

System and Society in Sub-Sahara Africa: The English School in *Terre Incognita*?

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INTRODUCTION

The English School may have an eclectic methodology,¹ but it does have a relatively uniform purpose. At its core, it is interested in how international politics evolves along a continuum from international anarchy to an international system to a revolution in international affairs that would end in a world society.² Each of these three conditions, furthermore, is associated with a particular school of thought (I am purposely avoiding the term theory at this point). “System,” is associated with the school of realism in international relations (IR) and with anarchy in international politics - Hobbesians. “International Society” is associated with rationalism and with interdependence in international politics - Grotians. Finally, “World Society” is associated with revolutionism and the apparent dialectical transcendence of the first two orders - Kantians.³

Like much of IR theory, the English School has a Eurocentric bent.⁴ Largely, I would argue, because the teleology implied in the transition from anarchy to international society has

¹There is quite a bit of commentary on the English Schools “methodology,” much of it critical. This paper will not address or add to the commentary on research methodology and design. See, Ian Hall, “Review article: Still the English patient? Closures and inventions in the English School” *International Affairs* 77, 3 (2001) and Barry Buzan’s and Richard Little’s response: Barry Buzan and Richard Little, “The English Patient Strikes Back” *International Affairs* 77, 4 (2001).

²Roger Epp, “The English School on the Frontiers of International Relations” in Tim Dunne, Michale Cox, Ken Booth (eds) *The Eighty Years’ Crisis* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 48.

³Balkan Devlen, Patrick James, Özgür Özdamar, “The English School, International Relations and Progress” *International Studies Review* 7 (2005). Martha Finnemore, “Exporting the English School,” *Review of International Studies* 27 (2001), 510.

⁴ There is an apparent teleology here. However, proponents of the English School are well aware that different kinds of international systems have existed through history, See, Barry Buzan and Richard Little, *International Systems in World History: The Remaking on the Study of International Relations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000). As well, this is some

progressed further in Europe than anywhere else in world history, ie. from the creation of the state around 1500, to the birth of the Westphalia state system in 1648, to the extant state of regional integration in Europe – the European Union (EU).⁵ Africa has followed a different trajectory.

The notion of an African society has been a desideratum since the advent of the anti-colonial struggles of the 1950s and 1960s. Possibly its greatest proponent was Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of post-colonial Ghana and a driving force behind Pan Africanism. The reification of this movement was the creation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which he chaired from 1955 to 1966. But the OAU was never the vehicle to African unity, for reasons well beyond the scope of this paper. Rather, Africa adopted a regional approach to creating an Africa society. In 1980 the OAU adopted the *Lagos Plan of Action* (LPA) at the extraordinary 1980 summit of the heads of state and government in Lagos. The LPA called for the gradual integration of Africa through strengthening the existing regional sub-groupings.⁶ In 1991 under the auspices of the Abuja Accord the OAU created a timetable for the creation of a Pan-African Community by the year 2025, again by building on regional institutions such as

acknowledgement that we should avoid a linear logic, that history proceeds from anarchy to system to society, Barry Buzan, “From international system to international society: structural realism and regime theory meet the English school,” *International Organization* 47, 3 (1993), 351.

⁵See Buzan’s discussion of how Hedley Bull and Martin Wright, focus on an empirical analysis of the Modern European-generated international society. Buzan, “From international system to international society,” 329.

⁶See, Ahmad A.H. M. Alyh, *Economic Cooperation in Africa: In Search of Direction* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1994), 78-81; John Ravenhill, “Collective Self-Reliance or Collective Self-Delusion: Is the Lagos Plan a Viable Alternative” in Ravenhill (ed), *Africa in Economic Crisis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 85-107.

ECOWAS, COMESA and SADC. Finally the African Union (the successor to the OAU), also build on the regionalist approach of its predecessor.

If Africa is to evolve into a type of international society, it will begin at the regional level. This is, in fact, consistent with Buzan's position that because of shorter distances ... international societies will initially develop at the sub-system level.⁷ This is also consistent with Buzan's and Little's typology of five levels of international systems: system, subsystem, unit, subunit, individual.⁸

This paper will look at the subsystem level in Africa. The larger question is how well does the English school capture Africa's evolution in the post-colonial era? To answer this, the paper progresses in three parts followed by a conclusion. First, it will describe the distinctive characteristics of Africa's subsystems with a particular focus on what are called "regional conflict zones." As will be argued below, Africa consists of regional subsystems, but ones that are not analogous to the Westphalia state system.⁹ The Westphalia project has been arrested in much of Africa. The foundational assumption should be that Africa largely consists of states with limited internal authority – they lack *de facto* sovereignty. The functional differentiation in the Africa system at the state level is related to the erosion of sovereignty.¹⁰ It is a weak state

⁷Buzan, "From international system," 344.

⁸Buzan and Little, *International Systems*, 11.

⁹If we are to take a systemic approach to understanding conflict in Africa we need to avoid superimposing the international system on the subsystem, what Robert Kelly calls "downscalers." Robert Kelly, "Security Theory in the 'New Regionalism,'" *International Studies Review* 9 (2007), 216.

¹⁰Borrowed from Buzan and Little, "Reconceptualizing Anarchy," 407.

system rather than a strong state system,¹¹ and therefore structural realism has little purchase of describing and explaining Africa. After describing Africa's subsystems as conflict zones, can the English school explain how to move from Africa's form of international systems to an international society? Is the internal logic of Africa's anarchy congruent or incongruent with the logic the English school argues propels such transitions? The second section will look at how rationalism, and in particular interdependence and transnationalism affects the trajectory of regionalism in Africa. It argues that Africa's systemic logic informed by its own form of anarchy inhibits the ability of interdependence and transnationalism to promote an international society in Africa. The third section will explain how the dialectical tension between system and an inchoate regionalism (society) in Africa has all but precluded a world society in Africa. The focus switches from the state to the individual.¹² The focus here will be on the inability of the "right to protect" (R2P) norm to gain traction in Africa. Finally, in the catholic tradition of the English School, the paper will borrow liberally from IR theory across the old world new world divide.¹³

SYSTEMS AND REALISM IN AFRICA

In Buzan's words: "For a system to exist requires the existence of units, among which significant interaction takes place and that are arranged or structured according to some

¹¹Mohammed Ayoob, *The Third World Security Predicament: State Making, Regional Conflict and the System* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1995), 13.

¹²Buzan, "From International System," 339.

¹³As Richard Little states: "the founding fathers of the English school were drawn to a pluralistic methodology that aims to find ways of linking apparently disparate bodies of knowledge and understanding." Richard Little, "The English School's Contribution to the Study of International Relations," *European Journal of International Relations* 6 (2000), 397.

principle.”¹⁴ The African state system, as with any system, is shaped by how its interdependent parts interact. The units that make up Africa’s regional (subsystems) do not look like the hard-shelled Weberian states of Europe. As David Dessler relates, “The job of a structural theory is to explain the connections between the conditions of action and actions itself.”¹⁵ In the case of Africa, the condition of action is a weak state system, which generates regional conflict zones. The action is *wars across states*. As John Ruggie argues:

It follows that the functional scope of the international system will also vary, depending upon the hegemonic form of state/society relations that prevail internationally at any given time. Therefore, the hegemonic form of state/society relations, or lack thereof, constitutes an attribute of the international system and can be used as a systems level explanation.¹⁶

Or as Buzan and Little state: a structural change in the unit causes a structural change in the international system.¹⁷

The case of Africa supports Ruggie’s, Buzan’s and Little’s, as well as other scholar’s, argument that because Waltz drops the “differentiation of units” from his structural theory of international politics, he loses the generative power his theory promised. This is not to argue that

¹⁴Buzan, “From International System,” 331.

¹⁵David Dessler, “What’s at Stake in the Agent-Structure Debate” *International Organization* 43, 3 (1989), 444

¹⁶John Gerald Ruggie, “Continuity and Transformation in the World Policy: Toward a Neorealist Synthesis” *World Politics* 35, 2 (1983), 280.

¹⁷Buzan and Little, “Reconceptualizing Anarchy,” 408.

structural realism needs a supporting theory of state behavior,¹⁸ but rather as constructivists would argue, units and structure are inseparable.¹⁹

As Buzan and Little argue, reopening the second tier is essential for constructing a non-Eurocentric view of international systems.²⁰ Ruggie argued that Waltz could not explain “the most important contextual change in international politics in this millennium: the shift from the medieval to the modern international system.”²¹ He continued, that Waltz’s failure was due to the fact that he ignores how their anarchies are different: the medieval system was “heteronomous” and the modern system “sovereignty.”²² The medieval system was, Ruggie argues, “a system of segmental territorial rule.”²³ Here we have to be careful in making historical analogies between medieval Europe and post-colonial Africa. Modern Africa is obviously imbedded or engaged in a different historical context.²⁴ But, because much of Africa

¹⁸See James, “Structural Realism,” 182.

¹⁹Robert Powell, “Anarchy in International Relations Theory: The Neorealist-Neoliberal Debate,” *International Organization* 48, 2 (1994), 322.

²⁰Barry Buzan and Richard Little, “Reconceptualizing Anarchy: Structural Realism Meets World History,” *European Journal of International Relations* 2 (1996), 407.

²¹Ruggie, “Continuity and Transformation,” 273.

²²*Ibid.*, 275.

²³*Ibid.*

²⁴Modern day Africa operates within a global system. And, unlike medieval Europe, it is made up of juridical states. See Mohammed Ayoob for a thorough explanation of how this fact influences the African state system. *The Third World Security Predicament: State Making, Regional Conflict and the International System* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publications, 1995). Lemke makes an interesting comparison between modern Nigeria and medieval England. Douglas Lemke, *Regions of War and Peace* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 190.

has a deficit in *de facto* sovereignty, at least in the regional *conflict zones* found in the overlapping penumbras of weak states, forms of segmented rule do exist.²⁵

The weak and overlapping penumbras of Africa’s states have both functional and structural causes in post-colonial Africa; and they mutually reinforcing.²⁶ The first has to do with the inability of African states to project authority into their peripheries. In *conflict zones*, sovereignty is fragmented and disaggregated. The second has to do with the nature of neo-patrimonial rule in Africa, which has eviscerated the post-colonial state creating weak, failing and collapsed states.²⁷ The effect is a zone where, “... bits of sovereignty are parceled out to different kinds of units.”²⁸

Aristide Zolberg talked about *syncretic* societies where the center of a newly independent state in Africa had not expanded sufficiently to create an integrated society – they could not

²⁵For a brief description of the parallels between pre-Westphalia Europe and post-Colonial Africa see, Kenneth Omeje, “Markets or Oligopolies of Violence? The Case of Sudan,” *African Security* 3, 3 (2010).

²⁶These are partially a product of pre-colonial and colonial antecedents, which this paper does not have the space to describe and explain.

²⁷Buzan and Little created a matrix entitled, “Four Types of International System – A First Linking of Structural and Functional Differentiation.” I have added Africa’s conflict zones to the upper left cell. “Reconceptualizing Anarchy,” 430.

	Structurally Differentiated	Structurally Undifferentiated
Functionally Differentiated	Medieval Systems Deudneyan Philadelphia Systems EU-Type Political Unions Africa’s Conflict Zones	Watsonian Suzerain Systems
Functionally Undifferentiated	Classical Systems of Heterogenous but Autonomous Units	Pure Waltzian/Westphalian Systems of Like Units

²⁸Ibid., 431.

reach out to their periphery.²⁹ Stathis Kalyvas notes that actors at the center seeking power in Sub-Saharan Africa formed alliances with peripheral actors.³⁰ Jeffrey Herbst has differentiated three classes of states that are more to less prone to problems related to the inability to project power into the periphery.³¹ First are the "challenged states." These states have pockets of high population density separated by vast areas of sparsely populated areas. This makes it difficult for the center (one area of high population density) to connect with outlying areas (with pockets of high population density). As well, these states are susceptible to ethnic fractionalization.³² The second category is "hinterland" states, characterized by vast empty hinterlands and small pockets of people scattered around the country. These countries have trouble projecting authority into the periphery, but most people live in the city as so it is not necessarily destabilizing. The third category is "countries with favorable geography," where the highest concentration of power is found in one area – usually around the capital.³³

These scholars approach Africa from different theoretical perspectives, but all agree on the inability of African states to police their peripheries. As Weinstein notes, “Where national governments are strong – able to implement their policies and **police the countryside without**

²⁹Aristide Zolberg, “The Structure of Political Conflict in the New States of Africa,” *American Political Science Review* 62, 1 (1968), 71.

³⁰Kalyvas notes that civil wars are a transformation of center and periphery quest for power, “The Ontology of Political Violence: Action and Identity in Civil Wars” *Perspectives on Politics* 1, 3 (2003), 486.

³¹Jeffrey Herbst, *States and Power in Africa* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

³²*Ibid.*, p. 146.

³³*Ibid.*, 154.

challenge – the barriers to organization are often too high for insurgent groups to develop (my emphasis).³⁴ Africa's *wars across states* are the exception proving his rule.

Africa's post-independence politics has been stubbornly neo-patrimonial.³⁵ The patrimonial form of rule, which replaced the feeble effort of democratization at the cusp of independence, can be defined by three essential characteristics. First, in contrast to the Weberian state, which is defined by impersonal and abstract legal-rational rule, the patrimonial state is defined by personal rule. Second, the boundary between the private and the public is blurred and the state becomes the main means for accumulating power and wealth. Third, politics are structured around vertical patron-client relationships, typically centered on a “big man.” Over time, patrimonial rule hollowed out the post-colonial state in Africa and created or exacerbated what are typically labeled weak states.³⁶

As well, the post-colonial state had a strong urban bias, supported by monopsonistic markets that used marketing boards (themselves a legacy of colonial rule) to generate rents for

³⁴Jeremy M. Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 14. In contrast, at the cusp of the 20th century the frontiers of France, Austria, Russia and the German Reich had the infrastructure necessary to move large numbers of troops to the borders if necessary. Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007), 73.

³⁵The literature on patrimonial rule in Africa is expansive. A classic work on Zaire (DRC), which goes into the Weberian roots of the category is, Thomas Callaghy, *The State-Society Struggle: Zaire in Comparative Perspective* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984).

³⁶This is why they often are associated strongly with state collapse and why it is difficult to separate cause from effect. Van de Walle goes as far as to posit that it may be impossible to disentangle cause and effect. “The Economic Correlates of State Failure,” in Robert Rotberg (ed.) *When States Fail* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 2004), 98.

patrimonial networks.³⁷ This not only contributed to the polarization of society, but, as well, by keeping producer prices of agricultural goods artificially low it contributed to the poverty of the regions distant from the urban areas. Callaghy's description of Zaire in the late 1970s is emblematic: "[T]he rural population dwellers view the agents of the centralizing state as outsiders or 'strangers' who are to be distrusted."³⁸

After years of corruption and economic mismanagement, the African state failed to provide the essential public goods necessary to sustain statehood.³⁹ This reality got worse the farther you traveled from the capital. Infrastructures, from hospitals and schools to roads, deteriorated. By way of illustration, Zaire (DRC) went from having 31,000 to 3,500 miles of road.⁴⁰ Patrimonial networks centered on the "big man" began to fracture. This meant that the institutional sinews, already frayed and stretched thin between the center and the periphery, weakened and in the extreme cases snapped. As the patrimonial ties between the center and the periphery weakened, peripheral actors formed alliances with cross-border partners – patrimonialism writ regionally; or what Söderbaum called "regional shadow governance."⁴¹

³⁷The classic work remains, Robert Bates, *Markets and States in Tropical Africa: The Political Basis of Agricultural Policy* (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1981).

³⁸Callaghy, *The State-Society Struggle*, 145.

³⁹Robert Rotberg, "The Failure and Collapse of Nation-States: Breakdown, Preventions and Repair," in Rotberg (ed.), *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 2-3.

⁴⁰Will Reno, *Warlord Politics and African States* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publications, 1998), 154.

⁴¹Fredrik Söderbaum, "Modes of Regional Governance in Africa: Neoliberalism, Sovereignty Boosting and Shared Networks" *Global Governance: A Review of Multilateral and International Organizations* 10, 4 (2004), 428.

Africa's weakened state has led to subsystem wars. Sub-Saharan Africa's wars are what Marshall and Gurr call a "nested problem,"⁴² and the one thing that most clearly distinguishes Africa from the other regions in their study is the newness of its state system.⁴³ Elbadawi and Sambanis, as well, attribute the high incidence of civil war in Africa to the failure of state building.⁴⁴ The African system is defined by a sovereignty deficit.⁴⁵ And as Vasquez states "... the strength of order in a global society is reflected in how it makes war."⁴⁶

In Wendt's constructivist challenge to neorealism (and other positivist theories), he describes the modern notion of sovereignty as a particular form of community whose essence is: "a mutual recognition of another's right to exercise exclusive political authority within territorial limits."⁴⁷ But, he adds, this constitutes a spatially differentiated world (separating the domestic

⁴²Monty Marshall and Ted Robert Gurr, *Peace and Conflict, 2005* (College Park: CIDCM, 2005), 14.

⁴³*Ibid*, 39.

⁴⁴Ibrahim Elbadawi and Nicholas Sambanis, "Why Are There So Many Civil Wars in Africa?" *Journal of African Economies* 9, 3 (2000), 264.

⁴⁵In the rankings of the 2006 Fund for Peace Failed State Index, 53 percent of states in the "most failed category (and six of the top seven) were in Africa, as were 28 percent of those in the next category of those in the next category, and 7 percent of those in the third. Fund for Peace, Failed State Index Scores, 2006.

http://www.fundforpeace.org/web/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=104&Itemid=324, cited in Englebert and Tull, "Postconflict Reconstruction," 108.

⁴⁶John A. Vasquez, *The War Puzzle Revisited* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

⁴⁷Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is what States Make of It" *International Organization* 46, 2 (1992), 412. Africa did uphold the sovereignty norm under the Organization of African States (OAS) Charter, but this only strengthened its juridical statehood and may have actually weakened its functional statehood.

from the international) rather than a functionally differentiated world.⁴⁸ Sovereign practices have been oriented toward producing distinct territorial spaces, which has led to the “hardening” of territorial boundaries over the centuries.⁴⁹ But, because this is an intersubjective norm and depends on what actors do,⁵⁰ removing the practice of reciprocal “permissions” that defines the sovereignty norm could weaken the territorial (spatial) norm of the Westphalia state system. This is what has happened in Africa. Rather than a hardening of territorial borders over time, Africa has witnessed a softening of its interstate borders over time. It has witnessed the blurring of the lines between the international and the domestic.⁵¹ Most importantly, much of Africa has lost its monopoly over the legitimate use of force within its recognized territorial borders.⁵²

Because, Africa’s anarchy is loosely analogous to medieval Europe, Africa is not a “spatially differentiated world” (made up of sovereign states) but rather “functionally differentiated,”⁵³ (states lack *de facto* sovereignty). In Niklas Hultin’s words, “... swaths of

⁴⁸Ibid. As he notes, because functional nondifferentiation among states is accepted, differentiation drops out of Waltz’s theory. Ibid., footnote 69.

⁴⁹Ibid., 414.

⁵⁰Ibid., 412.

⁵¹Unlike much of the literature on weak states and the international system, which focuses on the “internal security dilemma” and intrastate rather than interstate conflict, *wars across states* describes a type of conflict at the interstices of intra and interstate war. See Brian Job, “Matters of Multilateralism,” in David Lake and Patrick Morgan (eds.) *Regional Orders: Building Security in a New World* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), 180.

⁵²Mehler calls the fracturing of authority in the security realm “oligopolies of violence.” See Andreas Mehler, “Oligopolies of Violence in Africa South of the Sahara,” *Nord-Süd-Aktuell* 18, 3, (2004), 539-548.

⁵³Wendt, “Anarchy is What States Make of It,” 414.

Africa exist outside the formal geography of Africa.”⁵⁴ The system needs to be defined functionally rather than spatially. Since, Africa’s *conflict zones* are defined by conflict, we are concerned with war, security is the key function or public good. As, Wallenstein and Sollenberg relate, nine out of ten wars in Africa are within conflict complexes.⁵⁵ These are the systems that need to be identified and then explained. Christopher Clapham summarizes:

As the administrative reach of African states declined, with the shrinking of their revenue base and the spread of armed challenges to their power, so the number and size of such zones increased, ... in the process creating a new international relations of statelessness.⁵⁶

Because agency and structure are codetermined and all action pre-supposes a social structure and vice versa, the structure (regional conflict zone) is an outcome as well as a medium of action.⁵⁷ Patrimonial politics as the prevailing social system and decaying national sovereignty, most pronounced in the weak state’s periphery foster regional systems prone to *wars across states*.

Africa is rife with regional systems whose variables include state and non-state actors alike. In the post –Cold War years, a heteronomous system displaced ones once based tenuously based on sovereignty. To paraphrase Buzan and Little, functional differentiation in the African context has led to the erosion of sovereignty and a structural change in the units causes a

⁵⁴Niklas Hultin, “Repositioning the Front Lines? Reflection on the Ethnography of African Securityscapes,” *African Security* 3, 2 (2010), 112.

⁵⁵Peter Wallenstein and Margareta Sollenberg, “Armed Conflict and Regional Conflict Complexes, 1989-97,” *Journal of Peace Research* 35, 5 (1998), 625.

⁵⁶Christopher Clapham, *Africa and the International System: The Politics of State Survival* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 222.

⁵⁷See Dessler, “What’s at Stake,” 452.

structural change in the Africa system.⁵⁸ Can the Africa system move from a international system to an international society?

FROM INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM TO INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY

An international society presupposes a system, but not vice versa.⁵⁹ The system that acts as predicate in the English School is typically made up of states - it has a state-centric ontology.⁶⁰ Devlen et al. argue: "... the School sees states as the basic units and interactions among them as plausible leading up to an international society."⁶¹ This is not to argue that the English School sees the Westphalia state system as the only possible or historical type of international system; Buzan and Little have cautioned that a focus on sovereign states is too limiting.⁶² Nonetheless, although the English school, and in particular Buzan and Little, advance the argument that there were different kinds of international systems across history, the Waltzain system seems to be the natural antecedent to an international society. Possibly because this is what happened in Europe.

In contrast to the Westphalia antecedent to an international society, Bull saw what he called a system of unlike units "neomedievalism." Such as what we have in Afriac's *conflict zones*. It was considered incompatible with international society.⁶³ While Buzan posits that it is

⁵⁸Buzan and Little, "Reconceptualizing Anarchy," 408.

⁵⁹Buzan, "From International System," 331.

⁶⁰Balkan Devlen, Patrick James, Özgür Özdamar, "The English School, International Relations and Progress," *International Studies Review* 7 (2005), 176.

⁶¹Ibid., 178.

⁶²Buzan and Little, *International Systems*, 6.

⁶³Buzan, "From international system," 335.

logically possible to for a neomedieval system to develop into an international society, he admits it is difficult to conceive and so his focus remains on the case of like units.⁶⁴

Africa's *conflict zones* (subsystems) are functionally and structurally differentiated. The movement from an international system to an international society is the case of Africa cannot be explained by the English school because it builds on international systems that are structurally and functionally undifferentiated.

First, the socialization process imbedded in Waltz's neorealism is predicated on like units. It is difficult to reconcile Africa's anarchy with a Waltz's logic. As well, Buzan and Little concluded that where systems are functionally differentiated, such as neomedieval systems, they may prove durable.⁶⁵ In the case of Africa, the socialization process may in fact follow the same logic as Waltz's system, but with diametrically opposed results. The survival strategies of patrimonial rulers in weak states may encourage more functional differentiation, particularly in the border regions where the grip of sovereignty is most disaggregated. As the states decays, rulers turn to informal networks.⁶⁶ In *conflict zones*, such as ones centered on Liberia/Sierra Leone, the eastern DRC and Darfur, cross-border informal networks proliferate.

If the socialization process of like units is unlikely given the missing predicate, can an increasingly dense and interactive international system lead to an international society?⁶⁷ To answer this, we can use the analogous debates on how "security communities" are created. I have made an extensive argument elsewhere about how Africa's anarchy may be incongruent

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Buzan and Little, "Reconceptualizing Anarchy," 433-434.

⁶⁶William Reno has clearly laid out this political logic. See, Reno, *Warlord Politics and Africa States* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publications, 1998).

⁶⁷Buzan, "From International System," 334.

with the argument that regional interdependence leads to greater security.⁶⁸ What follows is an encapsulation.

In Africa, and in much of the developing world, intra-state threats are more salient than interstate threats. It is not a Waltzian world. Two assumptions underlying our understanding of the relationship between regional integration and regional security that concern, respectively, the nature of anarchy and the unitary state, need to be recast to fit Africa's systemic logic.

By relaxing the anarchy and unitary state assumptions, consistent with the argument in the first section of the paper, Africa's security orders change from what Buzan and Wæver's label a "standard [security] complex," which is anarchic in form with "predominantly a military security agenda,"⁶⁹ to what here is labeled a *insecurity complex*.⁷⁰ The focus is thereby shifted from looking at how states threaten, or do not, other states, to the development of sub-national and transnational threats to regional security and ultimately – *wars across states*.

The national security literature firmly imbedded in a Waltzian logic, assumes that states are the main actors in the anarchical international system and that they are, furthermore, unitary actors. The main difference between liberalism and realism is their respective emphasis on the benefits versus the costs of interdependence,⁷¹ but both almost always assume a utility-maximizing state working within an anarchical (Waltzian) environment. From a realist

⁶⁸James J. Hentz, "The Southern African security order: regional economic integration and security among developing states," *Review of International Studies* 35, 1 (2009).

⁶⁹Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, *Regions and Power: The Structure of International Security* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 55.

⁷⁰They look at two defining dimensions, variations in polarity and variations in amity and enmity. *Ibid.*, 53.

⁷¹Dale Copeland, "Economic Interdependence and War: A Theory of Trade Expectations," *International Security* 20, 4 (1996), 12.

perspective, Edward Mansfield and Rachel Bronson relate how trading blocs ameliorate the security dilemma.⁷² From a liberalist perspective, Paul Papayoanou makes a similar claim when he states, "... [I]f there is sustained economic integration, the stakes may be so high that states eschew any thoughts of resorting to force for gain."⁷³ Within a classical security dilemma, allies can ignore relative gains (who are getting richer) because their collective gains augment their power *vis-à-vis* an external threat.⁷⁴ Therefore, alliance partners trade more with each other than with non-alliance partners.⁷⁵ However, even the formal literature allows that while trade engenders peace, asymmetrical trade can increase the chances of war.⁷⁶

Because the functionally and structurally differentiated system in Africa engenders new security threats, the analytical lens of traditional realism and liberalism when looking at security in the developing world focuses our attention on the wrong actors. This is particularly true with

⁷²Edward Mansfield and Rachel Bronson, "Alliance, Preferential Trading Arrangements, and International Trade," *American Political Science Review* 91, 1 (1997), 94.

⁷³Papayoanou, "Great Powers and Regional Orders: Possibilities and Prospects after the Cold War," in Lake and Morgan, *Regional Orders*, 138. Bruce Russett makes a similar claim. Russett, "A neo-Kantian Perspective," 374.

⁷⁴Joanne Gowa, *Allies, Adversaries, and International Trade* (Princeton: Princeton University Press). Others have argued that increasing trade in the international system does not, by itself, necessarily promote stability. Copeland, "Economic Interdependence."

⁷⁵Mansfield and Bronson, "Alliance, Preferential Trading Arrangements."

⁷⁶There is a vast amount of formal modeling dealing with this issue. McMillan's review of the literature concludes that the liberalist argument that interdependence leads to peace is stronger than the realist argument that posits the opposite. Susan McMillan, "Interdependence and Conflict," *Mershon International Studies Review* 41, 1 (1997), 43. Building on the insights of Hirschman, others argue that asymmetrical trade causes conflict. Albert Hirschman, *National Power and the Structure of Foreign Trade* (Berkeley: University of California Press). See also, Peter Wallensteen, *Structure and War: On International Relations 1920-1968* (Stockholm: Raben and Sjogren, 1973)

formal models analyzing the effects of interdependence that start "... from the premise that nation-states are rational unitary actors who try to maximize national welfare."⁷⁷ Less reliance on the unitary actor assumption and a more solid micro foundation is needed in empirical studies.⁷⁸ This does not write the state out of the script; it remains central to the prospects for security in Africa.⁷⁹

In international relations literature, a *security community* is considered a special case of a *security complex*. The concept of a *security community* comes from Karl Deutsch's work on the North Atlantic Community.⁸⁰ It is built on the notion that interdependence and interaction among a collection of states engenders positive externalities. In this case, "[A]n intensive and extensive pattern of networks between states" leads to peace,⁸¹ interdependence leads to peace.⁸²

As Gerrie Swart and Anton du Plessis, explain: "[A] distinctive feature of a security community is the link it makes between stable peace and the existence of a transnational

⁷⁷Katherine Barbieri, and Gerald Schneider, "Globalization and Peace: Assessing New Directions in the Study of Trade Conflict," *Journal of Peace Research* 36, 4 (1999), 399.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, 388.

⁷⁹Others, particularly critical theory, have argued that the state itself is the security problem. See, Kevin Dunn, *Imagining the Congo: The International Relations of Identity* (London: Palgrave, 2003).

⁸⁰Karl Deutsch et al., *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), 5-6.

⁸¹Emanuel Adler, and Michael Barnett, "Framework for the Study of Security Communities," in *Security Communities*, eds. Adler and Barnett, 54.

⁸²Bruce Russett, "A neo-Kantian Perspective," in *Security Communities*, eds. Adler and Barnett, 374. Much of the early neofunctionalist literature on the European Community made a similar argument.

community."⁸³ But this is not necessarily the case where a region's intra-state insecurity is more germane than interstate threats. Deutsch argued that "[I]n a pluralistic *security community* the members give no thought to using violence in their relations with one another."⁸⁴ But within the context of an *insecurity complex*, it is quite possible to have instability even as the constituent states do not threaten each other; it is not enough that states have committed to pacific relations.⁸⁵ In an *insecurity complex*, the security externalities caused by a high level of interdependence are mostly negative. The most obvious is a weak or collapsing state, but the externalities include what are often called the "new security issues," such as: immigration, gunrunning, gangs and domestic crime, HIV/AIDS, transnational crime, and poverty.⁸⁶

The anarchy assumption, which dominates international relations theory and in particular the sub-discipline of international security, describes the relationship among hard-shelled Weberian states where in a Hobbesian world one state arms to defend itself, thereby threatening other states, which in turn must arm themselves. But anarchy means something different in a world populated by weak states, such as in much of Sub-Saharan Africa. To recast Alexander Wendt, the issue is not what states make of anarchy, but rather that states must make something

⁸³Gerrie Swart and Anton du Plessis, "From Apartheid Destabilisation to a Southern Africa Security Community," in *Towards a Common Defense*, ed. Solomon, 18.

⁸⁴Morgan, "Regional Security Complexes," 36.

⁸⁵Laurie Nathan, "Domestic Instability and Security Communities," *European Journal of International Relations* 12, 2 (2006), 293.

⁸⁶Marianne Marchand, Morten Bøås, and Timothy Shaw, "The Political Economy of New Regionalism," *Third World Quarterly* 20, 5 (1999), 905; Andrew Hurrell, "Security and Inequality," in *Inequality and Globalization, and World Politics*, eds. Hurrell and Ngaire Woods (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 259; Hettne, "The New Regionalism," xvii. For specific discussions of the "new security" threats in post-apartheid southern Africa see; Laurie Nathan, "A Framework and Strategy for Building Peace and Security in Southern Africa," Unpublished manuscript (Cape Town: Centre for Intergroup Studies, 1992); Nathan, "Domestic Instability," Roger Southall, "Regional Security: The 'New Security' in Southern Africa," *Southern Africa Report* 10, no. 5 (1995).

of different forms of anarchy.⁸⁷ Both mainstream realism and liberalism are handicapped by a narrowly defined notion of anarchy. As Edward Kolodziej argues:

What is important to recognize is that anarchy may be ordered in many ways. What form it assumes as security systems may perhaps be neither obvious nor logical, but still coherent and compelling in driving behavior.⁸⁸

Traditional IR theory on regionalism is the wrong toolkit for understanding Africa. Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett discuss three stages in the formation of a *security community*. Stage two is an intensive and extensive pattern of networks between states.⁸⁹ Buzan et al. made a similar claim when they state, "Regional integration will eliminate a *security complex*, which with it is coextensive, by transforming it from an anarchic subsystem of states to a single, larger actor within the system."⁹⁰ Immigration, weapons proliferation, HIV/AIDS, and failing and collapsed states largely define the pattern of interaction in Africa.⁹¹ So, as Michael Schulz, Fred Söderbaum and Joakim Ojendal note, "Increased interaction and integration can

⁸⁷Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is What States Make of It," *International Organization* 46, 2 (1992).

⁸⁸Edward Kolodziej, "Renaissance in Security Studies? Caveat Lector," *International Studies Quarterly* 36, 1 (1992), 436.

⁸⁹Adler, and Barnett, "A Framework for the Study of Security Communities," in Adler and Barnett (eds.), *Security Communities* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 54.

⁹⁰Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Press, 1998), 5.

⁹¹Senzo Ngubane, "Sources of Southern African Insecurity," in *Towards a Common Defense and Security in the Southern African Development Community*, (ed.), Solomon (Pretoria: African Institute of South Africa, 2004), 52-53.

also give the rise to conflict, exploitation, dominance, misallocation of resources" ⁹² In the African context, the very high frequency of cross-border/cross-region interaction has not created anything that remotely resembles a *security community*.⁹³ In fact, it has created a new security dilemma.

GLOBAL SOCIETY

There is recursive relationship between an international society and a global society, but the agent changes. On one hand, Bull related that "... the interests of mankind are articulated and aggregated ... through the mechanism of the society of sovereign states."⁹⁴ And an international society needs to be underwritten by a world society.⁹⁵ The world society, however, shifts the focus from the state to the individual. In Buzan's words:

For Bull, international society rests on common rules, and identities among states, whereas world society would rest on common norms, rules, and identities held by individuals across the system.

An international society and a world society are, therefore, imbedded in different ontologies. Devlen et al. explain this as a pluralist versus solidarist approach.⁹⁶ Pluralist line-up on the realist side and remain state-centric. Solidarist lean toward the Kantian side and stress human rights. This tension is evident in Africa's post-colonial pursuit of unity. The Pan Africanism of the immediate post-colonial era took a more solidarist approach while the OAU was firmly

⁹²Michael Schultz, Fredrick Söderbaum and Joakim Ojendal, "Introduction," in *Regionalization in a Globalizing World: A Comparative Perspective on Forms, Actors and Processes*, eds. Schultz, Söderbaum and Ojendal (London: Zed Books), draft chapter, 11.

⁹³ Bøås, "Towards a Political," 312.

⁹⁴Quoted in Little, "The English's School's Contribution," 412.

⁹⁵Ibid.

⁹⁶Devlen et al. "The English School," footnote 15.

anchored to a pluralist approach, as codified in Article 11, paragraph 3 of the original OAU charter. The 1964 OAU Cairo Resolution on Border Disputes among States formally adopted *uti possidetis*.

The tension between these two approaches creates a set of paradoxes. First is what I have called the “African paradox”: African states are expected to cede sovereignty to regional organizations even as that sovereignty eludes them.⁹⁷ The loss of sovereignty is most evident in the peripheries of weak states: Sudan and Chad (Darfur); the eastern DRC, the Central African Republic (CAR), the states of the Mano River Basin, etc; where we find *wars across states*. Angela Meyer, in discussing the conflict in the CAR, notes that there is a tension between the *de facto* sovereignty states retain over the center of the country and the *de jure* sovereignty they legally enjoy over their peripheries.⁹⁸ The worse human rights occur in the peripheries of these states that shape the *conflict zones*. But, again paradoxically, the threat to human security comes from the state trying to broadcast authority into the periphery – extend *de facto* sovereignty, as in for example Darfur, and in the statelessness of the *conflict zones*, as for example in the eastern DRC. The most stable part of the failed state of Somalia is Somaliland, where the state not only lost *de facto* sovereignty but where it has also all but ceded *de jure* sovereignty.

A second paradox within the English school, as noted by Roger Epp, is created by a post colonial state that insists on the Westphalian norms of non-interference and sovereign equality.⁹⁹ This tension is a product of the central role of the state in the English school and the ontological

⁹⁷James J. Hentz, Fredrik Söderbaum, Rodrigo Tavares, “Regional Organizations and African Security: Moving the Debate Forward” *African Security* 2, 2-3 (2009), 214.

⁹⁸Angela Meyer, “Regional Conflict Management in Central Africa” *African Security* 2, 2-3 (2009).

⁹⁹Epp, “The English school on the frontiers of international relations, 57.

preeminence accorded the individual in a world society. Buzan relays that Bull believed that human rights could undermine an international order based on state.¹⁰⁰ Devlin et al. state:

Given that international society is based on sovereignty and the principle of nonintervention, any effort to legitimize foreign intervention into the domestic politics of other state, for whatever reason, will destabilize the very foundations of the system.¹⁰¹

The weaker the state, the more pernicious this paradox becomes. But it is the weakness of the African state that generates the threat to human security. A state-centric framing of Africa's subsystems obscures more than it reveals.

For instance, Douglas Lemke's rigorous work led to the counter-intuitive conclusion of an "Africa Peace."¹⁰² He concluded that African dyads are less war prone than non-African dyads.¹⁰³ As he qualifies, this refers only to *interstate* relations, as defined by COW.¹⁰⁴ This is puzzling, of course, because as Lemke goes to great lengths to explain: [U]nfortunately for Africans, the conditions associated with war are almost uniformly present...¹⁰⁵ To explain what seems like an anomaly, he looks at the affects of domestic instability on the ability of Africa states to wage war. He concludes that instability (measured by the level of economic underdevelopment and number of coups) does help explain the African anomaly. Africa is not

¹⁰⁰Buzan, "The English School," 337.

¹⁰¹Devlin et al., "The English School," 190.

¹⁰²Douglas Lemke, *Regions of War and Peace* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 161 .

¹⁰³Ibid., 180.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., 162.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., 167.

peaceful because, as Lemke suspects, weak states cannot project power into neighboring countries, but rather is conflict prone because they cannot police their peripheries.

Finally, Lemke also questions the data, but concludes that COW is right. But again, because Africa's systemic wars do not fit the Westphalia model, in fact while the reporting is correct, the data obscures more than it reveals. As Vasquez states "... researchers must not assume that the absence of interstate war means that there is no ongoing war as the system is at peace, a common mistake in data (as well as historical) analysis."¹⁰⁶ Lemke gets this: "If the legal entities defined as states in our datasets are not the empirical interacting entities (the agents) our theories describe, then our research designs will be indeterminate ..."¹⁰⁷

The third paradox is that the nascent Africa states not only inherited their borders and shape at the end of colonial rule, but depended on the international community for legitimacy – what Jackson and Rosberg famously labeled the *juridical state*.¹⁰⁸ In essence, Africa's postcolonial states could ride the coattails of the international sovereignty norm. Since the legitimacy, such as it is, came from abroad, less effort was applied to knitting together a functioning (*de facto*) state.

These paradoxes have left Africa a structural legacy. As noted above, in the post-cold war era, Africa has been wracked by war. These wars are what Mary Kaldor labels "new wars," which seemingly reverse the processes through which the modern state evolved;¹⁰⁹ and again the

¹⁰⁶Vasquez, *The War Puzzle*, 29.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., 188.

¹⁰⁸Robert Jackson and Carl Rosberg, "Why Africa's Weak States Persist: The Empirical and Juridical in Statehood", *World Politics*, 35, 1 (1982).

¹⁰⁹Mary Kaldor, *New and Old War: Organized Violence in a Global Era* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 5.

state appears to be the necessary antecedent to international societies and world societies (if not necessarily for international systems).

While between 2002 and 2006 Africa had forty-two percent of the world's fatalities from organized violence, it had eighty-three percent of non-state fatalities.¹¹⁰ While the state does play a major role, it does so more conspicuous by its absence than by its presence. Africa's largest conflicts are *war across states*, they reveal a systemic logic independent of a struggle over the dispensation of the state; they are imbedded in what Pugh and Cooper see as regional economic, military, political, and social networks.¹¹¹ These wars, as Paul Richards has related, occur on the margins of weak and retreating states.¹¹² The players are primarily non-state actors. As Ann Hironaka notes, in many post-Cold War conflicts, insurgent groups do not even venture into government held areas but, rather, are ensconced in their peripheral strongholds.¹¹³

To address its security challenges Africa launched its "Africa's New Peace and Security Architecture, (APSA)," under the auspices of the AU. There is disagreement on how successful APSA has been,¹¹⁴ but relative agreement on its purpose. It is expected to create a "security

¹¹⁰Ralph Sundberg, "Collective Violence 2002-2007: Global and Regional Trends," in Lotta Harborn and Ralph Sunberd, (eds) *States in Armed Conflict 2007* (Oslo, UCDP: 2008).

¹¹¹Michael Pugh and Neil Cooper, *War Economies in a Regional Context: Challenges of Transition* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publications, 2004).

¹¹²Paul Richards, "New War: An Ethnographic Approach", in Richards (ed) *No Peace, No War: An Anthropology of Contemporary Armed Conflict* (Ohio University Press: Athens, 2005), 13.

¹¹³Ann Hironaka, *Neverending Wars: The International Community, Weak States, and the Perpetuation of Civil War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 42.

¹¹⁴For instance, Ulf Engel and João Gomes Porto, eds. *Africa's New Security Peace and Security Architecture: Promoting Norms, Institutionalizing Solutions* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010) takes a less optimistic position than Benedikt Franke, *Security Cooperation in Africa*. Boulder, CO: First Forum Press, 2009.

community,” akin to a “world society” in Africa. It is supported by innovative institutions, such as: the Peace and Security Council, The Continental Early Warning System, The Panel of the Wise, and the African Standby Force – collectively called the pillars of APSA. But what separates APSA from earlier efforts at community building are its norms, which include: respect for fundamental human rights and, sanctity of human life, respect for democratic principles and good governance, and the core principles of “human security” and the “responsibility to protect.”¹¹⁵ Possibly the most important is “the right to protect” (R2P). Thus, under APSA’s new rules the PSC has the right to intervene without the consent of the state. This set of norms points toward a solidarist ethos, and toward a world society.

However, the pluralist ethos still governs action.¹¹⁶ Franke, in fact, notes that the AU has been much better at condemning coups than fraudulent elections.¹¹⁷ In fact, “sovereign boosting” seems to be the accepted norm in Africa. The authors in the special issue of *African Security*, “Regional Organizations in African Security,” which addressed the recent successes and failures of peacekeeping in Africa came to a similar conclusion.¹¹⁸ Robert Mugabe’s ability to maintain power in Zimbabwe may be the most obvious failure of a solidarist approach.

Africa has seemingly had difficulty moving away from an anarchic international system to an international society, to say nothing of an African (world) society because of the incongruence between the ontological foundation of the process and the product. As Franke

¹¹⁵Engel and Porto, eds. *Africa’s New Security Peace*, 152.

¹¹⁶Ibid., 147.

¹¹⁷Franke, *Security Cooperation in Africa*, 220 .

¹¹⁸*African Security* 2, 2-3 (2009).

relates, APSA takes an “instrumental top-down approach to community building.”¹¹⁹ For Engle and Porto APSA’s weakness is this very legacy of inter-governmental cooperation inherited from the OAU.¹²⁰

CONCLUSION

Martha Finnemore concluded her short review of the English School with this question: “How is it, exactly, that politics moves from an international system to an international society, or from an international society to a world society.”¹²¹ Devlen et al. writing in the same journal four years later state that the problem of justice and order is unresolved in the English school.¹²²

This is because each of the three, international systems, international society, and world society occupy different ontological planes, respectively - Hobbesians with their focus on states, Grotians with their focus on institutions, and Kantians with their focus on individuals. In the African context, the discordance generated by trying to move one from one level to another begins with a misunderstanding of its anarchical structure. This has cascading effects, as the structural logics inherent in the anarchical Westphalia nation state system are incongruent with the structural logics inherent in Africa’s *conflict zones* and, therefore, transcending the latter is unlikely to follow a formula for transcending the former.

As Africa struggles with its own structural legacies, it faces a paradox not too dissimilar to that at the heart of capitalism (used to illustrate a point not make a political statement). How does an ontology grounded in individual gain lead to a collective good. Adam Smith’s answer

¹¹⁹Franke, *Security Cooperation in Africa*, 38.

¹²⁰Engel and Porto, eds. *Africa’s New Security Peace*, 144-45.

¹²¹ Finnemore, “Exporting the English School,” 513.

¹²²Devlen et al. “The English School,” 194 .

was – the *invisible hand*. Africa has been dealt a different hand. The English schools historical approach to IR will have much to offer. As Princeton physicist John Wheeler once stated: “No progress without paradox.”¹²³ .

¹²³Graham Farmelo, *The Strangest Man: The Hidden Life of Paul Dirac, Mystic of the Atom* (New York: Basic Books, 2009), 204.