining eras.
- An additional theory of the state as described above.
- A different way of looking at eras by introducing the idea of transition periods between them that distinguish periods of relative stability in material and social conditions from periods of change and turbulence. This bears on two debates:
  - First, it helps to clarify some of the heated debates about the pre-history era. It does this by separating out as a transition period the several thousand years before the onset of civilisation, during which a warming and stabilising climate enabled settlement and then the development of agriculture.
  - Second, it sets out a quite radical departure in the understanding of both the CAPE era and modernity. The CAPE era is much more stable and uniform in material and social conditions than is usually thought. And modernity did not just jump into being fully fledged during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. There was, and might still be, a period of transition marked by changes in both material and social conditions. The old gives way to the new, and the new raises a host of contradictions that have to be worked out, both within itself, and in relation to what carries over from the previous era. The idea of transition periods between eras provides a novel perspective on how to interpret developments since the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

For all of these disciplines, this book aims to show one way of building bridges among them. It opens up the empirical and theoretical space between IR/IPE, Global Historical Sociology, and Global/World History, and offers a way of occupying it that is compatible with all of

them. It does not threaten either their identities or their particular skills, methods and perspectives. But for those so inclined, it offers common ground on which they might stand in order better to pursue some of the big questions that they all share. Historians will, I hope, be attracted by the ability to continue to work in a narrative style even if at a higher level of abstraction. Global Historical Sociologists will, I hope, find interest in a more fine-grained level of abstraction that nonetheless retains coherence across eras. Those from IR/IPE who are interested in big picture approaches will, I hope, be attracted to the global society approach for two reasons: first, as a relatively clear way of dealing with the issue of states versus empires as the dominant form of polity; second, as a way of getting a holistic picture of their subject that spans across the three domains in an integrated way.

More grandly, the social sciences and History in particular, and humankind in general, are in pressing need of an Earth System Social Science to act as a companion to the emergence of Earth System Science in the natural sciences. Earth System Science reflects the understanding that the natural and social sciences need to develop an integrated, planetary perspective if they are to address issues like global warming and the sixth great extinction (Steffen et al., 2020). The social sciences and History need to do more to move in the same direction, joining hands with Earth System Science in pursuit of understanding the big picture. I hope this book might act as one further step in that direction.