BETWEEN ANARCHY AND EMPIRE: AN ANALYSIS AND REFORMULATION OF THE CONCEPT OF INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY IN THE LIGHT OF THE REPUBLICAN POLITICAL TRADITION

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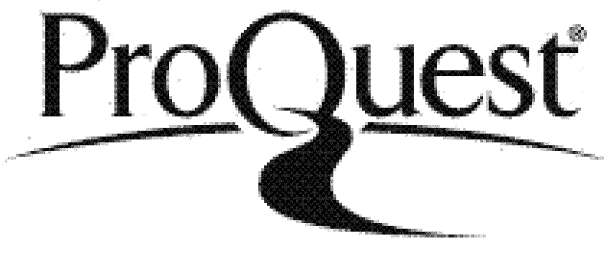

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this thesis is to reformulate the concept of international society, as it is predominantly used within the discipline of International Relations. In particular, this work analyses the conception of international society defined as a society of states, which is associated with the work of the so-called 'English school'. An important recent development within the discipline of International Relations is the attempt to develop a notion of international society which is able to overcome the ontological divide between domestic and international politics. This work should be seen as part of the same intellectual enterprise.

The thesis starts by explaining the meaning of the expression "ontological divide" between domestic and international politics. In addition, it is claimed that the adoption of such a divide characterises the statist approaches to the study of international society. In the first part, two central points are addressed. First, how the English school developed the concept of international society as a reaction against the tradition of *realpolitik*, specifically against a definition of the states system in terms of a state of war. This work then discusses why the notion of the society of states has ultimately failed to avoid the ontological divide.

In the second part, building on the republican political tradition, this thesis attempts to elaborate a conception of international society which escapes the ontological divide between domestic and international politics. It does so by developing the ideas of the international common good, mixed polities and divided sovereignty, and the international constitutional and ideological structure. As a result, this work reformulates the concept of international society, conventionally defined as a society of states. The thesis concludes by outlining the importance of this argument for the study of international relations.

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INTRODUCTION

Contemporary international political theory, the concept of international society, and the 'ontological divide' between domestic and international politics

Since the 1980s, one of the most significant developments within the discipline of International Relations has been the willingness to contest conventional conceptions of international anarchy.[1] From a constructivist perspective, John Gerard Ruggie and Alexander Wendt have criticised the neo-realist conception of international anarchy.[2] For Ruggie, Waltz's neo-realist theory is 'an unduly and unnecessarily undersocialized view of the world'.[3] As for Wendt, he explicitly seeks to offer 'a theory of the states system critical of Waltz's'.[4] On this side of the Atlantic, Barry Buzan and Richard Little, following their joint work with Charles Jones,[5] continue to show a number of significant differences between their version of 'structural realism' and neorealism.[6] In particular, they seek to escape the identification between international anarchy and the state of war. Adopting a more historical approach, Daniel Deudney has also tried to abandon the category of international anarchy, and has developed the concept of 'negarchy', which escapes the conventional 'dyad of hierarchy and anarchy'.[7] From a more "critical" position, Andrew Linklater has investigated whether a 'cosmopolitan' model of international society is gradually replacing the 'Westphalian' one.[8]

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[1] In this thesis, 'International Relations' refers to the discipline that studies 'international relations', the latter thus refers to the subject of study, like international politics or world politics.
[2] See John Gerard Ruggie, *Constructing the World Polity: Essays on International Institutionalization* (London: Routledge, 1998); and Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
[3] Ruggie, *Constructing the World Polity*, p.2.
[4] Wendt, *Social Theory*, p.8.
[5] See *The Logic of Anarchy: Neorealism to Structural Realism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).
[6] See 'The Idea of "International System": Theory Meets History', *International Political Science Review*, 3 (1994), pp.231-55; and 'Reconceptualizing Anarchy: Structural Realism Meets World History', *European Journal of International Relations*, 2, 4 (1996), pp.403-38.
[7] See 'The Philadelphia System: Sovereignty, Arms Control, and Balance of Power in the American States-Union, circa 1787-1861', *International Organization*, 49, 2 (1995), pp.191-229; and 'Binding Sovereigns: Authorities, Structures, and Geopolitics in Philadelphian Systems', in Thomas J. Biersteker and Cynthia Weber (eds.), *State Sovereignty as Social Construct* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp.190-239.
[8] See 'Citizenship and Sovereignty in the Post-Westphalian State', *European Journal of International Relations*, 2, 1 (1996), pp.77-103; and *The Transformation of Political Community* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998).

In addition, such effort has been accompanied by what I call a return to history. A re-examination of modern international political history has been an important part of the attempts to reformulate the concept of international anarchy. Ruggie is particularly interested in investigating the historical transformation that occurred from the medieval to the modern political system and the possible transition from the latter to 'a modified Westphalian system'.[9] In their efforts to reconceptualise international anarchy, Buzan and Little adopt an approach that rests on the 'meeting between theory and history'.[10] Deudney's notion of negarchy results from the belief that the republicanism of the American Founding Fathers constitutes an adequate starting point to redefine international society. Finally, Linklater also engages in a critical inquiry about the historical development of the Westphalian states system. Thus, what is at stake ultimately is an effort to reinterpret the concept of international anarchy by examining the nature of *modern international society*. This thesis should be seen as revealing similar theoretical concerns and as such as part of this broader tendency to reformulate the concept of international society by examining its historical development.

Contesting the ontological divide between domestic and international politics

One of the central issues of contention in this recent work within International Relations is whether the modern states system may be defined in terms of an 'ontological separation' between domestic and international politics.[11] In a straightforward formulation, the ontological separation expresses a sharp distinction between the domains of domestic sovereignty and international anarchy. Using the expression 'the great divide', Ian Clark has recently discussed the implications of such an ontological distinction for the study of international relations.[12] In his formulation, 'The great divide remains rooted in a belief that, for *analytical purposes*, we can pretend that there are two separates spheres of political action, the domestic and the international'.[13] In this thesis, the expression ontological separation is used in a similar way.[14] In order to fully

[9] Ruggie, *Constructing the World Polity*, pp.45-61.
[10] See the essays cited in note 6 above.
[11] The terms 'ontological separation' and 'ontological divide' will be used interchangeably throughout the thesis.
[12] See Ian Clark, *Globalization and International Relations Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp.15-33.
[13] *Globalization and International Relations Theory*, p.68. Emphasis in the original.
[14] Yet, I disagree with Clark's view that it is globalisation that challenges the great divide. In my view, the process of globalisation is not a necessary condition to question the conception of international society that rests on the ontological separation between domestic and international politics.

understand the nature of the ontological separation, this short definition needs to be further discussed.

Acceptance of the ontological separation stems from the belief that political society, with the institutions and rules that characterise its normative structure, results from the existence of a sovereign authority. This is, in short, the Hobbesian belief. As it is clear in Hobbes's thought, it is the establishment of the sovereign state that marks the beginning of political and social relations. Martin Wight has such a belief in mind when he refers to 'the sovereign state as the consummation of political experience and activity'.[15] We find a strong expression of the Hobbesian view, for instance, in Kenneth Waltz's theory of the international system. Following Hobbes, Waltz insists in reducing social orders to two types: sovereign and anarchical social orders, which are radically opposed.[16] In fact, instead of referring to two social orders, it would be more accurate to say that in Waltz's view the states system is in a pre-social and pre-normative condition. James Caporaso has referred to such a view as the belief that the 'international system...is a competitive anarchy', whereas 'domestic society...is, by contrast, rule-based'.[17] Four consequences follow from the ontological separation. The first two occur at the level of the international political structure. The third and the fourth distort our understanding of both the nature and identity of the international agents and the way they act.

The first consequence of the ontological separation is the absence of a social or normative conception of the international political system. Those who accept the ontological separation argue that there is no international political society due to the absence of an international sovereign authority. Hence, political societies only exist within sovereign states and international politics is in a state of nature. Ruggie reacts against this view when he criticises Waltz's 'undersocialized view' of the states system. Against neorealism, Ruggie argues that 'At the level of the international polity, the concept of structure...is suffused with ideational factors'.[18] He goes as far as claiming that the world constitutes an 'organized social collectivity',[19] with such a claim being captured by the expression 'world polity'. As in the case of Ruggie, Buzan and Little

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[15] See 'Why Is There No International Theory?', in James Der Derian (ed.), *International Theory: Critical Investigations* (London: Macmillan, 1995), p.20. See also the discussion in Andrew Linklater, *Men and Citizens in the Theory of International Relations* (Second Edition, London: Macmillan, 1990), chapter 1.

[16] See Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: Random House, 1979).

[17] 'Across the Great Divide: Integrating Comparative and International Politics', *International Studies Quarterly*, 41, 4 (1997), p. 564.

[18] *Constructing the World Polity*, p.33.

[19] *Constructing the World Polity*, p.2.

also stress the social nature of world politics, when they refer to 'the communal institutions that are the hallmark of a maturing international society'.[20] For Buzan and Little, a mature international society cannot be identified with the idea of state of nature, being rather an example of a social and political system. Accordingly, Buzan and Little shift from the Waltzian conception of the international system to a focus on the world political system as a whole, or what they call the 'interhuman system'.[21] Similarly, Deudney also sees the international system as a social domain with a strong normative content.[22] In this regard, his notion of 'negarchy', which refers to a constitutional political order, is explicitly opposed to the realist conception of anarchy as state of war.[23]

The belief that 'sovereignty precedes the international and gives rise to it'[24] is the second consequence of the ontological separation. As we shall see in the case of the English school, in historical terms such a belief is manifested in a historical narrative that gives ontological priority to the sovereign state over international society. In Wendt's terms, modern sovereign states are seen as ontological primitive agents,[25] and not, as Wight puts it, 'as parts of a greater whole'.[26] The problem with this belief is the assumption that sovereign states emerged and acted, until they created international society, in a *pre-social and pre-normative condition.* Again, in Wendt's words, states are understood as being 'autonomous from the social system in which they are embedded'.[27] The implication of this view is the belief that states *create* the normative structure of international society. Such a belief has also been recently criticised by Nicholas Onuf and Ruggie, who both reject the view that states are ontologically prior to international society.[28] Starting from such an individualist assumption easily leads one to misunderstand not only the nature of modern international society, but also the nature of the modern sovereign state. In particular, one fails to notice that international normative and social structures have constitutive effects on the identity of sovereign states.[29] This point leads us to the last two consequences of the ontological divide.

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[20] Buzan, Jones, Little, *The Logic of Anarchy*, pp.69-71.
[21] *The Logic of Anarchy*, p.30.
[22] See Deudney, 'The Philadelphian System' and 'Binding Sovereigns'.
[23] 'Binding Sovereigns', p.205.
[24] Clark, *Globalization and International Relations Theory*, p.76.
[25] See *Social Theory*, pp.1-44, and 198-214.
[26] Martin Wight, 'Western Values in International Relations', in Herbert Butterfield and Martin Wight (eds.), *Diplomatic Investigations* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1966), p.95.
[27] *Social Theory*, p.2.
[28] Nicholas Greenwood Onuf, *The Republican Legacy in International Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); and Ruggie, *Constructing the World Polity.*
[29] See Wendt, *Social Theory*, pp.26-7, and 171-8.

The third consequence is the view that the modern Westphalian political system is exclusively composed of unitary sovereign states. Thus, on the one hand, and according to the notion of unitary sovereignty, sovereign states are seen as absolutely independent, like autonomous individuals, and not integrated within larger constitutional entities. On the other hand, unitary sovereign states are the 'only subjects of international law'.[30] One of the consequences of this view is that international agents other than the unitary sovereign state are seen as political anomalies. In historical terms, those modern anomalies either tend to be dismissed as medieval legacies, such as for instance the German Empire (which lasted until the beginning of the nineteenth century, a rather long life for a 'medieval' institution). Or, alternatively, tend to be considered as 'post-Westphalian institutions', such as for instance the European Union.[31] In other words, if the autonomous and unitary sovereign state is considered to be the 'normal' modern political institution, then political systems constitutionally defined by a division of sovereign authority, such as the German Empire, or the European Union, are necessarily perceived as 'abnormal'. A reaction against this approach is also clear in the current literature. For instance, Ruggie tries to abandon the conventional statist conception of international society, understood as a political system that is composed by sovereign states, conceived as like-units, and addresses the issue of functionally differentiated units.[32] This shift leads him to consider the significance of political experiences such as the European Union, which should be seen in terms of a 'multiperspectival polity', where a group of states 'assume multiple identities, play diverse roles, and for some purpose act in different, more collectively legitimated, capacities'.[33] The concept of 'sharing authority' is the result of states choosing 'to organize activities internationally'.[34] Again, like Ruggie, Buzan and Little also abandon the strict statist conception of international society, and argue that the idea of international anarchy is compatible with the differentiation of units. Likewise, 'neo-republican' thinkers present alternatives to the unitary conception of sovereignty. Deudney, for instance, has been lately focusing on 'interstate unions', as 'alternatives to

[30] Wight, 'Western Values', p.101. It should be noted that Wight here is criticising these views, as we shall see later.
[31] See, for instance, Linklater, 'Citizenship and Sovereignty', pp.77-103; and *The Transformation of Political Community*, chapter 6.
[32] Ruggie, *Constructing the World Polity*, pp.45-61, and pp.146-7.
[33] *Constructing the World Polity*, p.135.
[34] *Constructing the World Polity*, p.147.

the state and anarchy'.[35] As for Onuf, he explicitly refers to the idea of divided sovereignty in the context of 'compound republics'.[36]

The fourth consequence of the ontological separation between domestic and international politics is the view that national interest, or *raison d'état*, is defined in terms of pure self-interest, and not as including concerns for the international common good. In this regard, it is illustrative to note that, with their challenge to the realist conception of international anarchy, Ruggie and Deudney also propose a notion of external statecraft, distinct from Waltz's notion of self-help, which emphasises the idea of the international common good. For Ruggie, states' national interests should be concerned with respecting and increasing multilateral means to maintain international political order.[37] Deudney has also included the idea of the international common good in his conception of statecraft, and focuses on foreign policy practices such as institutional 'biding'.[38] Following Ruggie and Deudney, it will be argued later in this thesis that, contrary to the realist conception of national interest, the republican conception of *raison d'état* considers the concern for the international common good as part of vital national interest. Here, the point is not to see the national interest and the international common good in opposite terms, or to abandon the notion of national interest altogether, but rather to see them as compatible.

These four implications of the ontological separation between domestic and international politics give origin to what one can refer as the *statist* approach to the study of international society. In accordance with the discussion up to this point, the 'statist' approach is thus characterised by four elements. First, the identification between modern international relations and the Hobbesian notion of the state of war. Secondly, the view that the normative structure of modern international society was initially created by sovereign states living in the state of nature. Thirdly, the belief that modern international society is exclusively composed of unitary sovereign states. Fourthly, and finally, a conception of reason of state that rests purely on the idea of states' self-interests. In historical terms, for the different statist approaches within International Relations, modern international society is preceded by the emergence of the sovereign state and thereby by the constitution of the *states system*. It is in this sense that I refer to states being ontologically prior to international society or being treated as primitive agents. Therefore, to overcome the ontological divide, it is necessary to

[35] See 'The Philadelphian System' and 'Binding Sovereigns'.
[36] *The Republican Legacy*, pp.70-5, and pp.126-38.
[37] See *Constructing the World Polity*.
[38] 'Binding Sovereigns', pp.213-6.

develop a conception of international society that rejects the statist approach. It needs to be stressed from the outset that a *non-statist* approach to international society does not imply by any means an *anti-statist* argument. As it will be clear throughout the thesis, the reformulation of the concept of international society pursued here recognises the vital importance of the sovereign state, both empirically and normatively, in modern world politics.[39]

In addition, a final implication of the ontological separation between domestic and international politics takes us to the level of theory, specifically to the distinction between political theory and international theory. According to Wight, political theory is that body of thought that speculates 'about the state', and 'international theory' speculates 'about relations between states'.[40] Given the belief that progress only occurs within the sovereign state, almost all modern political thought has been devoted to the study of domestic politics. As such, it 'has become natural to think of international politics as the untidy fringe of domestic politics'.[41] This results in 'a kind of recalcitrance of international politics to being theorized about'. Thus, Wight affirms, 'international theory' is 'a tradition by negation', and is opposed to the 'great tradition' of 'political thought'.[42] The effort to overcome such an opposition and to move towards a focus on 'international political theory',[43] or on 'political theories of international relations',[44] by reconsidering the significance of classical political thought to the study of world politics, has marked contemporary International Relations.[45] The early work of Linklater is a good example of the attempt 'to defend the enterprise of international political theory'.[46] He asks the 'Kantian question': 'what makes international political theory possible?' It is quite revealingly that the crucial point of his answer is that 'both domestic and international political theory must possess at least one postulate in common'. As with political theory, 'international political theory must contain some awareness of the possibility of human intervention in the social world in order to

[39] It is appropriate to note, in this regard, that despite the fact that scholars such as Buzan, Little, Deudney, Onuf, Ruggie, and Wendt criticise what I call the statist approach, they clearly recognise the crucial importance of the sovereign state.
[40] 'Why Is There No International Theory?', p.15.
[41] Wight, 'Why Is There No International Theory?', p.20.
[42] Wight, 'Why Is There No International Theory?', p.32.
[43] See Michael Donelan, *Elements of International Political Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990); and Howard Williams, *International Relations and the Limits of Political Theory* (London: Macmillan, 1996).
[44] See David Boucher, *Political Theories of International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).
[45] See Ian Clark, and Iver B. Neumann (eds.), *Classical Theories of International Relations* (London: Macmillan, 1996).
[46] *Men and Citizens*, p.8.

modify its nature'.[47] The most important implication of Linklater's argument is that international political theory helps us to reflect upon 'alternative foundations of world political organisation'.[48] This is a view entirely accepted in this thesis and indeed provides the starting-point to recover the republican political tradition in order to reformulate the concept of international society.

The English school's early rejection of the ontological divide

Within international political theory, we find in the work of the English school an early attempt to overcome the ontological separation between international and domestic politics, particularly in Wight's 'Western Values in International Relations'. In the beginning of the essay, Wight refers to a conception of international society that sees the states as 'as parts of a greater whole'.[49] This conception is distinguished from the realist notion of state of nature.[50] In addition, such a conception of international society is also distinguished from the legal positivist notion of 'society of states'.[51] For legal positivists, continues Wight, sovereign states are 'the *real* political units', and international society as a whole is simply ignored. As he puts it, 'the doctrine that the state is the ultimate unit of political society entails the doctrine that there is no wider society to embrace states'.[52] In other words, by placing such a strong emphasis on the state, legal positivists deny that international society exists as a political association above and beyond states' interests. This observation even led Wight to associate legal positivism with realism.[53] We can draw a number of conclusions from Wight's views.

First, by attacking the view that the state is the ultimate unit of international society, Wight criticises the statist approach of both realism and international legal

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[47] See *Men and Citizens*, pp.10-1. Although I entirely agree with Linklater's arguments regarding the need to construct international political theory, I disagree with his assessment of Wight. As I will argue later in chapter 2, I read 'Why Is There No International Theory?' as an initial attempt to construct international political theory.

[48] Linklater, *Men and Citizens*, p.4.

[49] 'Western Values', p.95. Wight writes 'as relatively, not absolutely *perfect*' (my emphasis). I replaced perfect by sovereign, for the term 'perfect' is borrowed from the Suarez's expression, 'perfect commonwealth', which means a sovereign state in the sense of being completely autonomous.

[50] 'Western Values', pp.92-4.

[51] International legal positivism must be distinguished from John Austin's legal positivism, which rejects the legal nature of international law.

[52] 'Western Values', p.92.

[53] Wight affirms that 'in the nineteenth century, the separate influences of Hegel, of Social Darwinism and of legal positivism converged', see 'Western Values', p.92. Likewise, in 'Why Is There no International Theory?', Wight refers to the work of J.J. Moser as coming as 'near to codifying *Realpolitik* as any work of [positive] international law can do', p.29.

positivism. This indicates that, for Wight, none of these theories had produced a satisfactory conception of international society. Secondly, Wight saw the reconceptualization of international society as the adequate response to both realism and legal positivism. This suggests that Wight and his colleagues of the British Committee sat themselves the task of developing a conception of international society that could serve as an alternative to those two approaches.[54] What is extraordinary is that in 'Western Values' Wight anticipates many of the themes recently developed by Buzan and Little, Deudney, Onuf, and Ruggie as part of their reaction against the ontological separation between the domestic and the international. This can be seen in the way Wight opposes the four points that define the statist approaches to international society, summarised above. First of all, contrary to realism, Wight argues that international anarchy should not be defined in terms of the state of war. The consequences of international anarchy can be mitigated by the creation of common international norms, rules, and institutions, which demonstrates that the emergence of a political society does not necessarily depend on the existence of a common sovereign authority. Secondly, in opposition to international legal positivism, Wight denies that international society is exclusively created by states and affirms that the international normative structure can only be conveniently understood if we grasp that that the society of states is part of a greater political society. Thirdly, Wight disputes both 'the orthodox doctrine' that sovereign states are 'the only subjects of international law' and the conventional view of sovereignty as a unitary and absolutist concept.[55] Fourthly, Wight's treatment of states' political interests stresses both the ideas of 'common interests' and 'collective action', and the principle of 'rightful occasions for intervention' to pursue the common good of 'human society'.[56] By explicitly criticising these four elements of the statist approach, Wight's argument therefore demonstrates that a reformulation of the concept of international society is required in order to overcome the ontological separation between domestic and international politics.

This last point leads us to draw a final conclusion from 'Western Values'. Wight's views also suggest that he would have not been entirely happy with Hedley Bull's conception of international society as a society of states. This is not surprising

[54] We should remember that 'Western Values' was the second paper presented by Wight before the British Committee, during its early period, when the development of a distinct approach to the study of international relations was at a crucial moment. This point will be developed in chapter 2.
[55] See 'Western Values', p.93, p.95, and p.101.
[56] 'Western Values', pp.109-10 and 116-9.

given the influence of legal positivism, especially the work of Lassa Oppenheim, on Bull's thought. As we know, Bull defines international society as

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

Then, he adds, to leave no doubts about his statist approach, that 'an international society...presupposes an international system'.[57] Borrowing Wight's words, one could say from Bull's definition that 'by recognising no international society except the society of sovereign states', it 'denies the existence of an effective international society'.[58] Wight's argument suggests, first, that Bull's pluralist conception of international society does not encompass all possible ways of conceptualising international society within the broad category of Rationalism. Yet, as it will be argued in chapter 2, despite Wight's early attempt to distance himself from a strict statist approach, he and his colleagues were not entirely successful in escaping from the ontological divide either. Such a failure also shows that so far, within the English school, only Bull has managed to have fully developed a comprehensive conception of international society, as the frequent references these days to his definition demonstrate.

It should be noted at this point that the historical understanding of modern international society adopted by Buzan and Little, and by Ruggie is rather similar to Bull's.[59] This is clear in their definition of the Westphalian international society as a political system of like-units.[60] The fact that these scholars try to reconsider the notion of international anarchy without questioning the account of political modernity developed by the English school shows that, to satisfactorily reformulate the concept of

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[57] Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics* (London: Macmillan, 1977), p.13. Emphasis in the original.
[58] 'Western Values', p.93.
[59] Of course, these three authors themselves acknowledge the influence of the work of the English school on their thought. For the influence of the English school on Buzan, see Barry Buzan, 'From International System to International Society: Structural Realism and Regime Theory Meet the English School', *International Organization*, 47, 3 (1993), pp.327-52; see also Buzan's paper presented in the 1999 BISA Conference, in Manchester, 'The English School as a Research Program'. As for Little, see Richard Little, 'Neorealism and the English School: A Methodological, Ontological and Theoretical Reassessment', *European Journal of International Relations*, 1, 1 (1995), pp.9-34; and 'International System, International Society and World Society: A Re-evaluation of the English School', in B.A. Roberson (ed.), *International Society and the Development of International Relations Theory* (London: Pinter, 1998), pp.59-79; see also Little's paper presented in the 1999 BISA Conference, 'The English School's Contribution to the Study of International Relations'. Finally, as for Ruggie, he affirms that: 'The so-called English school influenced many constructivists, myself included', see 'Introduction', in *Constructing the World Polity*, p.11.
[60] This point will be further developed in chapter 5.

international society, it is also necessary to offer a different interpretation of the nature of *modern* international society. In short, this is the challenge faced by this thesis.

It is important to sum up the points made above. First, the need to overcome the ontological separation between domestic and international politics is a pressing issue in contemporary International Relations, with the literature briefly discussed above showing a strong dissatisfaction with such a separation.[61] Moreover, the attempt to abandon such an ontological divide leads to a challenge to the statist conception of international society. Secondly, such a theoretical endeavour is associated with a historical re-examination of the nature of modern international society, as the recent return to history by International Relations scholars demonstrates. Thirdly, it has been argued that, by recovering the political language associated with the idea of international society, the work of the English school, and specially Wight's 'Western Values', represents the first serious attempt to overcome the ontological separation. Fourthly, it was noted that, in the end, the English school had not completely succeeded in developing a conception of international society able to abandon the ontological separation. Indeed, the only conception of international society fully developed by the school was Bull's pluralist notion of the 'anarchical society', which moves a considerable distance from Wight's suggestion that international society must be understood as a political society greater than the society of sovereign states.

This thesis recovers Wight's belief in the need to formulate a conception of international society as 'a whole greater than the sum of its parts', that is, distinct from the notion of a society of states. In other words, a political society that is above all national societies. In this regard, my reformulation of the concept of international society seeks to develop what I call the unexplored potential of the legacy of the English school. To achieve this purpose, I will try to develop a conception of international society that disputes the four central elements of the statist approach, as they were identified above. In addition, the thesis follows an intellectual route only briefly taken by Wight, but never pursued by Bull or for that matter by any subsequent member of the English school. By exploring the insights offered by the republican political tradition, almost ignored by international political theory,[62] this thesis tries to correct some problems associated with the notion of the society of states. Yet, it should be clear from the outset that I am trying to offer neither a republican theory of international politics,

[61] Of course, the criticism of the ontological separation does not mean that there is no substantial differences between domestic and international politics.
[62] There are two notable exceptions. Deudney's recent work on the 'Philadelphian System', and Onuf's *The Republican Legacy*.

nor an intellectual history of republican international thought. At this point, we still need further clarification. It may seem that this thesis is attempting to address too many different issues at the same time. From the points just made, the argument addresses the notions of international anarchy, sovereign statehood, and reason of state. Obviously, a comprehensive treatment of these three concepts would require more than one thesis. In this regard, this thesis does not attempt to provide detailed discussions of all these notions. Its central focus is the concept of international society. In particular, it will try to show that a satisfactory conception of international society needs to abandon the ontological separation found in most conventional International Relations theories. Yet, as the discussion so far has suggested, to overcome the ontological separation, and thereby to formulate a satisfactory conception of international society, requires the treatment of the notions of international anarchy, sovereign statehood, and reason of state. Thus, when this thesis addresses those notions, it does exclusively with the purpose of reformulating the idea of international society, and not as an attempt to treat those notions in their own right.

The republican political tradition and the concept of international society

The republican revival in political thought

The republican revival in the history of political thought may be initially located in the work of the German emigrant historians, Hans Baron and Felix Gilbert. It was their work that started to call attention to the 'civic humanism' and the republicanism of Italian Renaissance political thought.[63] After the pioneer work of Baron and Gilbert, it was the work of the historians J. G. A. Pocock and Quentin Skinner in the 1970s that mostly contributed to stress the importance of the republican political tradition in the development of modern political thought. In his book on the 'Machiavellian moment', Pocock argues that the classical republican paradigm, recovered by Machiavelli and Guicciardini in sixteenth-century Florence, had a tremendous influence on modern

[63] See, respectively, Hans Baron, *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955); and Felix Gilbert, *Machiavelli and Guicciardini: Politics and History in Sixteenth Century Florence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965). For two brief but very helpful discussions of the emergence of the interest in the republican tradition within Political Theory and the History of Political Thought since the 1970s, see Philip Petit, 'Republican Political Theory', in Andrew Vincent (ed.), *Political Theory: Tradition & Diversity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp.112-31; and Knud Haakonssen, 'Republicanism', in Robert E. Goodin and Philip Pettit (eds.), *A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), pp.568-74.

politics until the eighteenth century.[64] In addition to Pocock, Skinner is the contemporary thinker who has done most to emphasise the fundamental importance of the political ideologies of the Renaissance, and in particular of the republican ideology, in the establishment of 'the foundations of modern political thought'.[65] According to Skinner, one of the crucial questions of the formative years of political modernity was: How can a political community save itself from the rise of domestic despots and from external imperial threats? One of the central themes of Volume One of Skinner's book is precisely the way Renaissance political thinkers tried to answer this question.[66] The terms of the answer gave origin to the modern republican political ideology. Accordingly, Skinner's history of Renaissance political thought starts with the struggle of the city republics against the Emperor and the Pope to achieve political liberty. It was during the Renaissance that the political argument to resist the 'ideology of empire' emerged. As it will be clear later, in chapters 4, 5 and 6, this was one of the central themes in the republican treatment of international relations well into the eighteenth century.

In the context of this thesis, there are two points in Pocock's and Skinner's works that need to be stressed. The first is *historical.* It emphasises the crucial importance of republican political thought to both modern political theory and to the political practices and institutions of modernity. One of the central goals for both Pocock and Skinner is the attempt to establish the significance of republicanism, alongside with other political ideologies such as absolutism, natural law, constitutionalism, liberalism, and nationalism, in the development of the modern Western political language. A central point of such an endeavour is the stress, which again is clear in both authors, on the importance of the Renaissance, and on the political ideas associated with its intellectual movements, in the transition from medievalism to modernity. This point is strongly expressed by one of the main conclusions of Pocock's work. The American Revolution should be interpreted, claims Pocock, 'less as the first political act of revolutionary enlightenment than as the last great act of the Renaissance'.[67] Of course, here 'America' only serves as an example of a broader

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[64] J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975).
[65] Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978).
[66] Skinner, *The Foundations, Volume One: The Renaissance.*
[67] Cited in David Wootton, 'Introduction: The republican Tradition: From Commonwealth to Common Sense', in David Wootton (ed.), *Republicanism, Liberty, and Commercial Society 1649-1776* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), p.13. See also J.G.A. Pocock, "Between Gog and Magog: The Republican Thesis and the *Ideologia Americana*', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 2 (1987), pp.325-46.

claim: the rediscovery of the significance of republican thought and the removal of the 'myth of liberalism' from the centre of the Atlantic political tradition.[68] Likewise, Skinner argues that we cannot understand the foundations of the modern concept of the state if we do not grasp that they were considerably influenced by the republican ideology.[69] This historical point will be a recurrent theme of my thesis. In particular, one of the ideas that often appears is the significance of Renaissance republicanism for our understanding of the emergence and development of modern international society.

The second point is a *normative point.* Pocock and Skinner are not satisfied with the study of republicanism only as a way to understand the nature of political modernity. Although it is most of the times concealed, it is possible to discern an element of urgency in their work, which points to the normative significance of recovering the republican ideology for contemporary liberal societies. This last point is more evident in Skinner's work, particularly in his contemporary work on the significance of the republican conception of liberty.[70] This tendency, albeit implicitly also appears in the later work of Pocock on eighteenth century republican thought; specifically in his views that the idea of European *respublica* provides the foundation for a just political order, both at the confederal level, and at the international level as a whole.[71] Again following Pocock and Skinner, this thesis also reveals a similar normative concern.

The republican political tradition and international relations: clarifying the meaning of the 'international republican political tradition'

It is now essential to establish that the modern republican political tradition has a concept of the international. One can point to two related reasons to explain why republican political tradition has been almost ignored in the study of international relations. First, the fact that republican thinkers, like for example Montesquieu and

[68] J.G.A. Pocock, '*The Machiavellian Moment* Revisited: A Study in History and Ideology', *Journal of Modern History*, 1 (1981), p.70.
[69] See Quentin Skinner, 'The State', in Terence Ball, James Farr, and Russell L. Hanson (eds.), *Political Innovation and Conceptual Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp.90-131.
[70] See Quentin Skinner, *Liberty Before Liberalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
[71] See in particular, J.G.A. Pocock, *The Politics of Extent and the Problems of Freedom* (Colorado Springs: Colorado College, 1987); 'States, Republics, and Empires: The American Founding in Early Modern Perspective', in Terence Ball and J.G.A. Pocock (eds.), *Conceptual Change and the Constitution* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1988), pp.55-77; and 'Conservative Enlightenment and Democratic Revolutions: The American and French Cases in British Perspective', *Government and Opposition*, 21, 1, (1989), pp.81-105.

Hume, who have something to say about international relations are treated as only relevant to domestic politics. Secondly, many thinkers whose thought is influenced by republican themes, in particular in the treatment of international relations, are seen as belonging to other intellectual traditions. Thus, Justus Lipsius is normally dismissed as an absolutist thinker, Samuel Pufendorf is often included within the natural law tradition, Emmer de Vattel is considered to be a precursor of international statism, and often associated with international legal positivism, David Hume is presented as a 'realist', and Baron de Montesquieu as a 'liberal'. Given that, with the exception of Vattel, these thinkers will be central figures in this thesis, the argument being developed here involves a challenge to established paradigmatic categories. First, the thesis will challenge the view that Hume and Montesquieu are above all thinkers of domestic politics. Some of the conventional assertions within International Theory will also be challenged. Thinkers such as Lipsius, Pufendorf, and again Hume and Montesquieu, contrary to prevalent views, are treated here as republican thinkers.

Thus, it is at this moment necessary to answer a fundamental question: Does the republican political tradition have a conception of the 'international'? Although it is not entirely clear in the work of Pocock and Skinner, who tend to focus on the constitutional organisation of independent political communities, historically, republicanism did not emerge only as a theory of domestic politics.[72] It is in this regard significant to note that in its original meaning the term *respublica* was not associated with the separation between the domestic and the international. *Respublica* was often employed to define the world political order as a whole. Indeed, form the Renaissance to the eighteenth century, the generic term international *respublica* was understood to refer to the 'republic of all nations'.[73] In this way, international *respublica* can be defined as an extended political society of diverse associations and institutions, which may encompass the whole world.[74] For instance, Renaissance republican thinkers used to distinguish between *respublica* and the *stato*. Besides expressing the opposition between a free and a tyrannical political regime, such a distinction also referred to different types of political orders. Contrary to the *stato*, which was seen as a territorial bounded political system, the term *respublica* involved an extended political order.

[72] To be precise, the exclusive focus on the domestic-constitutional implications of the republican themes applies more to Skinner than to Pocock. Indeed, from the 1980s, the latter has turned his attention to how republican thinkers, both European and American, conceptualise the idea of international *respublica*. This aspect of Pocock's work will be discussed in chapters 5 and 6.

[73] See Onuf, *The Republican Legacy*, p.71.

[74] This is similar to the notion of *civitas maxima*. See Onuf's discussion in *The Republican Legacy*, pp.58-84.

Hence, expressions such as *Respublica Christiana*, or even *Respublica Mundana* were often used to characterise the civilised world political system as a whole. In this regard, we find in Italian Renaissance the explicit attempt to extend the republican political order beyond the *civitas*. Likewise, early modern republican thought developed notions appropriate to the study of international relations such as the secular conception of *raison d'état* and the concepts of extended confederations and divided sovereignty. Finally, the idea of international *respublica* was central to the thought of eighteenth century republican figures. The emphasis on the international dimension of republican thought is related with one of the challenges to paradigmatic categories noted above, namely the need to interpret republican thinkers, such as for instance Hume and Montesquieu, normally associated with the analysis of domestic politics, as concerned with international issues.[75]

It is also important to distinguish what I call 'international republicanism' from two other so-called republican approaches to international relations. First, the approach adopted here is different from 'republican realism', which is the result of two related tendencies. On the one hand, the republican order is reduced to domestic politics, and international politics is understood as remaining in the state of war. In other words, an international system of republics is still an *anarchical international system*. On the other hand, republican realism tends to be associated with the thought of Machiavelli.[76] As it was expressed by the Florentine thinker, politics outside the republican domestic orders is characterised by conflicts and conquest. Secondly, international republicanism should also be distinguished from 'pacifist republicanism'. This latter form emerged during the eighteenth century as a critique of the *ancien regime* diplomacy, and gave origin to the doctrine of the republican peace. Its ideas may be, initially, found in the work of Thomas Paine and the French *philosophes*.[77] It is possible to discern the legacy of this form of pacifist republicanism in the current discussion of democratic peace, associated

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[75] Besides the Pocock's work referred to above in note 74, for the emphasis on the international dimension of Hume's and Montesquieu's thought, see also Anthony Pagden, *Lords of All World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France c.1500-.1800* (London: Yale University Press, 1995); and John Robertson, 'Universal Monarchy and the Liberties of Europe: David Hume's Critique of an English Whig Doctrine', in Nicholas Phillipson and Quentin Skinner (eds.), *Political Discourses in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp.349-73.

[76] See Boucher, *Political Theories of International Relations*, pp.90-113, and 125-44; and Michael W. Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace* (London: W.W. Norton, 1997), pp.93-110. The distinction between my version of international republicanism and republican realism will be further developed in chapter 4 of the thesis.

[77] See David Wootton, 'Introduction: The Republican Tradition'; Martin Ceadel, *Thinking about Peace and War* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987); and Felix Gilbert, *To the Farewell Address: Ideas of Early American Foreign Policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), pp.19-75.

with the thought of Kant.[78] After having showed that the republican tradition has a concept of the international, which permits to conceptualise international society, and after having defined and clarified the meaning of international republicanism, let me briefly compare my approach with a recent work that tries to show the relevance of the republican political tradition to the study of international relations.

Within International Relations, the most important work on the republican political tradition is Nicholas Onuf's *The Republican Legacy in International Thought*. In common with Buzan and Little's, and Ruggie's works, Onuf also criticises the undersocialized view of world politics: 'The world of states is social, just as any world of autonomous individuals must be'.[79] Yet, unlike those scholars, Onuf's target is not only realism, but also liberal theories of international law.

> In republican terms, society is neither an artifact of relations among self-regarding agents nor a jointly negotiated device to advance their several interests. Human association comes first. In the absence of association (republic, society), there is no agency and there can be no agents.[80]

In other words, what Onuf is criticising here is the view, which he calls 'the liberal-legal story',[81] that gives the state ontological priority over international society. Such a view appears in all those theories that equate the states system with the state of nature. According to the naturalist logic, 'independent agents (rights-holding individuals, independent states) come first'; subsequently, 'they create society for their own convenience'.[82] As we saw above, my argument entirely agrees with Onuf on this point. Moreover, as Onuf, I also rely on the republican political thought to develop a similar critique to the work of the English school and thereby to reformulate the concept of international society.[83]

Where I distance myself from Onuf is in the way he perceives the significance of the republican tradition for the study of international relations. As Onuf explicitly affirms his purpose is to see how the republican tradition 'has strongly influenced modern international political thought'. To study the legacy of the republican thinking,

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[78] This strand of republicanism also appears as 'republican liberalism'. See Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace*, pp.251-300; and Mark W. Zacher and Richard A. Matthew, 'Liberal International Theory: Common Threads, Divergent Strands', in Charles W. Kegley, Jr. (ed.), *Controversies in International Relations Theory: Realism and the Neoliberal Challenge* (New York: St.. Martin's Press, 1995), pp. 107-50.

[79] *The Republican Legacy*, p.4.

[80] *The Republican Legacy*, p.5.

[81] *The Republican Legacy*, pp.12-3.

[82] *The Republican Legacy*, p.5.

[83] For Onuf's exposition of the republican conception of international society, see chapters 3 and 7 of *The Republican Legacy*.

Onuf builds an historical narrative around two points. First, the formative period of modern international society was strongly affected by early modern republican thought, that is from the Renaissance theories of Bartolus, Machiavelli and Althusius to the eighteenth century republican thought of Vattel and Kant, where the tradition comes to an end.[84] The second point of Onuf's historical view is that 'Nineteenth-century liberalism eclipsed eighteenth-century republicanism'.[85] The contemporary disciplines of International Law and International Relations are profoundly marked by this liberal legacy. Yet, Onuf argues that this is a mistaken view of the emergence and development of international political thought, and to correct such a view it is necessary to understand to what extent the contemporary intellectual discussion of international relations 'bears the legacy of republican ways of thinking'.[86] In this regard, Onuf's primary goal is to improve our understanding about international thought by returning to a crucial historical juncture at which the way of thinking about international relations was first articulated. He believes that the result of this historical exercise is the acquisition of a self-conscious awareness of the way we employ central concepts in the analysis of world politics.

However, by being happy with pointing out the republican legacy in international political theories, Onuf does not, in my view, stress enough the discontinuities between the republican tradition and current international thought. Of course, we can find republican influences in liberal and realist theories. But the question is: did these traditions only eclipse republicanism or radically break with it? My view is that there has been a very strong break, particularly in the way we define the concept of international society, which is the concern of this thesis. Thus, it is my belief that we should not only clarify the terms of the republican legacy in international thought, but also and most importantly try to recover the republican way of thinking about international relations. I agree with Onuf that the republican tradition, to use Skinner's terms, became 'buried in the sands of time'.[87] But more than excavating and showing its legacy, we need to reconsider it and to vindicate its relevance for the present. In short, the main difference between this study and Onuf's concerns the way we use the republican tradition. Whereas Onuf seeks to understand the origins of international thought, by emphasising the importance of the republican tradition; I try to reformulate the concept of international society, by vindicating its enduring validity.

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[84] See *The Republican Legacy*, pp.21-3, and chapter 2.
[85] *The Republican Legacy*, pp.2-5, and 10-6.
[86] *The Republican Legacy*, p.3.
[87] Skinner, *Liberty Before Liberalism*, p.111.

A final point of disagreement concerns the way we see the legacy of republicanism in contemporary international thought. I deeply disagree with Onuf's view that realists are 'strong liberals'. As I will try to show in chapter 1, realism is the heir of the nineteenth century nationalist revolt against internationalist political traditions, amongst them liberalism. Indeed, Onuf's study shows the oddity of his own judgement. Taking for instance the idea of international society, it is hard to find in the realist notion of a state of war any legacy of Wolff's idea of *civitas maxima* or even of Vattel's notion of international society. If anywhere, we find the legacy of the republican conception of international society in the work of the English school. In this respect, it is the English school, particularly Wight's work, as I briefly claimed above and as I will try to show in chapter 2, that bears the legacy of republicanism, despite the fact that the school had become finally too statist.

Plan of the thesis

My reformulation of the concept of international society will develop along the following lines. In chapter 1, I will discuss the emergence of the tradition of *realpolitik* in the nineteenth century, which is associated with Leopold Ranke's political thought, and how Hans Morgenthau presented it to the American audience as the foundation for a theory of international politics. It will be argued that the characterisation of the international system as the state of war, the first element of the ontological divide, is the result of a nationalist approach to politics adopted by the tradition of *realpolitik*.

In chapter 2, I will focus on the reaction of the English School against the realist project of international relations. The central purpose of the English school was to recover internationalist political traditions, which had been strongly attacked by *realpolitik* during the nineteenth century and, within the discipline of International Relations, after World War Two. The result was the category of rationalism. In this chapter, I shall argue that rationalism opened up different ways to develop the concept of international society. In particular, I will claim that it is possible to find what I call a 'republican moment' in the work of the English school, specifically in Wight's early contributions to the British Committee.

In chapter 3, I will try to show how the broad category of rationalism evolved into the notion of society of states. I will try to highlight some problems with this statist conception of international society. In particular, it will be argued that two points of

such a conception are deeply problematic. First, the distinction between international society and international system; secondly, the distinction between international society and world society. As I will argue, the incapacity to escape the ontological divide was the ultimate consequence of the statist turn in the work of the English school, and in this sense the conception of international political society put forward by Wight in 'Western Values' was never entirely developed. In the second part of the thesis, I will attempt, in the light of the republican political tradition, to pursue the suggestions offered by Wight.

Chapter 4 will develop a republican conception of *raison d'état*, as in opposition to the realist conception of national interest. As such, the chapter will try to accomplish two related tasks. First, it will formulate in explicit terms the idea of the international common good that we find implicitly in some writings of the English school. Secondly, it will argue that such a formulation is indispensable to reconceptualise international society in a way that avoids the ontological divide. Chapter 5 will constitute a further step to move beyond the statist conception of international society. By focusing on the work of Samuel Pufendorf, in particular on his analysis of the constitutional nature of the German Empire after the Peace of Westphalia, I will show that the ideas of republican confederation and divided sovereignty were part of both the theory and institutional practices of modern international society. As we shall see, such a reformulation of international institutions, avoids the ontological divide by escaping the opposition unitary sovereignty/ international anarchy. Finally, in chapter 6, the exploration of the idea of international *respublica*, associated in this thesis mainly with the thought of Hume and Montesquieu, will complete my attempt to develop a republican conception of international society. In a significant way, the concept of 'international *respublica*' demonstrates that states have not emerged in a pre-societal and pre-normative state of nature, but rather within a social and normative context. In this way, it seems to me, it is possible to explain what Wight meant when he affirmed that international political society is greater than the society of states.

CHAPTER 1: THE TRADITION OF *REALPOLITIK* AND THE ONTOLOGICAL DIVIDE: FROM RANKE TO REALISM

As it was argued in the introduction, the terms 'anarchy' and 'state of war' reflect one of the conventional images of the international system that we find in the discipline of International Relations. As it was also noted, Kenneth Waltz's *Theory of International Politics*[1] may be considered a good example of such a view. In his structural realist theory, Waltz employs the idea of 'anarchy' to define the international system, and then characterizes international anarchy as 'state of war'.[2] This conception of the states system rejects the existence of an international society, and in this sense accepts the first element that defines the statist approach: an undersocialized and non-normative view of world politics. As it was noted before, a strong reaction against this formulation of international anarchy has recently emerged within International Relations. Notwithstanding some important differences, Waltz's work can be seen in terms of continuing the argument developed by earlier realist authors.[3] For instance, both Waltz and Hans Morgenthau define the international system in terms of the state of war, and what mainly distinguishes the two is the method used in their respective approaches.[4] In this regard, neo-realism is a restatement of the conventional realist conception of the international system.

This chapter addresses two themes which appear in the realist theory: the definition of the international system as state of war, and the construction of the realist version of the historical category of the Westphalian system, which serves to validate the notion of international anarchy. Both themes are placed in the context of the emergence of the tradition of *realpolitik* in nineteenth century Prussia. It will be argued that the definition of the international system in terms of the state of war is the consequence of a nationalist

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[1] Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York, NY: Random House, 1979).
[2] *Theory*, p.102.
[3] For the similarities and the differences between Morgenthau's realism and Waltz's neo-realism, see Joseph M. Grieco, 'Anarchy and the Limits of Cooperation: A Realist Critique of the Newest Liberal Institutionalism', in David A. Baldwin (ed.), *Neorealism and Neoliberalism: The Contemporary Debate* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), pp.116-40; and Robert O. Keohane, 'Realism, Neo-realism and the Study of World Politics', in Robert O. Keohane (ed.), *Neorealism and Its Critics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), pp.1-26.
[4] See Kenneth N. Waltz, 'Realist Thought and Neorealist Theory', in Charles W. Kegley, Jr. (ed.), *Controversies in International Relations Theory: Realism and the Neoliberal Challenge* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), pp.67-82.

international theory. In other words, the realist notion of the Westphalian system results from a view of modern political history, which accents the triumph of the national state and national conflicts in modern politics.

To achieve its aims, the chapter is divided into two parts. The first part discusses the emergence of the tradition of *realpolitik* in the early nineteenth century Germany. Here, the central figure is the Prussian historian Leopold Ranke. With Ranke's work, we see the emergence of a nationalist account of the politics of the modern states system, one which ignores internationalist considerations. What Friedrich Meinecke called 'the idea of a completely independent State authority, not tied by any foreign considerations, and only founded on itself'.[5] In this chapter, the term 'internationalism' is used in a similar way as Martin Wight uses 'rationalism'. As we shall see later, it is important to bear this point in mind. To avoid conceptual confusions, 'nationalist international theory' as it is used here shall be distinguished from other treatments of nationalism, in particular the liberal approach. In terms of international politics, the basic difference between the two approaches concerns the relation between the national state and international society. As we will see below, for *realpolitik*, the national state is seen in opposition to international society. For realists, the triumph of nationalism produces an international system defined in power politics terms. As a consequence, in historical terms, the triumph of the national state implied the failure of the idea of international society; this view is clear, for example, in the work of Morgenthau. For liberals, the emergence of nationalism as a modern political ideology is compatible with the existence of an international society. Indeed, a just and legitimate international society needs to accommodate within its normative structure the claims for national self-determination.[6] This chapter will concentrate on the first type of nationalism, and will claim that it is historically linked to the tradition of *realpolitik* and to the theory of realism.

The second part of the chapter looks at Morgenthau's realism as the '*realpolitik* moment' in the discipline of International Relations. Here, the argument develops in two ways. The first discusses Morgenthau's theoretical project, in the context of his attack on liberal political thought. The central goal of Morgenthau, after his arrival at the United

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[5] See Friedrich Meinecke, *Machiavellism: The Doctrine of Raison d'État and Its Place in Modern History* (Introduction by Werner Stark, translated by Douglas Scott, London: Transaction Publishers, 1998), p.386. Revealingly, Meinecke uses the term 'foreign' instead of 'international'.

[6] For the impact of the liberal conception of national self-determination on international society, see James Mayall, *Nationalism and International Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

States, was to replace liberalism by *realpolitik* as the theory of American foreign policy. To achieve this, the crucial point was to show the utopian nature of liberal political thought. To demonstrate that the modern history of the relations between states could only be understood through the principles of *realpolitik* was a central part of the strategy to expose the idealism of liberals. In this regard, the second section concentrates on the role of history in Morgenthau's theory and on his historical interpretation of the modern states-system. Both the criticism of liberal internationalism and the historical element of Morgenthau's political realism show clearly the Rankean influence in his thought.

Before I start, it is important to make a further preliminary observation. Although the chapter focuses on the work of two thinkers, Ranke and Morgenthau, it does not seek to be a work about their thought *per se*. Rather, given the significance of their contributions to international political theory, I use their works to explain the nature of a political tradition, *realpolitik*, which in my view has played a fundamental role in the theoretical development of International Relations. My treatment of Morgenthau illustrates this point. I am not interested in the development of Morgenthau's thought, but rather in his crucial contribution to what I call the '*realpolitik* moment'. Accordingly, I will ignore important late writings by Morgenthau, which may illuminate in important matters the evolution of his thought. Instead, I will focus on his work between 1946 and 1951, when he published his most important works, *Scientific Man versus Power Politics* in 1946, *Politics Among Nations* in 1948, and *In Defense of the National Interest* in 1951.[7] With the publication of this trilogy, Morgenthau laid the intellectual foundations of the discipline of International Relations in the United States. Here, the expression '*realpolitik* moment' draws on the work of J. G. A. Pocock on the 'Machiavellian moment'.[8] The term 'moment' has a double meaning. First, it refers to a political problem which, given its importance, a particular thinker or a group of thinkers, writing in different historical periods, attempt to address in a similar way. This first meaning appears only implicitly in this chapter. Both Ranke and Morgenthau produced the most important body of their work during a period in which their respective countries, Prussia/Germany and the United States, suffered a radical transformation in their foreign policies, and as such the definition of the nature of the international system became the crucial problem they had to address. The second meaning

[7] M. J. Smith also argues that this is the defining period of Morgenthau's thought, see *Realist Thought from Weber to Kissinger* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana University Press, 1986)), p.134.
[8] See *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), the introduction.

is related with the theoretical answers given to the political problem. We can properly talk of an 'intellectual moment' when those answers give origin to a tradition that is later adopted and developed by subsequent writers. To show the crucial contribution of Ranke and Morgenthau to the development of such an intellectual moment is a central theme of this chapter.

Ranke and the emergence of the tradition of *realpolitik*

This first part of the chapter starts by placing Ranke's work in its historical context, the emergence of German nationalism. In Ranke's political thought, the impact of the nationalist revolt in Germany was manifested in three ways. First, he embraced a nationalist political theory, in which the national state occupies a privileged place both in domestic and in international politics. Secondly, in his analysis of international politics, he stressed power politics with a consequent focus on the importance of great powers. Finally, he revealed a deep anti-internationalist attitude, which resulted from an intellectual reaction against Western, i.e. French and English, political traditions. The chapter then considers the central role of history in the full development of Ranke's political theory. First, it addresses Ranke's historicism, particularly the claim about the objectivity and the impartiality of his political history. Secondly, it discusses Ranke's history of the modern states-system, which starts with the revolt of the 'nascent national states' against the papacy and the Emperor, then continues by treating the German Reformation as a nationalist movement, and finally sees the French Revolution as marking the final triumph of the national state. In the end of this first part, I shall define the political tradition of *realpolitik*.

Ranke's political thought: nationalism, power politics, and the 'primacy of foreign policy'

In his book, *Cosmopolitanism and the National State*, the German historian, Meinecke, has emphasized the influence of external impulses on the development of the idea of nationalism.

Contacts between nations and national states can...determine their individual development in the most profound way. A single historical moment, a single great event in the international arena can so affect a single nation or national state that it follows a course that could not have been predicted before on the basis of its past behaviour.[9]

In the case of German nationalism, the 'single historical moment' that Meinecke refers to is the Napoleonic invasions. As another student of German nationalism has observed, 'it was the defeat of Prussia in the course of the French revolutionary wars that finally ushered German nationalism into the world'.[10] As a result, in the words of another German historian, 'the German fatherland was to be found where every Frenchman is called foe, and every German is called friend'.[11] Throughout Germany, the French armies became the common external enemy that made German nationalism a political force, and the Wars of Restoration turned into the first German national war. Moreover, the dominant figure of Napoleon symbolized the greatness and the historical triumph of the idea of the national state.

French political hegemony and the Napoleonic invasions have produced a tremendous impact on the political thought of Ranke who recognized that Napoleon was 'the most grandiose phenomenon that we have seen passing before us'.[12] At the intellectual level, the fact that a national state was able to dominate large parts of the German lands led to a philosophical focus on the idea of the nation-state. The result, as we shall see, was a political theory which combined an emphasis both on the uniqueness of the German national identity and on the duty of the Prussian state to exclusively follow its national interests in foreign affairs, ignoring any kind of normative obligations to international society.

Ranke formed most of his political views and theoretical concepts while working as editor for a semi-official journal, the *Historisch-Politische Zeitschrift*. During this period, Ranke developed a close political relationship with the Prussian state.[13] The following

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[9] Friedrich Meinecke, *Cosmopolitanism and the National State* (translated by Robert B. Kimber, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970), p.19.
[10] Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), p.358
[11] Quoted in Georg G. Iggers, *The German Conception of History: The National Tradition of Historical Thought from Herder to the Present* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1968), p.41.
[12] Felix Gilbert, *History: Politics or Culture? Reflections on Ranke and Burckhardt* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), p.7.
[13] For Ranke's 'dedication' to the Prussian state and how this deeply influenced his historical work, see A.J.P. Taylor, 'Ranke' in *Europe: Grandeur and Decline* (London: Penguin, 1991, Second Edition), pp.113-20.

statement by one member of the nationalist circle close to the Prussian power is revealing as to what was expected in political and intellectual terms from the editor.

> The editor must be a Prussian patriot in the truest and highest sense, possess the confidence of the department of foreign affairs, and know the spirit and intention of the Prussian administration in all its branches. He must be a historical writer.[14]

The decision to invite Ranke for the editorship of the journal was taken by the Prussian ministry of foreign affairs.[15] The historian had thus the responsibility to defend Prussian policies, both within the German confederation and outside Germany. To do this successfully, Ranke had to deal with a dilemma faced by his government. On the one hand, Prussia was a conservative state which sought to preserve its traditional absolutist political and constitutional structure. Yet, on the other hand, it aimed at unifying Germany and thus was in opposition to the conservative European diplomatic system created in 1815. In this context, Ranke was expected to use his intellectual talents and his knowledge of history to reconcile a nationalist and revolutionary agenda in international politics with a reactionary agenda in domestic politics. To reject both the internationalist elements of the European states-system and the political agenda of the Prussian reformist party, which defended the universalism of certain liberal-constitutional principles, Ranke glorified the idea of the German nation.

Ranke's view of politics was also influenced by the anti-internationalist intellectual tendency that emerged in Germany in the beginning of the nineteenth century. For many contemporary German thinkers, the 'future belonged to the autonomy of the regenerated national state, not to the universalistic principle'.[16] The anti-French feelings, which resulted from the Wars of Liberation, transformed into a general reaction against Western internationalist ideas, many of them with their origin in the Enlightenment. In Germany, the 'Enlightenment faith in universally applicable ethical and political values...was now completely shattered'.[17] In theoretical and intellectual terms, this meant a strong attack not

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[14] Theodore H. Von Laue, *Leopold Ranke: The Formative Years* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950), pp.67-8.
[15] According to Iggers, the journal 'was founded under the initiative of Count von Bernstorff, the then foreign minister'. The central purpose of the journal was to combat 'liberal' ideas in Prussia. See Iggers, *The German Conception of History*, p.70. For this period of Ranke's life, see also Von Laue, *Leopold Ranke*, chapter 3.
[16] Meinecke, *Cosmopolitanism*, p.216.
[17] Iggers, *The German Conception of History*, p.40.

only on what was considered to be French political republicanism but also on English liberalism. Greenfeld called this intellectual nationalist revolt the *ressentiment* against the West.[18] Ranke primarily developed this 'ressentiment' against Western political ideas in the context of Prussian domestic politics. One of the central arguments consistently developed by Ranke was that liberal values and institutions developed in other countries, i.e. France and Britain, did not apply to Germany. As he so clearly put it, Germans 'have to solve a great German task, a task peculiarly our own: to develop a genuine German state'.[19]

The belief that the German nation had a moral right to follow its own cultural logic indicates the fundamental importance given by Ranke to nationalism. In his theoretical writings, Ranke continually stressed the central role played by nationality in political life. As he says in his 'A Dialogue on Politics', nationalism 'must be the guiding principle of all human activity'.[20] In political terms, this nationalist perspective leads to a strong emphasis on the link between the nation and the state. On the one hand, the state has the mission of unifying politically the nation. From the nation's point of view, in order to fulfil its moral value, it 'must achieve genuine independence'[21], which means to be politically organized as a sovereign state. It is only as an independent state that the nation is able to control its own political destiny. We see here the beginning of an influential modern approach to politics: a nationalist conception of politics, with a strong connection between national identity and statehood. The nation ceases to be merely a cultural group, which can coexist with other nations in a common constitutional framework, and transforms into a political group, whose destiny can be fulfilled only through the acquisition of sovereign statehood. As a nineteenth century Prussian nationalist put it, 'a people cannot be a nation without a state'.[22] Such a nationalist perspective had a tremendous impact on the thinking about international politics.

At the external level, the emphasis on national self-determination produced a nationalist conception of foreign policy. As in the case of domestic politics, in foreign affairs, Prussia, and later a unified Germany, should also follow a 'genuine German foreign policy'. Moreover, this nationalist conception of foreign policy was transformed into a

[18] Greenfeld, *Nationalism*, p.313.
[19] Cited in Laue, *Leopold Ranke*, p.74.
[20] Leopold Ranke, 'A Dialogue on Politics', in Von Laue, *Leopold Ranke*, p.175.
[21] Ranke, 'A Dialogue on Politics', p.167.
[22] Quoted in Meinecke, *Cosmopolitanism*, p.11.

general theory of international politics. As Carsten Holbraad observed, Ranke's international theory 'was inseparably bound up with continual struggle between integrated national states'.[23] In this respect, it is instructive to quote Theodore H. Von Laue:

> every nation has a right to follow its own logic of politics as well as any other phase of national life, his [Ranke's] theory therefore was limited not only to germanophilism. The original break with the standards of western liberal thought was carried forward...in a destructive but inevitable chain reaction into Slavophilism, Sinophilism, Indophilism, Turcophilism, etc. Wherever the standards of the most advanced western nations clashed with local traditions, a similar ideological revolt was the logical consequence of local nationalism.[24]

It may be pointed out that the identification between the preservation of the national identity and the independence of the state as such does not imply a view of international politics stressing conflicts and relations of power. As it was noted earlier, the liberal conception of national self-determination also equates the political fulfillment of national identity with the acquisition of sovereign statehood.[25] There is, nevertheless, a crucial difference between the liberal conception of national self-determination and the Rankean idea of the individuality of national cultures. For liberals, the freedom of the nations does not necessarily mean endless competition between national states. In other words, national self-determination is not equated with power politics; rather, it is part of a just international political order. On the contrary, for Ranke, the awareness of their cultural individuality leads national groups to assert their superiority through conflicts and wars. To a large extent, this view is related with the historical circumstances of German national unification. From a Prussian standpoint, in the political context of the nineteenth century, the quest to unify the German nation necessarily involved a conflict with Western states. This seems to confirm not only the belief of contemporary historians of modern politics that the tradition of *realpolitik* grew out of a reaction against Western liberal thought,[26] but also the view that historically there is a strong connection between *realpolitik* and nationalism.[27]

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[23] Carsten Holbraad, *The Concert of Europe: A Study in German and British International Theory 1815-1914* (London: Longman, 1970), p.85, see also pp.86-7.
[24] Laue, *Leopold Ranke*, p.100.
[25] See Mayall, *Nationalism and International Society*, in particular chapters 2, 3, and 4.
[26] See Peter Burke, 'Ranke the Reactionary', in Georg G. Iggers, James M. Powell (eds.), *Leopold Von Ranke and the Shaping of the Historical Discipline* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1990), pp.36-44; Karl H. Metz, 'The Politics of Conflict: Heinrich Von Treitschke and the Idea of *Realpolitik*', *History of Political Thought*, 2 (1982), pp.269-84; and Laue, *Leopold Ranke*, chapter 4.
[27] See, *inter alia*, Metz, 'The Politics of Conflict'; and Laue, *Leopold Ranke*, chapter 5.

Such a historical association has resulted into a theory of 'aggressive nationalism': the political realization of a nation leads inevitably to expansionist policies. As it was noted by a historian of nineteenth century Germany, 'the concept of national self-determination is easily transformed into a belief in national superiority and the right of dominion over alien cultural groups'.[28] This aggressive conception of nationalism is further reinforced by two other factors. At the theoretical level, we need to remember that Ranke, as with other German nationalists, saw the national state in organic terms. For such a view, the defining characteristic of a political organism is that of growth, which has to be achieved through conflict. In his more theoretical writings, Ranke developed the concept of 'the organic power state': a state founded on domestic political coercion and on external military might, whose vitality and individuality were shaped in conflicts with other states.[29] For this theory of state nationalism, the independence of the nation, in a violent international environment, depends on the power of the state. The second factor is related with the particular German historical experience. Contrary to other European cases during the nineteenth century, Germany was struggling not only for national self-determination but also to be recognized as a great power.

The logical conclusion of Ranke's thought is the belief in the primacy of foreign policy. According to Ranke,

> The position of a state in the world depends on the degree of independence it has attained. It is obliged, therefore, to organize all its internal resources for the purpose of self-preservation. This is the supreme law of the state'.[30]

In this statement, the crucial point is the expression 'self-preservation'. It is the perception that the existence of the state is permanently threatened by external enemies that gives origin to the doctrine of 'the primacy of the foreign policy'. For Ranke, the permanent danger of foreign aggression makes the capacity of the state to defend national interests 'the supreme factor in political life'.[31] Yet, and this is a crucial point, the primacy of

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[28] Otto Pflanze, *Bismarck and the Development of Germany, Volume I, The Period of Unification, 1815-1871* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), p.69.

[29] This view is the central theme of his essay, 'The Great Powers'. For a discussion of this idea in nineteenth century Germany and in Ranke's thought, see Pflanze, *The Period of Unification*, pp.28-31.

[30] Ranke, "A Dialogue on Politics", p.167.

[31] For a discussion of the 'primacy of foreign policy' in Ranke's thought, see Herbert Butterfield, *Man on His Past: The Study of the History of Historical Scholarship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969),

foreign policy does not follow a defensive logic. Rather, the assumption is that in the international system aggression is a common political practice, which is moreover justified in moral terms. In the name of national preservation, the unilateral right to war is a legitimate instrument of foreign policy. In other words, for the perspective adopted by Ranke, national survival easily leads to offensive strategies.

As recent discussions within International Relations have emphasized, the distinction between a defensive and an offensive ideology in international politics is of a fundamental importance.[32] When the former ideology prevails, the security dilemma is mitigated and states tend to establish institutional forms of collective security.[33] On the contrary, when the latter ideology is dominant, national security is achieved through expansion.[34] In addition, as it has also been noted, offensive policies and strategies tend to be closely connected with an aggressive nationalist political theory, or what Stephen Van Evera calls 'war-causing nationalisms'.[35] This form of nationalism creates an 'ideology of the offensive', which leads great powers to believe that security is best provided for by territorial expansion.[36] This seems to suggest that a nationalist ideology gives raise to situations where 'the offensive posture is not distinguishable from defensive one'.[37] As Robert Jervis has argued, this is the worst scenario of all.

> There is no way to get security without menacing others, and security through defense is terribly difficult to obtain...because the offense has the advantage over the defense, attacking is the best route to protecting what you have...The situation will be unstable. Arms races are likely. Incentives to strike first will turn crises into wars. Decisive victories and conquests will be common. States will grow and shrink rapidly, and it will be hard for any state to maintain its size and influence without trying to increase them.[38]

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pp.116-22. According to Holbraad, it was Dilthey who coined the expression 'primacy of foreign policy', and first used it about Ranke's doctrine, see *The Concert of Europe*, p.83.

[32] For the 'offense-defense distinction', within realist theory, see Robert Jervis, 'Cooperation under the Security Dilemma', *World Politics*, 30 (1978), pp.167-214; and Stephen Van Evera, 'Offense, Defense, and the Causes of War', in Michael E. Brown, et. al. (eds.), *Theories of War and Peace* (London: The MIT Press, 1998), pp.55-93.

[33] Jervis is quite clear: when the 'offense-defense distinction is possible, the central characteristic of the security dilemma no longer holds, and one of the most troublesome consequences of anarchy is removed'. 'Security Dilemma', p.206.

[34] Jervis, 'Security Dilemma', pp.186-7.

[35] Stephen Van Evera, 'Hypotheses on Nationalism and War', in Brown, et al (eds.), *War and Peace*, pp.257-91.

[36] See Jack Snyder, *Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambitions* (London: Cornell University Press, 1991); and Stephen Van Evera, 'The Cult of the Offensive and the Origins of the First World War', *International Security*, 9 (1984), pp.58-107.

[37] Jervis, 'Security Dilemma', p.211.

[38] Jervis, 'Security Dilemma', p.211.

Jervis' description corresponds to Ranke's view of international politics and to his doctrine of the primacy of foreign policy. For Ranke, to increase the *power* of the state is what really matters in international politics. As Laue has observed, when it comes to foreign relations, 'Ranke's theory looses its vagueness and assumes the hard distinctive features of power politics and war'.[39]

At this point, it is quite important to stress the *revolutionary* nature of Ranke's work. The strong nationalist character of his international theory was the result of a reaction against political traditions with clear internationalist inclinations, most notably the traditions of liberalism, natural law, and republicanism. By identifying these traditions exclusively with the *Western* states and by associating the rise of *nationalism* with the 'reaction against the West', the nationalist theory of politics rejects intellectual traditions, which were genuinely *European*, and indeed international, and not the exclusive preserve of particular national cultures (and to which, it must be added, German political traditions and thinkers have greatly contributed, as we shall see later in the thesis). The exclusive focus on political strategies appropriate to increase national power, and not to maintain international society, was one of the crucial implications of this revolution in the domain of international political theory. The emphasis on the uniqueness of the nations, and on its superior moral value, results in the destruction of the necessary intellectual foundations to build a concept of international society. For instance, according to the Rankean perspective, foreign policies should be exclusively guided by a narrow conception of national interest, which excludes any concern with the international common good. To grasp the revolutionary nature of the tradition of *realpolitik*, it is helpful to consider for a moment the extremely important work on 'the transformation of European politics' by the American historian Paul Schroeder.[40]

Schroeder defines the political system created in Vienna, in 1813-15, as a system based on 'political equilibrium', and not on power politics. According to Schroeder, the struggle for power that characterized international politics in the last quarter of the eighteenth century and in the first decade of nineteenth century 'gave away to an international system of political equilibrium based on benign shared hegemony and the

[39] Von Laue, *Leopold Ranke*, p.99. Although not associating it specifically with Ranke, John Vincent also equates *realpolitik* with power politics. See John Vincent, '*Realpolitik*', in James Mayall (ed.), *The Community of States* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1982), pp.73-84.
[40] Paul W. Schroeder, *The Transformation of European Politics 1763-1848* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

mutual recognition of rights underpinned by law'.[41] Such an international system is defined by 'a general legal and political system in Europe designed to ensure political equilibrium – meaning a balance in rights, security, and independence – between all states...despite the existence of permanent, unavoidable imbalances of power among them'.[42] In this regard, the general diplomatic goal in Europe was to maintain a political equilibrium in the international system.[43] As it is clear from the above, Schroeder explicitly opposes the system of 'political equilibrium' to the realist system of power politics. For instance, in his survey of the 'diplomatic correspondence and political writings from leaders' of the major nineteenth century European powers, Schroeder has discovered 'two divergent political vocabularies'. One, associated with the notion of equilibrium, which uses a 'moral-legal' language and often refers to ideas such as 'the unity of the powers, the Concert of Europe, order and peace, and the independence of Europe'; the other, 'balance of power terminology', 'flows into the language of *realpolitik*', and sees international politics 'governed only by state interests rather than principles or moral rules'.[44] The results of Schroeder's historical investigation lead him to conclude that 'pure balance of power politics destroys political equilibrium rather than sustains it'.[45] Yet, during the nineteenth century, the older doctrine of political equilibrium was gradually replaced by the offensive ideology of power politics, associated with nationalism and *realpolitik*. One can safely say that, as the century advanced, international politics became deeply influenced by the nationalist ideology, by aggressive and expansionist diplomatic strategies, and were transformed into a condition of state of war. Such a state of affairs culminated in the outbreak of the First World War.

Further, from Schroeder's argument it is easy to conclude that his idea of political equilibrium is quite similar to the notion of international society, developed by the English school. Borrowing from Michael Oakeshott, he defines international system in terms of

> constituent rules of a practice or a civic association: the understandings, assumptions, learned skills and responses, rules, norms, procedures...which agents acquire and use in pursuing their individual divergent aims within the framework of a shared practice.[46]

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[41] *The Transformation*, p.580.
[42] Schroeder, *The Transformation*, p.482.
[43] Schroeder, *The Transformation*, p.482.
[44] Paul W. Schroeder, 'The Nineteenth Century System: Balance of Power or Political Equilibrium?', *Review of International Studies*, 15, 1 (1989), p.135.
[45] Schroeder, 'The Nineteenth Century System', p.138.
[46] Schroeder, *The Transformation*, p.x.

Indeed, Schroeder himself identifies his concept with Hedley Bull's conception of international society. As he says, the historical record of European politics after 1815 proves that 'international politics, even if they remain structurally anarchic...can none the less be restrained by consensus and bounded by law'.[47] Schroeder's analysis shows, first, that contrary to what is asserted by some, the realist notion of the state of war is inadequate to understand the nature of international order in the first half of nineteenth century Europe. Secondly, the age of *realpolitik* that came to dominate the politics of the states system shattered the belief in international political, legal, and ethical principles.[48] This demonstrates that the emergence of the tradition of *realpolitik* was indeed quite revolutionary. Interesting enough, a politician who is often identified with political realism, the British Prime Minister, Disraeli, clearly perceived the revolutionary nature of *realpolitik*. Discussing the consequences of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1 in Parliament, he affirmed that

> This war represents the German revolution, a greater political event than the French Revolution of the last century...Not a single principle on the management of our foreign affairs, accepted by all statesmen for guidance up to six months ago, any longer exists. You have a new world, new influences at work.[49]

Before we move to the next section of the chapter, it is necessary to make a qualification. Despite the focus on the rise of German nationalism, it should not be concluded that nationalism was exclusively a German ideology. From the second half of the nineteenth century, all European great powers were strongly influenced by nationalist ideology, and pursued expansionist strategies. For instance, as Van Evera has observed, 'during the decades before the First World War a phenomenon which may be called a 'cult of the offensive' swept through Europe'.[50] It was undoubtedly the case that nationalist

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[47] Schroeder, *The Transformation*, p.803.

[48] For an analysis of international power politics in the second half of the nineteenth century, see Hinsley, *Power and the Pursuit of Peace*, chapter 11. The period between the Crimean War and 1871 witnessed five wars between great powers in Europe. Then the period until 1914, although formally peaceful in Europe, was characterized by arms races, competing alliances, tariff wars and colonial conflicts in Africa and in Asia. It should be noted that Hinsley does not argue that the age of *realpolitik* during the second half of the nineteenth century was revolutionary, but rather a return to the eighteenth century politics of the *ancien regime*.

[49] Cited in Michael Doyle, *Empires* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986), p.244. In the same vein, Henry Kissinger calls Bismarck 'the conservative revolutionary', and argues that if 'Prussia were going to realize its destiny and unify Germany, the Vienna system had to be destroyed'. For Kissinger's analysis of the 'conservative revolutionary' character of Bismarck's policies, see Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (Simon & Schuster, 1994), in particular pp.120-36.

[50] 'Origins of the First World War', p.58. See also Jack Snyder, *The Ideology of the Offensive: Military Decision Making and the Disasters of 1914* (London: Cornell University Press, 1984).

ideology, associated with the tradition of *realpolitik*, had a considerable impact on both the conduct and the understanding of international relations on *all* European great powers. There are, however, two reasons why most of the discussion here concentrates on German nationalism. First, it is the case, historically, that German national unification marked a transition from, in Schroeder's terms, a cooperative system of political equilibrium to a competitive system of balance of power. Secondly, and more important in the context of this thesis, the rise of the tradition of *realpolitik* in the nineteenth century Prussia, exemplified by the work of Ranke, is the historical moment where the nationalist character of what was to become later the American realist theory of International Relations is clearly visible; and this is one of the points that this chapter seeks to emphasize. In addition, this nationalist approach is reinforced by a construction of European political history centered on the historical triumph of the national idea. The work of Ranke also illustrates the utilization of history to validate the tradition of *realpolitik*, as we shall see now in the discussion of his account of modern political history.

Ranke's historicism: the strategy to validate realpolitik as a modern international theory

Briefly, in the study of politics, the concept of historicism has generally been understood in three different ways.[51] The first use refers to the belief that political knowledge comes exclusively from history. Thus, any explanation or understanding of political phenomena is achieved through the study of history.[52] A second use relates to what has been called the 'historicization of life'. In fact, this meaning reveals more a political philosophy than an approach to the study of history. Basically, it transforms the past into a continuation of the present. As a German historian has put it, 'the patterns of life become the categories of history'.[53] Translating into political language, political history is reconstructed in order to

[51] According to Meinecke, the term 'historicism' was coined in 1879 by the German historian Karl Werner in his study on the Italian philosopher Vico. The initial English term was 'historism', which was a translation of the German *historismus*. In a revealing way, the title of Meinecke's work on the emergence of 'historicism' was still translated as 'historism'. See Friedrich Meinecke, *Historism: The Rise of a New Historical Outlook* (Translated by J.E. Anderson, London: Routledge, 1972). Yet, gradually the term 'historicism' replaced the early 'historism'. Accordingly, the former will be used in this paper. For valuable discussions on these questions, see Dwight E. Lee and Robert N. Beck, 'The Meaning of Historicism', *The American Historical Review*, 59 (1953-54); and David Boucher, *Texts in Context: Revisionist Methods for Studying the History of Ideas* (Lancaster: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1985), introduction.

[52] Lee and Beck, 'The Meaning of Historicism, pp.568-70.

[53] Cited in Lee and Beck, 'The Meaning of Historicism', p.571.

answer contemporary concerns. In the third common use, historicism means 'historical relationism', that is the 'stress upon the contextual nature of understanding human beings'.[54] In other words, the study of political actions and political ideas has to consider their historical circumstances. We find all these three meanings of historicism in Ranke's work, but we shall now focus both on the first and the last meanings of historicism, given that it is the way he addresses these questions that permits him to substantiate both the historical and the theoretical claims of the *realpolitik* tradition.

The emphasis on the historical context inevitably raises some crucial questions. First of all one needs to think about the relation between the past and the present. Shall we study history just for the sake of knowing the past? Or is the engagement with history necessarily influenced by current political concerns? Then, we have also to ask to what extent can we really know the past? In other words, is history an objective activity, and is the 'past' 'fixed', in the sense of being independent of any conception of it? Or are we bound to be subjective in our choices regarding what is historically relevant and, as such, the meaning of the 'past' is always constructed? These questions are treated by two different approaches to the study of history, namely historical *realism* and historical *idealism*.[55] The historical realist believes that it is possible to know the past as it really was. This in turn would lead to the assertion that one may do history just for the sake of knowing the past. However, in contrast, the historical idealist recognizes that 'understanding the past is a present activity'.[56] As a result he or she accepts that the historian is also engaged with political questions and, as a consequence, is necessarily selective in his or her choices of study. It is important to see how Ranke situates in this debate.

Ranke once famously wrote, in his 'Criticism of Modern Historians', that he only wished to show 'what really happened' in history.[57] With this declaration Ranke sought to make two points. First, he stressed the importance of history to the study of politics. Referring to this feature of Ranke's historicism, two editors of his work have defined it in the following way: 'At the core of the historicist orientation was the insistence that man can be understood only in terms of his history, (and) that the sciences dealing with man's

[54] Boucher, *Texts in Context*, p.14.
[55] For a brief introduction to these approaches to the study of history, see Boucher, *Texts in Context*, pp.14-19
[56] Boucher, *Texts in Context*, p.14.
[57] Ranke developed this argument in the Preface to his first important historical work, *The Histories of the Latin and Teutonic Nations*, 'Criticism of Modern Historians', see Iggers, *The German Conception of History*, p.68.

cultural creativity are historical sciences'.[58] In terms of political thought, the implication is that the understanding of political institutions is only achieved through the study of their history. In a common formula, 'political theory is the study of political history'.[59]

The second point made by Ranke referred to the possibility of reaching objective historical truth, which puts him clearly in the historical realism camp, as defined above. The Prussian historian always maintained that the study of history has to be accompanied by a 'strict representation of the facts'. In his words, 'without exact research, the general view would deteriorate into fantasy'.[60] However, though this kind of documentary study characterized Ranke's historical work, it should be noted that Ranke's stress on the 'historical facts' is not a narrow empiricist position. Ranke rejected and even condemned the positivist approach. The problem with positivism, says Ranke, is that it 'does not see for what purpose all these things happen, why these men existed and lived; even the inner connection is distorted'.[61] Despite the emphasis on 'facts', Ranke always aimed at something deeper. His ultimate focus was the 'objective order behind the events', the 'inner connection of history'. The task of the historian is to grasp that political order, what in a revealing way Ranke calls 'the core of Existence'.[62] There is something beyond and above the historical facts, which gives them unity and helps to know our present condition. Historical reality, according to the Prussian historian, was not exhausted by historical events. Crucially, the study and understanding of history is influenced by present political concerns. This seems to put Ranke in the idealist camp. Therefore, Ranke has oriented his historical work in two directions: on the one hand, 'the investigation of the effective forces behind events'; and, on the other hand, 'the perception of their general connection'.[63] This latter point connects the historical past to the political present. It is this double method that permits Ranke to achieve what he calls 'historical truth'. At this moment, a crucial

[58] Georg G. Iggers and Konrad Von Moltke, 'Introduction' to Leopold Von Ranke, *The Theory and Practice of History* (edited by Georg G. Iggers and Konrad Von Moltke, New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1973), p.xliii.
[59] See Michael Donelan, *Elements of International Political Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp.76-7.
[60] Ranke, *Theory and Practice*, p.59.
[61] Ranke, *Theory and Practice*, p.48.
[62] Ranke, *Theory and Practice*, p.58.
[63] Ranke, *Theory and Practice*, p.59.

question arises regarding Ranke's apparent historical realism: is Ranke's historical truth the 'only historical truth'?[64]

It seems to me that contrary to what Ranke wants us to believe the search for 'historical totality' is far from being an objective and 'impartial' intellectual activity. Such a task is, first of all, heavily determined by the political views of the historian. Here, the fundamental question is what kind of 'true facts' was Ranke looking for? Obviously, the 'facts' he considered relevant in the conduct of politics. As we saw, his political theory rested on the belief that national states 'constituted the sole viable units of historical investigation'.[65] In this regard, it is not surprising that Ranke's sources were mainly documents of state such as 'memoirs, diaries, letters, (and) reports from embassies'.[66] In particular, the study of the *Relazioni* of the Venetian ambassadors: 'the reports which the ambassadors of the Republic had sent from all the courts of Europe in the course of more than three centuries'.[67] Presented as politically neutral, 'the true historical method' shows in fact a close connection to a nationalist and statist theory of politics. In this regard, the subjective nature of Ranke's historical work is clear. As a student of Ranke's work has put it, his claimed objective historiography was tinged 'with a subjective bias'.[68]

In his historical studies, Ranke was not able to transcend the present and thus starts from his concept of the political developed in 'The Dialogue on Politics', and in 'The Great Powers'. The concepts developed in these theoretical writings guided his historical investigations. Yet, Ranke attempted to make an ingenious mixture between historical realism and historical idealism. Starting from a contemporary standpoint, the development of the national state in Europe, and the German struggle for national unification, he adopted an idealist position. However, by claiming that he wanted to show 'what really happened' in history, he later tried to shift to a realist position. The crucial problem with Ranke's historicist approach lies in this shift. Ranke presented the results of a work, which had clear 'subjective' premises, as 'objective'. As such, he refused to acknowledge the

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[64] In the Preface to the *History of the Reformation in Germany* (Translated by Sarah Austin, edited bby Robbert A.. Johnson, London: George Routledge and Sons, 1905), Ranke concludes the defense of his epistemological position saying 'truth can be but one', p.xxi.

[65] Hayden White, *The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), p.175.

[66] Ranke, *Theory and Practice,* p.137. Ranke spent four years in Italy, between 1827 and 1831, where he researched diplomatic documents in Venice, Florence and Rome. The findings of this research were to become one of the central sources of his subsequent historical work. See Von Laue, *Leopold Ranke*, chapter 2.

[67] Ranke, *Theory and Practice*, p.33.

[68] Ferdinand Schevill, 'Ranke: Rise, Decline, and Persistence of a Reputation', *The Journal of Modern History*, XXIV, 3 (1952), p.221.

extent to which his own political history was informed by his theoretical assumptions. To tell international political history in terms of the emergence and the development of the nation-states system is, according to Ranke, to tell an 'objective history' freed of utopian elements. Moreover, it was a necessary foundation to build a 'realist' theory of politics, as we shall see now.

Ranke's modern political history: the triumph of the national state

In striking accordance with his theoretical views, the 'national idea' is the 'leading idea' of Ranke's modern political history. Ranke's international political history focuses on 'nationalities engaged in the historical movement', and ignores internationalist elements.[69] Modern political history started with the rise of the European nations through their constitution into sovereign states. The emergence of the states system was the result of the collapse of the universal church and the Imperial state. Ranke's second major work, the *History of the Popes,* gives an account of the clash between the Holy See and the 'nascent national states', and the subsequent decline of the papacy. Medieval Europe had been politically dominated by the alliance between the Pope and the Holy Roman Emperor.[70] Yet, during the fifteenth century, the 'movements in the history of the world'[71] turned against the universal institutions, both the religious and the temporal. It was then that the 'national idea' 'emerged as the self-consciously governing principle of the various peoples of Europe'.[72] In Ranke's own words,

> we see one nation after another begin to feel its independence and unity: the public government of each will no longer own any higher authority; the popes no longer find allies in the middle ranks; their inroads upon national independence were repelled, in a determined spirit, by princes and people of all orders.[73]

[69] Ranke, *Theory and Practice,* p.52.
[70] Leopold Ranke, *A History of the Papacy, Political and Ecclesiastical in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Vol. I, London: Blackie and Son, MDCCCL), see pp.26-8.
[71] Ranke, *A History of the Papacy,* p.34.
[72] White, *The Historical Imagination,* p.170.
[73] Ranke, *A History of the Papacy,* pp.35-6.

The 'act of wrenching oneself free from the idea of universal Christendom, was an indispensable step towards the development of a new form of the State, both without and within'.[74] Thus, the defeat of the papacy marks the foundation of the modern states-system.

For Ranke, the political significance of the Reformation lies also in the fact that the Protestant religious movements were deeply informed by the 'national idea'. This is clear in Ranke's account of the impact of the Reformation in the German lands. The theme that runs through his *History of the Reformation in Germany* is the relation between politics and religion during the development of the German nation. Most of the book discusses the period from the beginning of the Lutheran reformist movement to the Religious Peace of Augsburg of 1555. The anti-Papal reformist movement is presented as a national struggle against the universal empire of the papacy. During the sixteenth century, the nation demanded a reform against the 'military-sacerdotal state' that still exercised a great deal of authority over German affairs.

The whole future destiny of the German nation was involved in the question whether it could withstand this danger or not; whether it would succeed in severing itself from the papacy, and what form of constitution - for without political changes the separation was impossible - the nation would then assume.[75]

This was of course the crucial moment for the German nation. Despite the failure of the Protestant Reformation to unify the nation, the German national spirit became self-conscious with the Lutheran movement. Not surprisingly, Ranke called the Reformation 'the most beneficent event in German history'.[76]

As these last remarks suggest, Ranke saw the emergence and consolidation of national states as corresponding to a process which witnessed the blending of religion with nationalism. It is important to stress this historical process for it explains the 'spiritual content' that Ranke attributes to the national idea.[77]

In the pressure of universal strife, religion was adopted by the nations according to the different modifications of its dogmatic forms. The system thus chosen had blended with and been fused into the feeling of nationality, had become, as it were, a possession of the community of the state, or of the

[74] Quoted in Meinecke, *Machiavellism*, p.382.
[75] Ranke, *History of the Reformation*, p.246-48.
[76] Cited in G.P.Gooch, 'Ranke's Interpretation of the German History', in G.P.Gooch, *Studies in German History* (New York, NY: Russell and Russell, 1969), p.213.
[77] Ranke, *Theory and Practice*, p.32.

people...Thence it happened that the states...have formed themselves into great ecclesiastical-political bodies.[78]

Ranke arrives at this conclusion through an interesting and important argument. One of the far-reaching implications of the Reformation was a crucial change on the relation between individuals and religion. Before the Protestant challenge, Christianity was simply a matter of 'simple acceptation'. After, it became a matter of 'conviction', of 'conscious acquiescence'. 'It is of great consequence that a man should have to choose between different creeds; that he can reject, apostatize, pass from the one to the other'. At he individual level, 'it followed that Christian ideas penetrated still more deeply and fully into all life and thought'. At the collective level,

religion came to be embraced by the nations according to one or other of the various modifications that had taken place in its dogmatic structure; religious doctrine had become fused in one mass with feelings of nationality, as if it were a common property, an attribute of the government or of the people. It had been gained by arms, maintained amidst infinite dangers, and became part of their flesh and blood.[79]

Thus, embodying both secular and spiritual elements, modern European states grew as 'earthly-spiritual' entities, with both 'an ecclesiastical and a political individuality'. In other words, for Ranke, Reformation is seen as the first national moment in political modernity.

Ranke's analysis of the impact of the French Revolution in Europe stresses again the conflict between universalism and nationalism. From the end of the medieval period to the end of the Thirty Years' War, as we saw, the emergent national states struggled against the universalism of the both the Pope and the Emperor. In the period between the Peace of Westphalia and the Vienna Congress, the states-system had to withstand attacks of universal models of political organisation, most notably by Philip II, Louis XIV and Napoleon.[80] In political terms, such universal attempts were identified with bids of particular monarchs for international hegemony, which threatened the survival of other national states. Yet, for Ranke, it is crucially important to investigate not only how nationalism opposes universalism but also how nationalism changes, and is changed by,

[78] Von Laue, *Leopold Ranke*, pp.131-2.
[79] Ranke, *A History of the Papacy*, Vol. II, p.154.
[80] See Ranke, 'The Great Powers', in Von Laue, *Leopold Ranke*.

universal ideologies. In modern history, this has happened through a process in which those ideologies turned into forms of nationalism. Each nation is 'modified by universal tendencies, but at the same time resist and react upon them'.[81] This is clear in the period after the French Revolution, when European 'nationalities were rejuvenated, revived, and developed anew'.[82] Although France preceded all other states, this was 'a general movement' developed around the principle of the 'individuality of the state'.[83] The historical process that led to this stage is nicely defined by Felix Gilbert: modern history witnessed 'the gradual renunciation of all commitments to cosmopolitan values until at the end the sovereign national state is recognized as the supreme value and final goal of history'.[84] Thus, according to Ranke's interpretation, the French Revolution reinforced the unity and continuity of modern history in terms of the prevalence of the national idea.[85] As he puts it, as a result of the French Revolution, 'the nations had come into a final stage of self-consciousness'.[86] We have therefore in the Reformation and in the French Revolution the crucial moments in the modern triumph of the national state.

Furthermore, in Ranke's historical work, the development and the final triumph of the national idea are strongly connected with power politics, which again follows from his political theory. In a revealing way, Ranke believes that only the 'more prominent nations' become great powers. As he puts it: 'All states that count in the world and make themselves felt are motivated by special tendencies of their own'.[87] This argument appears in his essay, 'The Great Powers'. In all cases of the rise of the five European great powers, France, England, Austria, Russia, and Prussia, the existence of a strong national identity plays a crucial role. For instance, German history illustrates quite well this point. The rise of Prussia to the status of a great national power is associated with the 'development of the national spirit', which in turn is the result of the international struggle for power.[88] Following his 'history of the Reformation in Germany', Ranke's account of the historical development of Prussia starts with the decline of the Holy Roman Empire after the Thirty Years' War. By reinforcing its Protestant identity, the religious conflicts helped Prussia to

[81] Iggers, Moltke, 'Introduction', p.xl.
[82] Ranke, 'The Great Powers', p.215.
[83] Ranke, 'The Great Powers', p.216.
[84] Gilbert, 'Introduction', Meinecke, *Cosmopolitanism*, p.ix.
[85] Ranke, *The Theory and Practice*, p.163.
[86] White, *The Historical Imagination*, p.171.
[87] Ranke, 'A Dialogue on Politics', p.168.
[88] Ranke, 'The Great Powers', p.204.

rise to the status of great power, more specifically a Protestant German great power. After 1648, Prussia continues its rise by competing with Austria for hegemony within the German Empire. During this period, Frederick the Great gave a decisive impulse to what Luther had started in 1518. At this point, as a political entity, Prussia was strong enough to attract the German nation, but not to be a truly great power, as Britain, France and Russia were. To achieve this position, it needed the moral and political strength of the whole German nation. It was at this critical historical moment that Napoleon's forces invaded Germany offering the 'external impulse' that later made possible the Prussian unification of the German nation, under Bismarck's leadership. Thus, as the Neo-Rankeans were to put it, the history of the German unification can be summarized under the heading 'From Luther to Bismarck'.[89]

The second theme of the essay on 'The Great Powers' is the French attempts, both Louis XIV's and Napoleon's, to consolidate its political hegemony in European politics. This is indeed a narrative quite familiar to students of International Relations. As soon as French preponderance set over Europe, an alliance of all other European great powers formed against France. Ranke sees in this example a case of the functioning of the principle of the balance of power. 'The concept of the European balance of power was developed in order that the union of many other states might resist the pretensions of the "exorbitant" court, as it was called'.[90] As for many other political traditions, for Ranke, the balance of power is an institution that guarantees national independence. Yet, the problem with Ranke's conception of the balance of power is that it is not developed in the context of a conception of international society. Being unable to distinguish between defensive and offensive aims, as we saw before, Ranke ends up by admitting that the maintenance of the balance of power serves as an excuse to expand political power. In this regard, it is illustrative to compare Ranke's notion of the balance of power with Schroeder's concept of political equilibrium. Whereas for Ranke, the notion of balance of power is understood in the context of power politics and struggles for hegemony, in which it is assumed that each state tries to maximize its power; for Schroeder, the balance of power, or political equilibrium, is seen as a fundamental institution to preserve international order.

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[89] Wolfgang J. Mommsen, 'Ranke and the Neo-Rankean School in Imperial Germany: State-oriented Historiography as a Stabilizing Force', in Iggers, Powell (eds.), *Leopold Von Ranke* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1990), p.137.
[90] Ranke, "The Great Powers", p.188.

Therefore, in Ranke's modern European history, we find the attempt to write political history in terms of a perennial struggle between major national powers. As he says, 'independent national states in all their original power had taken over the world stage'.[91] Rightly, Bull has observed that Ranke tells 'the story of European international history...as the history of relations among the great powers'.[92] Such a story starts with the defeat of the papacy and with the effective collapse of the Holy Roman Empire, after the Thirty Years' Wars, and has since then defined modern political history. As for international norms and institutions, they are never treated as compatible with states' political independence. International normative principles are either seen as the consequence of one state's political hegemony, which, in Ranke's words, 'would bring ruin to the others'. Or, alternatively, as a mixture of national identities which 'would destroy the essence of each one'.[93] As such, Ranke ends up with a nationalist view of international politics, where nations are unique and individual entities, that interact with each other only through power politics and wars.

We are now in a position to define the tradition of *realpolitik* as it emerged in Germany in the first half of the nineteenth century.[94] Such a tradition rests on three central ideas. First, as an international political theory, it focuses on power relations between sovereign states, ignoring other type of political processes. In the familiar language of international relations, the states system is defined in terms of anarchy and state of war. Second, at the epistemological level, it is founded on the double belief that all knowledge derives from the study of history, and that it is possible to achieve a true account of political history. Finally, it is based on an historical narrative that emphasizes the absolute triumph of the national idea, and the historical defeat of internationalist political ideologies. It is in this regard that history is used to legitimize a particular political theory. By telling modern political history in nationalist and statist terms, Ranke tried to demonstrate the 'truthness' of *realpolitik* as a theory of international politics. The result

[91] Ranke, 'The Great Powers', p.206.
[92] Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics* (London: Macmillan, 1977), p.206.
[93] Ranke, 'The Great Powers', p.218.
[94] Here, I am using *realpolitik* in a broader way as an intellectual tradition. The term is often used in a narrow way as meaning the formulation of practical and possible policies in a context of power politics. Historically, the former, as a general theory of international politics, only emerged in Germany in the nineteenth century. The latter, as a theory of foreign policy, is much older and its origins can be traced to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, then often referred to as *raison d'état*. However, as this Thesis claims, the two must not be confused. See also the discussion in chapter 4 of this thesis.

was the construction of the historical category that came to be known, within International Relations, as the 'Westphalian system', which is founded on a twofold view of the history of the modern states system. First, it defines modern politics in terms of the historical triumph of the nation-state. The national idea emerged as a political principle in the early modern Europe against the imperialism of the Pope and the Emperor. Then, its ideological power was reinforced with the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars, and subsequently has dominated the modern political world. Secondly, international political history is a history of power politics between national great powers, where national survival is always at stake. In other words, world politics is seen as in a state of war, and incapable of being organized in terms of an international society. Yet, the identification between the triumph of the national state and the international state of war should be seen as a sign of *particular conceptions* of the sovereign state and of the international states system. The second part of the chapter tries to show how Morgenthau established *realpolitik* as the dominant intellectual tradition in the discipline of International Relations.

Morgenthau and the '*realpolitik* moment' in International Relations theory

The purpose of this second part of the chapter is to show the fundamental importance of the Rankean intellectual revolution to the development of Morgenthau's international political theory is As it is often pointed out, after arriving in the United States, Morgenthau sought to 'speak truth to power'.[95] Early realists, and in particular Morgenthau, attempted to educate American politicians to think and to act as leaders of a great power. Stanley Hoffmann has made this point: 'Morgenthau's ambition was to be the teacher of realism in the New World, bringing Old World wisdom to the continent of Utopia'.[96] For Morgenthau, the country's status as a new great power invited the tradition of *realpolitik* to become the doctrinal framework for American foreign policy. The United States, so

[95] See Stanley Hoffmann, 'Hans Morgenthau: The Limits and Influence of "Realism"', in *Janus and Minerva: Essays in the Theory and Practice of International Politics* (London: Westview Press, 1987), pp.70-81; Kenneth W. Thompson, 'Hans Morgenthau: Principles of Political Realism', in *Masters of International Thought* (London: Louisiana State University Press, 1980), pp.80-91; and Robert J. Myers, 'Hans Morgenthau's Realism and American Foreign Policy', *Ethics and International Affairs*, 11 (1997), pp..253-70.

[96] Hoffmann, 'Hans Morgenthau', p.76.

believed Morgenthau, should come to terms with the use of power in world politics.[97] But to be able to 'speak truth to power', Morgenthau would have to develop a 'true' theory of international politics. In other words, he would need to show that the European political tradition that he was bringing to the United States was the most apt in the 'quest for theoretical truth'.

Morgenthau's task rested on a double strategy. First, he denounced dominant theories in American political thought as inadequate to a proper understanding of international politics. Morgenthau did this by attacking American, mainly liberal, political thought for being utopian. In his view, liberalism could not provide a suitable ('realist') theoretical framework to guide American involvement in world politics. Secondly, Morgenthau produced a 'true' theory of international relations. It was at this moment that Rankean historiography started to play its role in the development of the realist theory. Basically, Morgenthau sought to offer an interpretation of modern political history stressing the continuity in terms of the rise and fall of great powers between the classical European states system and the bipolar system of the Cold War. As a new great power, the Unites States had to learn some important lessons about statecraft, and there was no better school available in this regard than the German historical school. By telling Americans the true nature of the modern states system, Morgenthau was able to put forward the political principles that should guide the foreign policy of a great power. This reveals Morgenthau's historicism: a theory of 'politics as it is' has to be founded on 'history as it is'. By showing the 'true' nature of modern political history, Morgenthau could dismiss theories with different historical interpretations of modern politics as utopian.

The attack on the political rationalism of the 'scientific man'.

Morgenthau started his attack on the liberal political tradition by strongly criticizing its 'scientific rationalism'.[98] According to Morgenthau, both liberal political thinkers and statesmen tried to transfer the scientific method to the understanding and practice of

[97] See Robert E. Osgood, 'The Mission of Morgenthau', in Kenneth Thompson and Robert J. Myers (eds.), *Truth and Tragedy* (London: Transaction Books, 1984), p.32.
[98] See Hans J. Morgenthau, *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1946). For an interesting analysis of Morgenthau's book, see Tang Tsou, 'Scientific Man vs. Power Politics Revisited', in Thompson and Myers (eds.), *Truth and Tragedy*.

politics. The belief that science can replace politics is defined by the three following characteristics. First, education leads individuals to act rationally. Secondly, a rational act inevitably produces the common good. Thirdly, reason is universal, both in its capacity to make individuals acting morally and in the universal effects of such rational behaviour.[99] Against this rational tradition, Morgenthau develops a number of criticisms. Two are particularly important. First, Morgenthau says that, in the domain of international politics, liberal rationalism gives origin to legalism, which rests on nothing but 'legal fictions'. Secondly, scientific rationalism reveals a mistaken view of history,[100] which Morgenthau calls 'a fictional account of the past'.[101]

For Morgenthau, a central characteristic of the 'scientific man' is the 'belief in the redeeming power of the rule of law'.

> The idea of a coherent system of legal rules regulating the relationships of men is intimately related, logically as well as historically, to the general philosophy of rationalism. Such a system of legal rules...is only the image...of the rational order which dominates the world[102]

In the case of international politics, the rule of law is seen as an instrument to change political life, in the sense of implementing a liberal political order. Morgenthau finds two key historical moments in the development of liberal 'legalism'. The first occurred with the 'rationalist philosophy' of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which gave rise to 'abstract systems of international law', as instruments to build a 'perfect international society'. The second moment resulted from the 'political experience of domestic liberalism'.

> After rationalist philosophy, in its liberal manifestation, had passed successfully its domestic trial, the general idea of extending those same principles to the international field was transformed into a concrete political problem to be put to the test of actual realization.[103]

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[99] Morgenthau, *Scientific Man*, p.13.
[100] Hans J. Morgenthau, 'Another "Great Debate": The National Interest of the United States', *The American Political Science Review*, XLVI (1952), p.965, and p.976.
[101] 'Another Great Debate', pp.969-70. Morgenthau also criticizes the liberal conception of history for seeing 'in history only a process through which reason realizes itself in time and space', see *Scientific Man*, p.32.
[102] *Scientific Man*, pp.23-4, and p.27.
[103] *Scientific Man*, p.42.

What the rule of law had done in domestic societies was, basically, to transform societies affected by anarchy, insecurity, and disorder into 'well-ordered societies'. If 'the rule of law had accomplished this in the domestic field', 'the rule of law would accomplish it again in the international sphere'.[104] Thus, the experience of political reforms in liberal countries originated the doctrine of the domestic analogy: the 'application of domestic legal experience to international law is really the main stock in trade of modern international thought'.[105] It was such a doctrine that gave rise to the liberal idea of 'peace through law'. As Morgenthau says, the belief that 'wars can be abolished through international law' became 'the great hope of the age'.[106] The first half of the twentieth century witnessed the most important historical manifestations of the 'science of peace'. For instance, the Hague Peace Conference was a significant attempt to establish an international liberal society ruled by law. Later, after the First World War, the scientific approach to international peace gained new momentum with the establishment of the League of Nations.

Morgenthau uses two arguments to attack the liberal tendency 'to think of politics in terms of law'.[107] He first refers to the classical Hobbesian argument, which identifies the creation of a legal system with the existence of a sovereign authority. In a well-known proposition, law is the command of the sovereign. Given the absence of an international sovereign, the application of international law is always precarious. If we compare the domestic and the international spheres, we find a fundamental difference. Whereas the domestic legal system functions within a framework of law enforcement, created and implemented by the state, in the international field, without the existence of a sovereign state, such a framework does not exist, and thus the enforcement of international law depends always on the interests of the states. For Morgenthau, the problem with liberal legalism is that it deeply misunderstands the relationship between law and politics. In particular, 'it overlooks the particular conditions which the rule of law encounters in the international sphere'.[108] In part, it is such an Hobbesian analysis that explains why Morgenthau attributes an utopian character to liberal international thought. Without a

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[104] *Scientific Man*, p.112.
[105] *Scientific Man*, p.113. For a discussion of nineteenth and twentieth centuries theories of international order based on the doctrine of the domestic analogy, see Hidemi Suganami, *The Domestic Analogy and World Order Proposals* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).
[106] *Scientific Man*, pp.111-3.
[107] *Scientific Man*, p.110.
[108] *Scientific Man*, pp.115-7.

common international sovereign authority, world politics remains in the state of nature, and as such it is hopeless to expect the implementation of the rule of law. Yet, Morgenthau does not stop here. His second argument to demonstrate the utopianism of liberal thinking rests on the lessons of history. This is an argument on which Morgenthau heavily relies on Ranke, and where the influence of Ranke's historical thinking is obvious. Morgenthau constructs the history of 'liberal legalism' in a way that is meant to show its 'utopianism'. It is important to note, in this regard, that Morgenthau relates the triumph of liberalism on the international scene with the League of Nations.[109]

By identifying the League with the application of liberal and legal principles to international politics, Morgenthau prepares the way to make the further inevitable step: the historical failure of the League signifies the collapse of liberalism as a valid intellectual foundation for international order. Then, from a historicist perspective, Morgenthau makes the final verdict: liberal theoretical devices 'to reorganize the relations between states...have failed to stand the trial of history'.[110] Above any other consideration, it is this failure 'to stand the trial of history' that makes liberal legalism utopian. Moreover, in an intelligent way, Morgenthau goes further. One could plausibly argue that the failure of the League resulted above all from particular historical circumstances, and many of them not resulting exclusively from the failure of liberal principles and policies. The immediate implication of this reasoning would be to recover some of the principles of the inter-war liberal project to reformulate the notion of a liberal international order.[111] Yet, Morgenthau does not pursue this line of thought. For him, the failure of the League reveals a much deeper problem. It derives ultimately from a conflict between science and history. Given, on the one hand, the abstract scientism of liberals and, on the other hand, the repetition and recurrence of international politics, liberals are bound to fail again: the 'search for the scientific formula, and an obstinate reality again and again makes the solution of today the

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[109] *Scientific Man*, p.41. Morgenthau also associates the United Nations with the 'legalistic spirit', see Hans J. Morgenthau, *American Foreign Policy: A Critical Examination* (London: Methuen & CO., 1952. The book was published in the United States in 1951 under the title *In Defence of the National Interest: A Critical Examination of American Foreign Policy*), pp.101-4.

[110] *Scientific Man*, p.39.

[111] For recent attempts in this direction, see Charles W. Kegley, 'The Neoidealist Moment in International Studies? Realist Myths and the New International Realities', *International Studies Quarterly*, 37, 2 (1993), pp. 131-46; Stanley Kober, 'Idealpolitik', *Foreign Policy*, 79, 1 (1990), pp. 3-24; and David Little, 'The Recovery of Liberalism', *Ethics and International Affairs*, 7, (1993), pp. 171-201. For a general treatment of the inter-war international liberal thinking, see David Long and Peter Wilson (eds.), *Thinkers of the Twenty Years' Crisis: Inter-War Idealism Reassessed* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).

fallacy of tomorrow'.[112] Therefore, it is history, this 'obstinate reality', in Morgenthau's terms, that demonstrates the errors of liberal international theory. This leads Morgenthau to affirm that liberals 'never learn from history'.[113] Before we discuss what Morgenthau has learned from history, it is important to briefly make some points regarding his conception of 'liberal legalism'.

There are, at least, two basic errors with Morgenthau's conception of liberal legalism. First, in historical terms, it is a mistake to reduce the legalist tradition to the doctrine of domestic analogy. It is true that most of modern international legalist doctrines believe in the possibility of improving international political life, but historically such a belief is not associated with any kind of domestic analogy; for the simple fact that some of the most important modern international legalist approaches have emerged long before the beginning of the liberal domestic reforms. The idea of the domestic analogy can be traced back to Hobbes's thought. More precisely, in the absolute opposition made by the English thinker between the anarchical state of nature and political order under a sovereign authority. The implication of this reasoning seems to be that, as in the domestic case, only the constitution of a world sovereign could abolish international anarchy. Yet, during the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth centuries, before Hobbes had produced his political thought, the doctrine of the law of nations dominated the discussions about international politics, and considerably influenced the practice of sovereign rulers. In addition, domestic reforms mostly occurred during periods in which the rule of law prevailed in international relations. This suggests that the realist distinction between domestic politics as the domain of progress and reform and international politics as the realm of repetition is historically not correct. To use Martin Wight's terms, the 'good life' at the domestic level is closely connected with the 'good life' at the international level. Or, if you want, miserable life within the states is often the result of wars among them, as Hobbes so clearly saw.[114]

The second error is associated with what Morgenthau calls the 'science of peace'. The pacifist idea of achieving permanent peace through law mainly emerged during the

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[112] *Scientific Man*, p.101.
[113] *Scientific Man*, p.37.
[114] For instance, one of the central themes of Hobbes's history of the English Civil War was how the general European religious conflict aggravated religious conflicts within England, in particular due to the Pope's influence and intervention. See Thomas Hobbes, *Behemoth or the Long Parliament* (Edited by Ferdinand Tonnies, and Introduction by Stephen Holmes, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990).

nineteenth century. Contrary to what Morgenthau attributes to liberal legalism, that the rule of law is seen as an instrument to end all wars, for older legalist traditions, war was a mechanism to implement the law.[115] Both the 'natural law' and the 'public law' schools of the sixteenth and seventeen centuries recognized the existence of conflicts and wars between states, and their members did not believe in the possibility of creating a condition of 'perpetual peace'. Yet, they certainly believed in the application of the rule of law to international wars. In this sense, they avoided the position of contemporary realists who see war as merely the continuation of politics by other means. The problem with Morgenthau is that he seems to be unable to see the merits of a middle position, which falls between the pacifist ideal and the realist argument. A more serious problem that these historical errors reveal is a tendency to see the history of the modern states system through the lens of the realist-idealist debate.[116]

'History as it is': the foundation of a realist theory

In good historicist manner, Morgenthau considered history to be an essential foundation for the study of international politics.[117] The very first page of the *Politics Among Nations* provides a good example of Morgenthau's historicism. Morgenthau refers to a 'contest' between two different conceptions 'of the nature of man, society, and politics'. But it is also, and more importantly, a contest about how to produce theory. One conception believes that knowledge derives from 'universally valid abstract principles'. The other 'appeals to historic precedent rather than to abstract principles'.[118] What makes this epistemological dimension of the confrontation quite important is its decisive nature.

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[115] For the growth of the nineteenth century liberal-pacifist idea of achieving permanent international peace though the rule of law, see Martin Ceadel, *Thinking about Peace and War* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987); F.H. Hinsley, *Power and the Pursuit of Peace*, chapters 5,6, and 7; Michael Howard, *War and the Liberal Conscience* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981).

[116] For two recent critiques of the tendency to treat international political thought of the inter-war period in terms of the dichotomy realism-idealism, see David Long, 'Conclusion: Inter-War Idealism, Liberal Internationalism, and Contemporary International Theory', in Long, and Wilson (eds.), *Thinkers of the Twenty Years' Crisis*; and Peter Wilson, 'The Myth of the 'First Great Debate'', *Review of International Studies*, Special Issue (1998), pp.1-16.

[117] See Norman A. Graebner, 'Morgenthau as Historian', in Thompson and Myers (eds.), *Truth and Tragedy*, p.66.

[118] Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (6th Edition, Revised by Kenneth W. Thompson, London: McGraw-Hill, 1978), p.3.

Morgenthau never compares in a systematic way the respective merits of the different conceptions of 'man, society and politics'. In this regard, the issue is resolved without a serious discussion, and merely by resorting to the use of history. Before Morgenthau investigates the relative merits of the two positions, he resolves the issue by saying that one is realist for it relies on historical knowledge, and the other is utopian for it ignores history. The 'theoretical concern with human nature as it actually is, and with the historic processes as they actually take place, has earned the theory presented here the name of realism'.[119]

After having emphasized the importance of history, Morgenthau defines international politics as a continuous struggle for power between national states, which must fight for their interests. However, this is terribly vague. Every theory of international relations that pretends to be sound has to consider the questions of power politics and national interests. The crucial point concerns the terms in which these issues are discussed. In particular, whether a theory is able to reconcile states' concerns for power and interests with the respect for international norms, or whether the questions of power politics and national interests are seen through a nationalist approach which completely ignores international considerations. The way Morgenthau tells modern international political history suggests that he embraced the second option.

Morgenthau considers nationalism as a central force of modern politics, particularly after the Napoleonic Wars. Those conflicts, he says, 'began the period of national foreign policies and wars; that is, the identification of the great masses of the citizens of a nation with national power and national policies'.[120] This observation indicates that the French revolution and the Napoleonic Wars marked a crucial transformation in the history of the modern states-system. However, by locating the final triumph of nationalism only in the beginning of the nineteenth century, Morgenthau seems to suggest that political traditions that value international institutions were important in earlier periods. In fact, Morgenthau recognizes the existence of an international society in the eighteenth century Europe. In such a political society, states opposed each other 'within a framework of shared beliefs and common values', which imposed 'effective limitations upon the ends and means of their struggle for power'.[121] Discussing the political principles of this period, Morgenthau even uses the language of the international society tradition. For example, he says that a

[119] *Politics Among Nations*, pp.3-4.
[120] *Politics Among Nations*, pp.115-8.
[121] *Politics Among Nations*, p.242.

'core rules of international law laying down the rights and duties of states in relation to each other developed in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries'.[122] Therefore, on the one hand, Morgenthau emphasizes the emergence of nationalism in the beginning of the nineteenth century; but, on the other hand, he admits that the notion of international society was historically important. In this situation, he faced two alternatives. Either he would privilege the national idea and thus would treat modern political history in terms of the gradual triumph of nationalism over the idea of international society. Or, alternatively, he would study the historical evolution of the modern states system through the notion of international society.[123] As it was already implied, Morgenthau followed the nationalist thesis.[124]

In a revealing passage of the *Politics Among Nations*, Morgenthau says that 'the Treaty of Westphalia brought the religious wars to an end and made the territorial state the cornerstone of the modern state-system'.[125] In another passage, he situates 'the beginning of the modern state system at the turn of the fifteenth century'. Moreover, 'the active elements' of such a political system were the 'European *nations*'.[126] These observations show that Morgenthau subscribes to the view that the gradual triumph of the national idea occurred in the period between the fifteenth and the eighteenth century. Although it took three centuries to complete, the process that eventually led to the victory of nationalism started with the emergence of territorial entities in early modern Europe. Thus, as with Ranke, the significance of the Napoleonic Wars should be understood not as marking the emergence of the national idea but as reinforcing the nationalist nature of modern international politics. More importantly, when Morgenthau adopts the thesis of the triumph of the national idea, he is in fact dismissing the relevance of international principles and institutions in the evolution of modern international society. In its confrontation with nationalism, the idea of international society has suffered a historical defeat and thereby 'became a historic reminiscence...no longer capable of moving men to action'.[127] What Morgenthau is saying here is that internationalism, as a legacy of medieval universalism,

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[122] *Politics Among Nations*, p.254.
[123] The best example of someone who pursued this second option is Bull, in *The Anarchical Society*. Seeing the question in these terms, we realize the extent to which Bull distanced from realism. This point is further developed in chapter 2.
[124] This does not mean that Morgenthau glorifies the nation as for instance Ranke did.
[125] P.254.
[126] *Politics Among Nations*, p.206, my emphasis.
[127] *Politics Among Nations*, p.244.

belongs to past historical epochs. In historical terms, nationalism is equated with modernity, and internationalism with the medieval ages. In this vein, the period between the Peace of Westphalia and the Napoleonic Wars witnessed the unfolding of the two fundamental modern historical processes: the gradual defeat of internationalism, and the gradual but sure triumph of nationalism. The political result was the destruction of the notion of international society, both as a relevant concept and as a guide to states' behaviour.[128] Therefore, directly addressing those with more internationalist inclinations, Morgenthau says that it would be a dangerous illusion to overlook the significant change brought about by the triumph of nationalism and to persist in defending the idea of international society.[129]

The nationalist nature of Morgenthau's realism is also clear in the way he discusses the concept of national interest. In his view, political realism 'erects the national state into the last word in politics and the national interest into an absolute standard for political action'.[130] In his discussion of national interest, Morgenthau ignores, for instance, a crucial idea developed by the early-modern tradition of *raison d'état*. As it will be discussed later in chapter 4, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, there was a conception of reason of the state that distinguished between interests that take into account the general public good and interests only concerned with the power of the ruler. Although Morgenthau refers to the importance of considering the interests of other states,[131] his discussion lacks a notion of the common good, of the general international interest, which is more than the mere sum of the different national interests.[132] This is clear in his contradictory treatment of the 'morality of pluralism'. The 'morality of pluralism' in the international sphere allows a state to secure its vital interests and at the same time to follow principles of political morality which permit it 'to deal with divergent interests...with...methods of genuine compromise and conciliation'.[133] What Morgenthau here has in mind is the moral duty of each country to contribute to the existence of an international society. Yet, this view clashes with Morgenthau's historical account of

[128] See *Politics Among Nations*, pp.240-1.
[129] *Politics Among Nations*, p.244.
[130] 'Another Great Debate', p.972.
[131] See in particular the chapters on 'Diplomacy' in *Politics Among Nations*.
[132] For a comparison between the realist conception of national interest and a conception which takes into account the 'international public interest', see Friedrich Kratochwil, 'On the Notion of "Interest" in International Relations', *International Organization*, 36, 1 (1982), pp.1-30.
[133] "Another Great Debate", p.985.

international politics as a continuous struggle for power. To investigate if and how the 'morality of pluralism' has influenced American foreign policy, Morgenthau should have studied, in his historical narrative, if and how the United States had pursued principles of 'genuine compromise and conciliation'. However, to analyze international politics in terms of these principles of political coexistence, one needs to have a notion of international society, and not to see the states system in terms of the state of war. Accepting the existence of an international society, based on normative principles of coexistence, one must define the national interest as being concerned with the international common good, that is, with the maintenance of the normative structure of international society. By ignoring such considerations in his conception of the national interest, Morgenthau adopts a nationalist perspective, which is a legacy of the *realpolitik* tradition. In the end, national interest is defined as being concerned merely with the increase of state's power.

Morgenthau's discussion of the theory and practice of the balance of power also illustrates Morgenthau's nationalist approach to international politics. Morgenthau starts his discussion on the balance of power with the following sentence: 'The aspiration for power on the part of several nations, each trying either to maintain or overthrow the status quo, leads of necessity to a configuration that is called the balance of power and to policies that aim at preserving it'.[134] What does Morgenthau mean with the expression 'policies that aim at preserving the balance of power'? Does it reflect merely a nationalist perspective, or a concern for the good functioning of international institutions? Morgenthau's answers offer no doubts regarding his theoretical orientation. Be it the 'patterns' of the balance of power ('the pattern of direct opposition', or 'the pattern of competition')[135], or the 'different methods' of the balance of power ('divide and rule', 'compensations', 'armaments', or 'alliances')[136], Morgenthau maintains a systematic national perspective in his analysis. It is clear that his conception of the balance of power stems from a view of international politics, where national states are engaged in a permanent struggle for power. In such an environment, states' main strategies are to consolidate their power and to divide and manipulate the power of their rivals. The balance of power is important only in the sense that it guarantees national security, but not as an institution to achieve international order. Even in Morgenthau's discussion of the 'general nature of alliances', where he

[134] *Politics Among Nations*, p.183.
[135] *Politics Among Nations*, pp.188-92.
[136] *Politics Among Nations*, pp.194-202.

refers to 'a community of interests', he ends up with a nationalist perspective. 'Identical' and 'complementary' interests are applied to those specific cases where *national* interests of different states converge for a brief period, and not to the interests of *international society* as a whole.[137] Richard Little has named this conception of the balance of power, 'the adversarial balance of power'.[138]

If we compare Morgenthau's conception of the balance of power with the rationalist account of the balance of power, or the 'associative balance of power',[139] we notice the difference between the nationalist character of the former and the internationalist concerns of the latter. The associative conception rests on the constitutional and republican idea of mixed government where the parts of a political system live in a 'just equilibrium'.[140] This implies the espousal of the notion of international society. Historically, it is associated with the view of Europe as a *respublica*.[141] For this latter conception of the balance of power, besides the independence of each state, an even distribution of power is fundamental for an overall *international* order. In this regard, the conduct of states must take into account the common international interest to maintain a 'just equilibrium'.[142] Moreover, as Little notices, 'states operating on realist premises' may well subvert the balance of power.[143] So, there is little doubt that we should refer to two different meanings of the balance of power. One, 'the adversarial balance of power', embraced by Morgenthau, emphasizes states' exclusive concerns with their political power, and overlooks the general interest of the international society. The other, 'the associative balance of power', is above all concerned with the political order of international society as a whole.[144]

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[137] *Politics Among Nations*, pp.197-9.
[138] Richard Little, 'Deconstructing the Balance of Power: Two Traditions of Thought', *Review of International Studies*, 15, 1 (1989), pp.88-92.
[139] Little, 'Deconstructing the Balance of Power', pp.92-8.
[140] See Martin Wight, 'The Balance of Power and International Order', in Alan James (ed.), *The Bases of International Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973). Wight identifies the 'constitutional' conception of the balance of power as the 'international counterpart of liberal constitutionalism', p.111.
[141] Little, 'Deconstructing the Balance of Power', pp.94-5.
[142] See Wight, 'The Balance of Power', pp.100-9. It should be noted that this conception is similar to Schroeder's idea of political equilibrium, discussed above.
[143] Richard Little, 'Friedrich Gentz, Rationalism and the Balance of Power', in Ian Clark, and Iver B. Neumann (eds.), *Classical Theories of International Relations* (London: MacMillan, 1996), p.225.
[144] For a comparison of the realist and the rationalist conceptions of the balance of power, see Martin Wight, *International Theory: The Three Traditions* (Edited by Gabriele Wight and Brian Porter, London: Leicester University Press, 1994), chapter 8, 'Theory of Diplomacy: Balance of Power'.

In Morgenthau's history of the modern states-system, we see therefore the close link between the content of the historical narrative and the nature of the international theory that we also find in Ranke. As Morgenthau puts it, his realist theory 'appeals to historic precedent rather than to abstract principles'.[145] Embracing the tradition of *realpolitik* as a sound foundation for a theory of international relations, like the German historian, Morgenthau stresses power politics and conflicts between national states as defining the history of the modern states-system.[146] Moreover, in another parallel with Ranke, Morgenthau also attacked internationalist theories. As we saw above, Ranke's historical paradigm emerged as a reaction against the internationalism of the legal, liberal, and republican political traditions. In the case of Morgenthau, the tradition of *realpolitik* was recovered to oppose American liberal internationalist political culture. The unfortunate result was to condemn not only liberalism but also older political theories, which Wight included within the broad category of rationalism, as 'idealists' or 'utopians'. Despite the effort of the English school, which is the focus of the next chapter, the discipline of International Relations has lived with this legacy since then.

Conclusion

To conclude, let me briefly recall the main points developed in this chapter. The purpose was to show the crucial moments of the intellectual revolution that caused the emergence of realism, which has strongly determined the language used by contemporary international political theory. The first part of the chapter discusses the emergence of the Rankean nationalist international theory. Its origins were placed within the tradition of *realpolitik*, which emerged in Germany during the first half of the nineteenth century. The target of *realpolitik* was internationalism, as it had been developed by older political traditions, namely liberalism, international constitutional and legal approaches, natural law, and republicanism. Such an attack was in turn associated with the rise of nationalism. A

[145] 'Another Great Debate', p.962.

[146] In his 'intellectual autobiography', in a revealing way, Morgenthau treats 'Bismarck's *Realpolitik*' as 'a coherent system of thought...that appeared to support my isolated and impressionistic judgments on contemporary issues of foreign policy'. Such a tradition became, Morgenthau adds, his 'way of thinking about foreign policy'. See, Hans J. Morgenthau, 'Fragment of an Intellectual Autobiography: 1904-1932', in Thompson and Myers (eds.), *Truth and Tragedy*, pp.5-6.

commitment to nationalist policies and the reaction against internationalism led to a view of international politics as power politics between national states, which dismisses the idea of international society. This theory of the state of war was reinforced by the construction of the 'Westphalian system' as a historical category. The theoretical credibility of the notion of state of war rests on such a historical category.

The second part considers Morgenthau's political realism by placing it within the *realpolitik* tradition.[147] We can see the influence of the latter in the former in a number of ways. First of all, as Ranke did in the first half of the last century, Morgenthau also started by attacking the traditions of liberalism and natural law, and legal approaches to the study of international relations. In this regard, *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics* can be read as addressing the same issue, and in a similar way, treated by Ranke in 'A Dialogue on Politics'. Then, we find in Morgenthau the same conception of the states system, defined in terms of state of war, that we found in the *realpolitik* theory. Finally, in order to legitimize his realist theory, Morgenthau adopts the historical category, the 'Westphalian system', that was constructed by Ranke in his studies of modern political history. The way that some recent works continue to use the notions of anarchy, state of war, and 'Westphalian system' demonstrates the impact that the tradition of *realpolitik* has had on international political theory, even among non-realist authors. Hence, I call Morgenthau's contribution the '*realpolitik* moment' in International Relations.

In addition, such a moment has strongly contributed to the acceptance of both the ontological divide between domestic and international politics and the statist approach. In particular, the first element of the statist approach, the identification between international politics and the state of war, is the central point of the *realpolitik* analysis. As a consequence, the fourth element, a conception of reason of state that rests purely on the idea of self-interest, also receives a privileged place in the realist studies. These two points, but specially the first, remind us of the critique raised by Buzan, Little, Ruggie and others against Waltz's view of the states system, which demonstrates the elements of continuity between the two realist approaches, specifically their agreement regarding the characterization of the international system as an undersocialized and non-normative state of war.

[147] For the influence the Rankean nature of contemporary realism, which however does not develop the terms of the connection between Ranke and realism, see John Farrenkopf, 'The Challenge of Spenglerian Pessimism to Ranke and Political Realism', *Review of International Studies*, 17, 3 (1991), pp.267-84.

The intelligent use of history by both Ranke and Morgenthau makes it possible for them, and also for their followers, to argue that the 'Westphalian system' emerged with the creation of the modern sovereign state. Thus, we have realism as the 'modern' international political theory, and the 'Westphalian system' as the description for 'modern' international political history. This historical claim clearly gives political realism an intellectual legitimacy that is not easy to question. Such a legitimacy is further reinforced with the triple identification of 'post-realism', 'post-Westphalian system' and 'beyond the sovereign state' recently made by some non-realist works. One of the aims of this thesis is to show that what has become familiar for us, namely the association between 'modern' international politics, realism, anarchy and state of war, turns out to be quite revolutionary if placed in a longer historical perspective. This point explains why it is crucial to place contemporary theories of international relations within the context of modern intellectual traditions, as it was argued in the introduction of the thesis. The first step that needs to be taken is to show that realism as a theory of international relations is not as old as the 'modern' international system; rather, it was mainly developed during the first half of the nineteenth century, and only became dominant towards the end of that century. Within contemporary International Relations, Wight was one of the first to grasp this point, and refers in the conclusion to the lectures on 'international theory' to 'the erosion of rationalism', which occurred mainly during the nineteenth century.[148] As I noted in the introduction of the chapter, the identification between Ranke's internationalist intellectual targets and Wight's rationalism is a crucial point. It shows the extent to which Wight and his fellow members of the English school developed the rationalist tradition as part of a reaction against the revolution of *realpolitik*. Interesting enough, such a reaction sought to recover those very same theories that had been attacked by figures such as Ranke and Morgenthau. The account of how this occurred is the focus of the next chapter.

[148] Martin Wight, *International Theory: The Three Traditions* (Edited by Gabriele Wight, and Brian Porter, London: Leicester University Press, 1991), p.260.

CHAPTER 2: THE ENGLISH SCHOOL'S REACTION AGAINST *REALPOLITIK*: CREATING THE CONCEPT OF INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY

The last chapter located the origins of the contemporary realist theory of International Relations in the emergence of the tradition of *realpolitik*, associated with the ideology of offensive nationalism, during the nineteenth century. It was argued that the realist conception of international anarchy, defined in terms of state of war, is the result of such an intellectual development. Moreover, as we also saw, the realist theory is sustained by a historiography that defines modern politics in terms of the triumph of the national state. In the case of international political theory, the adoption of the nationalist narrative resulted into the conclusion that the concept of international society is an 'historic reminiscence', to use Hans Morgenthau's words.[1] From that moment, realist and neo-realist scholars have argued that the international system is in a pre-social and pre-normative condition, which is captured by the expression "state of war". The purpose of this chapter is to show how the English school reacted against the realist conception of international anarchy, and how as a result of such a reaction its members developed the notion of international society.

Within International Relations, the pioneer work on the concept of international society rests with a group of scholars, based in British Universities, who came to be known as the English school. During a period characterised by the hegemony of realist theory in the study of international relations, this group of scholars reacted against the nationalist language of the realists and argued that modern world politics is better understood through the concept of international society. Indeed, in my view, this is the main contribution of the English school. When the central figure of the realist school claimed that the idea of international society was a 'historic reminiscence', the English school argued that the fundamental task of any student of international relations is to define the idea of international society. After a brief discussion on the identity of the English school, the chapter shows, in the second part, how the English school, since its origins, reacted against realism. The third part of the chapter will analyse how the central members of the school developed the rationalist tradition, by reinterpreting modern political history and recovering past political thought. In the end the chapter

[1] Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (6th Edition, Revised by Kenneth W. Thompson, London: McGraw-Hill, 1978), p.244.

will argue that rationalism opens different possibilities to conceptualise international society.

Defining the English school

Given that there is no general consensus regarding the identity of the English school, before I develop the argument of this chapter, it is necessary to address such a question, and to indicate the approach adopted by this thesis. The 'first' debate on the English school occurred in the 1980s.[2] The discussion concentrated on two questions: whether there was a *school* in first place, and, if there was a school, how to assess its contribution to the study of international relations. It is to the first question that we shall turn now. With the exception of Sheila Grader, all other participants in the debate agreed that there is an English school of International Relations. Regarding the existence and the identity of the English school, it was the 'Suganami-Wilson thesis' that prevailed. In the writings of these two authors, the English school is implicitly associated with the Department of International Relations of the London School of Economics, and its central members are Charles Manning, Martin Wight, Fred Northedge, Hedley Bull, and Alan James; indeed all of them have worked at some point in that Department.[3] As for the conceptual identity of the school, Peter Wilson says that it 'does to a large extent coalesce around the concept of international society'.[4] The centrality of the concept of international society not only unites the work of the different members of the school, but also gives it a distinctive character. Indeed, excluding the dismissal of 'scientific methodology', the other three criteria that, for Wilson, identify the school, namely the focus on 'order', on 'normative rules', and the 'rejection of utopian schemes' for organising international politics,[5] derive all from the privileged place given to the idea of international society. As Wilson himself says, they are the

[2] The 'first' debate was conducted by Roy E. Jones, 'The English School of International Relations: A Case for Closure', *Review of International Studies*, 7 (1981), pp.1-13; Hidemi Suganami, 'The Structure of Institutionalism: An Anatomy of British Mainstream International Relations', *International Relations*, 7 (1983), pp. 2363-81; Sheila Grader, 'The English School of International Relations: Evidence and Evaluation', *Review of International Studies*, 14, (1988), pp.29-44; and Peter Wilson, 'The English School of International Relations: A Reply to Sheila Grader', *Review of International Studies*, 15 (1989), pp.49-58.

[3] It should be noted that Suganami does not explicitly discuss Wight's writings, but includes the book edited by him and Butterfield, *Diplomatic Investigations*, in the main body of work of the English school. As for Wilson, he also includes R.J. Vincent and James Mayall in the school.

[4] Wilson, 'A Reply to Sheila Grader', p.49.

[5] Wilson, 'A Reply to Sheila Grader', pp.55-6.

result of 'breaking down the idea of international society into more specific components'.[6] Likewise, Hidemi Suganami considers that international society provides the conceptual identity of the school. For him, such a concept heavily determines the way the members of the school treat the institutions of international politics, and moreover leads them to reject solutions based on domestic politics to reform the states system.[7] The Suganami-Wilson thesis has to a considerable extent marked the subsequent debates on the nature of the English school, and it is generally accepted that one of the defining features of the English school is its emphasis on the concept of international society. However, the following question is still worth raising: is the focus on the concept of international society sufficient to identify the English school? The question is still more difficult to answer when such a concept is indeed seen, as in the case of this thesis, as one of the central defining elements of the school.

There is, in my view, a crucial problem with focusing exclusively on the idea of international society. According to such a criterion, a number of other figures, belonging to different intellectual traditions, from international law to political theory, would be included in the English school. For instance, international lawyers of the first half of this century, such as J.L. Brierly and Hersh Lauterpacht, who approached the study of international politics in terms of the concept of international society, would certainly be members of the school. Moreover, their concept of international society is also associated with the notion of political order, reveals a concern with normative questions, and finally reflects a distrust of 'utopian schemes'.[8] Indeed, the importance given to the idea of international society by Manning, Wight, Bull and James is largely the result of the influence of international legal thought in their understanding of international relations. In this regard, it is true to say that all these four thinkers reveal common intellectual influences, but in my view this is not enough to treat them collectively as a *school*. In other words, the focus on the concept of international society is necessary but not sufficient to define the English school. To a certain extent, Grader has a point when she says that Manning, Northedge, Wight and Bull did not see themselves as forming a particular school. Yet, the fact that these four figures never

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[6] 'A Reply to Sheila Grader', p.49.

[7] See 'The Structure of Institutionalism'. For the discussion on the 'domestic analogy' as a source of proposals for international reform, see Hidemi Suganami, *The Domestic Analogy and World Order Proposals* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

[8] The same three criteria are found in Rawls's and Walzer's conceptions of international society, who can hardly be seen as members of the English school. See John Rawls, 'The Law of Peoples' in Stephen Shute and Susan Hurley (eds.), *On Human Rights* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), pp.41-82; and Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations* (2nd edition, New York: Basic Books, 1992).

constituted a school should not lead one to conclude, as Grader does, that the 'evidence' for the English school 'does not exist'.[9] The evidence for the existence of the English school is clear when we establish other criteria to identify a school of thought. As a result of such criteria, the identity of the English school, as we shall see below, is found in the work of the British Committee for the Theory of International Politics.[10]

Beyond the agreement on the centrality of a key concept, we need three further criteria to identify a distinct school within a given academic discipline. First, a sense of collective purpose among a group of scholars, which gives rise to a specific research agenda. The research purpose of the British Committee appears clearly in the Preface of the first work produced by the Committee, *Diplomatic Investigations,* where the group established a threefold theoretical goal. First, to investigate the concept of international society; second, to conduct such investigation in historical terms, both in the field of the history of political thought and in more empirical historical analyses; finally, the Committee stressed the normative dimensions of its enquiry.[11] Subsequently, this sense of collective purpose has been restated by Bull and Adam Watson on different occasions.[12] Excluding perhaps some shared beliefs regarding the function of a department of International Relations, there is no evidence to believe, at least it has not been given by Suganami and Wilson, that scholars such as Wight, Bull, Manning and Northedge were self-consciously engaged in a collective research enterprise. For instance, contrary to the cases of Wight and Bull, analyses of the history of political thought do not play a central role in the work of Manning, Northedge and James. A second criterion to identify a school is an explicit rejection of the approaches developed by other schools. As this chapter will argue at length, the reaction against realism was a central characteristic of the British Committee. Although the work of Manning, Northedge, and James should not be included within the mainstream realist school, it is hard to find in these authors an explicit rejection of realism.[13] The final criterion, closely

[9] 'Evidence and Evaluation', p.41.
[10] It has been noted that the debate of the 1980s was marked by 'the complete absence of the British Committee'. See Timothy Dunne, 'International Society: Theoretical Promises Fulfilled?', *Cooperation and Conflict*, 20 (1995), p.128.
[11] Herbert Butterfield and Martin Wight (eds.), *Diplomatic Investigations* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1966), Preface.
[12] See Hedley Bull, 'Introduction: Martin Wight and the Study of International Relations', where Bull refers to the work of the British Committee as a 'collective enquiry' (p.15), in Martin Wight, *Systems of States* (Edited by Hedley Bull, Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1977). See also Hedley Bull & Adam Watson (eds.), *The Expansion of International Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), the Preface; and Adam Watson, *The Evolution of International Society* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp.2-5.
[13] In this regard, it is interesting to note that R.J. Vincent opposes Wight's approach in *Systems of States* to 'the LSE orthodoxy of system dominance', associated with the work of Northedge. See 'The Factor of Culture in the Global International Order', *The Yearbook of World Affairs*, 34 (1980), p.255. It should be noted that in a later article co-authored by Wilson, he accepts that there are important differences

related to the others, is the willingness to contribute in a distinctive way to the theoretical development of a given discipline. The English school is not only a *school*, but a school of *International Relations*. Again, it is in the work of the British Committee that we find a clear purpose to have an impact on the evolution of International Relations. This last point is particularly important in the sense that for new generations of students that seek to pursue the research agenda of the English school, it is essential to understand how its original members sought to influence the discipline. By including these further three criteria, we are able, I believe, to approach the concept of international society in a new light. It is not enough to say that it is the focus on the idea of international society that separates the English school from realism. Rather, what we need to see is that it was the reaction against realism that made the English school to focus on the concept of international society. As it will be argued, when Wight affirms that the crucial question to ask about world politics regards the nature of international society, it is already a sign of his dissatisfaction with realism, and not a theoretical concern that just appears in Wight's mind.

Thus, to sum up, the English school, as it is conceived in this work, has its origins in the work of the British Committee.[14] It is in the collective project of the group of scholars that formed such a Committee that we clearly find a well-defined research agenda, a reaction against the dominant intellectual tradition within International Relations, realism, and thereby an effort to influence the theoretical development of the discipline. From the 'Suganami-Wilson' thesis, I retain the claim that the concept of international society is the central issue of the school's theoretical investigations.

As it was referred above, one of the foci of the debates on the English school was the assessment of the contribution of the school to the study of international relations. For those who saw the contribution of the school in negative terms – i.e., as a 'case for closure' – the way to express such an assessment was to include the school within the realist paradigm. In developing my argument, I will challenge both the position that includes the English school in the Realist paradigm[15] and its variation that

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between, on the one hand, Wight, Bull, and Vincent, and on the other hand, Manning, Northedge, and James. See Tony Evans and Peter Wilson, 'Regime Theory and the English School of International Relations: A Comparison', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 21 (1992), see pp. 332, 333, and 336. Nevertheless, these authors are all still included together within the English school.

[14] For a work that locates the origins of the English school in the British Committee, see Tim Dunne, *Inventing International Society: A History of the English School* (London: Macmillan, 1998).

[15] See Michael Banks, 'General Theory in International Relations: New Directions', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 8 (1979-80), pp.252-66; Jones, 'A Case for Closure'; Martin Shaw, 'Global Society and Global Responsibility: The Theoretical, Historical and Political Limits of International Society', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 21 (1992), pp.421-34; and Justin Rosenberg, *The*

sees the English school as a form of 'normative realism', distinct from Kenneth Waltz's neorealism, but quite close to Morgenthau's classical realism.[16] The argument presented here also goes further than the views of those who have recently noted the differences between these two schools. In many of these discussions, there is a tendency to see the English school or, alternatively, the work of its key members, as occupying a kind of middle ground, with close affinities in many respects to the realist theory. Normally, such a view is presented in terms of an evolution of thought from an early 'realist' phase to a later 'rationalist' or 'solidarist' period. For instance, discussing the contribution of Bull to the study of international relations, Andrew Hurrell recognises, on the one hand, that Bull is 'close to realism' in the sense that he acknowledged 'the continued importance of power and the politics of power'. Yet, on the other hand, Hurrell argues that Bull's conception of international society might have started 'with realism' but 'it could never end with realism'.[17] In the same vein, Andrew Linklater maintains that the English school, like realism, 'begins with anarchy' but departs from the realist theory 'by seeking to explain how states control the quest for power in the context of anarchy'. For Linklater, the work of the English school has evolved from the realism of the early Wight to the 'rationalism' of the later Wight and Bull, and the 'solidarism' of Vincent.[18] Similarly, in their treatment of 'Bull's intellectual journey', Nicholas J. Wheeler and Timothy Dunne see Bull as moving away from issues of power politics towards a more solidarist position.[19]

More recently, Tim Dunne has emphasised English school's reaction against realism.[20] He rejects the views of those who see the English school 'as a derivative of realism'. For Dunne, these arguments miss 'the contribution of the English school to International Relations'. By telling the story of the evolution of the English school, Dunne tries to show how 'the School developed precisely as a 'move' away from pure

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Empire of Civil Society: A Critique of the Realist Theory of International Relations (London: Verso, 1994).

[16] See Richard Ashley, 'The Poverty of Neorealism', in Robert O. Keohane (ed.), *Neorealism and Its Critics* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1986), pp.255-300; R. B. J. Walker, *Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, in particular pp.32-4. Fred Halliday falls in between these two positions. On the one hand, he acknowledges that the focus on the concept of international society distinguishes the English School from 'the school of Germanic-American realism' (p.97). Yet, on the other hand, he says that the notion of international society is a 'conventional realist category' and thus treats the English School as 'British realism' (p.98). See *Rethinking International Relations* (London: Macmillan, 1994).

[17] Andrew Hurrell, 'Society and Anarchy in the 1990s', in B. A. Roberson (ed.), *International Society and the Development of International Relations Theory* (London: Pinter, 1998), pp.20-1.

[18] Andrew Linklater, 'Rationalism', in Scott Burchill et. all., *Theories of International Relations* (London: Macmillan, 1996), 93-118.

[19] See Nicholas J. Wheeler and Timothy Dunne, 'Hedley Bull's Pluralism of the Intellect and Solidarism of the Will", *International Affairs*, 72 (1996), pp.91-108.

[20] See *Inventing International Society.*

realism'.[21] Moreover, Dunne not only claims that the approach of the English school 'is incompatible with mainstream realist theories',[22] but also that there is a 'radical potentiality' in the work of 'the Grotian or Rationalist tradition'.[23] I entirely agree with Dunne on the need to see the work of the English school as opposing realism. Where my argument distances from Dunne's is in the way we regard the significance of the English school's challenge. For Dunne, the major contribution of the original members of the English school lies in their anticipation of many of the themes that are now being treated by normative and constructivist theories in International Relations.[24] Notwithstanding the merits of this interpretation, it is my belief that the significance of the work of the English school lies in the way its members engaged in exercises of historical reinterpretation. It was by stressing the value of historical research, and indeed by returning to history, that the members of the English school opposed realism and thereby tried to set the discipline on new foundations. This is connected with another distinction between my approach and Dunne's. *Inventing International Society* is mostly concerned with the internal perspective of the school. The contribution of the English school is recovered by reconstructing 'the conversation which took place between the members of the School'.[25] My approach attempts to place the work of the English school not only in the context of the discipline but also within a broader historical perspective. As it was already observed in the introduction of the thesis, I follow the maxim that we can hardly know about International Relations theories if we only study them as 'something' that emerged in 1919. Rather, it is necessary to see them as part of larger intellectual and historical debates. In significant aspects, the English school and realism belong to different modern intellectual traditions. It is my belief, as we shall see, that this broader perspective is the best way to show the distinction between realism and the English school. As we saw in the last chapter, contemporary realist theory of international relations is largely the result of the nineteenth century tradition of *realpolitik*, and the nationalist ideology associated with it. These traditions, as it was noted, emerged as a reaction against older internationalist traditions, such as international legal approaches, liberalism, natural law, and republicanism. In other words, those same traditions that the English school tried to recover.

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[21] *Inventing International Society*, pp.1-3.
[22] *Inventing International Society*, p.5.
[23] *Inventing International Society*, p.xi.
[24] *Inventing International Society*, Conclusion.
[25] *Inventing International Society*, p.2

Attacking the tradition of realpolitik

As in the case of the English school, the inclusion of Wight within the realist tradition has become a common view in International Relations.[26] More than any other work, it is the famous article, 'Why Is There No International Theory?'[27] that gives Wight his realist reputation. In particular, it is often argued that Wight's realist position derives from the opposition between 'domestic politics' and 'international politics', with the corresponding separation between political theory and international theory.[28] By treating domestic and international politics as completely distinct domains, it is argued, Wight accepts that 'relations between states are incapable of being fundamentally modified or reconstructed'.[29] Apparently, starting from this premise, he is bound to end up with the familiar realist assertion that politics at the international level are reduced to essentially the same type of diplomatic and military strategies; being domestic politics the domain that is concerned with issues such as equality, freedom, justice, rights, and so forth. The other implication of such an opposition is Wight's problematic definition of 'political theory', as the discipline that studies the domestic politics of the sovereign state. Given such a definition, political theory is at once excluded from the study of international politics, seen as inter-state relations. In order to build a body of 'international theory', Wight has to look then for traditions that begin with the 'world of the sovereign states',[30] and live on the margins of political philosophy. Not surprisingly, international theory is marked by intellectual poverty. Yet, as it has been pointed out, that 'poverty' is more a result of Wight's definitions than of the nature of international politics.[31] This

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[26] See, for instance, Kenneth W. Thompson, *Masters of International Thought* (London: Louisiana State University Press, 1980), pp.44-66, who treats Wight as a 'Christian realist'. From a more radical position, Justin Rosenberg calls Wight a 'realist historian', *The Empire of Civil Society*, pp.43-6. Although disagreeing on almost everything else, Michael Nicholson and Alan James also see Wight as a realist, see the exchange between the two in *Review of International Studies*, 'The Enigma of Martin Wight', 7 (1981), pp.1-18; 'Michael Nicholson on Martin Wight: A Mind Passing in the Night', 8 (1982), pp.117-23; and 'Martin Wight: Enigma or Error?', 8 (1982), pp.125-8.

[27] Martin Wight, 'Why Is There No International Theory?', in James De Derian (ed.), *International Theory: Critical Investigations* (London: Macmillan, 1995), pp.15-35.

[28] Such an opposition is stressed by most of those who discuss Wight's work. See, *inter alia*, Andrew Linklater, *Men and Citizens in the Theory of International Relations* (Second Edition, London: Macmillan, 1990), Chapters 1 and 2; Robert H. Jackson, 'Martin Wight, International Theory and the Good Life', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 19 (1990), pp.261-72; R. B. J. Walker, *Inside/Outside*, pp.33-4; and Ian Clark, 'Traditions of Thought and Classical Theories of International Relations', in Ian Clark and Iver B. Neumann (eds.), *Classical Theories of International Relations* (London: Macmillan, 1996), p.2.

[29] Linklater, *Men and Citizens*, p.11.

[30] Timothy Dunne, 'Mythology or Methodology? Traditions in International Relations', *Review of International Studies*, 3 (1993), pp.316-7.

[31] See Chris Brown, *International Relations Theory: New Normative Approaches* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992), pp.6-7; and David Boucher, *Political Theories of International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p.5.

reading of the argument developed in 'Why Is There No International Theory?' concludes that the inaugural paper of the British Committee is a 'strikingly realist statement', where 'we catch a glimpse of Martin Wight the arch-realist'.[32] Given that the judgement of Wight as a realist rests heavily on 'Why Is There No International Theory?', it is important to start our discussion with this article.[33]

To consider 'Why Is There No International Theory?' as a realist piece of work may lead to a serious puzzle. Such a reading may be sensible for those who include the English school within the realist tradition. Yet, for those who believe that the school constitutes an alternative to realism and identify the origins of the school in the British Committee, it seems to be quite contradictory to share that reading of Wight's inaugural presentation. How could someone, who is committed to participate in a collective research project with the goal of developing an alternative to realism, present a realist paper in the very first meeting of the group? In a polemical manner, Wight starts indeed by affirming that 'international theory is marked, not only by paucity but also by intellectual and moral poverty'.[34] According to Wight, such a theoretical poverty results from the nature of international politics, in particular from two reasons. The first is the consequence of the historical triumph of the sovereign state, which has imposed an 'intellectual prejudice' on political theorists since the Renaissance.[35] This prejudice results from 'the belief in the sovereign state as the consummation of political experience and activity' during the entire modern era: 'That belief has absorbed almost all the intellectual energy devoted to political study'.[36] The unfortunate consequence of the focus on the sovereign state for international theory is that '[i]t has become natural to think of international politics as the untidy fringe of domestic politics'. In this regard,

[32] The first phrase is by Linklater, 'Rationalism', p.94. The second is found in Robert Jackson, 'Is There a Classical International Theory?', in Steve Smith, Ken Booth & Marysia Zalewski (eds.), *International Theory: Positivism & Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.104. It should be noted that, for Linklater and Jackson, the reading of Wight as a realist corresponds to the 'early' Wight, later his thought evolved towards the rationalist tradition. For a further argument that sees Wight's reputation as a realist thinker as resting on 'Why Is There No International Theory?', see Roger Epp, 'Martin Wight: International Relations as Realm of Persuasion', in F.A. Beer and R. Hariman (eds.), *Post-Realism: The Rhetorical Turn in International Relations* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1996), p.121.

[33] For many observers, Wight's *Power Politics* also serves to illustrate Wight's realism. Yet, a careful reading of the book shows that Wight merely treats the 'realist' argument of 'power politics' as a 'working hypothesis', which is abandoned during the book for the conception of international society and a normative approach to the study of international relations. See Hedley Bull and Carsten Holbraad, 'Introduction' to Martin Wight, *Power Politics* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1978), and in particular Chapters 1, 9, 10, and 24.

[34] Martin Wight, 'Why Is There No International Theory?', p.19.

[35] Wight, 'Why Is There No International Theory?', p.19.

[36] Wight, 'Why Is There No International Theory?', p.20.

Wight tells us, the study of international politics amounts to nothing more than the study of 'problems of foreign policy'.[37]

The second reason which explains the intellectual poverty of international theory is that, contrary to domestic politics, international politics are 'less susceptible of a progressivist interpretation'[38]. As Wight famously put it, '[i]nternational politics is the realm of recurrence and repetition; it is the field in which political action is most regularly necessitous'.[39] Thus, the intellectual poverty of international theory is the result of

> [A] kind of recalcitrance of international politics to being theorised about. The reason is that the theorising has to be done in the language of political theory and law. But this is the language appropriate to man's control of his social life. Political theory and law are maps of experience or systems of action within the realm of normal relationships and calculable results. They are the theory of the good life. International theory is the theory of survival. What for political theory is the extreme case (as revolution, or civil war) is for international theory the regular case.[40]

This shows that Wight's argument seems to accept the opposition between domestic and international politics, which would reveal a realist view of international politics. However, one should be careful before reaching such a conclusion. Given the language used by Wight, it is not easy to grasp at once that he is in fact criticising realism. Indeed, one could safely say that two thirds of the essay concentrate on the difficulties of developing a rationalist tradition. Yet, Wight does not give up and in the end tells his colleagues that, in order to create a satisfactory conception of international society, it is absolutely necessary to escape realism.

To grasp Wight's intentions, it is necessary to understand what he means by 'international theory'. Wight used the expression 'international theory' not only in one but in two senses: a broad and a narrow sense. This can only be grasped if we read 'Why Is There No International Theory?' in the context of both the argument of *International Theory* and the broad research project of the British Committee. This in turn requires taking a slightly different approach, from the conventional one accepted in the discipline, to the analysis of *International Theory*. The prevailing view is that *International Theory* should be seen as presenting 'international theory' in terms of a

[37] See Wight, 'Why Is There No International Theory?', p.20.
[38] 'Why Is There No International Theory?', p.25.
[39] 'Why Is There No International Theory?', p.25.
[40] 'Why Is There No International Theory?', p.32.

conversation between three traditions of thought.[41] Yet, to present Wight's lectures as a debate or a dialogue between three traditions is to ignore a crucial historical distinction that appears in *International Theory*. According to Wight, until the beginning of the twentieth century, rationalism was one of the central intellectual traditions of modern international theory.[42] Its theoretical principles were formulated and developed by major figures such as Grotius, Locke, in the seventeenth century, Hume, Burke, in the eighteenth century, and Toqueville, in the nineteenth century. Yet, such a tradition virtually disappears during the twentieth century.[43] In a very conventional way, Wight sees the history of international thought during the twentieth century in terms of the triumph of realist theory over other intellectual traditions.[44] However, contrary to those who see Wight as a realist, he was far from being satisfied with the dominance of realism, as indeed his treatment of Carr's and Morgenthau's works in the lectures demonstrates.[45] Now, in the sense that Carr and Morgenthau were undoubtedly the two central International Theorists in the 1950s, Wight's critical attitude towards realism reveals a broader dissatisfaction with International Theory as a whole. In particular, he is very critical of Carr's and Morgenthau's presentation of the history of international thought in terms of realism opposed to utopianism or idealism. As he says in the conclusion of his lectures, one of his 'conscious aims' was 'to show that the two-schools analysis of international theory is not adequate'.[46]

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[41] See, *inter alia*, Bull, 'Martin Wight', p.xi, and p.xvii; Clark, 'Traditions of Thought', p.6; Dunne, 'Mythology or Methodology?', p.318; Epp, 'Martin Wight', pp.132-5; and Jackson, 'Is there a Classical International Theory?', p.207.

[42] As he put it, rationalism is 'the great central stream of European thought'. Cited in Bull, 'Martin Wight', p.xiv.

[43] This is clear in Martin Wight, 'An Anatomy of International Thought', *Review of International Studies*, 13 (1987), pp.221-27. Realism includes modern International Relations figures such as Carr and Morgenthau; Idealism, or Revolutionism, includes President Wilson; Rationalism starts with Suarez and Grotius and stops with Locke. In the lectures, Wight refers only to two examples of Rationalism in twentieth century international theory: George Kennan (pp.113, 120, 133, and 265); and pre-1939 Rationalist thinkers associated with the League of Nations, such as Alfred Zimmern, Norman Angell and Lassa Oppenheim, among others, p.129. Yet, given the 'confluence of traditions' in the same thinker or school, Wight is not consistent and elsewhere treats Kennan as a realist, the school of the League of Nations and Zimmern as idealists, p.17, and Oppenheim as a realist, pp.234-5.

[44] In terms of statecraft, the picture is different. Wight saw the early years of the Cold War as a conflict between two versions of Revolutionism: the American Kantian one against the Soviet Marxist one. Yet, this should not concern us here.

[45] Carr is consistently treated, and often attacked, as a major realist figure, throughout *International Theory*. For Wight's view on Carr's work, see also Peter Wilson, 'The Myth of the First Great Debate', *Review of International Studies*, 24 (1998), p.7. As for Morgenthau, although he is mostly seen as a realist, some confusion might arise given that in p.160 he appears under the label of a 'Grotian realist'. However, in the end of the book, Wight leaves no room for any doubt, and says that 'Morgenthau is fundamentally a Realist', p.267.

[46] Wight, *International Theory*, p.267.

Wight's dissatisfaction is clear from the very beginning of the lectures, when he says that the 'central question of international theory is, what is international society?'[47] As Wight well knew this was not, and could never be, the central question either for realists or for revolutionists. Whereas the former deny the existence of international society, the latter see the international society of sovereign states as a 'fiction', which needs to be transcended.[48] Only thinkers who belong to the rationalist tradition start their analyses of international politics from that question. Thus, given its initial question, *International Theory* should be read as the beginning of Wight's recovery of past political thought in order to construct the category of rationalism. In fact, when Wight started his lectures, in the middle 1950s, there was no distinct rationalist voice in the discipline of International Relations. As such, the conversation between the three traditions, or at least a conversation with a rationalist participation, had stopped in the beginning of the twentieth century. To rescue the rationalist view was one of Wight's central purposes in *International Theory*. Such a task required, first of all, a return to classical political thought to recover, or to develop, intellectual traditions that could serve as an alternative to both realism and idealism. As we know, this was achieved through the construction of a the category of rationalism, which rested entirely on past political thought: mainly on the Grotian theory of international law, on Locke's classical political liberalism, and on Burke's constitutional Whigism.

In the light of what has been just argued, it is rather strange that, despite the general account of Wight as a rationalist, his reaction against realism in *International Theory* has not been sufficiently recognised. The problem stems largely from the 'conversation thesis' generally adopted to explain the content of the lectures. Here, Jackson expresses the common view when he says that for Wight, 'the study of international theory involves exploring all three traditions'.[49] Seeing the 'tripartite scheme' as the 'Wightian legacy'[50] naturally overlooks Wight's reaction against the dominance of twentieth century international theory by the realist school. For instance, although Jackson notes that Wight saw realism as dominating International Relations theory since the end of the Second World war,[51] he ignores Wight's reaction against the realist theory in *International Theory*. Among those who discuss Wight's legacy, Bull and Dunne are the only ones who clearly say that in his lectures he showed a

[47] *International Theory*, p.30.
[48] Wight, 'An Anatomy of International Thought', pp.222-4.
[49] 'Is There a Classical International Theory?', p.213.
[50] Clark, 'Traditions of Thought', p.16.
[51] 'Is There a Classical International Theory?', p.211.

'dissatisfaction' with the work of modern realists such as Carr and Morgenthau.[52] Yet, Bull does not fully explore this line of thought. As for Dunne, he argues that in the lectures Wight goes 'beyond power politics', but hesitates between treating Wight's Rationalism as a *via media* between the traditions of realism and idealism or as 'a meaningful category in itself'.[53] Here, part of the problem derives from the fact that Wight himself is not entirely consistent in his views. On some occasions, he refers to rationalism in terms of a *via media*.[54] However, this view is contradicted by Wight's assertion that the conceptualisation of international society is the central issue of international theory. The implication of this view is that rather than seeing rationalism as a *via media*, it is realism and revolutionism that are defined in comparison to rationalism. This is particularly clear in the case of revolutionism: the only reason for including Kant, Hitler and Marx in the same category is the answer they give to Wight's initial question. This shows that rationalism is indeed a 'meaningful category in itself': it is the only tradition that sees international society as the central concept of international relations.[55] At this moment, we need to consider the research project of the British Committee.

The argument of Wight's inaugural paper to the British Committee should be seen as reflecting the same concerns that appear in his lectures. When Wight presented 'Why Is There No International Theory?', he was above all concerned with presenting an alternative to the realist theory. The difference is that whereas in the lectures Wight uses 'international theory' in a broad way, including almost everything written or said about international politics by theorists, politicians, diplomats, lawyers, and even novel writers, in 'Why Is There No International Theory?', he is concerned with the narrow notion of 'international theory', meaning rationalism. In *International Theory*, given the vast focus of the lectures, Wight's purpose in recovering the rationalist tradition is not at all evident; in fact, it only becomes explicit in the conclusion. On the contrary, that purpose appears more clearly in 'Why Is There No International Theory?'. We shall now see how, on the way from the London School of Economics to Cambridge,[56] the

[52] Bull, 'Martin Wight', p.x.; and Dunne, *Inventing International Society*.
[53] *Inventing International Society*, pp.54-63.
[54] Martin Wight, 'Western Values in International Relations', in Herbert Butterfield and Martin Wight (eds.), *Diplomatic Investigations* (London: Allen and Uniwin, 1966), p.91.
[55] The fact that Wight makes this question his starting point shows at once his rationalism. For instance, for Morgenthau the question reveals a great deal of utopianism; the initial question should be rather how can a state increase its political power?
[56] The meetings of the British Committee, during its initial phase, were held in at Peterhouse, Cambridge. See Dunne, *Inventing International Society*, pp.90-4.

hidden agenda of the *International Theory* became the explicit goal of the British Committee.

It is helpful, at this point, to use some of the findings of Dunne's research on the 'history of the English School'. From the correspondence between Butterfield, Thompson, Wight and Watson before the establishment of the British Committee, we can draw some important points. First, Wight was considered to be an essential element for the whole project and the 'theory man'. Second, Wight had firm beliefs about the way the Committee should evolve. These included the development of 'some corporate purpose' and the establishment of a clear 'line of enquiry'. Above all, it was imperative to avoid the development '*into a collection of distinguished amateurs*, rather than a body of people having the *same language* and frame of reference'.[57] In this respect, it is illustrative to see Wight's response when faced with the perspective of E. H. Carr joining the Committee: 'I hesitate about E. H. Carr...*he is himself so much a Great power in this region* that...he might deflect our discussions into channels opened up by his own work'.[58] This seems to suggest that Wight himself wanted to direct the theoretical orientation of the Committee and that part of that orientation would be to escape Carr's realism. Now it is to be expected that someone, who had strong views about the role and the purpose of the British Committee, uses the initial presentation to set the future research agenda. On the other hand, by giving him the privilege to be the first speaker and by seeing him as the 'theory man', the other members also expected from Wight some guiding lines regarding the theoretical activity of the Committee.[59] It is in this sense that it is crucial to understand the argument of 'Why Is There No International Theory?' in the context of the establishment of the British Committee.

In his reaction against realism, Wight focused on two points. First, instead of studying international society as a whole, realists, and here Wight refers explicitly to Morgenthau, have merely focused on states' foreign policies and on the concept of national interest.[60] Secondly, the impact of political realism has led to the abandonment of classical approaches to international law and to the consequent development of a positivist conception of international law, to which the creation and the application of legal rules are entirely dependent on the will of states.[61] Thus, the rejection of realism

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[57] Wight cited in Dunne, *Inventing International Society*, pp.92-3. Emphasis in the original.
[58] Wight cited in Dunne, *Inventing International Society*, p.92. Emphasis in the original.
[59] According to Dunne, Wight 'provided the intellectual leadership in the first phase of the Committee's proceedings', *Inventing International Society*, p.182.
[60] 'Why Is There No International Theory?', p.20.
[61] Wight refers to 'positivist jurisprudence' as coming 'as near to codifying *Realpolitik* as any work of international law can do', 'Why Is There No International Theory?', p.29. See also *International Theory*, pp.234-5.

involved a shift both from the analysis of foreign policy to the treatment of the nature of international society, and from legal positivism to older legal and political traditions. Therefore, when Wight uses expressions such as the poverty of international theory and the prejudice of the sovereign state, he is in fact criticising the realist theory and not referring to an intellectual and political condition that cannot be transcended. Indeed, reacting against realism involved precisely to abandon the limits imposed by conventional conceptions of the sovereign state, and to focus on international society as a whole. In this regard, it is not surprising to see one of the founding members of the British Committee, Watson, to write more than three decades later that 'Wight rejected and helped the Committee to free itself from what he called the intellectual bias imposed by the sovereign state'.[62]

The argument developed here suggests, therefore, that Wight's inaugural presentation before the British Committee is fundamental to understand the English School's attempt to escape realism. Contrary to the views of Linklater, Jackson and others, I believe that 'Why Is There No International Theory?' should be seen not as an example of Wight's early realist position, but as the beginning of the challenge to realism. Wight is repeating to a group of colleagues, who wanted to develop a specific approach to the study of international relations, the same criticisms made to the discipline, and its division between realism and idealism, in his lectures. When Wight asks 'why there is no international theory?', what he really means is why there is no *rationalist* tradition in contemporary International Relations? In other words, Wight is now using the second meaning of 'international theory', as identical to rationalism. From this initial moment of reacting against realism, to study the nature of international society became the business of the English school. Such a project required first of all the recovery of the thought of past political thinkers; in other words, it was necessary to create a *body* of rationalist 'international theory'[63]. In this regard, the way I read Wight's essay is that he was asking the same question that Linklater asked almost twenty years later, 'on what basis might we construct a political theory of international relations?'.[64] As Linklater, Wight was also engaged in 'defending' and 'reconstructing the assumptions associated with much international theory in the past'.[65]

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[62] Adam Watson, 'Forward', in Der Derian (ed.), *International Theory*, p.xv.

[63] Revealingly, the title of an early draft of 'Why Is There No International Theory?' was 'Why Is There No *Body* of International Theory?'. See Bull, 'Martin Wight', p.xxi. Dunne also notes that '[t]he intention behind Wight's paper was to shape the Committee's theoretical investigations in the direction of discovering patterns of theory and practice in international relations'. *Inventing International Society*, p.95.

[64] Linklater, *Men and Citizens*, p.8. What distinguishes Linklater from Wight is that whereas for the second the fundamental question for a political theory of international relations was 'what is the nature of

Building the rationalist tradition

Building rationalism by returning to history

It is important to note a remark by Butterfield in one of the meetings of the British Committee. During the presentation of his own paper on 'Notes for a Discussion on the Theory of International Politics', he referred to a comment that he had made during the discussion of Wight's inaugural presentation, in which Butterfield himself said that 'political theory is the enemy'. It is worth to consider how Butterfield elaborated, four years later, on that comment.

> Political Theory takes hold of man's duties to his fellows or to mankind and comprehends them in his duty to Society or the State. It may not explicitly assert that there is one Society or State, but it often argues as though only one existed. And the result is that thought tends to stop there. Even if something is added concerning the relations between states or between the citizens of various states, it seems to come as an unconvincing appendix, because thought has reached its apex in the highly-refined concept of the State[66]

This observation gains relevance if we remember that it was part of a presentation offered by Butterfield as Chairman of the Committee, with the purpose of summing up the general conclusions of the group after the first five years of activity. Moreover, the argument seems to have been inspired by Wight's initial remarks before the Committee. This suggests that the members of the Committee, or at least Wight and Butterfield, believed that in order to build the rationalist tradition of international theory, it was necessary to challenge the way twentieth century political theory had appropriated classical political thought.

Such a challenge could be done in two different but complementary ways. Either by reinterpreting classical political thought in order to emphasise its relevance to the study of international relations. Or to recover those past traditions that focused on the international states-system as a whole, and not as resting on a separation between domestic and international politics. Implicitly, we see here the beginning of a strong

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international society', for the first the history of modern political theory 'has consisted to a significant degree of the erosion of the classical foundations of thinking about the structure of international society', p.8.

[65] Linklater, *Men and Citizens*, p.10.

[66] Herbert Butterfield, 'Notes for a Discussion on the Theory of International Politics', British Committee paper (January 1964), p.2.

criticism against the *discipline* of political theory, and not, it has to be stressed, to political theory as such. Again, in the words of Butterfield,

> I would still ask...if...one can have a theory of international politics, capable of driving the mind to any great height, without wrecking...the framework of traditional Political Theory. In other words, it would not be sufficient to make merely a few banal transpositions, with the idea of adopting such theory to a world conceived as international.[67]

'Wrecking the framework of traditional political theory' meant for the Committee returning to classical political and historical thought and to demonstrate that some of its main traditions were engaged in studying international society as a whole and not merely the state. The attack on the discipline of political theory was not further developed because it was done in the context of a reaction against the dominant theory of International Relations, realism. Yet, 'wrecking the framework of realism' was just the complementary task to 'wrecking the framework of political theory', for the sins committed by the two traditions are indeed complementary. While political theorists tend to concentrate on domestic politics, realists focus on relations between states. So to claim that international theory should go beyond the treatment of inter-state relations implies that political theory could not be reduced to the study of domestic politics. These views are significant in the sense that they reveal that for the members of the English school the recovery of past political thought was a vital endeavour to challenge realism.

The development of the concept of international society, as in opposition to the realist idea of state of war, involved first a reinterpretation of Hobbes's view on the nature of international anarchy. For Morgenthau, as we saw in the previous chapter, international anarchy corresponded to the Hobbesian state of war. In another influential realist work, published in the end of the 1950s, Kenneth Waltz also defended the analogy between the international system and the Hobbesian state of war.[68] Since the 1950s, the belief that Hobbes's notion of the state of war characterises the international system has dominated American realist thinking.[69] More than any other member of the

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[67] 'Notes for a Discussion', p.3.

[68] See Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, the State and War: A Theoretical Analysis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), pp.166-7.

[69] Here, the most important example is of course Kenneth Waltz's *Theory of International Politics* (New York: Random House, 1979), pp.102-3. For a recent realist reading of Hobbes's thought, see Michael W. Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1977), chapter 3. For an important exception to this dominant view, see Stanley Hoffmann, 'Rousseau on War and Peace', initially published in 1965, where he affirms that 'We can see in Hobbes the father of utilitarian theories of international law'. See *Janus and Minerva: Essays in the Theory and Practice of International Politics*

British Committee, it was Bull who developed the critique of the way realist authors had appropriated Hobbes's thought. Indeed, one of Bull's central arguments is that the state of nature between sovereign states should not be compared to the state of war between individuals.[70] This leads Bull to argue that there are two conceptions of international anarchy, and not one, and that they should be clearly distinguished. In a first sense, anarchy refers to the absence of an international sovereign government; this can be called 'juridical anarchy'.[71] In the sense number two, anarchy means that 'states do not form together any kind of society' and thereby international politics is defined in terms of state of war; this is 'political anarchy'.[72] Now Bull says that there are two possible approaches to the problem of anarchy. Either, it is assumed that the absence of government ('juridical anarchy') entails state of war ('political anarchy'), or this assumption is rejected and then it is possible to argue that a political system with common rules and institutions does not necessarily demand the existence of a sovereign government.

Bull admits that Hobbes himself describes international anarchy in terms of a state of nature.[73] However, such a description of international politics has a clear purpose. By recurring to the international example, Hobbes is able to contrast a society with government, which lives in a condition of civil peace, to a society without a government, existing in a state of nature. Yet, this is not the same as saying that the two anarchical conditions, the one prior to the establishment of a sovereign authority and the international one, are identical. Bull arrives at this conclusion by comparing the Hobbesian conception of the state of nature among individuals with international politics. The three central characteristics of the Hobbesian state of nature, the lack of economic activities beyond the ones that allow merely for human survival, the lack of legal rules of coexistence and notions of right and wrong, and the permanent state of war, do not apply to relations between sovereign states. Despite international anarchy, states engage in rather advanced economic activities, not only internally, but also externally. Even if it is minimal, there is clearly a body of international law which regulates interstate relations.[74] Finally, the case of the state of war provokes an

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(London: Westview Press, 1987), p.29. For a development of this view, by a former student of Hoffmann, see Donald W. Hanson, 'Thomas Hobbes's "Highway to Peace"', *International Organization*, 38 (1984), pp.329-54.

[70] Wight has also noted this difference, see 'Why Is There No International Theory?', p.30.

[71] Hedley Bull, 'Society and Anarchy in International Relations', in James Der Derian (ed.), *International Theory: Critical Investigations* (London: Macmillan, 1995), p.75.

[72] 'Society and Anarchy', p.75. For a discussion of this distinction in Bull's thought, see Suganami, 'The Structure of Institutionalism', pp.2363-81.

[73] Cited by Bull, 'Society and Anarchy', p.81.

[74] Bull, 'Society and Anarchy', pp.81-3.

extensive discussion from Bull. He recognises that the fact of war 'appears to provide the chief evidence for the view that states do not form a society'.[75] Yet, despite this apparent concession to the domestic analogy argument, Bull also finds this last comparison between the domestic and the international states of nature wanting. To show this, he uses two arguments. First, contrary to the common view, the fact of 'war does not indicate the absence of international society, or its breakdown, but can occur as a part of its functioning'.[76] Warfare should be understood as a necessary institution for the working of international society, particularly because the enforcement of international law is often carried on through war.[77]

Further, Bull argues that Hobbes himself says that the international state of war is different from the domestic one. For Hobbes, there is an important exception that makes interstate anarchy more tolerable than anarchy among individuals. The exception is that 'a commonwealth can guard itself against being subjugated by another, as a man in the state of nature cannot do'.[78] This suggests that states are more apt than individuals to guarantee their survival, and thus less vulnerable to the state of war. As Bull says 'anarchy among states is tolerable to a degree to which among individuals it is not'.[79] From this discussion, Bull concludes that Hobbes himself rejects the domestic analogy. 'The analogy between the condition of states in the international anarchy and the condition of individual persons living without government is not taken by Hobbes to what, on some views at least, is its logical conclusion'[80]. In other words, Hobbes's thought does not quite correspond to what it is generally taken as 'the Hobbesian view'. By dissociating Hobbes from the so-called 'Hobbesian tradition', Bull is able to criticise the analogy between the state of war and international politics.[81] More importantly, the rejection of such an analogy, shows that, even if rudimentary, there is an element of

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[75] 'Society and Anarchy', p.84.
[76] Bull, 'Society and Anarchy', p.84.
[77] Bull, 'Society and Anarchy', p.85.
[78] Cited by Bull, 'Society and Anarchy', p.87.
[79] Bull, 'Society and Anarchy', p.86.
[80] Hedley Bull, 'Hobbes and the International Anarchy', *Social Research*, (1981), p.725.
[81] According to Stanley Hoffmann, Bull rejects 'a purely Hobbesian view of international affairs as a state of war...by using some of Hobbes's own arguments', 'International Society', in J. D. B. Miller, R. J. Vincent (eds.), *Order and Violence: Hedley Bull and International Relations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p.23. It should be noted that English school's treatment of Hobbes is somehow confusing. In 'Why Is There No International Theory?', Wight started to dissociate Hobbes from the realist tradition. Yet, in *International Theory*, he consistently sees Hobbes as a realist. In his article on Hobbes, Bull does not pursue the argument put forward in 'Society and Anarchy'. On the one hand, he claims that Hobbes 'was a true philosopher of peace' (p.738, and p.729), but on the other hand includes Hobbes 'within the broad tradition of Machiavellism' (p.724). See Hedley Bull, 'Hobbes and the International Anarchy'. Vincent seems to be clearer and places Hobbes firmly in the rationalist tradition. See R. J. Vincent, 'The Hobbesian Tradition in Twentieth Century International Thought', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 10 (1981), pp.91-101.

society at the international level. Despite the condition of juridical anarchy, states 'constitute a society without a government', which is able to maintain a minimum level of political order.[82] Thus, with Bull's discussion of Hobbes, we have one of the first examples of criticising realism by rethinking the assumptions associated with a past thinker.[83]

The second, and vital, step of the English school's challenge against realism was to recover the thought of those past political thinkers whose views would permit the construction of the concept of international society in a much more satisfactory way than those of Hobbes himself. From the very beginning of the meetings of the British Committee, there existed three different possibilities to develop the idea of international society. The first was offered by the natural law tradition, which was favoured by Wight, and where Grotius and, to a less extent, Locke were the central figures. Wight's recovery of the natural law tradition began in 'Why Is There No International Theory?'. In the very beginning of the essay, Wight raised two crucial questions: 'What international theory, then, was there before 1914? And if there was any, is it worth rediscovering?'[84]. To the first question, Wight answers by quoting Tocqueville: 'It is...to the classical international lawyers that we must look in the first place for any body of international theory before the twentieth century'.[85] The second question is implicitly answered when he says that 'it is necessary to see the domain of international theory stretching all the way from the noble attempt of Grotius and his successors to establish the laws of war'[86]. Following Wight, in his first paper presented to the British Committee, 'Society and Anarchy in International Relations',[87] Bull also refers to the significance of that 'body of theory to which modern international law is the heir'. It should be noted that Bull refers to the 'body of theory', and not to international law itself. This suggests, first of all, that it is a tradition of political thought that Bull has in mind. Second, it shows that at this stage, Bull did not distinguish between the naturalist and the positivist approaches to international law.[88]

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[82] 'Society and Anarchy', p.86 and pp.89-90.
[83] Since Bull, it has been usual in Britain to dissociate Hobbes's thought from realism. See Murray Forsyth, 'Thomas Hobbes and the External Relations of States', *British Journal of International Studies*, 5 (1979), pp.196-209; Vincent, 'The Hobbesian Tradition'; and Cornelia Navari, 'Hobbes and the "Hobbesian Tradition" in International Relations', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 11 (1982), pp.203-22.
[84] 'Why Is There No International Theory?', p.16.
[85] 'Why Is There No International Theory?', p.17.
[86] 'Why Is There No International Theory?', p.18.
[87] Hedley Bull, 'Society and Anarchy in International Relations', in Der Derian (ed.), *International Theory*, pp.75-93.
[88] 'Society and Anarchy', pp.79-80.

Crucially, the exercise of recovering the political thought of the classical liberal thinkers involved a challenge to the realist interpretation. For realists, the thought of Grotius and Locke belong undoubtedly to the 'idealist' tradition of modern political thought. For instance, Morgenthau saw Grotius as one of the founders of the rationalist liberal ideology that seeks to overcome international power politics with idealist schemes for peace.[89] For Waltz, the liberal belief that political and economic interdependence between states might produce a more peaceful international system has its roots in the thought of Locke.[90] These views were of course part of a broader critique of Western liberalism, as providing deficient foundations for a theory of international relations. In contrast to both Morgenthau and Waltz, Wight and Bull believed that some ideas of the classical liberal tradition were helpful to develop a satisfactory approach to the study of international politics. Grotius's thought is the most important case regarding the differences of treatment of past political thinkers between realism and the English school. Contrary to Morgenthau's assessment of the Dutch thinker as an idealist, Wight and Bull considered him to be the founding father of the rationalist tradition of international theory.[91]

The second possibility to reconceptualise international society was offered by the idea of the states system, as it had been developed at the end of the eighteenth century and in the early nineteenth century mainly by the German historian, Heeren. In this thesis, this approach will be called the *constitutional statist tradition*, given its focus on the constitutional principles of the states system. Although Butterfield was the member who strongest advocated international statist constitutionalism, Wight and Bull also accepted, from the very beginning, the merits of Heeren's legacy. For Wight, a fundamental task of international theory is to elevate its object of study to something broader than states' foreign policies. In what is probably the strongest criticism to his contemporaries, in particular realists, Wight observes that '[f]ew political thinkers have made it their business to study the states-system, the diplomatic community *itself*'[92]. As Wight argued later in the *Systems of States*, Heeren's work constitutes an adequate starting point to study the modern states system.[93] Likewise, Bull has Heeren in mind when he refers to those thinkers that see international society as a 'political system' in

[89] See Hans J. Morgenthau, *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1946), pp.12, and 41-2.
[90] *Theory of International Politics*, p.141.
[91] Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, pp.24-7; and Wight, *International Theory*, pp.14-5, and 38.
[92] 'Why Is There No International Theory?', p.19, emphasis in the original.
[93] Martin Wight, *Systems of States* (edited by Hedley Bull, Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1977).

its own right, and not as mere collection of states.[94] Finally, in 1962, Bull added a third possibility to study the concept of international society. In his second contribution to the Committee, 'The Grotian Conception of International Society', Bull argued that a satisfactory conception of international society should rest on the tradition of international legal positivism.[95] We shall see now how Wight explored the rationalist tradition.

Wight and the category of rationalism

Wight's most significant exploration of rationalism appeared in his paper on 'Western Values in International Relations', presented before the British Committee, in October 1961, and in this sense it pursued the research agenda put forward in 'Why Is There No International Theory?'.[96] In this regard, the paper undoubtedly 'signifies a growing alignment with rationalism'.[97] According to Wight himself 'Western Values' developed the 'most substantial argument' he had offered during the first period of the Committee.[98] The method was similar to the one used by Wight in *International Theory*: to discern the concept of international society in the history of ideas. As Wight puts it, 'international society...can be properly described only in historical...depth'.[99] There are three themes in 'Western Values' relevant for this thesis. The first, normally overlooked, but quite significant, is Wight's defence of the idea of international society against realists. He does so by addressing two processes that according to realist thinkers had destroyed the European international society: the growth of nationalism and the ideological conflict of the Cold War. The second theme is the clear liberal tendency of Wight's rationalism, where evident solidarist elements can be discerned. The third and final theme is the inclusion of the republican political tradition within rationalism. Although their thought is not conveniently explored, and sometimes it is even misunderstood, we should remind ourselves that Wight's rationalism includes thinkers, such as Hume, Montesquieu, Vattel, and the American Founding Fathers, who were chief figures of the early modern republican tradition.

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[94] 'Society and Anarchy', p.80.
[95] Bull, 'The Grotian Conception'.
[96] Martin Wight, 'Western Values in International Relations', in Butterfield, Wight (eds.), *Diplomatic Investigations*.
[97] Dunne, *Inventing International Society*, p.61.
[98] Cited in Dunne, *Inventing International Society*, p.99. According to Bull, 'Western Values' is Wight's 'single most important paper'. See Bull, 'Martin Wight and the Study of International Relations', p.7.
[99] 'Western Values', p.96.

Wight's defence of the idea of international society against realist arguments is visible in his discussion of the relation between order and justice, or between political order, legal order, and moral order. Wight starts his narrative in the seventeenth century. For Grotius, says Wight, the legal and the moral orders were the same, in the sense that natural law was simultaneously a moral notion and the basis of the Law of Nations. Thus, a criminal state commits a crime against both the moral and the legal orders. During the nineteenth century, the emergence of the principle of nationality separated the moral order, on the one hand, from the political and the legal orders, on the other hand. The gradual triumph of the national idea disrupted the political - the balance of power - and the legal - respect for dynastic sovereignty - orders of the Vienna system.[100] According to Wight, the great political challenge of the nineteenth century was to achieve a compromise between political order, or the general balance of power, legal order, the respect for the principle of state sovereignty as the foundation of the international legal system, and moral order, respect for the just principle of national self-determination. Part of the answer was to elevate the principle of 'the consent of the governed' to the basis of state sovereignty.[101] Closer to the contemporary age, the League of Nations attempted to pursue the nineteenth century compromise between the political, the legal and the moral orders. 'The majority of the inhabitants of Europe enjoyed the right of self-determination on which the existing order claimed to be based. The exceptions were marginal and explicable by reference to the needs of the balance of power'.[102]

Wight extends this historical analysis to the Cold War international order. Since World War Two, 'the relationship between order and justice', says Wight, 'has undergone a new transformation'. In the case of the anti-colonial struggles

> [i]t has now seemed that there is a direct and positive relation between national justice and the maintenance of order: that if the Western Powers could not free their colonies quickly enough the colonies would secede morally to the opposing camp, that the West must run at top speed in order to remain in its existing position, that peaceful change is no longer the antithesis of security but its condition. Order now requires justice.[103]

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[100] 'Western Values', p.106.
[101] 'Western Values', p.106.
[102] 'Western Values', p.107. Comparing with realism, we note already an important difference in Wight's treatment of the League of Nations. By achieving a compromise between the balance of power and liberal principles, the political order established by the League was not as *idealist* as Morgenthau claimed.
[103] 'Western Values', p.108.

The balance of power between the West and the East, and the maintenance of the principle of state sovereignty as the basis of international legal order depended on the independence of the European colonies. In other words, the maintenance of international order was linked to the fulfilment of principles of international justice; and again in the form of political self-determination. We can already draw an important conclusion from Wight's analysis. The present validity of the concept of international society is the result of its historical resilience, which derives from its capacity to accommodate ideological conflicts. In contrast to Morgenthau's belief in the triumph of the national idea, and the consequent defeat of the notion of international society, Wight shows how the principle of national self-determination was integrated into the normative structure of modern international society.[104]

The accommodation of nationalism and of the ideological differences was allowed by the principle of political toleration, what Wight calls '*via media*' or 'the *just milieu* between definable extremes'.[105] Given the deep ideological conflict that characterised the international context in the 1960s, an adequate notion of international society had to rest on respect for radical different political ideologies. It is interesting to note that Wight recovers a set of Western values as the most appropriate to establish a political coexistence between the *Marxist* Soviet Union and the *Western-liberal* United States. To a certain extent, this is linked to the similarities that Wight found between the ideological confrontation of the twentieth century and the religious conflicts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As Protestant and Catholic states had to find a *modus vivendi* between them, the respect for international pluralism in the twentieth century demanded Western powers, on the one hand, and states with radical different ideological principles, such as socialist and post-colonial states, on the other hand, to create and maintain rules of coexistence. In the light of this historical comparison, it is not surprising that the intellectual fathers of Wight's notion of rationalism are also the fathers of the modern idea of international society, in particular Grotius. For the early-modern theorists of international society, one of its chief functions was precisely to accommodate religious conflicts and political and ideological pluralism.[106] In this way,

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[104] See also 'International Legitimacy' in *Systems of States*, pp.153-73. This point was later developed by James Mayall in *Nationalism and International Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).
[105] 'Western Values', p.91.
[106] The work of contemporary historians of early-modern political thought seem to agree with Wight's view. See, as an example, Richard Tuck, 'Rights and Pluralism', in James Tully (ed.), *Philosophy in an Age of Pluralism: The Philosophy of Charles Taylor in Question* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp.159-70. For a more extensive discussion of this point in the thought of Grotius, see also Richard Tuck, *Philosophy and Government 1572-1651* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), chapter 5. Tuck's example is quite significant given that he is a Grotian scholar.

Wight's 'Western Values' may be seen as an attempt to build a notion of international society around the idea of political pluralism. Only the creation of an international political society, founded on the rights of states, would respect moral diversity that resulted from the ideological pluralism of the Cold War.[107]

Wight's solidarism in 'Western Values' is manifest in the way he discusses the notion of international legal personality, where he includes minorities and individuals rights, and in his treatment of the doctrine of just causes of war.[108] Solidarist thinkers emphasise the fundamental rights of individuals, who are thus treated in specific cases as subjects of international law, and the solidarism among states in the enforcement of international legal rules, particularly in the case of just wars.[109] The doctrine of just causes of war appears implicitly in Wight's argument, when he observes that 'international society has a right of self-defence and of coercion'.[110] Yet, it is in his considerations on aggression and on war as an instrument of law enforcement that Wight most clearly reveals his adoption of the solidarist doctrine of the just war.[111] The second sign of Wight's solidarism is his belief that international society should include certain basic universal rights. Such a belief is connected to Wight's view that individuals, and not only states, are members of international society and as such subjects of international law.[112] Believing that individuals are the ultimate members of international society, Wight affirms that states, the immediate members, ought to respect fundamental humanitarian values in their domestic politics.[113] He even refers to the existence of an 'international social consciousness', which is expressed for instance in the case of 'the minorities treatises'.[114] Given these solidarist views, it is not surprising to see Wight including the principle of humanitarian intervention in his rationalist tradition of international theory.[115] The significance of Wight's solidarism in the context of this chapter lies in two points. First, it was associated with the neo-Grotian reaction against the tradition of *realpolitik*, after World War I. The second significant point of Wight's solidarism is that it shows that the category of rationalism,

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[107] It has to be noted, however, that Wight's view of political pluralism should not be confused with Bull's legal pluralism, which will be discussed in the next chapter.
[108] See also *International Theory*, pp.36-7, 206-7, and 217-9.
[109] Herch Lauterpacht, 'The Grotian Tradition in International Law', *British Yearbook of International Law* (1946), pp.1-53.
[110] 'Western Values', p.103.
[111] 'Western Values', pp.104-5.
[112] 'Western Values', pp.101-2. Interesting enough, Wight identifies his views with the views of neo-Grotians, such as Westlake, T.J. Lawrence, and Brierly.
[113] 'Western Values', pp.99-100.
[114] 'Western Values', p.97.
[115] 'Western Values', p.119.

as it was developed from the early days of the English school, permits the formulation of different conceptions of international society. Quite strikingly, we still find in Wight's early contributions to the Committee an implicit defence of yet another conception of international society. This point takes us to the third theme of 'Western Values'.

The first sign that Wight includes the republican tradition within the category of rationalism is, as it was already noted, the reference to distinct republican figures. Montesquieu and the American Founding Fathers are seen as representative figures of 'Western Values'.[116] Elsewhere, Vattel is associated with the republican view that the balance of power is a 'constituent principle of international society',[117] and with the idea of European international republic.[118] Likewise, Hume is among those who developed the rationalist conception of the balance of power.[119] It is worth noting, in this regard, that Vattel is a central figure, and Hume and Montesquieu deserve a great deal of attention, in Nicholas Onuf's study of international republicanism.[120] The second indication of the impact of republicanism is given by the defining ideas of the 'Western Values', namely 'individual freedom' and the political 'organisation of liberty...in the form of...constitutional government'.[121] In this regard, the tradition of Western values is identified by Wight as 'the Whig or constitutional tradition in diplomacy'.[122] Although it is common to associate the term 'Whig' and the political theory of constitutionalism with the liberal tradition, in historical terms they have very strong connections with republicanism.[123] The final evidence for the appearance of republicanism in Wight's contributions is found in the terms of his attempt to conceptualise international society. As it was observed in the introduction of the thesis, in the beginning of 'Western Values', Wight affirms that international society must be conceptualised as a political society greater that the sum of the states, or in other words, as the society above national

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[116] 'Western Values', p.90.
[117] Martin Wight, 'The Balance of Power', in *Diplomatic Investigations*, pp.153-4.
[118] Martin Wight, 'The Balance of Power and International Order', in Alan James (ed.), *The Bases of International Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), p.101.
[119] *International Theory*, p.165. Yet, Wight is confusing and, quite strangely, also includes Hume in the realist tradition, see pp. 171 and 267.
[120] See Nicholas Greenwood Onuf, *The Republican Legacy in International Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
[121] Wight, 'Western Values', p.89.
[122] 'Western Values', p.90.
[123] For the relation between Whiggism and republicanism, see J.G.A. Pocock, 'The Varieties of Whiggism from Exclusion to Reform: A History of Ideology and Discourse', in *Virtue, Commerce, and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp.215-310; for the relation between constitutionalism and republicanism, see J.G.A. Pocock, *The Politics of Extent and the Problems of Freedom* (Colorado Springs: The Colorado College Press, 1987), and Richard Bellamy, 'The Political Form of the Constitution: The Separation of Powers, Rights, and Representative Democracy', *Political Studies*, XLIV, (1996), pp.436-56.

societies. This purpose corresponds precisely to Wight's argument in 'Why Is There No International Theory?', where he urged his colleagues to abandon the prejudice imposed by the sovereign state. Now the development of such a conception of international society would require a challenge to statist approaches, as indeed Wight's criticism of realism and international legal positivism demonstrates. In addition, not only Wight, but also Butterfield, quite consistently referred to the importance of the eighteenth century intellectual tradition, which saw international society as a political system 'and not merely a congeries of states'.[124] This seems to suggest that the exploration of the republican tradition is one way of conceptualising international society as a political society greater than a mere collection of states. One of the problems that occurred with Wight and Butterfield was that the characterisation of such a tradition, during this early period, was never clear. Indeed, the references to the eighteenth century intellectual tradition denote a confluence between the republican and the constitutional statist traditions, where thinkers such Burke, Hume, and Vattel, on the one hand, and Gentz and Heeren, on the other, often appear as belonging to the same tradition. Such a classification is evident in Butterfield's and Wight's discussion of the concept of the balance of power. Its development is sometimes attributed to republican thinkers such as Hume or Vattel, and other times to writers of the constitutional statist tradition, such as Gentz and Heeren, without distinguishing the two.[125] In addition, given the cosmopolitan elements of republican thought, Wight often includes distinct republican notions and indeed republican thinkers within the tradition of revolutionism.

Despite these confusions, in the early contributions of Wight and Butterfield to the British Committee, and also in Wight's later essay on the 'Balance of Power and International Order', we find the 'republican moment' within the English school. For instance, Wight gives an accurate interpretation of the historical context of republicanism. He places the origins of the practice of the balance of power in the Italian Renaissance, more precisely in the republican struggles for political freedom against the Emperor. Likewise, he recognises the process through which the doctrine of the mixed constitution converged with the concept of the balance of power.[126] Furthermore, the statement with which Wight finishes his essay on the 'Balance of

[124] 'Notes for a Discussion', p.5.
[125] See Wight, 'The Balance of Power', p.154 and p.157. See also Wight, 'The Balance of Power and International Order', pp.99-101. As for Butterfield's inclusion of all those thinkers in the same tradition, see Herbert Butterfield 'The Balance of Power', in *Diplomatic Investigations*, pp.140-7.
[126] 'The Balance of Power and International Order', pp.86-7, and pp.96-7.

Power' admirably sums up the eighteenth century republican view of the merits of a system of general political equilibrium.

> And where conflicts of interest between organized groups are insurmountable, the only principle of order is to try to maintain...an even distribution of power. The alternatives are either universal anarchy, or universal dominion. The balance of power is generally regarded as preferable to the first, and most people have not yet been persuaded that the second is so preferable to the balance of power that they will easily submit to it.[127]

However, after the early days of the British Committee, Wight abandoned the republican possibility opened up by his formulation of rationalism. Moreover, such an opening was not pursued by other members of the English school either. This is, in part, explained by the clarification of the orientation of the school after the first period of the British Committee. On the one hand, Heeren's idea of the states system finally prevailed in the school's approach, and came finally to be distinguished from eighteenth century republicanism. The moment at which the Committee's chooses to develop Heeren's notion of the states system is clearly visible in 1967. In the very same year, Wight presented the paper that later became the first chapter of *Systems of States*, and Bull gave a paper entitled 'Notes on the Modern International System'. They both used as their starting point Heeren's conception of the states system. In addition, Bull translated it into the term international society. The subsequent central work of the school up to Watson's *The Evolution of International Society*, which includes *Systems of States*, *The Anarchical Society*, and *The Expansion of International Society*, received a great deal of inspiration from Heeren's thought. On the other hand, Bull went further than all his colleagues in exploring the notion of international society. In fact, he was the only one that fully developed a conception of international society: the pluralist notion of 'anarchical society'. This of course demonstrates the great significance of Bull's work, but it also shows that the process of defining inevitably brings with it the narrowing down of a tradition, as we shall see in the next chapter.

Conclusion

In his assessment of the work of the British Committee, after the first period of the meetings, Butterfield referred to their attempt to find 'alternative ways of construing our

[127] 'The Balance of Power', pp.174-5.

subject'.[128] This suggests a picture of a group of scholars fighting against the state of International Relations, who were trying to build an alternative project for the discipline. Indeed, as I argued here, from the very beginning, when Wight presented 'Why Is There No International Theory?', the dissatisfaction of the members of the school with most of International Relations, particularly with realism, is quite clear. To fully understand the significance of the English school's challenge to realism, the chapter adopted a historical perspective. As I tried to show, it was by reinterpreting the significance of past political thought that the English school disputed the realist position. The results of this reinterpretation were the category of rationalism, which includes those internationalist approaches attacked by the tradition of *realpolitik*, and the concept of international society.

If we see the emergence of the English school in these terms, we can grasp that rationalism is not simply a *via media* between two other approaches, but that it rather transcends the realist/idealist divide that has defined the discipline since its beginning. In this regard, rationalism constitutes one of the most *important alternatives* to the realist theory, involving an attempt to set the discipline of International Relations on different theoretical foundations. Indeed, a central claim of this chapter is that, by rethinking our intellectual legacy in the domain of political thought, one of the major contributions of the English school was to provide alternative conceptual languages to the study of international relations. The third part of the chapter sought to demonstrate that by seeking to place the study of international relations within the context of broader modern political traditions, the category of rationalism, as it was initially formulated, offers distinct ways of defining the concept of international society.

Given the topic of this thesis, it seems to be appropriate to finish the chapter with the most significant definition of international society offered in the early period of the British Committee, which appears in 'Western Values'. For Wight, sovereign states are not absolutely independent, but 'parts of a greater whole', an international political society. Besides sovereign states, its members are individuals, minorities, and political organisations other than states. Such a political society presupposes 'an international social consciousness', or 'a world-wide community-sentiment'. In sum, international political society 'is the most comprehensive form of society among men'.[129] In other words, and in accordance with the argument presented in 'Why Is There No International Theory?', this conception of international political society manages to

[128] 'Notes for a Discussion', p.2.
[129] 'Western Values', pp.95-105.

escape the prejudice imposed by the sovereign state. For the moment, it suffices to make three brief points regarding the nature of this notion of international political society. First, as Wight believes, it can only be understood in 'historical depth'.[130] Secondly, it has a strong normative content. Finally, given that this conception sees international society as a truly political society, abandoning the idea of the state of nature altogether, its conceptual development is crucial to overcome the undersocialized view of world politics and the ontological separation between domestic and international politics. In this regard, to define the conception of international society put forward by Wight in 'Western Values', I shall use the term *international political society*, as in opposition to international society understood as the *society of states*. The next chapter will tell the story of how the former conception was gradually replaced by the latter in the work of the English school, and how in the process rationalism was narrowed down to the notion of the states system and the pluralist conception of international society. The rest of the thesis, chapters 4, 5, and 6, will return to the broad category of rationalism and then reformulate the concept of international society, building on the early contribution of the school, in particular by exploring the republican arm of the rationalist tradition.

[130] 'Western Values', p.96.

CHAPTER 3: THE LIMITS OF 'INTERNATIONAL THEORY': FROM RATIONALISM TO THE PLURALIST CONCEPTION OF INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY

As I affirmed in the end of the last chapter, this chapter will tell how the English school's early rationalism gradually transformed into the pluralist conception of international society. The shift from Martin Wight's original, and non-statist, conception of international society to a statist approach to the study of modern international society was the result of such a process. The analysis of this shift will be divided into three parts. In the first part, I start by looking at the historical interpretation offered by both Wight and Hedley Bull concerning the origins and development of modern international society. Despite some apparent differences in Wight's and Bull's historical interpretations, it will be argued that their views are in the end quite similar. In particular, for both of them, the sovereign state has ontological priority over international society. In this way, I attempt to show the connection between the English school's notion of society of states and the historical account of modern world politics adopted by the school. Then, the focus of the chapter will turn to Bull's pluralist conception of the society of states. In the third and last part, the chapter discusses some problems that result from the statist conception of international society. In particular, this part of the chapter critically assesses the distinction between the concepts of international society and, on the one hand, international system and, on the other hand, world society.

The chapter concludes by suggesting in which way the concept of international society can be reformulated. Here, to prepare the grounds for the rest of the thesis, I explicitly associate the terms of my reformulation of the concept of international society with the republican political tradition. Yet, and this point needs to be emphasised, my alternative conception of international society builds on some views put forward by Wight. As we saw in the last chapter, I believe that we find ideas which point towards a republican conception of international society in some of the writings of this member of the English school. Those ideas, however, have not been sufficiently explored. In this sense, my purpose is to recover some of those views and to further develop them in the light of the republican political tradition, which was almost ignored by the school. But,

first, it is necessary to show the problems with Wight's notion of 'system of states' and Bull's conception of 'anarchical international society'.

Creating the notion of the 'modern Westphalian states system'

The historical origins of the modern states system: the break with medieval imperialism

Within the English school, the classic study on the origins of modern international society is Wight's *Systems of States*. Four our purposes, it is necessary to note three points of Wight's analysis. The first element is Wight's emphasis on the institutional unity of medieval politics. He recognises a strong cultural unity which was associated with the Christian religion. The term *societas christiana* characterises precisely such a religious unity. This sense of spiritual unity was the basis of the Holy See political power, which was confirmed by the doctrine of the Pope as *dominus mundi*, or 'lord of all mankind'.[1] In addition to the Christian unity, the ideology of empire was the other element that gave unity to medieval politics. Wight accepts the conventional argument that sees a continuity between the authority of the Roman Emperor and the authority of the medieval Holy Roman Emperor.[2] The crucial episode in the connection between Rome and the medieval Empire was the coronation of Charlesmagne as Emperor in the Christmas Day of the eighth century. From this moment, the Holy Roman Emperor claimed universal jurisdiction in temporal matters.[3] Therefore, despite Wight's recognition of the existence of 'an innumerable multitude of governmental units', for instance he refers to the distribution of power among many political units, with some of them developing 'the internal organisation and external claims which in due course gave birth to the conceptions of 'sovereignty' and the 'state'', he clearly emphasises the 'unity rather than separateness', 'hierarchy rather than equality', the Empire's claim to universal jurisdiction in temporal matters, and '[t]he universal government of the papacy'.[4] Wight even calls the Church 'the real state of the Middle Ages'.[5] It is in this sense that he quotes a medieval historian.

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[1] Martin Wight, *Systems of States*, (edited by Hedley Bull, Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1977) pp.26-9.
[2] The Papacy also claimed to be the successor of the Roman Emperors, which led to continuous struggles between the Holy See and the Holy Roman Emperor during the medieval period. See Wight, *Systems of States*, p.28.
[3] Wight, *Systems of States*, p.27.
[4] *Systems of States*, pp.27-8.
[5] *Systems of States*, p.28.

papacy'.[4] Wight even calls the Church 'the real state of the Middle Ages'.[5] It is in this sense that he quotes a medieval historian.

> This papal world monarchy was...the bridge builder between Roman and modern times. All the characteristic Roman features had impressed themselves upon the physiognomy of the papacy, the Roman Church. Not only the law; also the conception of the universality of government. It was as universal monarchs that the popes applied Roman principles, partly developed them, and partly created new ones, which have since gained universal recognition in international law.[6]

This suggests that Wight's account of the medieval international society may be defined as a pluralist political society under the sovereign authority of both the Emperor and the Pope. In Wight's terms, a 'dualistic or double-headed suzerain states-system'.[7] Thus, the emergence of the modern system of sovereign states had to wait for the collapse of both the papal and the imperial sovereign authority.

The second element in Wight's argument is the emphasis on the replacement of a 'single undivided *societas christiana*' by 'international anarchy' between secular states. This indicates that, as many others, Wight also underlines the stark discontinuity between an hierarchical medieval political society and the anarchical modern international society. There are, however, two points in Wight's discussion on the transition from medieval to modern politics that could suggest a degree of continuity between the medieval and the modern international society. First of all, Wight sees the Council of Constance as marking the end of the medieval international society and the beginning of the process that will culminate in the emergence of secular sovereign powers. As he says, the Council of Constance

> is the last Ecumenical Council of undivided Latin Christendom, whose failure to effect reform of the Church makes revolution inevitable. It attempts to reform the international system of Christendom, which is the papally-centralized Church. Its failure leads directly to the breakdown of the system and to rebellion within the Church.[8]

Although Wight associates the Council to the emergence of both secular authority and national states, he also refers to the international significance of Constance. More specifically, the Conciliar Movement is associated with a particular conception of

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[4] *Systems of States,* pp.27-8.
[5] *Systems of States,* p.28.
[6] *Systems of States,* p.28.
[7] *Systems of States,* p.29.
[8] *Systems of States,* p.132.

international society. The Council of Constance attempted, in Wight's words, 'to provide a legal and regular constitution for the international system, a constitution on constitutionalist principles'.[9] The term 'constitutional' clearly refers to the 'Whig or constitutional tradition' of international relations,[10] which in turn suggests a continuity between some medieval ideas and practices and the modern international society. In this regard, the constitutional movement associated with the Council of Constance could have provided Wight with a chance to investigate the historical influence of the medieval constitutional tradition on the origins of modern international society. This would be particularly relevant given his attempt to define international society as a constitutional entity greater than the sum of its parts. Yet, Wight does not pursue this line of reasoning and in the end affirms that those early constitutionalist ideas only found recognition later in the domestic doctrine of constitutional sovereignty, which was adopted by Western European countries such as Holland and England. As he admits, those constitutional principles 'have never yet transformed international life'.[11]

In addition, and contrary to other approaches that emphasise the discontinuity thesis, Wight locates the origins of modern international society, or states system in his terms, in the fifteenth century, more specifically in 'the French invasion of Italy in 1494'.[12] Wight himself admits that, in opposition to his argument, there is an 'alternative starting-point': 'the Peace of Westphalia in 1648'.

> In retrospect, Westphalia was believed to mark the transition from religious to secular politics, from 'Christendom' to 'Europe', the exclusion from international politics of the Holy See, the effective end of the Holy Roman Empire by the virtual recognition of the sovereignty of its members...the beginning of the system of the balance of power. The prestige of Westphalia was buttressed by that of Grotius, whose reputation as father of international law was due to a work prompted by the same general war that Westphalia ended.[13]

Although implicitly Wight had probably many people in mind, explicitly this observation was directed at Bull.[14] As he observes, 'Hedley Bull made the existence of a body of international law a criterion of the states-system, and argued that the absence of

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[9] *Systems of States*, p.132.
[10] See Martin Wight, 'Western Values in International Relations', in Herbert Butterfield and Martin Wight (eds.), *Diplomatic Investigations* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1966), pp. 89-131. See also the discussion above in chapter 2.
[11] *Systems of States*, p.133.
[12] *Systems of States*, p.151.
[13] *Systems of States*, p.113.
[14] In addition to the 'Westphalian interpretation', Wight also criticises a third answer, offered by F.H. Hinsley, which places the beginning of the modern states-system in the eighteenth century, pp.150-2. See F.H. Hinsley, *Power and the Pursuit of Peace* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963).

such a body of law before the seventeenth century supported the Westphalian doctrine about the origin of the states-system'. However, according to Wight, Bull fails to see that 'the states of Italy and Europe in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries did not consider themselves as exempt from rules of law'.[15]

The disagreement concerning the chronological origins of modern international society could lead one to think that Wight's conception of international society is significantly different from Bull's. Indeed, Wight himself notes an important distinction. In terms of international political history, Wight's alternative permits to identify the origins of modern international law in the medieval law. Thus, we find again the hypothesis of continuity between the medieval and the modern international society. However, in the end these two points are not sufficient to distinguish Wight's from the conventional Westphalian interpretation. First of all, as we saw, Wight accepts the thesis of the break between the medieval and the modern political systems. Secondly, in opposition to the hierarchical medieval international society, he defines modern international society as an *anarchical states system*. It is in this sense that his alternative in the end is nothing more than yet another variant of the Westphalian interpretation. The chronological moment of the break is different; but otherwise, the definition of the political system of sovereign states is essentially the same, as it is the stress on an absolute break between medieval and modern international society. In the words of Wight, modern 'international anarchy'[16] arose from the ruins of the medieval international monarchy.[17]

The emphasis on the unitary sovereign state is the third point of Wight's historical account. The statist approach appears in a clear way in Wight's discussion of Pufendorf's notion of states system, which opens the first chapter of his *Systems of States*. Interesting enough, Wight recognises that Pufendorf used the term 'states system' in a double way. In a broad way, 'states system' is equated with the inclusive notion of 'the family of nations'; and in a narrow way, it refers to 'unions' and 'confederations' of states. The relevant point here is the fact that Wight chooses to study the historical evolution of the first, and never considers the historical relevance of the second meaning of the term 'states system'. I shall not be concerned at this point to explain the significance of this second meaning of the term for our understanding of modern international society, for this will be the focus of chapter 5 of this thesis. For the

[15] *Systems of States*, p.147.
[16] Wight, *Systems of States*, p.133.
[17] *Systems of States*, p.131.

moment, I merely wish to stress the statist option taken by Wight, which deeply influenced the subsequent work of the English school.

Wight's choice is obvious when a few paragraphs below he refers to Heeren's work on the historical evolution of the 'political system of Europe'.[18] Indeed, Wight adopts Heeren's definition of a states system: 'The union of several contiguous states, resembling each other in their manners, religion, and degree of social improvement, and cemented together by a reciprocity of interests'.[19] We see in this definition a central idea that strongly marked the work of the English school: modern international society is the result of the emergence of the modern states system. As a consequence, the central institutions of the English school's conception of international society are characteristically statist, such as balance of power, great powers, diplomacy, and international law, defined in a very positivist way. This is clear not only in the most comprehensive work on the notion of international society published by any member of the English school, Bull's *The Anarchical Society*, but also in Wight's further discussion on the nature of the modern system of states.[20] For instance, whereas in 'Western Values', besides the sovereign state, the members of international society are also individuals, minorities, and other types of political organisations, in the *Systems of States*, sovereign states are the only members of modern international society. Comparing with the argument that he put forward in 'Western Values', there is thus a clear statist turn in Wight's thought. After Wight's work on the emergence of the modern states system, it was Bull who mostly developed the statist conception of international society.

The creation of modern international society: civilising the states system

As in Wight's case, in Bull's account of the origins of modern international society, the emergence of the states system results from the collapse of the *hierarchical* medieval political system. Such a historical account has two defining moments. The first is the

[18] A.H.L. Heeren, *A Manual of the History of the Political System of Europe and Its Colonies* (London: 1833).

[19] *Systems of States*, p.22. For Heeren's definition, see *A Manual of the History*, p.vii. The impact of Heeren's work on Bull's definition of international society is clear and acknowledged by Bull himself. See *The Anarchical Society*, pp.12-3. For the general influence of Heeren on the work of the English school, see also Adam Watson, 'Hedley Bull, States Systems and International Societies', *Review of International Studies*, 13 (1987), pp.147-53; and Adam Watson, *The Evolution of International Society*, p.7.

[20] In chapter 5 of the *Systems of States*, Wight identifies as the institutions of the modern system of states, sovereign states themselves, the great powers, diplomacy, international law, and the balance of power.

creation of the basic element of modern politics, the sovereign state.[21] The second moment is the consequence of the first: sovereign states, by consenting to common institutions, give origin to a society of states. In these two moments, we notice the ontological priority given to the sovereign state by Bull's historical narrative. The subsequent story is basically the consolidation of this statist international society. During the time of Grotius, there was still a solidarist society where the distinction between domestic and international politics was not entirely clear; but later, during the eighteenth and particularly the nineteenth centuries, the pluralist international society was consolidated, and a positivist conception of international law replaced a more naturalist one.

Bull's historical narrative starts with the transition from the medieval to the modern politics, which corresponds to the period that Bull calls the 'Christian international society'.[22] Such a society is characterised by the following features. It rests, first, on Christian values. Second, there is '[n]o clear guidance' regarding the members of international society. Third, natural law was considered to be the central source of international law. Finally, the doctrine of the just war, specifically in the case of *jus ad bellum*, denoted a solidarist approach to the use of force in international relations. In intellectual terms, Bull identifies the Christian political society with the 'tradition of natural law'[23], in which the central figure was Grotius. This explains in part why the Dutch thinker emerges from this narrative as an ambivalent thinker. On the one hand, there is the 'modern' Grotius, one of the founding fathers of modern international law, who, as we will see below, is identified with the 'Westphalian moment' in modern international politics.[24] On the other hand, there is the 'medieval' Grotius, who could not escape the influence of Christian values, and whose views concerning the members of international society were unclear.[25]

Between the Christian international society and the European international society, there was, in Bull's view, a period characterised by power politics, which was marked by the religious and dynastic wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This is the period that Wight calls 'the interval of political realism'.[26] For Bull, there was already a states-system, 'which must be dated from the appearance of sovereign

[21] *The Anarchical Society*, p.31.
[22] *The Anarchical Society*, pp.27-32.
[23] *The Anarchical Society*, p.28.
[24] This view is clear in Hedley Bull, 'The Importance of Grotius in the Study of International Relations', in Hedley Bull, Benedict Kingsbury, Adam Roberts (eds.), *Hugo Grotius and International Relations* (Oxford: Claredon Press, 1992).
[25] Bull, 'The Grotian Conception', p.66.
[26] *Systems of States*, p.148.

states whose behaviour impinged on one another', and which 'began at least as early as the late fifteenth century'.[27] Yet, there was not an international society in the sense of states following legal rules in their mutual relations. The modern society of states only emerged in 1648 with the Peace of Westphalia.

In Bull's historical account, the Peace of Westphalia occupies a privileged place in the sense that it marks the beginning of the modern international society. Two elements should be stressed: on the one hand, the *modernity* of the society of states, in opposition to medieval political society; and, on the other hand, the *societal* nature, in opposition to the 'interval of realism' of the early modern states system. The modernity of the Peace lies in its crucial role in the development of a statist international society, in the recognition of the emergence of secular principles to manage international politics, and lastly in the establishment of a body of rules to be applied to the states system as a whole.[28] Moreover, the Treaties of Munster and Osnabruck also marked the historical transition from an international system of power politics to an international society of common norms and institutions. 'What the Peace of Westphalia did mark...was the emergence of an international society as distinct from a mere international system, the acceptance by states of rules and institutions binding on them in their relations with one another'.[29] Therefore, the historical significance of the Peace of Westphalia derives from its recognition of the emergence of the modern international society.[30] The central consequences of such a historical triumph were the establishment of 'the rule of non-intervention, the rule of the equality of states in respect of their basic rights, and the rights of states to domestic jurisdiction';[31] the emergence of a positivist approach to the sources of international law, based on the practice of the states, which replaced the older naturalism; and the abandonment of the 'solidarist assumptions inherited from medieval times', with the consequent recognition of 'the unique characteristics of the anarchical society'.[32]

In Bull's view, at the level of political thought, there was a related process of clarification concerning the nature of modern international society. Bull adopts an intellectual historical narrative, borrowed from the discipline of International Law, which is built around the evolution from legal naturalism towards legal positivism. It is

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[27] 'The Importance of Grotius', p.75.
[28] Bull, 'The Importance of Grotius', pp.75-8.
[29] 'The Importance of Grotius', pp.75-6.
[30] According to Bull, 'the idea of international society...was given concrete expression in the Peace of Westphalia', 'The Importance of Grotius', p.75.
[31] Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, p.37.
[32] Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, p.35.

in this context that the lineage Grotius-Vattel-Oppenheim is highlighted. After the association between the Peace of Westphalia and international law, Bull brings the third central element into his account of the origins of modern international society:[33] Grotius, the international lawyer (this time the 'modern' and not the 'medieval' Grotius).

> The idea of international society which Grotius propounded was given concrete expression in the Peace of Westphalia, and Grotius may be considered the intellectual father of this first general peace settlement of modern times.[34]

The concepts of international society and international law were initially given a distinct and fundamental treatment by Grotius, albeit firmly within the natural law tradition. Later, Vattel elucidates a number of conceptual confusions found in Grotius's thought, in particular concerning the membership of international society. Whereas Grotius did not develop clear criteria regarding the membership of international society, Vattel defined it as being composed by sovereign states. In a certain sense, Vattel makes Grotius's work to be simultaneously modern and medieval. 'Modern' in the sense that Vattel develops ideas initially discussed by Grotius; and 'medieval' for Vattel clarified the concept of modern international society in ways that Grotius was not able to do. Yet, this does mean that the work of Grotius is to be dismissed. For Bull, Grotius remains one of the founding figures of the ideas of international law and international society.[35]

Moreover, Vattel's contribution was also insufficient, particularly in the sense that his thinking was also firmly placed within the naturalist tradition. Thus, the second stage in the development towards a pluralist conception of international society occurred during the end of the eighteenth century and during the nineteenth century, when international legal positivists, such as J. J. Mozer and Von Martens, replaced natural law by the authoritative practices of states, like custom and treaties, as the source of international law. The idea of natural law was definitely abandoned and both

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[33] The three elements are clearly linked by Bull: 'the Westphalia treaties demonstrated in practice, just as Grotius has done in theory, that the independence or sovereignty of states was not incompatible with their subjection to law', 'The Importance of Grotius', pp.77-8.

[34] 'The Importance of Grotius', p.75. Bull also recognises that there are elements in the Treaties that are not 'consonant with the doctrines of Grotius', such as the balance of power, the idea of diplomatic conferences, and the principle of *cujus regio, ejus religio*, p.76.

[35] Bull refers to Grotius's work as 'one of the classical paradigms' of international relations, characterised by 'the idea of international society' and 'the notion that states and rulers of states are bound by rules', 'The Importance of Grotius', p.71. Positivist international lawyers also share this view. For instance, Lassa Oppenheim calls Grotius 'the father of international law' and considers *De Jure Belli Ac Pacis* to be an 'immortal work', 'The Science of International Law: Its Task and Method', *The American Journal of International Law*, 2, (1908), p.316.

the positivist nature of international law and the pluralist character of international society were accentuated.[36] At this point, the modern conception of international society was recognised by early twentieth century international legal positivists, such as Oppenheim, from whose work Bull derived the inspiration to build his pluralist conception of international society. We shall see now that, according to Bull, it was this idea of the society of states that expanded throughout the world.

The expansion of modern international society: extending the states system

'Was the states-system...world-wide from the beginning? Did it include all mankind? Was Prester John...a member of the society of princes?'[37] These are the questions that Wight raises to address the question of the geographical boundaries of the modern states system. What is quite interesting in Wight's argument is that it tries to escape the 'orthodox answer', developed mostly by positivist international lawyers during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Wight does this by considering a radical critique to the orthodox thesis, put forward in the 1960s by C.H. Alexandrowicz.[38] Although Wight qualifies Alexandrowicz's argument, in the end he is quite sympathetic to it. For the twentieth century orthodox thesis, the expansion of international society only started during the second half of the nineteenth century, after the consolidation of the modern states system in Europe. The 'orthodox answer' will be further discussed below, for the moment it is enough to stress two points of that answer. First, despite political, diplomatic and commercial contacts since the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries between Europeans and non-European rulers, it is not possible to identify a global international society until the twentieth century, and the post-colonial age. Secondly, the expansion

[36] It should be noted that I am only summing up Bull's account of the evolution of the thinking about the idea of international society. This does not mean that I agree with it. There are some points that must indeed be disputed. I would point to the interpretation of Vattel's thought, which seems to be highly disputable. Yet, given that Vattel does not have a central role in my subsequent reformulation of the concept of international society, this point shall not concern me here. Two works that have recently suggested a different interpretation of Vattel are Andrew Hurrell, 'Vattel: Pluralism and Its Limits', in Ian Clark and Iver B. Neumann (eds.), *Classical Theories of International Relations* (London: Macmillan, 1996), pp.233-55; and Nicholas Greenwood Onuf, *The Republican Legacy in International Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). For the intellectual narrative adopted by Bull, which is summarised here, see, among international lawyers, John Westlake, *Chapters on the Principles of International Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1894), pp.30-77; and J.L. Brierly, *The Law of Nations: An Introduction to the International Law of Peace* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1949), pp.25-41. Among International Relations scholars, see Terry Nardin, *Law, Morality, and the Relations of States* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983). For Bull's own account, see *The Anarchical Society*, pp.27-40.

[37] Wight, *Systems of States*, p.115.

[38] See C.H. Alexandrowicz, *An Introduction to the History of the Law of Nations in the East Indies* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967).

of international society followed the extension of the modern states system. In accordance with the ontological priority given to the sovereign state, the acquisition of sovereign statehood by former colonies is the fundamental condition for the expansion of the modern society of states. Alexandrowicz disputes this view, and although his explicit goal is to reject the thesis of the 'late expansion', in the end his argument, albeit implicitly, also counters the 'statist argument'.

Alexandrowicz starts by noting that 'European-Asian relations developed to a considerable extent on a footing of equality'; in particular, legal equality.[39] When the Portuguese first arrived in East Indies, they realised that it would not be possible to deal with local rulers on the basis of 'legal titles such as discovery, occupation or...Papal donation of overseas territories'.[40] Local communities were politically and legally organised according to the sovereign rule, and had their own legal systems, both domestic and international. This state of affairs obliged the Portuguese, and subsequently the Dutch, the English and the French, to enter into bilateral dealings and to conclude legal treaties with local sovereign rulers. In this regard, according to Alexandrowicz's analysis, early writers such as Bodin, Grotius, Serafim de Freitas and Vattel recognised the sovereignty of the Asian political communities and the need to regulate relations between Europeans and Asians in the framework of the law of nations.[41] For instance, despite their many disagreements, both Grotius and Freitas emphasised the sovereign status of the East Indian political communities in the law of nations.[42] Such a recognition by these early writers, argues Alexandrowicz, shows that the political encounter between Europeans and Asians deeply influenced the development of the discipline of the 'law of nations'. Crucially, the establishment of diplomatic and legal relations between European and Asian political communities gave a character of universality to the classical works on the law of nations.[43] According to Alexandrowicz, the existence of legal treaties between European and Eastern rulers demonstrates the universal character of the law of nations and that a global international society, working on the basis of common legal rules, existed before the nineteenth century, more precisely since the early expansion during the sixteenth century. To consider that the political communities of East Indies were not part of international society is to view the origins of the society of states 'in the light of positivist

[39] *An Introduction to the History of the Law of Nations*, p.1.
[40] Alexandrowicz, *An Introduction to the History of the Law of Nations*, p.14.
[41] *An Introduction to the History of the Law of Nations*, chapters 2 and 3.
[42] *An Introduction to the History of the Law of Nations*, p.229. See the discussion in chapter 3.
[43] Alexandrowicz, *An Introduction to the Law of Nations*, p.9. Moreover, according to Alexandrowicz, the cultural encounter also contributed to the secularization of the law of nations, see p.231.

conceptions which were only born at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries'.[44] The consequence was that those non-European political communities which 'had enjoyed a full legal status' within pre-nineteenth century law of nations became in the nineteenth and in the twentieth centuries 'candidates for admission' to membership in international society.[45]

Alexandrowicz's thesis is significant still in a further point, which is made in an implicit way. Although Alexandrowicz is clear that he is discussing 'principles of inter-State relations',[46] his analysis of the development of the law of nations also questions the conventional treatment of sovereign statehood as an absolutist and unitary political institution. Given the complex network of legal and political relations between local communities in East Indies, the first challenge faced by Europeans at their arrival in Asia concerned the classification of sovereignty in the region. The need to negotiate and to conclude treaties with local rulers made such a task still more important. Applying the category of 'suzerain-vassal relations', Europeans found three classes of sovereignty between absolute unitary sovereignty and non-sovereign status.[47] Quite significantly, these intermediate types of sovereignty were included in some of the more notable classical treatments of the law of nations. For instance, in his classification of sovereign authority, Bodin includes the vassal rulers, distinguishing between 'tributary princes', 'princes under protection', and 'vassals of various degrees of dependence'.[48] Likewise, Vattel addressed in his work on the law of nations treaties of protection between sovereign political communities, through which there is a temporary shift of sovereign powers, most of the times in the area of military defence.[49] As Alexandrowicz observes,

> Vattel in his *Droit des Gens* refers to the duties of a superior or protecting State *vis-à-vis* a dependent State and emphasizes that should the superior 'assume greater authority over the weaker one than the treaty of protection or submission allows, the latter may consider the treaty as broken and provide for its safety according to its discretion'.[50]

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[44] Alexandrowicz, *An Introduction to the History of the Law of Nations*, p.11.
[45] Alexandrowicz, *An Introduction to the History of the Law of Nations*, p.10 and p.235.
[46] *An Introduction to the History of the Law of Nations*, p.2.
[47] Alexandrowicz, *An Introduction to the History of the Law of Nations*, pp.15-6.
[48] Alexandrowicz, *An Introduction to the History of the Law of Nations*, p.31.
[49] Alexandrowicz, *An Introduction to the Law of Nations*, p.22. It is important to use the expression 'temporary', for Vattel believed that ultimately sovereignty remains in the people. Thus, we have here a case where a popular conception of sovereignty, hence undivided, may result in practices, through legal agreements, where the marks of sovereignty are shared by different institutions. As in many other similar cases, although this may sound strange to the late modern hear, we should probably take this treatment seriously, and modify our view of modern international political history, instead of condemning Vattel's view as yet another example of the medieval hangover that has not passed the test of 'modern history'.
[50] *An Introduction to the History of the Law of Nations*, p.22.

This observation is directly concerned with the degree of *equality* that exists even among different classes of sovereign communities and how the law of nations protects the weaker part.[51] Yet, for our discussion the point that has to be stressed is the idea that sovereign authority may be shared by different political institutions, as a result of the conclusion of treaties of protection. Normally, those treaties covered situations where a given political community abdicated of a mark of sovereignty, such as for instance the right to make war, to other sovereign community (which in turn had to protect the first community from external threats) but at the same time kept other sovereign attributes such as the legislative activity, the administration of justice, the exercise of financial authority, the capacity to treaty making, and the right to send and receive diplomatic envoys.[52] The inclusion of these cases in the law of nations is significant for it demonstrates that the existence of different types of sovereignty, and of cases of divided sovereignty, was not considered by classical writers as medieval anomalies but as an integral part of modern international society. Thus, we have an image with different types of states and various constitutional organisations of sovereign authority. A picture with absolute monarchies, republics, confederations, suzerain and vassal states living together is considerably different from the conventional one of an anarchical political system composed of absolutist and autonomous sovereign states. Interesting enough, such a view was accepted by authors often identified with absolutism and a statist approach to international politics, such as Bodin and Vattel. The point that it is essential to make now is that the idea of divided sovereignty, which, as it will be shown in chapter 5, occupies a central place in a republican conception of international society, was a central element in the law of nations at least until the nineteenth century. Moreover, this also shows that international society does not have to be anticipated by the emergence of a states system of like-units, as it is conventionally believed.

Although Wight partly accepts Alexandrowicz's argument, he also thinks that it needs a qualification. In order to qualify Alexandrowicz's radical answer, Wight refers to cases where the practice among European rulers was considerably different from the practice between European and non-European rulers.[53] This observation leads Wight to adopt the thesis of the 'dual nature' of modern international society, with 'two

[51] See the discussion in Alexandrowicz, *An Introduction to the History of the Law of Nations*, pp.151-3, and p.231.
[52] Alexandrowicz, *An Introduction to the History of the Law of Nations*, p.24, p.37, and p.231.
[53] *Systems of States*, p.123.

concentric circles, European and universal'.[54] Wight sees his thesis as following Grotius's idea of the 'dual states-system': a *Respublica Christiana* on the one hand, and the natural society of human race on the other. The former rested on deeper common interests which derived from both a common religion and a common culture, and has developed a more comprehensive legal system. The latter has less common interests and is ruled by natural law, which may in some occasions give origin to positive law, such as 'treaty relations'.[55] Wight's treatment of Alexandrowicz's thesis shows that, first, he accepts the early expansion of modern international society. Secondly, it also proves that, for Wight, such an expansion was not preceded by the formation of a European states system, as it is believed by positivist legal thinkers. On the contrary, the early development of international society was associated with ideas such as universalism and natural law. However, such an argument was abandoned by the British Committee in its later period, when its members, under the leadership of Bull and Adam Watson, discussed the 'expansion of international society'. Again, a less conventional approach, embraced by Wight, was abandoned in favour of a more statist approach.

During the 1970s, Wight's colleagues embraced and developed the 'orthodox answer'. Indeed, the opening sentence of *The Expansion of International Society* leaves no doubts. 'The purpose of this book is to explore the expansion of the international society of European states across the rest of the globe'.[56] This sentence reveals the central ideas of the 'orthodox thesis': first, the *European* origins of international society, in the sense that the institutions and practices of modern international society were historically established in the context of relations among European political communities; secondly, the *late* expansion of modern international society, which became universal only after the second half of the nineteenth century; thirdly, the *statist* nature of international society, in the sense that the expansion of the modern society of states followed the universalisation of the modern *states system*. Reflecting the strong link between theory and history in the work of the English school, this orthodox thesis rests on three historical claims. First, the establishment of the modern states system is historically located in early-modern Europe, after the collapse of the medieval political system. This historical event was followed by two developments. On the one hand, the creation in Europe of a society of states, based on common institutions and practices, after the Peace of Westphalia, as we saw; and on the other hand, the formation of

[54] *Systems of States*, p.118.
[55] *Systems of States*, pp.125-7.
[56] Hedley Bull and Adam Watson, 'Introduction', in Hedley Bull & Adam Watson (eds.), *The Expansion of International Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), p.1.

colonial empires as a result of the European expansion to the outside world. People such as Alexandrowicz, and to a certain extent Wight, would also agree that the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries witnessed both the formation of modern international society and the establishment of colonial empires, but they believe that these two processes deeply influenced each other.

What is striking in Bull's and Watson's analysis, and what distinguishes it specially from Alexandrowicz's, is that they managed, to a great extent, to keep the formation of modern international society and the European expansion on separate tracks. It is true that they briefly note that the development of the European state system and the European expansion 'were simultaneous processes, which influenced and affected each other'.[57] Yet, this mutual influence is limited to *European* politics. For Bull and Watson, the European maritime expansion, which started still under the shadow of the medieval imperial threat, helped to consolidate the states system and to defeat the hegemonial principle in Europe.[58] As for any impact on the early formation of *international* society as a whole, Bull and Watson remain silent, and this is indeed a disturbing silence. We actually find in Bull's and Watson's account of the European expansion the same ontological separation that for some separate domestic from international politics. Whereas the establishment of colonial empires was a matter that concerned only the relations between each imperial power and its colonies, and not the development of international society as a whole, the formation of the society of states occurred exclusively in the relations between European powers, and left the colonies out of it. In a certain way, one can conclude that, for the orthodox thesis, the process of colonisation was mainly the continuation of domestic politics.[59] At the beginning of the nineteenth century, European expansion had, in Bull's and Watson's words, 'established the domination of one of the several regional international systems that existed in the fifteenth century over the others...a domination that united the whole world into a single economic, strategic, and political system for the first time';[60] and at the core of

[57] Bull and Watson, 'Introduction', p.6.
[58] Bull and Watson, 'Introduction', p.6, and Adam Watson, 'European International Society and Its Expansion', p.16.
[59] For instance, Watson is quite clear regarding both the separation between European expansion and the formation of a society of states and the view that colonization was a continuation of domestic politics of the European colonial powers. He refers to the 'three centuries of competitive maritime exploration and expansion and the *parallel* evolution of a *European* international society' (my emphasis). He also notes that the Europeans 'incorporated the New World from the beginning into their system of administration and government. It became an extension of Christendom'. See 'European International Society and Its Expansion', respectively, p.32 and p.18.
[60] Bull and Watson, 'Introduction', p.7.

this system, there was a group of European sovereigns that constituted a society of states.

We arrive here at the second and the third ideas of the orthodox thesis: the late expansion, and the statist nature of such a process. The transformation of 'domestic' colonial relations into international relations only occurred during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries with the processes of decolonisation. Moreover, the acquisition of absolute unitary sovereign statehood, through political independence, was the essential condition to enter into a society of states. Indeed, we can distinguish two different moments in Bull's and Watson's account of the 'entry of non-European states into international society' First, before becoming members of international society, the new states had to enter into the modern states system.

> The expansion of Europe, from the fifteenth century to the nineteenth...gradually brought into being an international *system* linking the various regional systems together...This did not mean, however, that there yet existed a universal international society.[61]

Thus, according to Bull, between the fifteenth and the nineteenth centuries, modern history witnessed the emergence of an 'expanding international system', but not the creation of a universal 'international society'.[62]

The second moment regards the entry of non-European states into international society through legal and diplomatic recognition. Here, the English school relies on the idea of standards of civilisation, developed in the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries by international legal positivists. According to such a criterion, 'non-European states entered an originally club of states as and when they measured up to criteria of admission laid down by the founder members'.[63] Thus, by accepting its rules and institutions in the second half of the twentieth century, non-European states became members of the society of states established by European states.[64] This is, then, the account of the expansion of modern international society provided by the English school. The society of states 'was originally confined to Western Christendom out of which it grew'. Its global expansion had to wait for two necessary conditions: first, the creation and consolidation of its institutions in Europe; secondly, the acquisition of sovereign statehood by its non-European members.

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[61] 'The Emergence of a Universal International Society', in Bull and Watson (eds.), *The Expansion of International Society*, p.117. My emphasis.
[62] 'The Emergence of a Universal International Society', p.117.
[63] Bull, 'The Emergence of a Universal International Society', p.123.
[64] As Bull says in *The Anarchical Society*: 'In the twentieth century international society ceased to be regarded as specifically European and came to be considered as global or world wide', p.38.

What is quite odd is that, even without having carefully considered Alexandrowicz's arguments, Bull simply dismisses his thesis, which defends the early emergence of a universal international society. This is still more surprising given that Alexandrowicz's starting-point is precisely a decision of the International Court confirming the legal validity of a Treaty signed between the Portuguese monarch and the Maratha ruler in 1779.[65] It is based on this juridical decision that Alexandrowicz elaborates his view that the encounter between Europeans and Asians gave origin to a set of mutual treaties and common rules to regulate their relations, in accordance with the law of nations. By rejecting Alexandrowicz's account of the expansion of modern international society, Bull and Watson show that their conception of international society is statist in a double sense. First, it rests on the view that the emergence of the states system anticipates the formation of international society. As it is clear in Bull and Watson, the world wide extension of the states system occurs in a previous moment to the expansion of international society. Secondly, by ignoring how the early modern Law of Nations incorporated the relations between Europeans and non-Europeans during the early period of European expansion, Bull's and Watson's conception of international society ignores the idea of divided sovereignty and treats sovereign statehood exclusively in unitary and absolutist terms.

This first part of the chapter discussed, therefore, how the account of the historical evolution of modern international society reflects a *statist* conception of international society. The sovereign state and the states system emerged out of the disintegration of imperial medievalism. A group of *states*, originally in the state of nature, given the collapse of medieval political society, established an international society among them; and this society of states only expanded after non-European communities became sovereign states. In other words, the universalisation of the states system preceded the expansion of the society of states. It is now time to discuss, first, in more detail Bull's pluralist conception of the society of states, and then the most serious theoretical problems of the English school's statist approach to the study of international society.

Bull's pluralist conception of international society

Bull's pluralism was initially developed in 'The Grotian Conception of 'International

[65] Alexandrowicz, *An Introduction to the Law of Nations*, pp.4-5.

Society', presented in April 1962 to the British Committee.[66] He starts by saying that his aim is to contrast 'the doctrine of Grotius himself' with that of Lassa Oppenheim, a 'representative' of the international legal positivist school.[67] Bull discusses the contribution of the Dutch thinker through the work of twentieth century 'neo-Grotians', in particular Lauterpacht's article on 'the Grotian tradition in international law'.[68] This demonstrates that Bull's intention was, as he himself said, 'to consider the adequacy' of the 'prescriptions' of the 'twentieth century neo-Grotians'.[69] In this regard, it may be helpful to briefly discuss Lauterpacht's article on the 'Grotian legal tradition'.

According to Lauterpacht's historical interpretation, the Grotian tradition of international law, to which Grotius's work, mainly *De Jure Belli ac Pacis*, has crucially contributed, emerged during the seventeenth century. Lauterpacht develops an interesting and revealing reading of the double role of the Dutch thinker. Grotius was not only the interpreter of the modern states-system, but he also formulated a legal and an ethical system that has served as a standard of progress for world politics. On the one hand, responding to the collapse of the medieval political system and the rise of the modern territorial state, Grotius put forward a notion of international society defined by the rule of law. In Lauterpacht's words, 'a system of law governing the relations of the independent states'.[70] *De Jure Belli ac Pacis* 'was the first comprehensive and systematic treatise on international law'.[71] According to Lauterpacht, Grotius went further and built a programme, or a paradigm, about the application of the rule of law to international politics, which, if applied, can bring a considerable measure of progress to world politics. This shows not only the achievement of Grotius's intellectual contribution but also the reformist nature of his work.

> [T]he principal and characteristic features of *De Jure Belli ac Pacis* are identical with the fundamental and persistent problems of international law and that in nearly all of them the teaching of Grotius has become identified with the progression of international law to a true system of law both in its legal and in its ethical content.[72]

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[66] Hedley Bull, 'The Grotian Conception of International Society', in Herbert Butterfield and Martin Wight (eds.), *Diplomatic Investigations* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1966), pp.51-73.
[67] Bull, 'The Grotian Conception', p.52.
[68] Lauterpacht, 'The Grotian Tradition'.
[69] 'The Grotian Conception', p.51.
[70] 'The Grotian Tradition', p.17. This would of course correspond to the broad notion of 'Grotianism' used by the English school. See, for instance, Bull, 'The Grotian Conception', p.53; and Wight, *International Theory*, pp.233-4.
[71] Lauterpacht, 'The Grotian Tradition', p.17.
[72] 'The Grotian Tradition', p.19.

It was the 'reformist Grotius' that gave origin to what Lauterpacht calls the 'Grotian tradition', and what Bull named the 'solidarist' conception of international society.

However, to pursue Lauterpacht's historical narrative, the development of the states system between the seventeenth and the nineteenth centuries did not follow the reformist Grotian project.

> Undoubtedly, the general picture of international relations in the two centuries that followed the publication of *De Jure Belli ac Pacis* was not one pointing to any direct influence, in the sphere of practice, of the essential features of the Grotian teaching.[73]

Instead, that period of history saw the rise of both the doctrine of 'reason of state' and the theory of international legal positivism.[74] This state of affairs considerably changed during the twentieth century, which has witnessed the eventual triumph of some of the ideas associated with the Grotian tradition through their integration into positive international law, most notably in the Covenant of the League of Nations, and in the United Nations Charter. In particular, Lauterpacht emphasises, the acceptance of the 'distinction between just and unjust wars', and the related recognition of the 'doctrine of qualified neutrality', 'introduced by the Covenant of the league of Nations, the Pact of Paris of 1928, and the Charter of the United Nations'.[75] In addition, Lauterpacht stresses the integration of the idea of human rights and of the principle of humanitarian intervention in the Charter of the United Nations.[76] The legal recognition of these doctrines makes Grotius' thought a relevant contribution to the study of international relations in the twentieth century. As Lauterpacht himself observes, the inspiration which for more than three centuries has emanated from Grotius's work 'had by no means become a thing of the past'.[77] To oppose Lauterpacht's 'Grotian tradition', or the solidarist theory of international society, Bull develops his pluralist conception of international society.

For Bull, there are three central differences between these two conceptions of international society. The first concerns the treatment of the origins of wars. Whereas solidarists apply criteria of justice to the causes of wars, pluralists reject the doctrine *jus ad bellum*, and affirm that to recur to war is a 'prerogative right of sovereign states'.[78]

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[73] 'The Grotian Tradition', p.16.
[74] Lauterpacht, 'The Grotian Tradition', pp.34-6 and p.39.
[75] 'The Grotian Tradition', p.36.
[76] 'The Grotian Tradition', p.46.
[77] 'The Grotian Tradition', p.16.
[78] Bull, 'The Grotian Conception', p.54.

Secondly, as for the sources of international law, pluralists abandon the idea of natural law, stressing the role of custom and treaties.[79] The final difference appears in the question of membership of international society. Pluralists reject the solidarist inclusive view, to which individuals are also members of international society, and claim that such a membership is restricted to sovereign states. Therefore, Bull's definition of the pluralist conception of international society, as in opposition to the solidarist one, is based on three points. First, states are the only members of international society, which again shows that for Bull the society of states is anticipated by the emergence of the system of states. Moreover, sovereign statehood is defined in absolutist and unitary terms. Secondly, a positivist approach, stressing the consent of states, concerning the sources of international law. Thirdly, a treatment of the just causes of war that rejects the assumption of solidarism among states.

Before we move to the final part of the chapter, it is necessary to introduce a qualification. Given Bull's strong statist position, it would seem appropriate to identify the pluralist conception of international society with realism. Indeed, on a number of occasions, Wight himself identified legal positivism with the tradition of *realpolitik*. However, a careful comparison between the two approaches shows clearly the difference between Bull's pluralism and the realist theory. The distinction between Bull's pluralism and realism starts to be clear when we realise that both pluralism and solidarism have something in common. They are both critical of the tradition of *realpolitik*, arrived at the Anglo-Saxon world during the first half of the twentieth century. Bull himself is quite careful in distinguishing his criticism of solidarism from the realist critique. Legal pluralism is, says Bull, 'opposed to the tradition of *Realpolitik*, according to which there is no international society but rather an international state of nature in which states are without binding obligations in their relations with one another'.[80] Indeed, this reminds Bull's criticism of realists in 'Society and Anarchy', which was discussed in the last chapter.[81] Moreover, Bull does not equate the 'Grotian tradition' with idealism, as for instance Hans Morgenthau does.[82] What Bull tried to do with the category of pluralism was to rescue some elements of the Grotian legacy, such as for instance the importance of the rule of law in world politics and the view that anarchy is compatible with society, from the work of the 'neo-Grotians' and to place those elements within the legal positivist framework. Yet, and this point is crucial, such

[79] Bull, 'The Grotian Conception', pp.66-7.
[80] 'The Grotian Conception', p.53.
[81] See chapter 2 above.
[82] See chapter 1 above.

a reformulation of the Grotian tradition occurs within the broad rationalist tradition, and as part of a debate among members of the English school who adopted alternative conceptions of international society.

We can now define Bull's pluralist conception of international society. It is exclusively composed by unitary sovereign states, which in historical terms are seen as ontologically prior to international society. In other words, states emerged within a condition of political anarchy, and subsequently created international society. Thus, international legal rules must receive the consent of states. The central institutions of this society of states are the balance of power, diplomacy, the great powers, international law, and war.[83] Contrary to realists, Bull claims that there can be society in anarchy; in opposition to Wight's 'Western Values', this society is not a truly political society, but only an 'anarchical society'. Yet, such a view faces some major problems.

Problems with the English school's statist conception of modern international society

The distinction between international society and international system

The distinction between international society and international system became one of the most distinct contributions of Bull to the study of world politics. For Bull,

> A *society of states*...exists when a group of states, conscious of certain common interests and common values, form a society in the sense that they conceive themselves to be bound by a common set of rules in their relations with one another, and share in the working of common institutions.[84]

On the contrary, an international system exists

> Where states are in regular contact with one another, and where in addition there is interaction between them sufficient to make the behaviour of each a necessary element in the calculations of the other, then we may speak of them forming a system.[85]

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[83] For a discussion of the role of international institutions in Bull's thought, see R.J. Vincent, 'Order in International Politics', in J.D.B. Miller and R.J. Vincent (eds.), *Order and Violence: Hedley Bull and International Relations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), pp.49-56.
[84] Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, p.13.
[85] *The Anarchical Society*, p.10.

From these two definitions, it is quite clear that what distinguishes the two notions is the *normative nature* of the former. While the idea of international society is characterised by the existence of common values, rules, norms and institutions, the notion of international system merely expresses interactions between states based on calculations of power, being indeed very similar to the realist notion of state of war.[86]

It is interesting to note that the distinction between international system and international society does not appear in the early work of the English school. For instance, it is ignored by Wight in *Systems of States*. Wight only uses the notion of states-system, which has the same meaning of international society. Nor the distinction appears in Bull's early papers, presented in the British Committee, where the central distinction is between a solidarist and a pluralist conceptions of international society. The distinction only emerges as a central idea in Bull's *The Anarchical Society*. It seems to me that Bull makes this distinction for three reasons. First, to distinguish his approach from both realism and behaviouralism.[87] The distinction allowed Bull to distance his approach from both the American realist and positivist traditions, by stressing the elements of co-operation and collaboration, and the normative dimension of international politics.[88] Secondly, such a distinction was useful for Bull's historical analysis, where according to his account there are two cases that illustrate the existence of an international system. One of the examples, as we saw above, is found in early modern Europe, more precisely in the religious wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when the element of society collapsed, and was only reconstituted with the Peace of Westphalia.[89] The other example, also discussed earlier, is provided by the nature of the relations between European states and non-Christian communities, during the expansion of European imperialism.[90] In particular, the condition of international system is clearly visible in the relations between Europeans and the Ottoman Empire. The third and final reason, and perhaps the most important, that explains the distinction between international system and international society is related with Bull's concern

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[86] For recent discussions on the distinction between international society and international system, see Barry Buzan, 'From International System to International Society: Structural Realism and Regime Theory Meet the English School', *International Organization*, 47 (1993), pp.327-52; Alan James, 'System or Society?', *Review of International Studies*, 19 (1993), pp.269-88; Richard Little, 'Neorealism and the English School: A Methodological, Ontological and Theoretical Reassessment', *European Journal of International Relations*, 1 (1995), pp.9-34, and Richard Little, 'International System, International Society and World Society: A Re-evaluation of the English School', in B.A. Roberson (ed.), *International Society and the Development of International Relations Theory* (London: Pinter, 1998), pp.59-79.

[87] *The Anarchical Society*, p.12.

[88] See Stanley Hofmann, 'International Society', in Miller and Vincent (eds.), *Order and Violence*, pp.22-6.

[89] See Bull, 'The Importance of Grotius', pp.75-8.

[90] See Bull, 'The Emergence of a Universal International Society', pp.117-22.

about the survival of modern international society in a post-colonial age.[91] For Bull, international system, in the sense of the state of war, is a condition in which world politics falls if the international consensus on common normative standards collapses. This indicates that Bull used the concept of international system to illustrate what would be the condition of world politics in the case of the breakdown of the society of states. In this regard, for Bull, this third sense of the notion of international system constitutes an ideal-type to which international political reality should never correspond. At this point, it is important to raise two questions: why did Bull believe, in first place, in the possibility that international society could dissolve? And, why the result of such a dissolution would be a political condition characterised by the idea of international system? One can follow two lines of inquiry, and both are important for my argument.

The first line of inquiry leads one to ask whether it is possible to conceptualise international politics in non-normative terms, that is, as an international system. In answering this question, we realise that the distinction between international society and international system is a typical case that confuses more than it illuminates. This can be seen using an argument developed by Bull himself. When in the very beginning of *The Anarchical Society*, Bull elaborates on the elementary and primary social goals that define political societies, the conclusion is that any kind of social contact results into the emergence of those goals. In other words, it would be impossible for states to have 'sufficient contact between them' without developing elementary and primary social goals and common institutions to deal with those goals. To a certain extent, Bull himself admits so when he says that the international system constitutes 'a whole' and that states are part of it, and are in 'regular contact'.[92] Regular contact necessarily results into social life, unless one reduces such a contact to a permanent state of warfare, which Bull does not do. Then, if there is social life, it has to be arranged in such a way that it 'promotes certain goals or values'.[93] This, therefore, suggests the 'inevitability of international society' as a result of any kind of regular social or political international interaction. In other words, the idea of an *asocial* international system, without a normative structure, does not make sense, and this was precisely what Bull argued against realists in 'Society and Anarchy'. Alan James made a similar point when he argued that it is not possible to define international system as a political system without rules, without communication among its members, and without a sense of common

[91] For the threat posed by the ideological conflict of the Cold War, see *The Anarchical Society*, pp.257-60. For the challenge from the post-Colonial states, see 'The Revolt against the West'.
[92] *The Anarchical Society*, pp.9-10.
[93] *The Anarchical Society*, p.4.

interests.[94] Moreover, even historically, it is not accurate to refer to an international system. As Watson argued, the relations between European states and the Ottoman Empire were regulated by a common set of rules, common institutions and diplomatic conventions.[95] Watson's claim suggests that, in historical terms, the idea of a minimal pluralist international society is more adequate than the notion of international system to characterise the relations between Europe and the Ottomans. Wight himself seems to agree with Watson and James and never distinguishes between an international system and an international society, but between different forms of international society. As James, Watson, and Wight, I believe that no distinction should be made between international system and international society; it is, in James's words, a 'distinction without a difference'.[96] In this regard, only the term international society should be used.[97]

However, although I agree with some of James's points, it seems to me that his definition of international society, in some crucial elements, is similar to Bull's pluralist conception; that is, it is also quite *statist*. For James, international society is the 'collectivity of states'.[98] This leads us to the second venue of investigation, which is to question the statist ontology behind the idea of international system. According to Barry Buzan, we cannot avoid the 'boundary issue',[99] in the sense that, historically, there have existed different types of international societies, with some being socially and politically more integrated and having more societal institutions. Yet, and accepting Buzan's point, even if we cannot ignore the boundary issue, one can still ask, why should we start from the idea of international system? I suspect there is an ultimate reason that made Bull and makes Buzan to start from the idea of an international system: they both conceptualise international society in a strong statist way. Here, the term statist means the belief that a pre-social and pre-normative condition necessarily anticipates the emergence of international society, which corresponds to the second defining element of the statist approach identified above in the introduction of the thesis. The problem is not so much the view that states create international society. It is obvious that, in practical terms, states, or rather their rulers and diplomats, play a vital role in establishing the normative structure of international society. The problem is the assumption that sovereign states

[94] James, 'System or Society?', pp.272-6.
[95] See Watson, 'Hedley Bull'
[96] James, 'System or Society?', p.272.
[97] James, 'System or Society?', p.278. Bearing in mind that Wight's 'system of states' means international society, James seems to follow Wight's view.
[98] 'System or Society?', pp.281-6.
[99] Buzan, 'From International System', p.345.

emerge and act in a *pre-societal and pre-normative condition*. In other words, this problem results from the ontological priority given to the state over international society; or in Alexander Wendt's terms, the belief that states are 'ontological primitive agents'.[100] Now, Bull does not seem to be able to escape this problem, for he simultaneously assures us that, originally, states are in the state of nature, and that an international social and normative domain only emerges with the establishment of the society of states. Bull's views can be explained by recurring to the conventional liberal language. Initially, states are in the original condition, and then through a form of international contract, they forge the international normative structure. Therefore, the idea of international system expresses the condition of autonomous states interacting without a normative structure, which ultimately reveals the view of states as ontological primitive agents.

Moreover, as we saw with Bull's historical account in the first part of this chapter, this is not merely an hypothetical condition. Historically, the original condition corresponds to the period after the collapse of medieval imperialism, when until the creation of international society states are seen as interacting in a social and normative vacuum. The Peace of Westphalia marks the moment of the international contract that constitutes the society of states.[101] This is, however, in historical terms, a mistaken view. For instance, during the Thirty Years' War, which for Bull is part of the period of the original condition and of the state of war, one of the most important political practices was the conclusion of treaties. The signature of treaties normally occurred after long negotiations, characterised by the respect for social conventions and by agreements and disagreements on legal rules and political norms. This picture does not seem to describe a pre-social and pre-normative condition. Equally, the norms approved during the negotiations that led to the Peace of Westphalia were not created by states living in the state of nature. Those norms were the result of existent political ideas and beliefs, which strongly determined what was decided in Munster and Osnabruck. If we do not grasp this, we hardly understand not only the character of the Peace of Westphalia but also the nature of early modern international relations. However, Bull argues that states are, at least in an initial moment, insulated from any broader normative or social context. This explains why Bull is not able to abandon the idea of international system altogether, even if a substantial part of his argument, as we saw,

[100] See Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
[101] Watson refers to the multilateral conferences that preceded the Peace of Westphalia as the 'original international contract', 'Hedley Bull', pp.147-8.

would logically lead to do so. We can now give a single answer to the two questions raised above. Bull believed that international society could dissolve and if so that it would fall into an international system because his starting point is a pre-social and pre-normative condition, which corresponds precisely to the idea of international system, or state of nature.

Given that during the history of modern international society there have been important differences of societal integration in the domains of rules, institutions, interests and values, we still need to distinguish these distinct normative configurations. An alternative position would be to reformulate the 'boundaries issue' as, for instance, Andrew Hurrell has recently done between 'a minimalist conception of international society', 'a pluralist conception of international society', and 'a solidarist conception of international society'[102], which seems to follow the early work of the British Committee. This formulation of the boundaries issue, implicitly, rejects that the state of nature, in the sense of a pre-societal and pre-normative condition, has ever existed in historical terms. We need to discuss now a related problem found in the work of the English school: the distinction between international society and world society. As the distinction between international system and international society, it also ultimately stems from the statist conception of international society.

Clarifying the distinction between international society and world society

Before I proceed with the discussion in this section, let me briefly say what the term 'world society' means here. In the work of the English school, we can find at least five different meanings of world society. First, the idea of world order in the sense that it affects 'the great society of all mankind'. Secondly, the belief that 'the ultimate units of the great society of all mankind are...individual human beings'. Thirdly, the view that certain universal principles of order and 'cosmopolitan' values of 'right or good' apply to 'the world as a whole'. Fourthly, the notion that it is possible to envisage forms of 'universal political organisation' that connect the world in institutional terms, which may fall short of a world government but certainly go beyond the system of sovereign states.[103] Finally, the idea of world society is associated with an imperial political order. One of the central issues in this context regards the relation between international

[102] See Andrew Hurrell, 'Society and Anarchy in the 1990s', in Roberson (ed.), *International Society*, 17-42.
[103] See *The Anarchical Society*, pp.20-2, pp.84-6, and pp.252-4.

society and world society, in particular whether they are compatible or not.[104] The English school is somehow confusing in the treatment of this issue. On the one hand, Wight affirms in *Systems of States* that an effective international society must be underpinned by a common universal culture; and Bull notes that 'If international order does have value, this can only be because it is instrumental to the goal of order in human society as a whole'.[105] Thus, while for Wight the existence of a world society, even if it is minimal, is a condition for the existence of an international society; for Bull, the moral value of international society largely rests on its capacity to fulfil the goals of world society. In any case, in these two examples, the two ideas are compatible. However, on the other hand, the school sometimes argues that world society is ultimately opposed to international society. In an illustrative way, Bull sees, as in contrast to the idea of international society, forms of world society that may serve as 'alternatives paths to world order';[106] and in his lectures on *International Theory*, Wight consistently identifies cosmopolitan theories of world society with the tradition of revolutionism.

Here, I focus on the third, the fourth, and fifth meanings of the term world society. Respectively, the existence of universal principles of order and cosmopolitan values of 'right or good' that apply to the world as a whole, forms of 'universal political organisation' other than the states system, and the idea of an imperial political order. As in the case of the general idea of world society, the relation of the English school with universal principles and cosmopolitan values is also complex. If on some occasions, those principles and values seem to be compatible with the idea of international society, on other occasions they are presented as clashing notions. In this last case, the conclusion is that there are clear limits within the normative and political framework provided by international society to implement universal values and principles. Such a conclusion is associated with two points that appear in the English school's vision of modern political history: the identification between medieval international society and political imperialism, and the view that the modern sovereign state is, in ontological terms, a primitive agent. One of the implications of the latter view is that the state is self-constituted. In this way, universal principles and cosmopolitan values, which supposedly originate outside those self-constituted agents, may constitute a threat to the identity of states. Such a belief is reinforced by the view of medieval international

[104] See the discussion in Little, 'International System, International Society and World Society'.
[105] *The Anarchical Society*, p.22.
[106] See, in particular, part 3 of *The Anarchical Society*.

society as a double-headed political system, dominated by imperial institutions, such as the Holly Roman Empire and the Papacy. The English school tends to see the process of state building in early modern Europe as opposed to medieval imperialism, and quite rightly so. Given that both the Emperor and the Pope claimed that they were the symbols of universal principles and cosmopolitan values, one of the unfortunate consequences, in the work of the English school, is the identification, at the intellectual level, between medieval imperialism and cosmopolitanism and, at the political and normative level, between medieval imperialism and forms of universal political organisation other then the states system. Therefore, not only the modern sovereign state formed its political identity, initially, in an autonomous way, but it was also the case that the system of states emerged in opposition to cosmopolitan and universal principles and values.

The identification between medieval imperialism and cosmopolitan and universal principles and values, by the English school, has far-reaching implications. Given that the modern states system emerged as a reaction against medieval imperialism, cosmopolitan principles and universal values threaten the survival of the society of states. It is in this sense that projects of universal political order other than the states system are understood as forms of 'neo-medievalism' and cosmopolitan theories constitute the tradition of revolutionism. The association between cosmopolitan political ideas and medieval political society was initially formulated by Wight when he referred to the liberal internationalism of President Wilson.

When we study the origins of the states-system, we see that the Wilsonian view prescribes for the future a reversal of the historical development of the past. Western civilization began with an impressive system of 'world government' within the limits of Western Christendom, in the shape of papal monarchy.[107]

Therefore, for Wight, the break between the medieval imperial international society and the modern anarchical states system corresponds to the distinction between the traditions of revolutionism and rationalism. In this regard, the medieval empire becomes the historical example of the revolutionist projects that threaten the idea of a society of states.

A familiar aspect of the intellectual history of the modern European states-system has been the way in which its theory has fallen into three main traditions. Those whose outlook has been missionary and messianic have emphasized the ideal unity of international society as the standard for condemning the

[107] *Systems of States*, p.149.

empirical divisions within the society and believing them to be transitory. They implicitly repudiate the validity of the states-system.[108]

Wight's identification between cosmopolitanism and revolutionism is deeply problematic. The problem is not so much to associate some revolutionist theories with forms of universal empires. As we shall see later in the thesis, the republican political tradition itself largely emerged as the result of reactions against projects of universal monarchy. The problem lies rather in Wight's inclusion of all political theories which have cosmopolitan elements within the revolutionist tradition. This provokes three serious shortcomings in Wight's account of the history of political thought. Contrary to the argument put forward in 'Western Values', it leads him to oppose the idea of international society to cosmopolitan and universal principles and values. In this regard, and secondly, he is unable to fully explore the potentialities of the so-called rationalist authors, for all of them have clear universalist elements in their thought. Finally, it leads him to ignore past political traditions that offer the possibility of building a conception of international society able to integrate both statist and non-statist and universalist elements.

Conclusion

This chapter told how statist conceptions of international society, respectively Wight's system of states and Bull's pluralist society of states, replaced Wight's conception of international political society during the evolution of the English school's work. The statist approach was firmly established after the first period of the British Committee, which ended in 1962.[109] Until 1962, it is possible to find two alternative approaches to the study of international society. As we saw in the last chapter, in 'Western Values', Wight developed the idea of international political society. To such a conception, international society is understood as a constitutional whole greater than the collection of states. Its members include states, individuals, minorities, and political organisations other than the sovereign state. In addition, such an international political society rests on 'an international social consciousness' and 'is the most comprehensive form of society among men'.[110] In opposition to Wight's conception, Bull formulated the notion of

[108] Wight, *Systems of States*, pp.38-9.
[109] For this part of the English school's historiography, see Tim Dunne, *Inventing International Society: A History of the English School* (London: Macmillan, 1998), pp.89-135.
[110] See Wight, 'Western Values', pp.95-105.

society of states, which was initially presented in 'The Grotian Conception', and received its full elaboration later in *The Anarchical Society*.

A *society of states* (or international society) exists when a group of states, conscious of certain common interests and common values, form a society in the sense that they conceive themselves to be bound by a common set of rules in their relations with one another, and share in the working of common institutions.[111]

This statist conception of international society is related with a shift in the intellectual focus of the school, from a broadly defined rationalist tradition to the legacy of Heeren and to international legal positivism. For the German historian, the history of the 'Political System of Europe' is the history of states' mutual relations,[112] and international legal positivists adopt the doctrine of the exclusive state personality; in this sense both views reinforce the statist approach. The statist turn of the school lasted until the last period of the British Committee, which originated the publication of *The Expansion of International Society*. In this volume, the notion of international society as a society of states remains the same.

By an international society we mean a group of states.....which not merely form a system, in the sense that the behaviour of each is a necessary factor in the calculations of the others, but also have established by dialogue and consent common rules and institutions for the conduct of their relations, and recognize their common interests in maintaining these arrangements.[113]

As this chapter argued, one can identify two major problems with the school's statist approach to the study of international society. First, the English school starts from the assumption that international society is the product of a contract among a group of sovereign states originally in the state of nature. It is true that the spread of the sovereign state in Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries considerably affected the nature of international society, but to equate modern international society and the modern states system is, in my view, historically inaccurate. As I briefly suggested, sovereign states did not emerge in a social and political vacuum, but rather in an already constituted international political society with a normative framework. In important ways, such an identification is simultaneously narrow and vague. Narrow,

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[111] *The Anarchical Society*, p.13.
[112] Heeren, *The Political System of Europe*, p.5. For Wight's adoption of Heeren's definition of the states system, see *The Systems of States*, pp.21-2. In *The Anarchical Society*, Bull also identifies his conception of society of states with Heeren's notion of states system, pp.12-3.
[113] 'Introduction', Bull, Watson (eds.), *The Expansion Of International Society*, p.1.

because the idea of international society, as modern political history demonstrates, is more inclusive than it is suggested by the notion of state systems. Vague, because, even accepting the statist nature of modern international society, it is not enough to define it as an anarchical political system composed of sovereign states. To adequately study the nature of modern international society, we need to distinguish between different types of states, different forms of international institutions, and finally between different normative and political principles, values, and practices. The combination of all these elements certainly produces different political orders within modern international society, and these differences, it seems to me, do matter. Now all these distinctions are ultimately the product of intellectual categories and political practices embedded in an international political society greater than the society of states.

The incapacity to see that the states system emerged, developed and changed in the context of a broader international political society brings us to the second major problem found in the statist conception of international society adopted by the English school. If we are able to grasp that historically the states system is part of a greater international political society, we realise that cosmopolitan ideas influence the nature and the evolution of the states system. If, on the contrary, we equate the states system with international society, we end up, as the English school does, with the view that cosmopolitan theories are a threat to the existence of international society. As I shall argue in the second half of the thesis, this is a historical error for cosmopolitan ideas and principles have constituted, in crucial ways, the norms and practices of the society of states, and as such have been an integral part of modern international society.

In this way, the statist argument constitutes a hindrance to the complete development of the idea of international society. It seems to me that to fully explore the idea of international society, we need to dissociate the origins of modern international society from the emergence of both the idea of sovereign statehood and the notion of states system. To develop a satisfactory conception of international society, we can briefly return to Wight's conception of international political society offered in 'Western Values'. Instead of a 'society of sovereign states', presented by legal positivists, and adopted by the school, in particular by Bull, after the statist turn, which in fact 'denies the existence of an effective international society', Wight refers to a conception of international society, where states are 'parts of a greater whole'.[114] For such a conception, first of all, sovereign states are not necessarily the 'ultimate units' of

[114] Wight, 'Western Values', p.95.

international society.[115] In this regard, modern international society is not equated with a states system, but rather the modern states system is part of a wider international society. Secondly, in 'Western Values', Wight is also very critical of the legal positivist doctrine that considers states as 'the only international persons, the only subjects of international law'. For Wight, 'certain institutions other than states have attained a rudimentary international personality', including 'public international unions', international organisations, individuals and minorities.[116] Thirdly, Wight criticises the view that sees foreign policy as 'essentially self-regarding, and all international action' as 'self-help'. For those who embrace the conception of an international political society,

> It is not fallacious to speak of a collective interest, and security acquires a broadened meaning: it can be enjoyed and pursued in common. Foreign policy will take some account of the common interest. It becomes possible to transfer to international politics some of the categories of constitutionalism.[117]

In the rest of the thesis, I will further develop these three ideas. This will be done in the light of how the early modern republican political tradition discussed international relations. In this regard, from this moment, what I have been called the conception of international political society will gradually become a republican conception of international society. As I argued, Wight never built on these suggestions, nor did any other member of the English school. I believe that a redefinition of the notion of international society along the lines of the republican political tradition allows to recover Wight's goals and thus to reformulate the concept of international society. In chapter 4, I will discuss the republican conception of reason of state, which includes the notion of common political good, emphasised by Wight. In chapter 5, I consider the importance of international institutions other than the unitary sovereign state, such as international confederations, which are characterised by the sharing of sovereign authority, challenging what Wight calls the doctrine of exclusive state-personality. In chapter 6, by addressing the idea of *international respublica*, I will try to show that for republicans international society is greater than 'the sum of its parts'.

The result shall be a less statist conception of international society, which abandons the ontological divide between domestic and international politics. As we saw

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[115] Wight, 'Western Values', p.92.
[116] 'Western Values', p.101.
[117] 'Western Values', p.103. It should be stressed that a political theory of international society has to be distinguished from 'theories of world government': 'international constitutionalism' is to be achieved 'not through the creation or imposition of an international government, but by the collective action of the members of international society inspired by a clearer recognition of their legal duties', p. 105.

so far in this thesis, the work of the English school has quite successfully challenged the first consequence of the ontological divide, the absence of a normative conception of world politics, and thereby questioned the first point of the statist approach, the identification between international relations and the state of war. However, the move towards the notion of society of states led the English school to accept the other three implications of the ontological separation. First, as we saw, the sovereign state, as an ontological primitive agent, precedes international society. Secondly, the modern Westphalian political system is understood as being exclusively composed of unitary sovereign states. Finally, although the English school never treats the idea of national interest as resting purely on states' self-interests, it never explicitly develops an alternative conception of reason of state. Moreover, the belief that states are primitive agents, which emerged in the state of nature easily leads to the view that political interests are autonomously defined. By further exploring the idea of international society in the light of the republican political tradition, the task of the rest of the thesis is to dispute these views.

CHAPTER 4: *RAISON D'ÉTAT* AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMON GOOD

The concept of reason of state refers, first of all, to the principles that guide the behaviour of sovereign states in international society. In this regard, it is a question of *statecraft* that any international political theory has to address. As I affirmed in the introduction of the thesis, it is important to discuss the notion of reason of state as part of our attempt to formulate a conception of international society that escapes the ontological divide between domestic and international politics.[1] The attempt to reconcile self-interest with the international common good was one of the contributions of the English school to the study of international relations. This is clear, as it was noted in the end of the last chapter, in Martin Wight's 'Western Values and International Relations', where he makes a connection between the idea of 'responsible statecraft' and the 'international social consciousness'. For Wight, responsible statecraft means the pursuit of the state interest in accordance with the common good: 'Foreign policy will take some account of the common interest'.[2] Such a responsible statecraft, continues Wight, occurs in three ways. States must act, first, in accordance with the principles of international society; secondly, respecting the institutions of international society; and, thirdly, collectively. This expresses the belief that order and security are enjoyed and pursued in common. It also explains why Wight defends the institution of multilateralism, being at the same time quite critical of unilateral and bilateral strategies to maintain international order.[3] Such a non-realist conception of reason of state was never explicitly developed by subsequent work of the English school.[4] The purpose of this chapter is to investigate how the republican political tradition may help us in developing such a conception. Given that the idea of reason of state is often identified with realism, the republican conception will be distinguished from the realist one. In

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[1] See the introduction above.

[2] Martin Wight, 'Western Values in International Relations', in Herbert Butterfield and Martin Wight (eds.), *Diplomatic Investigations* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1966), p.103.

[3] Wight, 'Western Values', p.103.

[4] More recently, among the new generation of international society theorists we find attempts to explicitly develop a non-realist theory of statecraft. In particular, it is worth noting Robert Jackson's notion of 'situational ethics', and Andrew Linklater's idea of the 'good international citizen'. See, respectively, Robert H. Jackson, 'The Political Theory of International Society', in Ken Booth and Steve Smith (eds.), *International Relations Theory Today* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), pp.110-28; and Andrew Linklater, 'What is a Good International Citizen?', in Paul Keal (ed.), *Ethics and Foreign Policy* (St. Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1992), pp.21-43.

particular, it will be argued that the distinctiveness of the republican conception of reason of state results from the centrality given to the idea of *international virtue*, which rarely appears in contemporary discussions on external statecraft.

To trace such a republican conception, and specially to separate it from the realist conception, is not a simple task. Much of the difficulty is clear, for instance, in Machiavelli's thought. The Florentine thinker was, at once, a distinct republican thinker and the founder of the modern idea of reason of state.[5] This would not be problematic if the conception of reason of state formulated by Machiavelli was impeccably republican. Yet, things are far from being that clear, and in fact Machiavelli's republicanism and his view of reason of state are often opposed. It is widely believed that there was not one but 'two Machiavellis': 'the republican citizen and the author of The Prince'.[6] Throughout modern history, most of the attention has focused on the latter rather than on the former, which even gave origin to the term 'Machiavellism'. Indeed, the fact that such a term was chosen as the title of the English translation of the classic analysis of the modern doctrine of *raison d'état*, by Friedrich Meinecke, shows the 'realist', so to speak, reputation of Machiavelli.[7] Although this chapter does not attempt to correct the prevailing view of Machiavelli, nor to clarify the relation between the 'two Machiavellis', it is nevertheless important to start our discussion by addressing the ambiguity of the Machiavellian legacy. This allows us to see how the republican conception of *raison d'état*, while building on some ideas developed by Machiavelli, also breaks with others in a fundamental way. This historical exercise opens the possibility of treating the idea of reason of state in non-realist terms, which has been almost ignored by contemporary International Relations theory.[8] Such a conception of *raison d'état* will be developed in the light of the early modern republican political tradition, associated in particular with the thought of Justus Lipsius. This constitutes the bulk of the chapter. In the last part of the chapter, I shall argue that the normative principles which guided France's conduct during the Thirty Years' War, and the

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[5] In the latter point, I am of following Meinecke's view in Friedrich Meinecke, *Machiavellism: The Doctrine of Raison d'État and Its Place in Modern History* (Translated by Douglas Scott, London: Transaction Publishers, 1998). For a different view, which considers that the idea of reason of state existed long before Machiavelli, see Isaiah Berlin, 'The Originality of Machiavelli', in Isaiah Berlin, *Against the Current: Essays in the History of Ideas* (Edited by Henry Hardy, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), pp.25-79.

[6] See Hans Baron, ''Machiavelli: The Republican Citizen and the Author of "The Prince"', *The English Historical Review*, 76 (1961), pp.217-53.

[7] Meinecke, *Machiavellism*.

[8] There are, to my knowledge, two notable exceptions, who have explicitly treated the idea of reason of state in non-realist terms. John Vincent, 'Realpolitik', in James Mayall (ed.), *The Community of States* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1982), pp.73-84; and Friedrich Kratochwil, 'On the Notion of "Interest" in International Relations', *International Organization*, 1, (1982), pp.1-30.

diplomatic negotiations that led to the Peace of Westphalia, were influenced by the republican conception of reason of state.

Two conceptions of *raison d'état*

Meinecke's *Machiavellism* is a good place to start a discussion on the concept of reason of state. In the very first page of the book, Meinecke defines *raison d'état* as 'the fundamental principle of national conduct, the State's first Law of Motion', which 'tells the statesman what he must do to preserve the health and strength of the State'.[9] To consider the 'well-being of the State' as an ultimate political value is in accordance with most of the ethical doctrines of statecraft. The problem starts when Meinecke develops his definition. Power, continues the German historian, 'maintenance of power, extension of power, is the indispensable means which must – without any qualification – be procured'.[10] We note at once two points that cannot be ignored, and are indeed crucial. First, the belief that 'maintenance of power' can only be achieved by an 'extension of power', which gives origin to an aggressive conception of reason of state. Yet, it is far from being clear that the 'well-being of the State' requires aggressive and offensive strategies and the continuous expansion of power. It may well be the case that defensive strategies, or policies directed towards 'the maintenance of power' without extending it, are the best way to protect the 'well-being of the State'. At this point, then, a question arises: have all thinkers who used the language of reason of state treated the concept in offensive terms, or have some of them treated it in defensive terms? The second point that should be noted is Meinecke's assertion, 'without any qualification'. Again, was this assertion made by all those who have discussed the idea of reason of state? If the answers to these questions show that some thinkers treated reason of state in offensive and others in defensive terms, and some in the context of moral qualifications and others 'without any qualification', then we may indeed conclude that there are two distinct traditions of *raison d'état*.[11] However, given that such a distinction is not obvious, to grasp it we need first to clarify the sources of the confusion.

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[9] *Machiavellism*, p.1.
[10] *Machiavellism*, pp.2-3.
[11] According to Peter Burke, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, there was 'general agreement that a line should be drawn between...two kinds of reason of state': 'good reason of state is what serves the common good, bad reason of state is what serves the individual ruler'. 'Tacitism, Scepticism, and Reason

The Machiavellian legacy

According to Quentin Skinner, chapters XV to XXIII of *The Prince*, which answer the question how should the prince 'conduct himself towards others especially his allies and his own subjects?', constitute 'the most sensational and Machiavellian sections' of the book.[12] Here, Skinner means by 'Machiavellian' the conceptualisation of the doctrine of reason of state purely according to the logic of power politics. This definition of reason of state was the result of Machiavelli's break with the early Renaissance humanist tradition of advice-books to sovereign rulers, which were deeply influenced by the political thought of classical Rome.[13] In those chapters, Machiavelli explicitly repudiates the ethical traditions associated with classical republican thinkers, in particular Cicero. In chapter XV, Machiavelli clearly shows the orientation of his argument.

> One should not be troubled about becoming notorious for those vices without which it is difficult to preserve one's power, because if one considers everything carefully, doing some things that seem virtuous may result in one's ruin, whereas doing other things that seems vicious may strengthen one's position and cause one to flourish.[14]

In other words, 'a ruler who wishes to maintain his power must be prepared to act immorally when this becomes necessary'.[15] Machiavelli thus rejects those qualities and defends those vices, respectively, embraced and criticised by classical Roman thinkers.

In chapter XVI, Machiavelli argues that generosity, a crucial virtue to Cicero, can do the ruler great harm, and claims that in order to deal with power the prince has to be ready to ignore such a virtue. Following such an assertion, in chapter XVII, Machiavelli turns to the vice of cruelty, which was denounced by another Roman humanist, Seneca, and affirms that cruel actions are sometimes necessary for a prince to maintain his government. Finally, in chapter XVIII, discussing whether a prince should honour his word, Machiavelli rejects the Ciceronian principle, which was to become a

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of State', in J.H.Burns (ed., with the assistance of Mark Goldie), *The Cambridge History of Political Thought 1450-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp.481-2.

[12] Quentin Skinner, 'Introduction' to Machiavelli, *The Prince* (Ed. by Quentin Skinner and Russell Price, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p.xv.

[13] In Skinner's words, *The Prince* made a 'contribution to the *genre* of advice-books for princes which at the same time revolutionised the *genre* itself'. See Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought, Volume One The Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), p.118.

[14] Machiavelli, *The Prince*, p.55.

[15] Machiavelli, *The Prince*, p.55.

foundational principle of the modern law of nations, that 'the keeping of promises represents the foundation of justice'.[16] Therefore, for Machiavelli, 'wise princes are governed not by the requirements of the conventional virtues but rather by necessity'.[17] This rejection of the classical political morality originated what Skinner calls 'the Machiavellian revolution', which gave rise to 'the new morality' of the sixteenth century.[18] Such a moral revolution 'embodies a new conception of how the crucial concept of *virtú* should be understood': 'To be a truly *virtuoso* prince is to be willing and able to do whatever is necessary for the preservation of one's government'.[19] In order for the prince to hold his position in power, the obedience to the dictates of necessity is raised to the fundamental principle of political morality. Moreover, this new morality often requires the prince to act 'contrary to truth, contrary to charity, contrary to humanity, [and] contrary to religion'.[20] It is thus obvious that Machiavelli's political morality is radically flexible. We shall see later that for other theorists of the reason of state, the belief in moral flexibility would not mean the abandonment of all moral principles in name of state power. It is important to see now how Machiavelli's 'new morality' is applied to international politics.

It was pointed out that there is a 'republican version of power politics', to which the main political goals are 'greatness, expansion and glory'.[21] Machiavelli is, undoubtedly, a key figure within it. In a consistent way, and based on the model provided by the expansionist Rome, he defended the 'quest for empire'.[22] In this regard, it is not surprising to see Machiavelli praising Ferdinand of Aragon's policy of conquest during the second half of the fifteenth century.[23] Indeed, for the Florentine thinker, the king of Aragon was the example of the 'new Prince': the ruler that simultaneously consolidates her/his domestic power and leads an external strategy of expansion.[24] The defence of imperial expansion led Machiavelli to consider the Roman imperial policy as

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[16] Machiavelli, *The Prince*, pp.61-3.
[17] Skinner, 'Introduction', p.xx.
[18] See the discussion in Quentin Skinner, *Machiavelli* (Oxford University Press, 1981), pp.31-47.
[19] Skinner, 'Introduction', p.xx. Elsewhere, Skinner defines Machiavelli's view of *virtú* as the prince's capacity 'of varying his conduct from good to evil and back again as fortune and circumstances dictate'. *The Renaissance*, p.138.
[20] Machiavelli, cited in Skinner, *Machiavelli*, p.38.
[21] See Maurizio Viroli, *From Politics to Reason of State: The Acquisition and Transformation of the Labguage of Politics 1250-1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p.127.
[22] See Skinner, *Machiavelli*, pp.73-7.
[23] On Ferdinand's achievements, Machivavelli writes, '...he attacked Africa; he invaded Italy; and recently he has attacked France. Thus he has always plotted and achieved great things'. See *The Prince*, p.77. See also Michael W. Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace* (London: W.W. Norton, 1997), pp. 100-1.
[24] *The Prince*, Chapter XXI. Contrary to many other occasions in the early modern period, it is historically accurate to use also the term 'her' in this case for it was in fact Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabelle of Castille who both started the domestic unification of Spain and the expansion of the Spanish Empire.

'the model to be emulated'.[25] Accordingly, Machiavelli devotes the entire Book Two of *The Discourses* to analyse 'the growth of Rome's empire'.[26] It is important to emphasise two points at this moment, for they show the nature of Machiavelli's theory of power politics, and also what later republican thinkers tried hard to avoid.

First, imperial strategies of conquest, as the ones praised by Machiavelli, give origin to an international state of war, as it is defined by the nineteenth century tradition of *realpolitik* and by contemporary realists.[27] As Markus Fischer pointed out, in the work of Machiavelli, international politics is seen as 'a struggle for domination which cannot be escaped'.[28] It is this continuous and violent struggle for domination that obliges state not only to organise for war but also to expand externally.[29] As a result, Machiavelli saw the attack as the best form of defence and placed a strong emphasis upon a policy of conquests and expansion. In other words, we see in Machiavelli's thought the identification between preserving the state and enlarging the state, also found in the tradition of *realpolitik*, as it is noted by Meinecke. In their attempt to escape such a predicament, this point is always kept in mind by later republican thinkers, as we shall see below. Secondly, in Machiavelli's thought, external conquest is associated with a warlike virtue. As Felix Gilbert put it, for Machiavelli, war is 'the most essential activity of political life', and in *The Prince* 'we find nothing about the desirability of peace'.[30] Moreover, the eagerness to engage in wars is a fundamental condition to maintain a republican domestic order: a virtuous republic must also be expansionist.[31] As this suggests, the celebration of a warlike virtue is a typical attitude of a particular strand of republican political tradition, of which Machiavelli is a major figure. More than any other idea, it is this the notion of 'republican imperialism', based on a policy of conquest and on a warlike virtue,[32] that shows the intellectual connection between a specific republican tradition and contemporary realism. It also demonstrates that for some republican thinkers it is not possible to create a moderate and peaceful republican political order at the international level.

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[25] David Boucher, *Political Theories of International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p.95.
[26] See Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Discourses* (London: Penguin Books, 1970).
[27] See the discussion above in chapter 1.
[28] Markus Fischer, 'Machiavelli's Theory of Foreign Politics', in Benjamin Franklin (ed.), *Roots of Realism* (London: Frank Cass, 1996), p.248, see also pp.261-70.
[29] See Machiavelli, *The Discourses*, book one, chapter 6, and book two, chapters 1-5.
[30] Felix Gilbert, 'Machiavelli: The Renaissance of the Art of War', in Peter Paret (ed.), *Makers of Modern Strategy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), p.24.
[31] See the discussion in J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), pp.197-211. This belief is revealed in Machiavelli's saying that a republic must have not only good laws, but also good arms.
[32] See the discussion in Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace*, pp.103-5.

In Machiavelli's political thought, we also note a similarity between his notion of political morality and his views of external statecraft, as indeed it would be expected. 'The quest for power' by the prince becomes 'the quest for empire' by the state. The association between the maintenance of the state and the expansion of its power, or in other words the incapacity to distinguish between defensive and offensive strategies, results in a conception of *raison d'état* which does not include any concern for the international common good. In intellectual terms, by saying that external conquest and military virtues rank higher than a peaceful international order, Machiavelli was rebuking an older republican tradition, associated in particular with Cicero's teaching.[33] This point is particularly important for later republican thinkers consistently linked aggressive imperialism with state of war, and in opposition to such a view recovered the classical republican connection between the desirability for peace and defensive external policies. This resistance against expansionist imperialism involved an attempt to create a republican peaceful order at the international level, and hence to overcome the state of war. It is quite revealing that the ideology of imperialism, praised by Machiavelli in his discussion of Ferdinand of Aragon's policy of conquests, was the main target of later republican thinkers in their attacks on the imperial project of the Habsburgs, the successors of Ferdinand.

Machiavelli's realism is widely accepted, and quite rightly so, in contemporary International Relations. For one of the founding fathers of the discipline, E.H. Carr, 'Machiavelli is the first important political realist' to 'revolt against utopianism'; as such, continues Carr, he laid down the 'foundation-stones of the realist philosophy'.[34] Wight used the term 'Machiavellian' to name the realist tradition of international theory.[35] More recently, David Boucher and Michael Doyle restated the same view. For Boucher, Machiavelli is one of the central figures of modern 'empirical realism', and for Doyle, the Florentine thinker is the main example of the classical 'fundamentalist realism'.[36] There is, however, a crucial problem with this conventional interpretation. Because Machiavelli's name is associated both with the tradition of power politics and

[33] Viroli disagrees with this reading and offers an interpretation of Machiavelli's views on foreign politics, which stresses its defensive character. See *From Politics to Reason of State*, pp.162-4; and Maurizio Viroli, 'Machiavelli and the Republican Idea of Politics', in Gisela Bock, Quentin Skinner and Maurizio Viroli (eds.), *Machiavelli and Republicanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp.159-61.

[34] E.H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis 1919-1939* (Papermacs Edition, London: Macmillan, 1981, initially published in 1939), p.63.

[35] Martin Wight, *International Theory: The Three Traditions* (Edited by Gabriele Wight and Brian Porter, London: Leicester University Press, 1991), see in particular chapters 7,8, and 9.

[36] See, respectively, Boucher, *Political Theories*, chapters 5 and 6, and Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace*, chapter 2.

with the notion of reason of state, it is concluded that *reason d'état* is a typical realist concept. Historically, this is a problematic view. In other words, although 'Machiavellians', in Meinecke's sense, and non-Machiavellian republican thinkers both recur to the term *raison d'état*, they use it with different meanings, and associate it with distinct political moralities. These crucial clarifications are still more difficult to grasp in the sense that in a vital point later republican thinkers built on Machiavelli's contribution. The Florentine republican was probably the first modern political thinker to adopt in a systematic way a secular approach to political morality. The realm of politics is not to be constrained by religious virtues, but rather, in an ethical political order, religion must be subordinated to politics.[37] As it will be discussed below, such a secular vision of politics is also vital for the republican conception of reason of state. But before we move to that idea, it is necessary to briefly see how the Machiavellian legacy of power politics was later recovered by the tradition of *realpolitik*.

From Machiavelli to realpolitik

The transformation of certain 'Machiavellian' themes, such as the quest for power and the defence of expansionist policies, into a theory of *realpolitik* is a huge topic that cannot be fully treated here. Indeed, Meinecke devoted a 433-page book to investigate such a topic. What I briefly seek to show is how those Machiavellian themes survived in modern political thinking, by being incorporated into a nationalist conception of *raison d'état*. This point is in line with the claim I offered in chapter 1 concerning the nationalist nature of the realist theory of international politics. The impact of nationalism on the Machiavellian version of reason of state is clearly visible in Meinecke's work, first of all in his definition of the state. 'The State is an organic structure whose full power can only be maintained by allowing it in some way to continue growing; and *raison d'état* indicates both the path and the goal for such a growth'.[38]

In fact, one of the central themes of Meinecke's work is precisely how some ideas originally developed by Machiavelli were later integrated into the tradition of *realpolitik*, which emerged during the nineteenth century with the nationalist revolution. The nationalisation of the modern sovereign state, and the new idea of the national state,

[37] On the relation between political and religious moralities, see Berlin, 'The Originality of Machiavelli'.
[38] Meinecke, *Machiavellism*, p.1.

gave a new meaning to the old Machiavellian conception of reason of state. Such an intellectual process culminates in Leopold Ranke's work.[39] In the nineteenth century, the idea of 'State-egoism' acquired 'great moral power' and Ranke 'saw in it the most powerful impulse' in modern history.[40] From Machiavelli, Ranke kept the idea of expansion: state power 'must continue constantly to grow'.[41] Another German historian, Hans Baron, who interestingly was a student of Meinecke, places Ranke's contribution in the political context of nineteenth century Germany. He argues that Ranke believed that the author of *The Prince* was trying to show that only an expansionist conception of reason of state could protect Italy from foreign domination. The idea that national liberation could only be achieved through power politics and a 'new prince' served, for Ranke, as a guide for the unification of Germany. *The Prince* was praised by the early generation of the German *realpolitik* tradition as offering a political programme for national unification.[42] Thus, Machiavelli's defence of imperial expansionism fits perfectly into an aggressive nationalist ideology.

Towards the end of his book, Meinecke raises a crucial question: 'But why does this old story...sound like a new story now when Ranke tells it?'[43] The answer to this question lies in the national idea. Nationalism, says Meinecke, 'created entirely new possibilities for power politics'.[44] In this regard, 'From Machiavellism to Nationalism – this could be described as the theme of the whole sinister development of which we have tried to clarify the earlier stages'.[45] It is interesting to note that here Meinecke changes the tone of his language. What is on some occasions described as 'moral progress', like when he discusses German national unification, becomes now a 'sinister development'.[46] Such a change is confirmed by the hopeful note that Meinecke leaves in the conclusion of the book. We need

> To take up once again the old question concerning the bounds of *raison d'état*, and present the desirable relationship between politics and morality in the manner in which it derives from the combination of historical investigation and experience.[47]

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[39] The argument here, of course, follows the claim made above in chapter 1.
[40] Meinecke, *Machiavellism*, pp.385-6.
[41] Ranke, cited in Meinecke, *Machiavellism*, p.386.
[42] Baron, 'The Republican Citizen and the Author of 'The Prince'', p.219.
[43] Meinecke, *Machiavellism*, p.386.
[44] *Machiavellism*, p.414.
[45] Meinecke, *Machiavellism*, p.410.
[46] Meinecke was of course deeply influenced by German history. During the nineteenth century, when Bismarck – 'the master of modern *raison d'état*' – unified Germany the triumph of the national idea seemed indeed a moral progress; yet, from the perspective of the post-Great War, when Meinecke wrote his book, the defeat of Germany made nationalism to appear like a 'sinister development'.
[47] *Machiavellism*, p.424. It is interesting to note that this is amazingly similar to Vincent's conclusion in his shrot article on 'realpolitik'.

This remark reminds us that there is a second theme in Meinecke's book. He also investigates how from the very beginning of modern political history some thinkers tried to reconcile the idea of reason of state with international principles and institutions, that is, rationalism in Wight's sense. Indeed, Meinecke says in the introduction of his book that it is 'the struggle for and against Machiavellism' that he is going to describe.[48] However, being a child of the age of nationalism, he could not fully escape the categories of realism and idealism and never referred explicitly to two conceptions of reason of state, but rather to *raison d'état* and its opponents. In this sense, Friedrich Kratochwil is rather more helpful when he refers to an old political tradition that was able to include the idea of 'public international interest' within the concept of national interest.[49] Let me now discuss how the early modern republican political tradition tried to achieve this.

Justus Lipsius and the republican conception of raison d'état

As we saw, one of the conclusions of Machiavelli, 'the author of *The Prince*', was that rulers must be prepared to do evil in order to achieve the good. Moreover, this belief was reinforced by the assumption that, contrary to domestic politics, in international politics there is no escape to that predicament. In relations with allies and enemies alike, the sovereign prince is bound to do evil in order to survive. The Machiavellian view, as Skinner observes, posed a 'challenge which subsequent writers on statecraft have found it almost impossible to ignore'.[50] In particular, later theorists of statecraft had to demonstrate that there is nothing intrinsic to international politics that necessarily requires 'to do evil'. On the contrary, ideas such as virtue, justice, and the rule of law have a crucial place in relations between sovereigns. This is particularly true in the case of later republican thinkers who attempted to develop what can be named as the notion of 'international virtue': it is a political virtue for rulers to create and maintain an international *respublica*. This requires, first of all, a concept of reason of state which includes a concern for the international common good.

In this thesis, Justus Lipsius is considered to be a central figure in the development of the republican conception of *raison d'état*. In this regard, his main

[48] *Machiavellism*, p.ix.
[49] Kratochwil, 'On the Notion of "Interest"', pp.12-8.
[50] Skinner, 'Introduction', p.xxiv.

political work, *Six Books of Politics*,[51] will serve to illustrate the emergence of such a conception in early modern Europe, and how it affected international politics. Before, given the claim made here that Lipsius is a republican thinker, it is important to briefly address the argument of those who place him in the absolutist camp, in opposition to the ideology of republicanism. Indeed, it was observed that Lipsius's political work is 'the most elaborate and eloquent plea for princely rule', which offered a 'powerful repudiation' of the republican arguments of those who supported the Dutch revolt of the sixteenth century against the Habsburgs.[52] Given this assertion, it is essential to show how a thinker who defended domestic absolutism falls, in terms of international political theory, into the republic tradition. This is yet another example of the intellectual contradictions that mark the republican political tradition, as it has already been pointed out in the introduction of the thesis. In a certain sense, there is here a parallel, albeit in the opposite direction, with Machiavelli. Whereas the Florentine thinker developed a republican view of the domestic constitutional political organisation, but a theory of power politics when it came to foreign affairs; Lipsius, despite his defence of domestic absolutism, adopted a republican view about external statecraft. Lipsius may be seen as belonging to an intellectual tradition, which lasted until the beginning of the nineteenth century, that attempted to reconcile a *monarchical* form of government with *republican* values. Although republican thinkers tended to be aware of the potential disadvantages of monarchy, they still believed in the possibility of reconciling monarchical government with the republican spirit. It was in this context that terms such as 'mixed constitution' and 'limited monarchy' emerged.[53] Finally, and crucially, Lipsius's *international republicanism* appears in the way he uses a distinct republican language to discuss foreign politics.

Martin van Gelderen himself admits that Lipsius, following Cicero, adopted the republican ideas of prudence, virtue, and justice in his discussions of politics. He affirms that Lipsius's 'Neostoicism and republican theory had the same epistemological foundation'. They both 'employed the same 'language' and used the same conceptual scheme and identical organising categories.' It was merely 'in arguing that the *vitas civilis* could only be attained in a political order that was marked by unified, virtuous

[51] Justus Lipsius, *Six Books of Politics or Civil Doctrine, Written in Latin by Justus Lipsius: Which Does Especially Concern Principalities* (Translated by William Jones, London: Richard Field, 1594).
[52] Martin van Gelderen, *The Political Thought of the Dutch Revolt 1555-1590* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp.180-7.
[53] See the discussion in Blair Worden, 'English Republicanism', in J.H. Burns (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Political Thought*, pp.443-8.

princely rule', that Lipsius 'plainly refuted republicanism'.[54] These remarks show quite well that when Gelderen treats Lipsius as opposing republicanism, he is referring to Lipsius's opposition to the creation of a *republican political regime* in the United Provinces, and not to intellectual major departures from the republican political tradition. Indeed, the conceptual language is the same. This places Lipsius squarely within the tradition of 'Renaissance humanism', more specifically within the classical 'mirror-for-princes tradition',[55] abandoned by Machiavelli in the beginning of the sixteenth century, with the authorship of *The Prince*. In other words, and notwithstanding some similarities between the two thinkers,[56] Lipsius sought to recover the older tradition of reason of state, associated with classical republican authors, that was heavily attacked by Machiavelli. Lipsius's break with the Machiavellian tradition of reason of state is noted by other historians of early-modern Europe. In his discussion of Dutch republicanism in the context of early-modern European political thought, Eco Haitsma Mulier argues that the 'myth of Venice' played a crucial role in the development of the republican ideology in the United Provinces.[57] As many others in the Low Countries, Lipsius also praised Venice as an example of a moderate republic.[58] In particular, Lipsius admired the fact that Venice had always been peace-loving and not expansionist. This shows again the contrast between Lipsius and Machiavelli, for the second criticised Venice for its moderation and its inability to expand, as in opposition to the imperial Rome.[59] Thus, contrary to Machiavelli, Lipsius showed a clear concern for peace over expansion, a quality associated with the republic of Venice.[60] We have here an example of the disagreement between those, like Machiavelli, who favoured political constitutions that permitted the creation of 'commonwealths for expansion' and

[54] See Martin van Gelderen, 'The Machiavellian Moment and the Dutch Revolt: The Rise of Neostoicism and Dutch Republicanism', in Bock et al, *Machiavelli and Republicanism*, p.219.
[55] Gelderen, *Dutch Revolt*, pp.181-5.
[56] See Gelderen, 'The Machiavellian Moment and the Dutch Revolt', pp.209-10.
[57] Eco Haitsma Mulier, 'The Language of Seventeenth-Century Republicanism in the United Provinces: Dutch or European?', in Anthony Pagden (ed.), *The Languages of Political Theory in Early-Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp.179-95.
[58] Mulier, 'Dutch or European?', p.184.
[59] Machiavelli's comparison between Rome and Venice is discussed in Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, pp.183-218.
[60] This should not be understood as a denial of Machiavelli's influence on Lipsius. According to Mulier, '[i]n his work on government and the state [Lipsius] referred by name to Machiavelli as a sharp intellect, but immediately added a warning that his prince had taken the wrong road', Eco Haitsma Mulier, 'A Controversial Republican: Dutch Views of Machiavelli in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', in Bock et al (eds.), *Machiavelli and Republicanism*, p.252. Moreover, Lipsius was in general influenced by the republican idea of secular political virtues, as it will be argued below.

those, such as Lipsius, who defended constitutions suitable for 'commonwealths for preservation'.[61]

Among the recent work of the historians of political thought, it is Richard Tuck's *Philosophy and Government* that mostly contributes for a new interpretation of the significance of the idea of *raison d'état* in modern political history.[62] As he himself says, in his investigation on the nature of early modern political thought in Europe, 'a proper understanding of *raison d'état* theory became the first priority'.[63] This led Tuck into an investigation of the Renaissance political thinking, in particular the humanist and republican traditions. For the purpose of our argument, the significance of Tuck's work lies in his claim that the language of *raison d'état* was used in distinct ways and was indeed associated with different political theories. One can draw two implications from this argument. First, the language of *raison d'état*, with its origins in the Renaissance, deeply influenced subsequent political thought up to the natural law theories of the end of the seventeenth century.[64] Secondly, historically, it is a mistake to treat reason of state as always having the same meaning; instead, its history is made of intellectual breaks. It is in this context that we should understand the distinction between Lipsius's republican conception of *raison d'état* and Machiavelli's approach. As many others, Tuck also recognises that Machiavelli was 'in some sense a precursor of the *raison d'état* writers'.[65] Yet, he adds that the humanist notion of reason of state developed in the last quarter of the sixteenth century in Northern Europe, despite 'the undeniable links with the Machiavellian tradition', 'broke with it in some crucial respects'.[66] It is fundamental to grasp the nature of this break for some of the 'crucial respects' are directly concerned with international politics. For instance, in the cases where it is morally permitted to recur to war, Lipsius says, in desperate matters, i.e. self-preservation, 'let [the Prince] decline gently from the lawes, yet not except it be for his own conservation, but never to enlarge his estate'.[67] Here we have the first fundamental distinction of the early modern theory of just war. Moral principles could be broken when preservation was at stake, 'but not for any other reason, such as the enhancement

[61] For the significance of this distinction, see Worden, 'English Republicanism', p.466; and, for a more extensive discussion, Judith N. Shklar, *Montesquieu* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), chapter 3.
[62] Richard Tuck, *Philosophy and Government 1572-1651* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).
[63] Tuck, *Philosophy and Government*, p.xii.
[64] Tuck affirms that the influence of *raison d'état* on 'natural law theories' is 'the principal historical claim which I am making'. *Philosophy and Government*, p.xiv.
[65] *Philosophy and Government*, p.xii.
[66] Tuck, *Philosophy and Government*, p.40.
[67] Quoted in Tuck, *Philosophy and Government*, p.57.

of a ruler's or his country's *glory*'.[68] In other words, self-preservation and self-defence, but not expansionist and aggressive policies, were just causes of war. In these views we capture exactly the difference between Lipsius and Machiavelli.[69]

Like Tuck, Gerhard Oestreich sees Lipsius as 'heir to the Italian Renaissance' and places his thought firmly within the early-modern European humanist tradition.[70] For Oestreich, Lipsius was 'the chief figure' of European political thought during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, whose 'mirror of princes appealed to the *prudentia* of the leading personalities in the state...and called for *vis* to be restrained by *virtus*'.[71] Indeed, in the preface to the book, Lipsius is clear concerning his intentions to offer advises to the rulers. He starts by addressing the 'Emperor, Kings, and Princes'.

> The change you sustain is great and glorious. What is more magnificient among men, then for one to have authority over many; to give laws and commands; to govern the sea, the land, peace and war?[72]

Lipsius continues by making, at once, the distinction between two forms of exercising princely authority. 'Your end' is to exercise such tasks for 'the profit and good of the Commonwealth'; 'you govern for the benefit of men'. However, there are 'idle and wicked Princes, who in a kingdom think upon nothing else but the commandement they have...and who do imagine they are not given to their subjects, but their subjects to them'.[73] Again, it is illustrative to compare this distinction with Machiavelli's views expressed in Chapter XV of *The Prince*, where he affirms that 'a ruler who wishes to maintain his power must be prepared to act immorally when this becomes necessary'.[74]

Lipsius firmly rejects such an assertion. Yet, it might be observed that a concern with the 'good of the Commonwealth' may require external expansion. To distinguish between the good of the state and the interest of the ruler does not in itself define a republican conception of external reason of state. The emphasis on the common good over the good of the ruler may serve as the foundation for a non-Machiavellian conception of reason of state, but it does not avoid *per se* a notion of reason of state which accepts expansionism. Indeed, the ideology of democratic nationalism might be simultaneously compatible with a concern for the domestic common good and with a

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[68] Tuck, *Philosophy and Government*, p.58. Emphasis in the original.
[69] Tuck, *Philosophy and Government*, p.57.
[70] Gerhard Oestreich, *Neostoicism and the Early Modern State* (Edited by Brigitta Oestreich and H.G. Koenigsberger, translated by David McLintock, Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp.1-9 and 33-8.
[71] Oestreich, *Neostoicism*, p.9.
[72] *Six Books of Politics*, preface.
[73] *Six Books of Politics*, preface.
[74] *The Prince*, p.55.

defence of external expansionism. In this regard, one of the greatest contributions of Lipsius was the idea that the good of the commonwealth and the benefit of citizens, the central duties to be pursued by the ruler, require a peaceful international order. To contribute to the maintenance of international peace is a duty of the ruler that follows from her/his duty to guarantee domestic security. This new kind of secular prince, in Lipsius's view, embraces the classical Roman values and is, 'in the Stoic sense', a ruler of the world, and not just of her/his own country.[75]

In the first and second books, Lipsius addresses the nature of 'princely rule as a moral institution'.[76] Lipsius's political morality for rulers rested on Stoicism, which he recovered from his interpretation of Roman thinkers, in particular Tacitus, but also Cicero. In brief terms, Stoicist political morality stresses three ideas. In the first place, a detached and sceptical view of the world, freed of grandiose political utopias. Secondly, a particular kind of resignation in the face of adverse fortune, which gives the necessary self-discipline to endure the most terrible calamities.[77] Finally, a set of moral maxims of statecraft to deal with the 'stormy age' of European wars.[78] According to this neo-Stoicist moral theory, Lipsius told the seventeenth-century statesmen that the 'proper conduct of the prince' must follow 'prudence' and 'virtue': 'Prudence and virtue alone can make the sovereign a perfect ruler'.[79] The way Lipsius defines political virtue and prudence places his thought decisively within the republican political tradition.

For Maurizio Viroli, 'the tradition of the political virtues', inherited from classical Rome, played a central role in the historical emergence of the republican language of politics in early modern Europe.[80] According to this classical tradition, and in particular for Cicero, there are four types of 'virtues proper to the political man': 'prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance'.[81] The first two, prudence and justice, are central to Lipsius's thought. 'Prudence' 'consists in the capacity of directing [political] action by reason'. Thus, 'it bears the responsibility of making the right choice' concerning the ruler's behaviour. The virtue of 'justice' concerns not the right *behaviour*, but the ultimate *goal* that the ruler must pursue: the preservation of human

[75] See Oestreich, *Neostoicism*, p.28.
[76] Oestreich, *Neostoicism*, p.40.
[77] This second point is the foundation of what could be called a politcal morality for citizens, which requires above all discipline, obedience and self-control of political passions. See Oestreicht, *Neostoicism*, pp.6-7, 30 and 33.
[78] See Burke, 'Tacitism, Scepticism'.
[79] Oestreich, *Neostoicism*, p.43.
[80] Viroli, *From Politics to Reason of State*, pp.12-30. See also the discussion in Skinner, *The Renaissance*, pp. 84-101.
[81] Viroli, *From Politics to Reason of State*, p.18.

society in accordance with universal principles of life, liberty and equality.[82] These definitions are indeed adopted by Lipsius.

In book one, Lipsius starts be affirming that 'prudence' is a fundamental political virtue.[83] It tells how the ruler should act in rational terms. 'Without prudence', says Lipsius, 'power is blind'.[84] As Oestreich put it, prudence 'gives discernment and true judgement', and upon it rests the art of politics.[85] In book four, Lipsius distinguishes between 'civil' and 'military' prudence. The former refers to 'the dayly managing of matters in time of peace', whereas the latter is concerned with the right behaviour in war,[86] which will be further discussed below. As for 'justice', Lipsius calls it a 'greater virtue': 'It is a virtue observing that which is just and right'. As such, 'to administer justice is the principal duty of a prince'.[87] Lipsius ends his discussion about political morality with a vital distinction, typical of the republican ideology: 'a tyrant regards only...his own comodity, and a king the profit and good of his subjects'.[88] Therefore, and despite his preference for princely rule, Lipsius remains within the republican moral tradition of statecraft. As it was already noted, this particular mixture of support for a monarchical regime and the use of a republican language was common in the Renaissance Europe. In this respect, it is revealing that Lipsius avoided titles such as 'The Prince' or even 'Reason of State' for his treatise on politics, calling it instead *Six Books of Politics*. As Viroli remarked,

> Referred to kingly or princely rule, the adjective "political"...retains the commitment to justice and the common good...[it] indicates that the king possesses less power than a non-political king, and must accept checks and limitations. The label "political" clearly separates the prince from the tyrant, and makes him resemble a republican ruler. When advocates of monarchical government resorted to the word "*politicus*", they always intended to attach to the image of the monarch some of the connotations that belonged to the vocabulary of the *respublica*: the rule of law, the commitment to justice and the common good.[89]

This describes perfectly well Lipsius's contribution and shows the influence of the idea of republican political virtue on his thought.

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[82] Viroli, *From Politics to Reason of State*, pp.16-9.
[83] *Six Books of Politics*, p.1.
[84] *Six Books of Politics*, p.41.
[85] *Neostoicism*, p.43, see the discussion in pp.41-4.
[86] *Six Books of Politics*, p.61.
[87] *Six Books of Politics*, pp.27-9.
[88] *Six Books of Politics*, p.23.
[89] Viroli, *From Politics to Reason of State*, pp.68-9.

After having laid down his political morality for rulers, Lipsius explicitly addresses, in chapters 13 and 14 of book four, the question of reason of state. In chapter 14, he raises the question whether it is permissible for a ruler to recur to the political vice of 'deception': 'After what manner, and how far...deceipts are to be admitted'.[90] Lipsius defines 'deceipts' as actions that violate 'virtue or the laws for the good of the Prince and the state',[91] in other words what Machiavelli calls 'necessity'. Lipsius distinguishes between three kinds of deception: 'light', 'middle' and 'great'.[92] In order to fully understand Lipsius's discussion of this fundamental question, we need to refer to another crucial distinction made by the early-modern humanist tradition between a 'state of emergency' and a 'normal state of affairs'. During the latter, 'moral and legal rules remained valid'; only during a state of emergency the ruler could break those rules in name of the public interest (*salus publica*).[93] It is during these extraordinary periods that Lipsius admits that 'deception must be used to counter deception if the common good requires it'.[94] But even in these cases, Lipsius establishes two important qualifications. First, he tolerates the first, the 'light', and the second, the 'middle', but roundly condemns the third, the 'great', in any occasion.[95] As Oestreich observed, Lipsius 'condemns those who think that anything is just...if it serves to maintain the government'.[96] Moreover, Lipsius is unequivocal in his rejection of injustice, which shall not be permitted 'even for the common good'.[97] Secondly, Lipsius makes it quite clearly that the state of emergency is an extraordinary situation, and that the main duty of the ruler is to restore peace, the normal state of affairs, and not to maintain the condition of emergency in order to increase power.[98] Therefore, resting on strong moral foundations, reason of state turns into a doctrine of civic and moral virtue, defending a prudent and not an expansionist self-interest. As some historians, following the argument of Oestreich, recently pointed out, Lipsius inaugurated a tradition of advice-books to princes, for which it was crucial to distinguish between 'true reason of state (*ratio status genuina*)' and 'false reason of state (*ratio status spuria*)'.[99]

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[90] Lipsius, *Six Books of Politics*, p.115.
[91] *Six Books of Politics*, p.115.
[92] *Six Books of Politics*, p.115.
[93] See Wolfgang Weber, '"What a Good Ruler Should Not Do": Theoretical Limits of Royal Power in European Theories of Absolutism, 1500-1700', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 4 (1995), p.902.
[94] Cited in Oestreich, *Neostoicism*, p.49.
[95] *Six Books of Politics*, pp. 115-23. See also, Oestreich, *Neostoicism*, p.49.
[96] Oestreich, *Neostoicism*, p.48.
[97] Oestreich, *Neostoicism*, p.49.
[98] See Lipsius's discussion on a 'just peace', *Six Books of Politics*, pp.178-86.
[99] Weber, '"What a Good Ruler Should Not Do"', p.900.

In accordance with his political morality, Lipsius affirms that peace is the ultimate political goal, and he 'warns against the principal causes of war: ambition, power-hunger and acquisitiveness'.[100] In this regard, in book five, addressing the question of 'military prudence', he treats the problem of just and unjust wars. In very conventional terms, according to the humanist tradition, the issue of the justice in war is further divided into three questions: just origins, just causes and just objectives.[101] Here, Lipsius's discussion, in particular on the causes and origins of war, is dominated exclusively by defensive, and not offensive, concerns.[102] As for the objectives of war, 'a good end is required, which is peace'.[103] As we saw, Machiavelli links his political morality with his views on foreign policy, and the 'quest for power' by the prince turns into the 'quest for empire' by the state. Lipsius made the connection in rather different terms: virtuous and prudent statecraft leads to the quest for international peace. We have here again the vital distinction between 'commonwealths for expansion' and 'commonwealths for preservation'. What is quite interesting is Lipsius's ability to reconcile a conception of the sovereign state based on power with a Neostoicist political morality, which in the end permits to discipline and to limit the use of state power itself.

The central place of the notion of just war in Lipsius's political thought also shows the importance given to the rule of law in international relations. In this respect, Lipsius's thought needs to be understood in the context of early modern European humanism. Among sixteenth and seventeenth centuries humanists, there was a widespread conviction that in political matters a rational behaviour must follow legal considerations. This is connected with the growing of a new discipline, 'legal science', based essentially on the interpretation of Roman jurisprudence, in early modern Europe.[104] This 'new science' developed a 'vocabulary and conceptual apparatus' designed to comprehend political life in Europe, which ultimately gave origin to modern public law. Social groups, among them states, were legally personified, enjoying a set of rights but also 'responsibilities before the law'.[105] International political crises, as those which characterised sixteenth and seventeenth centuries European politics, gave new urgency to the development of legal concepts. The outcome was that the publicists came 'to establish a certain monopoly over...political discourse', particularly regarding the

[100] Oestreich, *Neostoicism*, p.51.
[101] See the discussion in Oestreich, *Neostoicism*, p.51.
[102] *Six Books of Politics*, pp.127-32.
[103] *Six Books of Politics*, pp.132-3.
[104] See Donald Kelley, 'Civil Science in the Renaissance: the Problem of Interpretation', in Pagden (ed.), *The Languages of Political Theory*, pp.57-78.
[105] Kelley, 'Civil Science', p.67.

activities of European states.[106] The 'triumph of the legal professionals' meant also that the behaviour of sovereign states in early modern Europe was strongly influenced by legal considerations. The law of nations, drawing on the Roman notion of *jus gentium*, the law common to all civilised *gentes*, became the common legal body of the emergent European sovereign states. In the case of statecraft, a generally accepted political maxim was that the 'ruler is bound by the laws, [and] his authority is limited'.[107] For instance, the transformation of the notion of just war from a moral principle to a fundamental norm of the law of nations shows the impact of the early modern legalist ideology on early modern European politics. The immediate implication of the impact of the legal science is that a proper understanding of the doctrine of *raison d'état* cannot be isolated from the emergence of the European public law.

A final point that needs to be briefly made concerns Lipsius's secular humanism, which was 'confessionally neutral'. As Oestreich so well put it, with the humanist and the republican traditions, 'Western Christendom...was once again linked with the world of antiquity',[108] more specifically with classical Rome. As it was noted above, Machiavelli played a decisive role in the development of modern political thought towards secularisation. Above all, a secular view of political reason is in opposition to politics conducted by confessional passions. In early-modern politics, the way to deal with such an opposition was probably the key issue. Quite ironically, as we shall see now, it was a Cardinal, by opposing the Catholic Habsburgs's quest for empire, by making alliances with Calvinist states, and by presenting the Thirty Years' War as a political rather than a religious conflict, that mostly contributed to the consolidation of the secular conception of *raison d'état*. This point also suggests that Lipsius's thought strongly influenced Richelieu's views on statecraft. Indeed, the next section of the chapter will show how some of Lipsius's republican themes were adopted by France's foreign policy during the struggle against the Habsburgs's imperial project.

French policy during the Thirty Years' War

The French Secretary of State, Cardinal Richelieu, is often associated with the doctrine of *raison d'etat*. This is largely linked to his central role in the emergence of a unitary

[106] Kelley, 'Civil Science', p.68.
[107] Oestreich, *Neostoicism*, p.43.
[108] *Neostoicism*, p.8.

and centralised state in France between the reigns of Henry IV and Louis XIV, which has been traditionally taken as an example of the modern process of state-building. Moreover, this historical process has given origin to a widespread theory of the modern sovereign state, where domestic *absolutism* and external *raison d'etat* are seen to be complementary doctrines. Meinecke expresses quite well the connection between the two.

> Unless a sovereign and unified State Will were created and recognised, there could be no unified and effective fostering of the concrete interests, and again without this the new concept of sovereignty would have remained empty and purposeless.[109]

The argument developed here accepts the historical association made by Meinecke between domestic absolutist sovereignty and *raison d'état*. What shall be disputed, following the first part of the chapter, is the meaning attributed to Richelieu's approach to reason of state by most of contemporary international political theory. In particular, it will be argued that reason of state, as it was developed in early modern France, recognised constraints on the exercise of external sovereign authority. If it is true that the opposition to an imperial political order in Europe, pursued by the two major Catholic monarchies other than France, respectively Austria and Spain, gave a new significance to the doctrine of *raison d'état*, it is misleading to think that Richelieu's foreign policy was based 'purely on advantage and expediency'.[110] This interpretation equates the concept of reason of state with its Machiavellian, and later, *realpolitik* conception. It does not correspond, however, to the republican conception, as the term is used in this work. We shall now see how this latter conception influenced Richelieu's understanding of France's interests.

Before we begin our discussion of Richelieu's statecraft, we need to briefly recall the republican conception of *raison d'état*, as it was elaborated above. Four central ideas characterise such a conception. First, the republican tradition strongly opposed imperial expansionism and the ideology of empire. Secondly, it developed, as we saw in the case of Lipsius, a secular political morality based on the ideas of justice, prudence and virtue. Thirdly, early modern republicanism showed a deep concern for the international public good, which was seen as a fundamental condition to maintain domestic political order. Finally, the republican tradition recognised the importance of

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[109] Meinecke, *Machiavellism*, p.225.

[110] J. H. Elliott, *Richelieu and Olivares* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p.122. It should be noted that Elliott disagrees with this view.

the rule of law in international politics. Now what needs to be perfectly clear is that Richelieu's approach to the doctrine of *raison d'état* corresponds to the republican conception as it was formulated by Lipsius.

Opposition to the Habsburg imperial project

Richelieu's time in power can be divided into two distinct periods. The first covers the period from his appointment, in 1624, to Louis XIII's Royal Council, to his victory over the Catholic party, organised around Marie de Medicis, in 1630. The members of this party, named by Richelieu's supporters as 'Machiavellians', strongly attacked Richelieu's foreign policy, in particular his opposition to Catholic imperialism. Against the Cardinal, they defended a 'peaceful coexistence with the Habsburgs abroad and the suppression of heresy at home'.[111] The second period follows the consolidation of Richelieu's power, and lasts until his death in December 1642. In November 1630, in the so-called 'Day of Dupes', the Catholic party attempted unsuccessfully to remove Richelieu from power. After such a failure, nobody in the French circle of power seriously challenged Richelieu's policy of resisting, if necessary with a war, the Spanish and Austrian imperial project.[112] The triumph of Richelieu over the Catholic faction coincided with the fall of La Rochelle in 1629.[113] The victory of Louis XIII over the Huguenots in the town of La Rochelle marked the end of the period in French political history known as the 'state within a state', and the beginning of the unification and the centralisation of the French state. With the Catholic party weakened, and with the Huguenots defeated, Louis XIII had at last the necessary domestic unity to pursue a foreign policy based not on confessional considerations but on state interests. This domestic process demonstrates quite well the link between the existence of an internal supreme authority and external reason of state. However, as we shall see, contrary to the conventional view, the picture of absolutist states pursuing their foreign policies on the basis of reason of state does not necessarily correspond to the realist doctrine of external statecraft.

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[111] Richard Bonney, *The European Dynastic States 1494-1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p.228.
[112] Bonney, *The European Dynastic States*, p.231.
[113] The significance of the the fall of La Rochelle is discussed by David Parker, *La Rochelle and the French Monarchy: Conflict and Order in Seventeenth-Century France* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1980).

French interests were, above all, to defeat Habsburgs's imperialism, and thereby to consolidate French position in European politics. For instance, in a memorandum of 1629, Richelieu wrote that '[o]utside our realm...it must be our constant purpose to arrest the course of Spain's progress'.[114] To achieve that, he adopted the strategy of identifying the ideology of empire with Spanish interests and with Habsburg expansionism. Of course, he was aware of the supranational character of the ideology of empire, as the existence of a radical Catholic party in France demonstrated. Yet, the 'Spanization' of Habsburg imperialism was a necessary step to justify a policy of external alliances with Protestant states. To be successful in his policies, the Cardinal had to avoid at all costs the division of European Christianity into two factions, one Catholic, the other Protestant. This made him resisting those who attributed a religious character to the European conflicts, and to treat Catholic and Protestant states alike as potential allies. As Richelieu often observed, he 'had no intention of intervening in a war of religion'.[115] The conflicts were between states, each with its own interest, and the duty of the statesmen was to reconcile those interests. It is in this regard that Richelieu's foreign policy is quite secular.

In accordance with such a secularism, the interests of France led Richelieu to make alliances with Protestant states, immediately after he came to power. Still in 1624, he signed an alliance with the United Provinces; and in 1625, he arranged the marriage of Louis XIII's sister to Charles I of England. Later, after French domestic pacification, in January 1631, France concluded a five-year alliance with Sweden, which had just intervened in the Thirty Years' War to protect the Protestants princes from the Austrian Habsburgs. Finally, just before French engagement in the Thirty Years' War, in February 1635, a new defensive alliance was made between France and the United Provinces. On the other hand, it has to be noted, France also signed a defensive treaty with Bavaria, a Catholic power. In fact, in 1630, Richelieu was simultaneously negotiating two treaties: one with a Protestant king, the Swedish Gustavus Adolphus, the other with a Catholic ruler, head of the German Catholic League, the Bavarian Maximilian.

Richelieu's attempt to guarantee the liberty of the German small states against the Emperor was also the result of France's opposition to the ideology of empire. This goal required however that German rulers, deeply divided by the religious conflict

[114] Quoted in G. Pagès, *The Thirty Years War* (London: Routledge, 1971), p.117.
[115] Pages, *The Thirty Years War*, p.120

within the Empire, accepted a secular conception of *raison d'état*. As G. Pages observed, Louis XIII and Richelieu

> wished to maintain the traditional liberties of the electors and princes and, to do this in the face of imperial ambition, they wished to convince the Catholic electors that their interests were the same as those of the Protestants electors and that they could only safeguard them by breaking with the emperor.[116]

This anti-imperial political project was consistently defended by the French diplomats during the negotiations of Munster that led to the signature of one of the Treaties of the Peace of Westphalia. As French leaders repeatedly said, it was to achieve the independence of the German princes that France intervened in the war. A war to safeguard 'German liberties' was also a war to prevent Habsburg imperialism. For the defence of 'German liberties' was nothing more than an attempt to considerably reduce the Emperor's authority, by strengthening the autonomy of German states.

Richelieu's political morality and the rule of law

The French conduct during the Thirty Years' War is considered to be the first historical example of the link between the concept of *raison d'etat* and diplomatic practices.[117] In this regard, Richelieu and Mazarin turned occasional practices into a doctrinal system. From what has been argued so far, it is fairly easy to see why the doctrine of the reason of state arose in France. Being geographically situated between Spain and the German Empire, it was the country most threatened by the Habsburgs's imperial project. This led French rulers inevitably to oppose both Habsburgs's monarchs. Yet, as France, Austria and Spain were all Catholic countries, the French were obliged to downplay religion as a crucial factor to define statecraft. As a result, France was the only European state, during the conflicts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, that quite consistently placed the interests of the state above confessional considerations. This leads us to consider Richelieu's political morality, and to try to answer the question raised by many: does Richelieu's approach reflect the belief that the interests of the state are above any other consideration?

[116] Pages, *The Thirty Years War*, p.120.
[117] See Meinecke, *Machiavellism*, chapter 6.

In his historical investigation on the evolution of modern diplomacy, Henry Kissinger recently emphasised that 'Richelieu's concept of *raison d'état* had no built-in limitations'. Thus, continues Kissinger,

> In the world inaugurated by Richelieu, states were no longer restrained by the pretence of a moral code. If the good of the state was the highest value, the duty of the ruler was the aggrandisement and promotion of his glory.[118]

Given that Kissinger's view reflects the conventional belief, how correct is Kissinger's assessment of Richelieu's conception of *raison d'état*? Specifically, how right is Kissinger in saying that Richelieu's concept 'had no built-in limitations' on the external exercise of sovereign authority? The best way to investigate this point is to place Richelieu's conduct in its proper intellectual context. Arguably, two of the strongest influences on Richelieu's doctrine of *raison d'etat* were the thought of Lipsius, in particular his views of political morality, and the legalist ideology, which considerably influenced the European political life of his time.

The influence of Lipsius's thought on Richelieu's approach to politics was recently emphasised. In his study of Lipsius's political thought, Oestreich observes that

> Richelieu...seems to have been influenced by Lipsius. In his youth he had been close to the party of the *Politiques*, at whom the *Civilis doctrina* seems to have been aimed, and he lived in the Neostoic climate of his age. Anyone who studies the cardinal's practice and reads his political testament can discern the voice of the Netherlander.[119]

As we saw above, according to Lipsius's political ethic, statecraft must follow a set of moral maxims. In particular, Lipsius's thought appealed to the prudence of the rulers and called for vices to be restrained by maxims of justice.[120] With these moral foundations, reason of state turns into a doctrine of political virtue, which defends a prudent and not an expansionist self-interest. Such a political morality was indeed adopted by Richelieu. As all theorists of reason of state, Richelieu also made a distinction between a private, or civil, morality and a public, or political, morality. Such a distinction gives rise to a double moral standard or, in other words, to two different conceptions of virtue. However, in a way that separates him from the Machiavellian

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[118] Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1994), pp.66-7.
[119] Oestreich, *Neostoicism*, p.198. Similarly, in his short political biography of Richelieu, Elliott has noted that 'Richelieu had the complete works of Lipsius in his library of the Palais Cardinal, and a copy of the *Civil Doctrine* in his more private library'. *Richelieu and Olivares*, p.26.
[120] Oestreich, *Neostoicism*, p.9.

tradition, for Richelieu political morality in external affairs was never equated with a ruthless quest for power and with an imperial policy. The opposition to Catholic imperialism without falling in an amoral behaviour explains Richelieu's secularism: it was secular in the sense that certain political goods required the abandonment of religious considerations, but it was not the radical secularism of Machiavelli, for Richelieu managed to develop a secular political morality that could be reconciled with normative principles.[121]

What is striking, and can only be explained by the coexistence of particular political circumstances, is that Richelieu's political morality could acquire a certain republican flavour. Of course, it is not possible to see Richelieu as a distinct republican thinker. Yet, his struggle to maintain the independence of the French state facing the threat, both domestic and external, of Catholic imperialism made him to establish political alliances with groups heavily influenced by the republican ideology, such as the *politiques* within France, and Venice and the Dutch in foreign politics. Moreover, he defined his political agenda in accordance with certain republican principles. It was this combination of a number of political factors, to a certain extent accidental, that makes Richelieu's *raison d'état* an example of statecraft influenced by republican ideas. In the case of Richelieu, what is distinctively republican about his conception of reason of state is the use of the language of justice and law rather than the language of power. The use of such a vocabulary is visible in Richelieu's arguments to justify both the war with the Habsburgs and the policy of alliances with Protestant states.

The legalist ideology also had a considerable influence on Richelieu's approach to politics. Indeed, a careful analysis of France's behaviour before and during its involvement in the Thirty Years' War shows the Cardinal's concern with legal considerations. This is particularly noticeable in the declarations of war and in the making of alliances, using in both cases arguments from the just war doctrine.[122] In the conflicts with the Habsburgs, Richelieu's justifications for his actions relied heavily on the doctrine of just war. As we saw before, one of the moves made by the Cardinal was to identify Habsburg's imperial aims with Austrian and Spanish interests. Such a move was fundamental in order to justify French involvement as an act of just self-defence against Austrian and Spanish aggression. Likewise, the alliance with the Dutch

[121] An important study of Richelieu's secularism and political morality is William F. Church, *Richelieu and Reason of State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972). See also Donald M. Mackinnon, 'Power Politics and Religious Faith: The Fifth Martin Wight Memorial Lecture', *British Journal of International Studies*, 6 (1980), pp.1-15.

[122] See D.P. O'Connell, 'A Cause Célèbre in the History of Treaty-Making: The Refusal to Ratify the Peace Treaty of Regensburg in 1630', *The British Yearbook of International Law*, XLII (1967), pp.71-90.

Republic, a Protestant state, was seen as an act of necessity to avert the loss of the French state.[123] The evocation of legal arguments to justify the alliance with the Dutch was a response to the charge made by French Catholics that to ally with a Calvinist state rebelling against Spanish authority favoured both heresy and sedition in France. Moreover, those legal principles were used in combination with the argument defending the public good of all Christendom. As one of Richelieu's supporters in France affirmed, 'these alliances concern only the security of peoples, the preservation of states, and the public tranquility'.[124] Therefore, Richelieu presented the war with Spain in terms of the justice of French opposition to imperialism and the alliances with Protestant states as defensive alliances. This seems to demonstrate Richelieu's concern

> to ground his foreign policy on moral considerations and the extent to which his vision of the mutual relations of European states was set within a conventional framework determined by the presumed requirements of natural law, the just war and legitimate defence.[125]

The respect for the rule of law was of primary importance to the creation of a durable peace. According to the editor of Richelieu's instructions for the French negotiators at the Conference of Munster, the German historian Fritz Dickmann, 'for Richelieu the great political decisions were also decisions of conscience; much more than we might expect he evaluates questions of power politics by way of legal concepts'.[126] Therefore, as William Church put it, Richelieu 'consistently defended legality, built upon it, and believed it essential to the peace of Europe'.[127]

By placing Richelieu's approach to politics both in the context of Lipsius's neo-republican political morality, and in the emergence of the European public law, we have a different picture of the Cardinal's political outlook, far from the conventional one expressed by Kissinger. It is true to say that Richelieu's policy marked the triumph of *raison d'etat* over confessional diplomacy. Yet, this is not the same as saying, as Kissinger does, that Richelieu's conception of *raison d'état* 'had no built-in limitations'. For Richelieu, reason of state was *not* above *any* other consideration; it *was* above *confessional* considerations. It certainly was not above moral justifications. As for international law, legal considerations were imbedded in Richelieu's conception of

[123] Elliott, *Richelieu and Olivares*, p.125.
[124] Cited in Church, *Richelieu and Reason of State*, p.397.
[125] Elliott, *Richelieu and Olivares*, p.122.
[126] Cited in Dietrich Gerhard, 'Richelieu', in Leonard Krieger and Fritz Stern (eds.), *The Responsibility of Power* (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1967), p.98.
[127] Church, *Richelieu and Reason of State*, p.372.

raison d'etat. Of course, it can still be argued that Richelieu's use of the language of just war was simply a moralistic justification behind which he concealed his real interests, which were to achieve an hegemonic position for France in Europe. However, one thing is to make decisions purely based on self-interest and then use legal arguments to legitimise the decision. Another thing is to try to reconcile self-interests with legal considerations and with the international public interest. That is, to make decisions within a legal framework, which of course involves a particular political talent in using the flexibility of the laws for his own advantage, but also the preoccupation to respect legal limitations.[128] Such a preoccupation was clear in a further political goal pursued by Richelieu: the general peace of Europe.

Raison d'etat, the international common good, and collective security

To fully understand Richelieu's view of the European political order as a whole, it is also necessary to discuss his attempt to help implementing 'unne bonne paix' in Europe.[129] What was then Richelieu's conception of a good peace? It was observed that 'Richelieu's vision of the eventual peace embraced a system of collective obligations to secure the peaceful coexistence of all European powers'.[130] The treatment of Richelieu's vision of European peace leads us to briefly consider Sully's Grand Design. At the end of the sixteenth century, Sully was a minister of the French king Henry IV. In his memories, he referred to a project for the European political order, which he attributed to Henry IV. Such a political project has been interpreted by some as proposing the establishment of a European confederation with a system of collective security. For instance, as a solution to European conflicts, Sully refers to a 'federal council to settle disputes and maintain the peace', resulting from 'a reunion of all the different states'.[131] Remarks such as this one even led F. H. Hinsley to refer to Sully as a forerunner 'of the League of Nations or United Europe or the United Nations experiment'.[132] This

[128] For a very interesting article which shows, in the Swedish case, 'a peculiar early modern preoccupation with matters of international law', see Erik Ringmar, 'The Relevance of International Law: a Hegelian Interpretation of a Peculiar Seventeenth-Century Preoccupation', *Review of International Studies*, 21 (1995), pp.87-103.
[129] See Hermann Weber, 'Une Bonne Paix: Richelieu's Foreign Policy and the Peace of Christendom', in Joseph Bergin and Laurence Brookliss (eds.), *Richelieu and His Age* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp.45-69.
[130] Gerhard, 'Richelieu', p.105.
[131] See F.H. Hinsley, *Power and the Pursuit of Peace: Theory and Practice in the History of Relations between States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), pp.24-6.
[132] Hinsley, *Power and the Pursuit of Peace*, p.13.

suggests, first of all, that the war against the Habsburgs was not meant to lead merely to an international anarchy of sovereign states, dominated by French hegemony, but rather to the implementation of what we could call in contemporary language a system of collective security.

Sully's plan of a European confederation was recovered by Richelieu under the term of 'the peace of Christendom'.[133] Such a peace did not mean simply the end of the Thirty Years' War, but also, and more importantly, the defeat of imperial projects in Europe. The freedom of European political communities was seriously threatened as long as the tyranny of universal monarchy loomed over Europe. Thus, the peace of Christendom was understood primarily as a durable political framework that could preserve all European states in untroubled coexistence and liberty.[134] The implementation of the 'bonne paix' demanded the acceptance by all European political communities that the security of each one was a collective concern. As such, a general commitment to join in a collective response against future imperial projects was essential. In other words, it would be indispensable that at least the major powers agreed that the anti-imperial principle constituted the foundation of a just international order. This resistance to universal monarchy is one of the constitutive principles of a republican conception of international society, and it was an integral part of Richelieu's conception of 'une bonne paix'.

The anti-imperial peace required, thus, the maintenance of political equilibrium in Europe. In this regard, it has been noted that Sully's Grand Design also talked about a plan

> to divide Europe equally among a certain number of Powers in such a manner that none of them might have cause either of envy or of fear from the possessions or powers of others...The whole, therefore, of what seems proper to be done is to support them all in a kind of equilibrium...[this is]...the purport of the Design.[135]

Clearly, the grand design anticipated the concept of balance of power as a necessary condition for international political order.[136] During France's intervention in the Thirty Years' War, Richelieu was consistently negotiating simultaneous defensive alliances

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[133] In Richelieu's words: 'une bonne Paix en toute la Chréstienté'; cited in Weber, 'Une Bonne Paix', p.46.
[134] Weber, 'Une Bonne Paix', p.48.
[135] Sully, quoted in Hinsley, *Power and the Pursuit of Peace*, p.27.
[136] For this interpretation, see Adam Watson, *The Evolution of International Society* (London: Routledge, 1992), p.183.

with Sweden and with Bavaria, respectively a Protestant and a Catholic state. Besides showing a secular approach to diplomacy, as it was earlier noted, these simultaneous negotiations demonstrate also the influence that the notion of balance of power had on French policy. For instance, referring to 'the Spaniard and the Swede', Richelieu wrote in his papers that

> we must above all take care that in bringing down one we do not raise the other to such a point that he is more to be feared than the former. We must also act with such caution that instead of setting one against the other, we do not become involved in war with one of them. Such a step would allow the other to increase in such strength that even if the king were victorious he would lose more from the easy manner in which the other became more powerful than he would gain from his own victory.[137]

This indicates both that Richelieu attributed to France the role of maintaining the European balance of power and that the ultimate purpose of those two treaties was to maintain the balance between Catholic and Protestant states and thereby to counter the over-mighty power of the house of Austria and the king of Sweden. As many others in the seventeenth century, Richelieu also believed that the idea of political equilibrium should be included in the public law of Europe.[138] This shows that, contrary to what is often believed, a system of collective security and the institution of the balance of power may be part of the same approach to international political order. Indeed, this view was expressed by Hinsley. Noting the coexistence of legal and institutionalist principles with political and statist elements, Hinsley suggested that such a tension 'is the key to an understanding of the printed version of the 'grand design''.[139]

Besides the consensus on the anti-imperial principle, the establishment of a lasting good peace was related with two further points: the signature of a general peace treaty, and the need to institutionalise the principles of collective security through a formal agreement. The first was achieved with the Peace of Westphalia.[140] With the

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[137] Quoted in Pages, *The Thirty Years War*, p.140.
[138] See D.P. O'Connell, *Richelieu*, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1968), pp.289-90.
[139] Hinsley, *Power and the Pursuit of Peace*, p.25.
[140] It should be noted that Richelieu's vision of a good peace was not fully realised in the Peace of Westphalia. First, France and Spain did not sign a peace treaty and continued fighting until 1659; secondly, the Peace did not create a German Confederation, in the terms that Richelieu defended, but maintained the formal superior authority of the Emperor. For instance, the two Peace Treaties signed in Munster and Osnabruck were both signed between the Emperor, representing the German Empire, and respectively France and Sweden. Yet, this failure to fully follow Richelieu's vision of European peace does not mean that the Peace of Westphalia cannot be seen as implementing a collective security system. For a comprehensive and very helpful discussion of the Peace of Westphalia, both its relation with Richelieu's peace project and its contribution to the European political order, see Andreas Osiander, *The States System of Europe, 1640-1990: Peacemaking and the Conditions of International Stability* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), chapter 2.

signature of a general peace treaty, the system of common security would be extended to the whole Europe. In order to work and to last, the European system of collective security should be based upon mutual guarantees binding all participants in the peace negotiations. In this regard, its implementation, which gives it a collective character, required the participation of all states of Christendom. As one observer noted, it was a 'peace *for* the whole of Christendom and ensured *by* the whole of Christendom'.[141] Moreover, with its principles recognised in a general peace treaty, the collective security system became part of the European public law.[142]

The system of collective security was intimately linked to the security guarantees provided by the Treaties of Munster and Osnabruck. 'The security of peace was to be ensured by a guarantee enshrined in the treaty itself...the guarantee came into operation when peace was threatened or broke down altogether'.[143] The guarantors of peace, in other words the major powers, had to act against violations of the peace. In particular, a fundamental principle of the security guarantees concerned the role of all contracting external powers as protectors of German liberties against the Emperor.[144] The inclusion in the Peace of Westphalia of this general clause guaranteeing the respect for the anti-imperial principle shows the vital role of great powers in implementing security. In other words, the Peace of Westphalia gave rise to a concert-based collective security system, in the sense that the Treaties entrusted the responsibilities of leadership in security issues to a small group of major powers. According to Hermann Weber, Richelieu was, therefore, 'the first to make a system of collective security the objective of a continuous, practical policy'.[145] This follows what Sully fifty years earlier identified as Henry IV's Grand Design, which confirms Hinsley's view of the Grand Design as a project for European collective security. To show, again, how history is full of ironies, the political plans of a former Huguenot leader were to be implemented by a Cardinal. Such an irony shows the prevalence of political interests over confessional considerations in the politics of early-modern France, in line with the notion of *raison*

[141] Weber, 'Unne Bonne Paix', p.61.
[142] However, we should not seek in the Peace of Westphalia a developed notion of international law. Indeed, the Treaties not even dealt with sovereignty from a legal perspective. What became part of the European public law were the ideas associated with the notion of collective security, namely the idea that peace and security in Europe are indivisible, that all states must contribute to the maintenance of peace, and that the major powers have a special role to play in the management of European security. See Osiander, *The States System of Europe*, chapter 2.
[143] Weber, 'Unne Bonne Paix', p.59.
[144] See Osiander, *The States-System of Europe*, pp.46-9.
[145] 'Unne Bonne Paix', p.59. Osiander also affirms that 'Richelieu...envisaged an elaborate collective security system', *The States System of Europe*, p.27.

d'état.[146] Yet, the triumph of the idea of reason of state, contrary to what is often believed, was accompanied by normative considerations about international order and by the emergence of a system of collective security.

Conclusion

The argument of this chapter claimed, first, that the opposition between normative considerations and national interest denotes a particular conception of reason of state, developed initially by Machiavelli, and later adopted by the tradition of *realpolitik*. As a result, the concept of reason of state is discussed by this latter tradition without any connection to moral and legal rules. As it was noted in the beginning of the chapter, the English school has to a certain extent corrected this view. In particular, when Wight formulated a non-realist conception of national interest in 'Western Values'. Yet, Wight is not entirely consistent on this point and, for instance, in his lectures on *International Theory*, he imputes the idea of *raison d'état* to the Machiavellian tradition. This chapter tried to correct this last point and in the process to develop some of the suggestions offered by Wight in 'Western Values'. In line with the argument of the thesis, the pursuit of such an attempt heavily relies on the republican political tradition. The central republican figure in the treatment of *raison d'état*, it was argued, is Lipsius. This is clear in his views on political morality, which are founded on the thought of classical republican figures such as Cicero and Tacitus. In this context, the emphasis was on three central ideas of Lipsius: justice and the rule of law, prudence and defensive strategies, and secularism and the concern for the international public good. The significance of Lipsius's contribution is that it shows how reason of state and some normative principles, historically, emerged and developed together. The advantages of such a conceptual redefinition is that, on the one hand, the idea of reason of state acquires a moral content, and on the other hand, principles concerned with the international common good loose a great deal of their idealist reputation.

In the last part of the chapter, it was asserted that Richelieu's external conduct lies within the normative terms established by the republican conception of *raison d'état*. Apparently, when asked on his deathbed to forgive his enemies, Richelieu

[146] It is illustrative to note that one of the French delegates to the peace negotiations in Munster complained that 'the Swedish delegates were too little concerned with *raison d'état* and excessively attached to the protestant cause'. See Osiander, *The States System of Europe*, p.28.

replied that he never had personal enemies, but only those of the state. This shows undoubtedly the high moral value of *raison d'état* for Richelieu. This is not denied in this chapter. What is firmly rejected is the view that Richelieu's conception of reason of state had no built-in limitations, as some seem to believe. The struggle of all his life was to separate diplomacy from religious considerations, but Richelieu never aimed at a full emancipation of the state from normative principles. Rather, he saw statecraft embedded in a larger moral and legal universe, and in this sense he was a moderate child of Machiavelli. Although Richelieu himself cannot be seen as a republican thinker, the influence of republicanism on his external statecraft is visible in three crucial points: first, in the opposition to the ideology of universal empire; secondly, Lipsius's idea of a virtuous external statecraft appears in Richelieu's conduct, both in his secular conception of *raison d'état* and in his respect for the rule of the law of nations; thirdly, Richelieu consistently showed a typical republican concern for the common good in his attempt to include the good of Europe in the French national interest.

The distinction between these two different conceptions of reason of state is crucially important for the question of the ontological divide. As we saw in the introduction of the thesis, for those who accept the ontological divide, reason of state tends to be understood in terms of mere self-interest and not as concerned with the international public good. If states are perceived as being ontological primitive agents, which were self-constituted in the international state of nature, then it is logical to see the formulation of their political interests as an inward-outward process. For instance, such an ontological divide is clear in Machiavelli's belief that it is impossible to replicate the principles of the domestic republican political order at the international level. Yet, Machiavelli failed to grasp that the republican political project was simultaneously domestic and international. Indeed, the assertion of this point constitutes one of the fundamental breaks between later republican thinkers and the author of *The Prince*. It is fundamental to grasp that for republican figures, such as Lipsius, the constitutional and secular domestic political order that the ruler has the duty to maintain is part of an overall secular and just international order. In this regard, domestic virtue required international virtue, and the concern for international common good was an integral part of the national interest. Therefore, instead of accepting the ontological divide, what we need to understand is that the political virtues associated with the idea of *raison d'état* were part of the broader republican virtues that also sustained domestic political order. The notion of virtuous external statecraft was not developed by primitive agents living in the state of nature, but it was rather the result of the influence of the

republican ideology on early modern European states. Thus, we may indeed conclude that the conception of *raison d'état* discussed in this chapter is constituted by a republican understanding of virtuous political life which includes both domestic and international politics. For such a conception, domestic political order starts at the international level, and the duties and responsibilities of the rulers do not stop at the state borders. By maintaining international peace, rulers contribute for the safety and security of their and other states' citizens alike. In this sense, every state contributes to the governance of international society as a whole. In short, the republican conception of *raison d'état* denotes the belief that domestic political order and interstate order are both part of a larger world political order.

CHAPTER 5: THE REPUBLICAN POLITICAL TRADITION AND INTERNATIONAL CONSTITUTIONALISM: MODERN INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY, MIXED POLITIES AND DIVIDED SOVEREIGNTY

As we saw in the introduction and in chapter 3, for the statist conception of international society, the modern states system is composed of like-units, in the form of unitary sovereign states. We find here the third element of the statist approach to international society, which rests on two ideas. First, modern international society is exclusively composed of sovereign states; and, secondly, a unitary conception of sovereign statehood. Thus, in historical terms, the statist approach claims that modern international society is exclusively composed of unitary sovereign states. In this regard, historical cases of political systems characterised by divided sovereignty are seen either as medieval hangovers, like the German Empire, or as a result of imperial experiences, like European colonial empires, which makes them to fall into the domestic side of the domestic/international divide. The consequence of this historical narrative has been a clear unwillingness by contemporary International Relations to discuss the notion of divided sovereignty, which occupies an important place in the work of many early modern political thinkers. However, as we noted in the introduction of the thesis, some recent works within International Relations have shown a disposition, if not to focus explicitly on divided sovereignty, at least to challenge the statist view. For instance, Barry Buzan and Richard Little, and John Gerard Ruggie argue that international anarchy may be compatible with the differentiation of units.[1] Moreover, as it was also already noted, Martin Wight put forward a similar challenge by explicitly questioning the positivist doctrine of exclusive state personality.[2]

Building on these suggestions, the explicit focus of this chapter is the notion of divided sovereignty, as it was developed by Samuel Pufendorf to explain the constitutional nature of the German Empire after the Peace of Westphalia. Before I discuss Pufendorf's work, which constitutes the central part of the chapter, it is necessary to address other important questions. First, I will briefly explain how two different conceptions of extended

[1] See the introduction above, p.5.
[2] See the introduction above, p.8.

empire coexisted in early modern Europe. After this section, I turn to Pufendorf's treatment of the constitutional nature of the post-Westphalia German Empire. Specifically, I will show how the Westphalia's constitutional puzzle led Pufendorf to develop the concept of confederated union of states, characterised by the division of the marks of sovereignty. However, to prepare the grounds for the rest of the chapter, to understand why the concept of divided sovereignty has been ignored within International Relations, and why it is helpful to recover it, we need to be aware of what I call the 'Westphalian myth' and 'modern anomalies'.

International political theory, the Westphalian myth, and modern anomalies.

As I noted above, for the statist approach, modern international society is exclusively composed of unitary sovereign states. There is however something odd about this historical view. First of all, the moment of the emergence of the states system is quite long. It occurred, in the words of Terry Nardin, 'between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries'. Moreover, such a historical moment is full of examples that are 'less easily accommodated', such as personal unions, confederations, alliances, and the Holy Roman Empire, which lasted until the beginning of the nineteenth century,[3] and was then replaced by the German Confederation, also founded on the division of sovereignty, which survived until 1870. To be precise, the final consolidation of the modern states system did not take place until the 1960s, when 'the nearly uniform system of sovereign equality' was at last established.[4] Yet, when this happened, some regions of modern international society, most notably Western Europe, were engaged in creating institutional forms of divided sovereign authority. From these modern anomalies, we can draw one obvious conclusion: in historical terms, the states system, *exclusively* composed of unitary sovereign states, never existed. Yet, most people in the discipline of International Relations persist in believing in its existence, and this is so for understandable reasons. The sovereign unitary state has been undoubtedly the prevalent unit in modern international society, and most of the important issues that affect world politics seem to revolve around the state. In this regard, it is quite

[3] Terry Nardin, *Law, Morality, and the Relations of States* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), p.51.
[4] Barry Buzan and Richard Little, 'The Idea of "International System": Theory Meets History', *International Political Science Review*, 15 (1994), p.253.

natural to treat modern international society as a political system composed of unitary sovereign states. However, such a view conceals important features of modern international society and, more significantly, buries in the dust of the past relevant concepts that once recovered may help to illuminate some important theoretical concerns.

Indeed, some of those concerns recently emerged in contemporary International Relations literature. As we saw in the introduction of the thesis, reflecting the growing doubt about conventional explanations, a number of scholars address the question of functionally differentiated units.[5] This shows at once that the issue of an international society composed of unlike-units is on the agenda of contemporary international political theory. There is, however, a tendency to equate the *modern* Westphalian international society, as in opposition to the concept of international *anarchy* as such, with a political system of like-units. For instance, Ruggie uses the term 'institutional framework of sovereignty' to characterise the modern states system.[6] Likewise, for Buzan, Charles Jones and Little, 'the modern international system...is made up of sovereign states, conceived as like-units'.[7] As a result of a rather interesting conceptual move, but in my view ultimately unsatisfactory, these authors make a crucial distinction between the concept of anarchy and political modernity. As Buzan and Little argue, historically, there have been different types of anarchical international systems. For instance, some, like the medieval system, were composed of unlike-units. As such, the idea of anarchy may be 'compatible with differentiation of units'.[8] However, for Buzan and Little, the modern Westphalian states system is formed by functionally undifferentiated units, defined as unitary sovereign states.[9] Therefore, Ruggie, and Buzan and Little seek to reconceptualise the notion of *anarchy* without attempting to reconsider the nature of *modern* international society. To a large extent, this results from the need to offer an explanation for the fact that certain international changes, which are occurring at the levels of interaction and the nature of units, do not result from an overall international structural transformation. In other words, according to these authors, we just need to reformulate the notion of international anarchy

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[5] See, for instance, John Gerard Ruggie, *Constructing World Polity: Essays on International Institutionalization* (London: Routledge, 1998); and Barry Buzan and Richard Little, 'Reconceptualizing Anarchy: Structural Realism Meets World History', *European Journal of International Relations*, 2 (1996).
[6] *Constructing World Polity*, p.146.
[7] Barry Buzan, Charles Jones, and Richard Little, *The Logic of Anarchy: Neorealism to Structural Realism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), p.89.
[8] Buzan and Little, 'Reconceptualizing Anarchy', p.403.
[9] For the comparison between the medieval and the modern international systems, see Ruggie, *Constructing the World Polity*, pp.146-7, and Buzan and Little, 'Reconceptualizing Anarchy', pp.414-5.

in order to accommodate views such as 'a modified Westphalian system'[10] or even a 'post-Westphalian states system'.[11] However, even if these accounts of international change are able to abandon the idea of a structural change, they still need to rely on a *historical* transformation from political modernity to something 'post-it'. Yet, this move from emphasising a structural change to stressing key historical transformations does not solve all problems, as we shall see below.

Some scholars also refer to the importance of the idea of divided sovereignty. The most notably case, Stephen Krasner, notes that the actual content of sovereignty has been contested throughout the history of the modern international political system. In some cases, the exercise of sovereign authority varied with the issue area, as it happened for instance in the Holy Roman Empire.[12] The claim that modern world politics has been characterised by a permanent contestation of sovereign authority led Krasner to reject the assertion, made by many, that contemporary violations of territoriality and sovereign autonomy reflect a basic transformation of the international political system. The normative and legal principles of the political system of sovereign states, argues Krasner, have persistently been compromised.[13] Yet, this new historical interpretation does not lead Krasner to offer a new definition of the concept of international society. Rather, he includes such an interpretation within a broad realist explanation.[14] Thus, in his attempt to reconceptualise international political *modernity*, without redefining the nature of the *anarchical* political system, Krasner seems to follow the opposite route, in comparison to the one taken by Buzan and Little, Linklater, and Ruggie.[15] In my exercise of recovering a

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[10] Ruggie, *Constructing the World Polity*, pp.45-61.

[11] Although developing a different argument, comparing to Buzan and Little and Ruggie, Andrew Linklater also believes that it is possible to go through a historical transformation from the Westphalian modernity without necessarily occurring a structural change from international anarchy. See *The Transformation of Political Community* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998), in particular pp.168-78, where Linklater argues that a 'post-Westphalian international society' is compatible with the persistence of a formal anarchical structure.

[12] Stephen D. Krasner, 'Westphalia and All That', in Judith Goldstein & Robert O. Keohane (eds.), *Ideas & Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change* (London: Cornell University Press, 1993), pp.235-64.

[13] Stephen D. Krasner, 'Compromising Westphalia', *International Security*, 20 (1995/96), pp.115-51.

[14] The reason I include Krasner's argument in the broad realist tradition is justified by the following statement: 'Given the asymmetries of power, diversity of interests, and the weakness of institutionalizing mechanisms in the international system, it would be more productive to stop thinking of the Westphalian model as some ideal or historical reality and to treat it as a reference point or convention that is useful in some circumstances but not others. Some states have the power to preserve their territory and autonomy; others do not', 'Compromising Westphalia', pp.150-1.

[15] Yet, against the general direction of his argument, Krasner notes that 'normative discourse' should 'contribute to the more imaginative construction of institutional forms-forms that compromise Westphalia-that could create a more stable and peaceful international system', 'Compromising Westphalia', p.151.

forgotten constitutional imagination, I try to link the two tasks. To do that, I heavily rely on the modern republican tradition.

From a republican perspective, Daniel Deudney's work on the Philadelphian system also addresses the notion of confederation of states or, in his terms, 'compound republics'.[16] I disagree, however, with Deudney's argument on two grounds. First, it seems to me that the way Deudney conceptualises sovereignty is not satisfactory. Although Deudney also focuses on 'large-scale security structures that are alternatives to the state and anarchy', that is on 'interstate unions',[17] he rejects the conceptual viability of the notion of divided sovereignty. According to Deudney, sovereignty is 'the ultimate source of *all* legitimate authority in a polity',[18] and as such cannot be divided. Those who talk about divided sovereignty, for Deudney, 'are conflating sovereignty and political authority'.[19] Yet, historically, the republican idea of divided sovereignty emerged with the attempt to divide the exercise of sovereign authority through different governmental institutions, as this chapter will try to demonstrate.[20] Secondly, in my view, Deudney's discussion suffers from an implicit belief in the 'American exceptionalism', which leads him to ignore the impact of constitutional alternatives to the state and anarchy elsewhere, both in Europe and in the European colonial empires.[21] As a result, he also ends up with the conventional statist conception of the Westphalian political system.[22] One of the implications is that the Philadelphian system looses some of its historical meaning, becomes a short-lived historical example that constitutes an exception to the modern rule, and turns into an ideal model for a post-Westphalian international society. In other words, by seeing the

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[16] See 'The Philadelphian System: Sovereignty, Arms Control, and Balance of Power in the American States-Union, circa 1787-1861', *International Organization*, 49 (1995), pp.191-229; and, 'Binding Sovereigns: Authorities, Structures, and Geopolitics in Philadelphian Systems', in Thomas J. Biersteker and Cynthia Weber (eds.), *State Sovereignty as Social Construct* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp.190-239. Another work that discusses the republican conceptions of international society and divided sovereignty is Nicholas Greenwood Onuf, *The Republican Legacy in International Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

[17] Deudney, 'The Philadelphian System', pp.191-2.

[18] 'The Philadelphian System', p.198, my emphasis.

[19] 'The Philadelphian System', p.198.

[20] One of the reasons that leads Deudney to reject the idea of divided sovereignty is his belief in the legitimacy of popular sovereignty, which of course stems from his focus on the republican ideas of the American Founding Fathers. Thus, he needs to distinguish between the ultimate unitary nature of popular sovereignty and the division of the exercise of political authority.

[21] Nevertheless, he acknowledges that 'the European political order as a whole was frequently understood to be a type of republic'; 'The Philadelphian System', p.192. Yet, he never develops such view and ends up by opposing the Philadelphian republican order against the Westphalian statist order, pp.222-4.

[22] See Daniel Deudney, 'Binding Sovereigns', pp.190-2.

Philadelphian system as an exceptional historical example, Deudney is not able to entirely escape the anomaly argument.

It is important, at this point, before we shift to the historical investigation, to introduce some key notions. The first is divided sovereignty: sovereignty is not understood as a form of unitary authority, where sovereign power is concentrated in a central political institution, but as a set of marks that divide sovereign authority over different political issues, which can be exercised by distinct political institutions and distributed across borders.[23] In this chapter, the idea of divided sovereignty is discussed in the context of international confederations. Thus, the process of the internationalisation of sovereignty presupposes the idea of an extended mixed *respublica* which, following Deudney, may be defined as 'an institutionalized system of decentralized power constraint', characterised by the existence of 'multiple authorities not hierarchically arranged'.[24] In this regard, a republican confederation cannot be included in the conventional 'dyad of hierarchy and anarchy'.[25] In order to fully understand the historical origins of the idea of a republican confederation, it is necessary first of all to briefly explain the early modern treatment of the notion of *imperium*.

Two conceptions of extended empire

To understand the idea of divided sovereignty, it is important to remember that modern European states emerged in the context of imperial political structures. Conventional political theories, and specifically most of international theories, identify these imperial systems with medieval politics and see the emergence of modern international society in terms of a stark discontinuity with medievalism. This chapter will challenge such a view, by presenting a twofold argument. First, it will be argued that the notion of divided sovereignty was the result of the adaptation of those imperial structures to modern politics. In this regard, the chapter opposes the discontinuity thesis, and accepts a degree of continuity between the medieval and the modern. This alternative interpretation requires in

[23] For recent discussions of divided sovereignty, see Buzan and Little, 'The Idea of International System', p.253; Krasner, 'Westphalia and All That', p.237; and Onuf, *The Republican Legacy*, pp.113-38.
[24] 'The Philadelphian System', pp.192-98.
[25] Deudney, 'The Philadelphian System', p.194.

turn a stress on the central role of Renaissance political thought in the emergence of both the ideas of divided sovereignty and international society.

In early-modern Europe, there were three different meanings of the word *imperium*, and all inherited from classical Rome. First, the idea of an absolutist monarchical empire. Despite the end of the Western Roman Empire in 476, the significance of the idea of universal monarchy did not vanish. Moreover, the imperial institution was recovered during the middle ages. The imperial title was given again in 800 to Charlesmagne, and from his successors, it passed to the German Hohenstaufens and on to the Austrian and Spanish Habsburgs. According to the second meaning, *imperium* meant the rule of law founded on a common constitution over multiple dominions. In contrast to the absolutist conception, this second use of the term *imperium* designates 'rule by rules, and not domination by brute force'.[26] It is in this conception of 'empire' that we find the origins of the idea of confederal republican order. Finally, the third meaning was related to the emergence of 'particularist claims to authority', which resulted into the notion of *imperium* as unitary state sovereignty.[27] This chapter focuses on the second meaning of the idea of empire. It will be showed, first, in which way such a meaning was perceived, by its proponents, to be in opposition to the first meaning of *imperium*, associated with the ideology of universal monarchy. Secondly, it will also be demonstrated that for some of those proponents, most notably for Samuel Pufendorf, the confederal conception of empire was seen as an alternative to the third meaning of *imperium* as state sovereignty. This view suggests a different interpretation of the evolution of modern international society. Instead of seeing it as a state system composed of like-units, this republican reading, emphasising the importance of post-imperial, or confederal, political structures where the marks of sovereign authority were divided, treats such polities not as medieval hangovers but as normal *modern* political institutions. Before we proceed with the discussion, it is important to clarify in which sense the first meaning of the term *imperium* will be discussed here, for the international implications of the idea of universal monarchy will also be addressed in the next chapter. The term universal monarchy was used both in the context of an ideology of world empire, which will be treated in the next chapter, and as an absolutist monarchical empire. Although the two were linked in early modern Europe, they deserve in this thesis a

[26] See Onuf, *The Republican Legacy*, p.127.
[27] See David Armitage, 'Introduction', in David Armitage (ed.), *Theories of Empire 1450-1800* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), p.xvi.

distinct conceptual treatment. In this chapter, the focus will be on the latter meaning of the term. Thus, the expression 'two conceptions of extended empire' refers to the distinction between an absolutist monarchical empire and a confederal republican empire.

The idea of absolutist monarchical empire

As many other political ideas in early modern Europe, the notion of absolutist monarchical empire also has Roman origins. From the second half of the first century A.D., the term *imperium* came to carry a territorial dimension', as *imperium Romanum*, or Roman empire.[28] As this indicates, the association between *imperium* and an extended territorial entity was the result of the expansion of Rome, through war and conquest.[29] It was this meaning of the *imperium Romanum* that both the medieval and the early modern emperors, who saw themselves as the heirs of the Roman emperors, sought to revive. In addition, during the early modern period, besides the idea of an extended territory, the Roman Empire was also associated with a specific kind of political regime: absolutist monarchy. In the words of Anthony Pagden, '[t]he transformation of the status of the Roman emperor from Augustus to Constantine the Great effectively involved the transformation of a Roman *principes* into a theocratic Hellenistic monarch'. In early modern Europe, adds Pagden, 'this understanding of what it was to exercise *imperium* was identified [as] monarchy'.[30] Thus, the Roman empire was seen as the historical example of both an extended territorial empire and an absolutist monarchy; hence the term absolutist monarchical empire adopted here.

In early modern Europe, it was the Habsburgs, both the Spanish and the Austrians, who first sought to create an absolutist monarchical empire. As the Roman imperial model, Charles V's empire involved a process of territorial expansion, captured by the term 'incorporating empire',[31] or in Machiavellian terms, 'commonwealth for expansion'. Such

[28] Armitage, 'Introduction', p.xv.
[29] See the discussion in J.S. Richardson, '*Imperium Romanum*: Empire and the Language of Power', in Armitage (ed.), *Theories of Empire*, pp.1 and 5-9.
[30] See Anthony Pagden, *Lords of All the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France c. 1500-c. 1800* (London: Yale University Press, 1995), p.15.
[31] See John Robertson, 'Empire and Union: Two Concepts of the Early Modern European Political Order', in John Robertson (ed.), *A Union for Empire: Political Thought and the British Union of 1707* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp.5-6, and 19-20.

an expansion required the attempt 'to concentrate power in the hands of a single man'.[32] Thus, again in line with the Roman empire, the political regime of the Habsburgs's empire was also an absolutist monarchy.[33] As a Spanish writer put it, addressing his monarch, 'your majesty...has an empire of undivided jurisdiction from this to the far hemisphere'. Indeed, according to contemporaries, 'the Spanish monarchy constituted a single legislative body from the Netherlands to Chile'.[34] For instance, in accordance with the absolutist ideology, 'the American possessions were legally a part of the kingdom of Castile',[35] and, in an illustrative way, the imperial ceremonies in the colonies 'meant to suggest a continuity between the viceroy and the Roman consuls'.[36] The appearance of the idea of confederal union in the reflections of many political thinkers in those regions threatened by Spanish and Austrian imperialism is another point that demonstrates the Habsburgs's aspirations to create an absolutist monarchical empire. During the sixteenth and seventeenth century, the confederal nature of the Dutch United Provinces and of the Swiss Confederation resulted largely from their opposition to the Habsburgs' territorial imperialism.[37] This shows at once that, in contrast with expansionist empires, 'confederal union was represented as antagonistic to extensive territorial empire'.[38]

This brief clarification of the term absolutist monarchical empire is important in the sense that it helps to understand the meaning of confederated empire, for the latter emerged as a reaction against the former, despite some confusion originated by the use of the term empire in both cases. Moreover, given the example of Rome, which seemed to demonstrate that all types of empires were bound to be closely associated with the practice of territorial conquest, early modern republican thinkers tried to deal with a crucial issue. As Pagden puts it,

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[32] Anthony Pagden, *Spanish Imperialism and the Political Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), p.3.

[33] According to Pagden, 'in theory', the Spanish empire was 'a confederation of principalties held together in the person of a single king', see *Spanish Imperialism*, p.3. Yet, even if this is legally true, the point is that early modern reflection on the political nature of the Habsburgs's empire identified it with the idea of universal monarchy. See for instance, Pagden, *Spanish Imperialism*, chapter 2. See also Richard Tuck, *Philosophy and Government 1572-1651* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp.65-80.

[34] Pagden, *Lords of All the World*, p.137.

[35] Pagden, *Lords of All the World*, p.46.

[36] Pagden, *Lords of All the World*, p.139.

[37] See Robertson, 'Empire and Union', pp.21-3. These became the most famous examples of confederations. Yet, there were other attempts, and all related with anti-imperial motivations, such as the Bohemian, Moravian, Austrian, and Hungarian Estates Confederation, and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, both of which opposed the Austrian Habsburgs' territorial imperialism. See Robertson, 'Empire and Union', pp.23-4.

[38] Robertson, 'Empire and Union', p.5.

The conflict between the political visions of empire and republic is based on the assumption that because all empires are founded upon conquest none...[is] in fact ever able to achieve the transition from an extended assembly of states to a true confederacy'.[39]

In other words, for early modern republican thinkers, how to extend a republican order to the international sphere became a crucial question. One of the answers was the notion of confederated republic.

The idea of a republican confederal union

The notion of a republican confederal empire was also inspired in the classical Roman model. As in the case of the absolutist form of empire, Rome, but now the republic, provided the 'foundation myth'. As Pagden notes, 'Tacitus spoke of the Roman world as an 'immense body of empire'...the kind of political...unity created out of a diversity of different states widely separated in space'.[40] Of course, this is associated with the second meaning of the term *imperium*, identified above as the decentralised form of the rule of law within the Roman republic.[41] It is this idea of a diversity of territories united under the rule of law that underpins the republican conception of empire. Early modern republican thinkers recovered such a view of *imperium* when they tried to show that 'size...was no impediment to true republican government, so long as the various parts of the state constituted an association of states or a confederacy'.[42] Thus, the Roman republic and the early republican phase of the empire were used as historical examples of a confederal empire.

We first find a strong attempt to develop the idea of a confederal empire in early Italian Renaissance with the school of legal humanism.[43] Those legal humanists lived in a political context marked by the struggle for political self-determination against the

[39] Pagden, *Lords of All the World,* p.16.
[40] *Lords of All the World*, pp.13-4.
[41] See Richardson, '*Imperium Romanum*', pp.1-5.
[42] Pagden, *Lords of All the World,* p.16.
[43] See Julian H. Franklin, *Jean Bodin and the Sixteenth-Century Revolution in the Methodology of Law and History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963); and Donald R. Kelley, *The Human Measure: Social Thought in the Western Legal Tradition* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990).

Emperor. Their contribution to the fight for political freedom involved the development of intellectual weapons. Yet, and this point is crucial to understand the idea of confederal empire, their fight did not involve a radical attack on the imperial structures, but only a defence of the modification of those structures in a way that could respect communal political freedom. This was, in turn, linked to the intellectual context of Renaissance Northern Italy. Renaissance legal humanists, on the one hand, sought to justify the freedom of political communities in Northern Italy, but on the other hand ultimately accepted the existence of imperial structures. In the language of contemporary international theory, which was not the language of the Renaissance, but helps to understand the points I am trying to make, the coexistence between political self-determination and imperial structures has a double meaning. First, Renaissance political communities acquired their autonomy gradually and within existent imperial structures, and not in a condition of the international state of nature.[44] Secondly, these imperial and societal structures, historically, formed the constitutional framework in which the idea of divided sovereignty emerged.

These views received an extensive treatment by legal humanists. As it was noted, their central political concern was the justification of the Northern Italian city-states' fight for political liberty against the Emperor. Legally, these cities were vassals of the Holy Roman Empire, and this condition extended as far back as the ninth century. Yet, despite this legal subjection, Northern Italian cities were able to acquire a great measure of *de facto* autonomy during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Such a political self-determination was threatened y the Emperor Barbarossa's expeditions to Northern Italy during the second half of the twelfth century. From that moment, the Holy Roman Emperors tried 'to impose their rule' in Italy, 'while the leading cities...fought with no less determination to assert their independence'.[45] The Emperors had a very strong ally in the scholastic legal school, which interpreted Roman Law in the terms of the Justinian's Code. For scholastics, Roman law was interpreted in a way that permitted the Emperor to be 'regarded as the *dominus mundi*, the sole ruler of the world'.[46] The implication of this

[44] F.H. Hinsley makes a similar point when he says that the newly independent city was 'still part of the Empire because it had acquired its rights by the overt or tacit consent of the Emperor', see *Sovereignty* (Second Edition, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p.81.
[45] Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought, Volume One: The Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), p.5.
[46] Skinner, *The Renaissance*, p.8. For a discussion of the political and legal arguments in defence of the Emperor's authority, see Antony Black, *Political Thought in Europe 1250-1450* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp.92-108.

conventional view was that the legitimisation of the cities' resistance to the imperial dominion required a legal revolution. Pure political arguments and the fight for self-defence were not enough.

The decisive move was to abandon the interpretation of Roman Law as civil law and to see it as the common law of the *Respublica Christiana*. The *Corpus Juris* began to be presented 'as a kind of European common law, which [was] not necessarily associated with political subordination to the emperor'. For legal humanists, Europe was regarded less as a system of political subordination than as a set of communities, which recognised a single common law.[47] Such a theoretical break, however, accepted the existence of two levels of legal authority. First, the domestic legislative sovereignty, which justified the cities' claims to political self-determination. For instance, Bartolus, in one of his works, explicitly asked 'whether the Italian cities may be said to have the rights to make their own laws'. His answer was that 'every king within his own kingdom is equivalent in authority to the Emperor', and in this sense Italian cities 'ought to be recognised as fully independent sovereign bodies'.[48] At a second level, legal humanists admitted that the Emperor kept some sovereign authority over the *Respublica Christiana*, and it is in this sense that it was referred that the reaction of the legal humanists was not radical. In particular, it was recognised that the Emperor had the authority to mediate conflicts between the *civitas*, and to impose his views, and to organise external defence against the common enemies of the *Respublica Christiana*.[49] Therefore, we have here what is probably the first early modern attempt to formulate the conception of divided sovereignty. Whereas some marks of sovereignty, such as legislative and fiscal powers, were earned by the *civitas*; other marks of sovereign authority, such as some judicial powers and supranational authority in the domain of external defence, were retained by the Emperor.

It is also in the context of the emergence of the idea of mixed constitutions that we need to understand the conception of divided sovereignty. For republicans, the central purpose of the mixed constitutions was the protection of political freedom. Now, political liberty can be, above all, threatened by both dominion and corruption. To deal with the former, it is fundamental to limit attempts to absolute power. In the Renaissance, the arguments defending the imposition of constitutional limits on the exercise of absolutist

[47] Franklin, *Jean Bodin and the Sixteenth-Century Revolution*, p.16.
[48] Skinner, *The Renaissance*, pp.10-1.
[49] Black, *Political Thought in Europe*, pp.88-9.

power were made in support of the resistance against the Emperor. Thus, in this sense, the defence of a constitutional mixture of sovereign powers resulted from the rejection of absolutist monarchy.[50] The other threat to political freedom, corruption, according to republican thought, is the consequence of the degeneration of the three basic types of polity, monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy, into, respectively, tyranny, oligarchy, and anarchy. The solution 'was to ensure moderation and proportion by combining or mixing [the] various types' of political regime.[51] In this way, political liberty was guaranteed through the establishment of mixed constitutions, where political power was balanced and divided between different social groups. Therefore, it seems safe to affirm that the idea of mixed constitutions is, historically, associated with republicanism in a double way. First, it is related with the struggle for a republican value: political liberty. In addition, a constitution that guarantees the freedom of political communities reflects a republican model of governance, where the central elements are the rule of law and the division of the exercise of sovereign authority. In other words, the idea of divided sovereignty was largely the result of the transposition of the republican political principles to the international level.

To further clarify the idea of a confederal *respublica*, founded on a common constitution, and where the marks of sovereignty are divided, we need, in addition, to discuss the coexistence between the concepts of *universitas* and *civitas*. 'Between the highest Universality or 'All-Community' and the absolute Unity of the individual man, we find a series of intermediating units, in each of which lesser and lower units are comprised and combined'. This defines what Otto Gierke calls the 'federalistic construction of the Social Whole'.[52] In the words of Bartolus,

> The Emperor is truly lord of the entire world. And this does not prevent that others should be lords in a more particular sense, because the world is a kind of *universitas*, and hence there may be a person who possesses the said *universitas* and yet the individual things do not belong to them.[53]

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[50] See Otto Gierke, *Political Theories of the Middle Age* (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1996), p.45.
[51] See Richard Bellamy, 'The Political Form of the Constitution: the Separation of Powers, Rights and Representative Democracy', *Political Studies*, XLIV (1996), p.440.
[52] *Political Theories*, p.21.
[53] Quoted in Franklin, *Jean Bodin and the Sixteenth-Century Revolution*, p.15. Onuf also argues that Bartolus's view of international political order is founded on the idea of 'associations in ascending order of size', see *The Republican Legacy*, pp.70-1.

Thus, for the Renaissance publicists, the European *respublica* was simultaneously united and plural. The concept of divided sovereignty was the result of such unity and pluralism. On the one hand, the newly independent *civitas* expressed the political pluralism of the Renaissance Europe, while, on the other hand, the Emperor symbolised the unity of the *Respublica Christiana*. There is of course a medieval outlook in the imperial nature of such a unity; but this results from the fact that independent political communities were formed within imperial structures. Despite such a medievalism, the point that needs to be stressed is that the political transition that occurred during the Renaissance originated the notion of divided sovereignty. To be a modern concept, it was just necessary to replace the Emperor by the idea of *respublica*. In this case, sovereign authority would be divided between the level of the *respublica* and the level of the states.

So far, the chapter has argued that we find in Renaissance republican thought, the emergence of the notion of a confederal system of international political order, composed by a variety of political communities, which shared the marks of sovereign authority among them.[54] We shall see now how Pufendorf, in order to explain the constitutional nature of the German Empire after the Thirty Years' War, recurred also to the ideas of confederation and divided sovereignty.

Samuel Pufendorf and the constitutional nature of the German Empire

Contemporary International and Political Theory tends to treat Pufendorf's political thought in a very *statist* way. Indeed, the conventional interpretations in both disciplines complement each other. Whereas within Political Theory, Pufendorf is seen as one of the first modern thinkers to have conceptualised the sovereign state, for international theory scholars he is one of the early theorists of the modern states system. As we saw in chapter 3, in *Systems of States*, Wight treated Pufendorf as the first modern thinker to use the notion of states system in the contemporary meaning as an international system composed of unitary sovereign states.[55] After Wight, this statist reading of Pufendorf's work has been

[54] Black also tries to recover a confederal model of international society, which is associated with the thought of the sixteenth century German thinker, Johannes Althusius, see Antony Black, 'Nation and Community in the International Order', *Review of International Studies*, 19, 1 (1993), pp.84-6.
[55] See Martin Wight, *The Systems of States* (edited by Hedley Bull, Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1977), p.21.

widely accepted in international political theory. For instance, Andrew Linklater treats Pufendorf's thought as representative of the emergence of 'the classic theory of the modern states-system'.[56] Charles Beitz sees Pufendorf as an exponent of 'the morality of states' approach, to which 'States, not persons, are the subjects of international morality'.[57] More recently, David Boucher, who otherwise is a strong critic of Wight's approach to the history of international political thought, restated the conventional interpretation of Pufendorf's thinking. For Boucher, Pufendorf 'presented an elaborate theory of the...state system', and as such captured the 'Westphalian moment' of modern politics.[58]

Likewise, within the History of Political Thought, and within Political Theory, Pufendorf is mainly seen as a theorist of the sovereign state. The emphasis on the statist dimension of his thought is part of a broader interpretation, which includes Pufendorf within the modern school of natural law.[59] James Tully's work reveals the terms in which the natural law and the statist interpretations often appear together. According to Tully, Pufendorf sought 'to develop, within a framework of natural laws... a theory of the consolidating independent political societies or states, the authority of rulers, and the duties and rights of subjects'.[60] This view leads Tully to conclude that 'being the first to present a comprehensive theory of the existing European state system, Pufendorf is the first philosopher of modern politics'.[61] Still among historians of political thought, a different interpretation, developed by Friedrich Meinecke, also emphasises the statist nature of Pufendorf's thought, by considering him a precursor of the German historical tradition of the *raison d'état*.[62]

However, by stressing the statist dimension of his thought and ignoring other relevant ideas also developed by the German thinker, which in fact distance him from the statist conception of the modern international society, these views reveal a one-sided interpretation of Pufendorf's contribution to modern political thought. Rather interestingly,

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[56] *Men and Citizens in the Theory of International Relations* (Second Edition, London: Macmillan, 1990), p.62. For Linklater's treatment of Pufendorf, see the chapter 4 of the book, pp.62-79.
[57] Charles R. Beitz, *Political Theory and International Relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), p.65.
[58] See *Political Theories of International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), chapter 10, pp.223-54.
[59] See Richard Tuck, 'The Modern Theory of Natural Law', in Anthony Pagden (ed.), *The Languages of Political Theory in Early-Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp.99-122.
[60] 'Introduction' to Pufendorf, *On the Duty of Man and Citizen* (Edited by James Tully, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p.xix.
[61] 'Introduction', p.xx.
[62] Friedrich Meinecke, *Machiavellism: The Doctrine of Raison d'État and Its Place in Modern History* (London: Transaction Publishers, 1998), chapter 9, pp.224-43.

the suggestions for a different interpretation of Pufendorf's work are offered by Wight and Hedley Bull themselves. In one occasion, Wight alludes to Pufendorf as a theorist of international confederations,[63] and Bull admits that Pufendorf's notion of 'system of states' refers to 'particular groups of states...which were sovereign yet at the same time connected so as to form one body-like the German states after the Peace of Westphalia'.[64] Of course, by having *not* developed these suggestions, Wight and Bull show their belief that an exploration of this 'other' Pufendorf was not fundamental to define modern international society. This is the view that I challenge here in my discussion of Pufendorf. Within International Relations, it was Murray Forsyth who first offered a new interpretation of Pufendorf's contribution. For Forsyth, Pufendorf presented 'the first coherent and sustained theoretical analysis of the nature of a confederation of states'.[65] Significantly, as I shall argue, such a contribution is part of a larger intellectual attempt to understand the nature of those intermediate political bodies which marked the history of modern international society.

The new interpretations among historians of political thought also point in the same direction. J.G.A. Pocock considers that the reflections of Pufendorf on the nature of a confederacy of states provided the model for the notion of extended republican empires developed by eighteenth century Atlantic colonial theorists.[66] Likewise, John Robertson argues that Pufendorf was one of the first modern thinkers to analyse systematically the idea of confederated unions of states.[67] Finally, and most recently, Richard Tuck revised his earlier views and now 'sharply distinguishes Pufendorf from Grotius and Hobbes', attributing to the German thinker a 'fluid account of sovereignty' in the context of international federations.[68] These new interpretations are accompanied by a recognition of the influence of the republican tradition on the thought of Pufendorf. The emphasis on Pufendorf's republicanism receives full recognition in Nicholas Onuf's recent book, where

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[63] Martin Wight, 'Balance of Power and International Order', in Alan James (ed.), *The Bases of International Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), p.97.
[64] Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics* (London: Macmillan, 1977), p.12.
[65] Murray Forsyth, *Unions of States: The Theory and Practice of Confederation* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1981), p.80.
[66] See J.G.A. Pocock, *The Politics of Extent and the Problems of Freedom* (Colorado Springs: The Colorado College Press, 1987); and 'States, Republics, and Empires: The American Founding in Early Modern Perspective', in Terence Ball and J.G.A. Pocock (eds.), *Conceptual Change and the Constitution* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1988), pp. 55-77.
[67] 'Empire and Union', pp.25-7.
[68] Richard Tuck, *The Rights of War and Peace: Political Thought and the International Order from Grotius to Kant* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p.151.

he includes Pufendorf within the category of 'continental republicanism'.[69] My account of Pufendorf builds on these views that point towards a new interpretation of the German thinker's contribution to the understanding of modern international society. In particular, it treats Pufendorf as a theorist of republican confederations and divided sovereignty.

Westphalia's constitutional puzzle

The terms of the Peace of Westphalia originated a constitutional puzzle, which in turn gave rise to a debate in Europe about the unitary conception of sovereignty. On the one hand, the Treaties recognised the sovereignty of the states of the empire by, for instance, giving them the right to sign treaties with foreign powers (Article 8 of the Treaty of Osnabruck and 62 to 66 of the Treaty of Munster).[70] On the other hand, the Treaties also accepted the sovereign authority of the Empire, considering it as an entity with international legal personality. In this regard, it was the Empire, through the Emperor, and not the states, that signed the Treaties of Munster and Osnabruck. This raised an obvious problem for those using an unitary conception of sovereignty. Those who recognised the sovereignty of the Empire, to maintain this position, were obliged to ignore the sovereign powers of the states; those who recognised the sovereignty of the states, on the other hand, could not give an account of the sovereign authority of the Empire. Thus, neither argument could explain the complexity of the constitutional order of the Empire.

This problem forced political thinkers and lawyers to reflect more deeply on the constitutional nature of the Empire. Accordingly, the beginning of the seventeenth century was marked by a growing interest in public law within the Empire. Although there were divergent positions regarding the character of the imperial constitution, the dominant ones shared a common view: the German Empire was a form of state and as such could be defined by the traditional, or Aristotelian, conceptions of statehood. There were some important exceptions. For instance, the constitutionalist Christoph Besold defined the

[69] *The Republican Legacy*, pp.47-57.
[70] See Krasner, 'Westphalia and All That', p.245; and Andreas Osiander, *The States System of Europe, 1640-1990: Peacemaking and the Conditions of International Stability* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), pp.46-7.

Empire in terms of a 'mixed constitution'.[71] Yet, by calling the Empire 'a form of state',[72] Besold also applied the category of sovereign statehood in his analysis of the Empire. In short, like the predominant legal schools, Besold continued to define the Empire as a single state. It is at this point that the work of Pufendorf on the German constitution is quite significant.

Pufendorf rejected all those arguments. In the recent words of a historian, 'What transformed this debate was the appearance in 1667...of Samuel Pufendorf's *De Statu Imperii Germanici*'.[73] Likewise, Forsyth claims that Pufendorf's main contribution was to abandon altogether the arguments of 'all those who persisted in considering the Empire as a state, whether mixed or unitary'.[74] In the same vein, another student of the German thinker affirms that Pufendorf 'transferred the constitutional problem from the arena of internal political relations to the setting of international relations'.[75] To fully grasp Pufendorf's answer to the constitutional puzzle created by the Peace of Westphalia, we need to understand that the German thinker recurred to the political language used by the Renaissance legal humanists during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the language of continental republicanism. As we saw above, that humanist tradition tried to reconcile political freedom with an extended constitutional order. The result of such an effort was the concept of a political *respublica*, founded on the notions of mixed constitution and divided sovereignty. Three centuries later, we find the same arguments in Pufendorf.

Pufendorf and the concept of a mixed polity

i) 'Pufendorf the constitutional historian'

[71] For a discussion of these arguments, see Julian H. Franklin, 'Sovereignty and the Mixed Constitution: Bodin and His Critics', in J.H. Burns (ed., with the assistance of Mark Goldie), *The Cambridge History of Political Thought 1450-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p.317.
[72] Franklin, "Sovereignty and the Mixed Constitution", p.324.
[73] Robertson, 'Empire and Union', p.25.
[74] Forsyth, *Unions of States* pp.79-80.
[75] Leonard Krieger, *The Politics of Discretion: Pufendorf and the Acceptance of Natural Law* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1965), p.163.

As it is often observed, in his work on *The Present State of Germany*,[76] Pufendorf wrote that 'Germany is an irregular body, similar to a monster'.[77] This observation has been the source of a great deal of confusion and misunderstanding, largely because there is a tendency to treat it as a complete statement, when it is in fact only the first part of a full sentence. This partiality stems largely from the nature of contemporary approaches to the work of the German thinker. As we saw above, the majority of historians of political thought and of international political theorists see Pufendorf mainly as a theorist of the modern concepts of unitary sovereignty and international states system. For these scholars, the use of the term 'monster' would be the obvious conclusion of a theorist of the modern sovereign state when looking at a 'medieval' institution like the German Empire. However, if we return to Pufendorf's observation concerning the constitutional nature of the German Empire, we notice at once that the second part has not deserved as much attention as the first half of it. Indeed, the full sentence ends with the following qualification: '*if it is measured by the common rules of politics and civil science*';[78] this part has been almost ignored. The consequence of what seems at first sight a minor mistake is a misunderstanding of historical proportions; in the process, a crucial dimension of Pufendorf's thought has been forgotten.

When Pufendorf told his readers that the forms of the state found in classical political thought were not adequate to define the Empire, he not only criticised all previous legal schools in their treatment of the constitution of the Empire, but he also gave the first step to develop his own international constitutional theory. Pufendorf shifted from an analysis based on pure Aristotelian concepts of the state, which he called the 'regular forms of states', to a historical and descriptive method.[79] The most notable result of the work of Pufendorf as a constitutional historian is the idea of a confederation of states. To fully grasp the relevance of such a concept, and its 'modern' nature, it is essential to perceive the move that Pufendorf, as a constitutional jurist, makes from constitutional history to constitutional

[76] The work was originally published in 1667, in Latin, with the title, *De Statu Imperii Germanici*, pretensly authored by a Venetian traveller, who attempted to explain the constitutional nature of the German Empire after the Peace of Westphalia, and who rejected all the existent explanations. The discussion here is based on the English edition. *The Present State of Germany, or an Account of the Extent, Rise, Form, Wealth, Strength, Weaknesses and Interests of that Empire* (translated by Edmund Bohun, London: 1690, 1696).
[77] See *The Present State of Germany*, p.152.
[78] *The Present State of Germany*, p.152, my emphasis.
[79] See John G. Gagliardo, *Reich and Nation: The Holy Roman Empire as Idea and Reality, 1763-1806* (London: Indiana University Press, 1980), p.40.

theory. The difficulty to clearly see such a move rests on the fact that the latter is almost entirely based on the former.

Pufendorf arrived at the concept of 'states-system' through an historical analysis of the evolution of the Holy Roman Empire. He traces the historical evolution of the interplay between the sovereign powers of the Emperor and of the states down to the Treaty of Westphalia. The history of the Empire constituted, for Pufendorf, a case of degeneration of regular into irregular forms of state, through a gradual process of acquisition of power by the states. Pufendorf starts his historical account with Charlemagne's sovereignty over Germany: 'under Charles the Great, Germany became a part of the kingdom of France, and was...subject to the absolute empire or sovereignty of those princes'.[80] Pufendorf also argued that Charlesmagne's sovereign title derived from conquest, and not form the Roman law. As such, he denied the continuity between the classical and the medieval Roman Empires, and indeed attacked those who argued that the Holy Roman Empire was the heir to the Classical Roman Empire. For him, such a historical link was the creation of the Popes to guarantee the security of the Holy See and of Western Christendom.[81] Thus, the first important historical change in the Empire occurred with the separation of the German lands from France, after the death of Charlesmagne: Germany 'became again a free State'.[82] The expression 'free state' means, for Pufendorf, that the new relations between the Imperial Estates and the Emperor rested on a '*de facto* post-Carolingian independence of the princes which became *de jure* in the form of feudal contracts'. Such a contractual relationship was recognised by the Golden Bull of the fourteenth century. At this historical moment, the German lands, in political terms, became an elective Empire. However, despite the historical transformation, the Carolingian and the German Empires had something in common. Both were regular forms of states, and as such their constitutional nature could be explained by the conventional Aristotelian categories: an absolutist monarchical empire in the first case; and a limited monarchy in the second. This latter form lasted until the Thirty Years War, when great political transformations occurred, which were confirmed by The Peace of Westphalia.

To understand the profound constitutional transformations introduced by the Treaties signed in Munster and Osnabruck, Pufendorf starts by discussing 'the power of the

[80] *The Present State of Germany*, p.11.
[81] *The Present State of Germany*, pp.20-4.
[82] *The Present State of Germany*, p.13.

Emperor' and 'the rights of the States of the Empire'.[83] He stresses both 'the limits to the imperial power', and the preservation of the German liberties, noting that this relationship was recognised 'by way of compact'.[84] Thus, argues Pufendorf, the Emperor is 'the head of a confederate body', which is 'very different in degree from that of a full and perfect kingdom or empire'.[85] Pufendorf is of course alluding here to the disintegration from a regular to a irregular form of state, and to the consequent emergence of 'a system of co-ordinate States, which are Confederates each to other'.[86] In his account of the confederate system, Pufendorf also refers explicitly to the idea of divided sovereignty. For instance, although the states enjoy domestic sovereignty over their own subjects, 'there are few instances in which the Emperor can directly and immediately command the subjects of another Prince'.[87] Therefore, Pufendorf tells us, the Peace of Westphalia validated the disintegration of the monarchical form of the Empire into a sort of a confederation of states. In Pufendorf's words, 'So now *Germany*...tends naturally to the state of a *Confederate System*'.[88]

However, it has to be noted, the term 'disintegration' has a double meaning: on the one hand, it designates the liberty of the states; but on the other hand, it means the establishment of a kind of confederation among them, including the Emperor. For instance, we should remember that during the negotiations in Munster and Osnabruck, the German states quite consistently showed hostility to the French project, which involved the complete fragmentation of the Empire. Such opposition reveals a different conception of 'German liberties' compatible with legal commitments to the Imperial constitution. The crucial question now is to see the theoretical implications that Pufendorf drew from the narrative that he tells. For Pufendorf, the return to the condition of absolute monarchy was out of question. On the other hand, a continuing degeneration of the Empire would provoke its dissolution and give place to a system of regular states, what we now call an international system. Alarmed with such a possibility, Pufendorf added to his historical analysis a normative defence of the constitution of the Empire, which pushed him to develop his constitutional theory. Now, the constitutional theorist replaces the historian.

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[83] This is the theme of chapter 5 of the Book, see *The Present State of Germany*, pp.82-97.
[84] *The Present State of Germany*, pp.82-7.
[85] *The Present State of Germany*, pp.87-8.
[86] *The Present State of Germany*, p.89.
[87] *The Present State of Germany*, p.93.
[88] *The Present State of Germany*, p.153. Emphasis in the original.

ii) 'Pufendorf the constitutional theorist'

There are three relevant indications in Pufendorf's career which suggest that he took his work as a constitutional jurist in a quite serious way. First, he included the theoretical conclusions of his historical analysis of the constitution of the German Empire in two of his central philosophical works, respectively *On the Law of Nature and Nations*, published in 1672, and *On the Duty of Man and Citizen according to Natural Law*, published in 1673. Secondly, in 1675, eight years after the publication of his views on the constitution of the Empire, he published a collection of essays, *Select Scholarly Essays*, which responded to his critics, reaffirming, and also reformulating, his previous arguments. Finally, Pufendorf devoted part of the last years of his life to the preparation of a new edition of *On the Constitution of the German Empire*.[89] All this makes one think that the constitutional writings of Pufendorf are an essential part of his theoretical contribution to modern political thought.

Pufendorf admits that the Empire 'has something of irregularity in it'. In this regard, as it has already been observed above, its constitutional nature cannot be explained by any of the 'regular forms of government, as they are usually described by the masters of politics: we must therefore the more accurately enquire what its true form is'.[90] In accordance with such observation, Pufendorf rejects the predominant interpretations of the Empire. He rejects, first, the argument of those who pretend that the Empire is an aristocracy,[91] and then the claim that the German Empire was a regular monarchy, either absolutist or limited.[92] Pufendorf argues that the notion of unitary sovereignty, either in its absolutist or in its limited version, is not useful to explain the constitutional nature of the Empire. At this point, we may notice that Pufendorf is moving towards the idea of divided sovereignty. If regular states are characterised by a unitary form of sovereign authority, then those to which such a conception of sovereignty does not apply, irregular states, are necessarily defined by a division of the marks of sovereignty. Moreover, in line with this argument, Pufendorf still adds that the Empire is not a 'system of many Sovereign States

[89] Krieger, *The Politics of Discretion*, p.156.
[90] *The Present State of Germany*, p.135.
[91] *The Present State of Germany*, pp.140-3.
[92] *The Present State of Germany*, pp.143-52.

and Princes...united in League';[93] in other words, the German Empire was not merely an alliance of states. Rather, it is 'something (without a name) that fluctuates' between limited sovereignty and a league.[94] After having dismissed the alternative answers, Pufendorf is ready to build a new conceptual category able to define the post-Westphalian Empire. It is important to note that there is an element of urgency in Pufendorf's attempt to define this intermediate political body. First of all, because to perpetuate the inability to define the Empire would allow the emergence of new conflicts in Germany. The 'Emperor is always labouring to reduce [Germany] to the condition of a regular Monarchy', and the states are trying to acquire 'to themselves a full and perfect liberty'.[95] This state of affairs, which resulted from the constitutional degeneration that started with the Thirty Years War, could only end with a general agreement on the constitutional identity of the German Empire. Of course, by associating the new concept with a stable political future for the Empire, Pufendorf reveals the ultimate *modern*, and not medieval, nature of his conceptual analysis.

The first innovation offered by Pufendorf, in comparison to the other schools of thought, is the notion of divided sovereignty. Although, as we saw, it is a sign of irregularity, it is not necessarily a constitutional anomaly; all it requires is a conceptual effort to grasp its nature. Pufendorf achieves such a task by integrating his conceptual innovation within a republican confederal theory of a constitutional political system. The key move made by Pufendorf to interpret the nature of the German confederation was to treat sovereign authority as a set of marks, which can be divided and shared by different bodies. As such sovereignty is not inevitably concentrated in a supreme central power. In the case of the post-Westphalia German Empire, the sovereignty was divided between the states and the imperial institutions. On the one hand, the states had full sovereignty in the legislative, judicial and taxation policies. On the other hand, the Empire was sovereign in the domains of internal arbitration, external defence, and in certain foreign affairs issues.[96] It is important to note that the division and sharing of sovereignty occurs within a political community, founded on a common constitution. This corresponds to a post-imperial republican political order; or, for Pufendorf, a confederation of states.

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[93] *The Present State of Germany*, p.153.
[94] *The Present State of Germany*, p.153.
[95] *The Present State of Germany*, p.153. In this regard, in chapter 8, devoted to 'the German interest, Pufendorf rejects the prescriptions of those who defended the reinforcement of states' sovereignty against the Emperor, see pp.187-92.
[96] See Pufendorf, *The Present State of Germany*, pp.193-5.

Therefore, it may be concluded that Pufendorf's constitutional theory adds new notions to the classical types of states. As an alternative to the 'regular states', or *civitas*, Pufendorf created the notion of 'commonwealths'. In the category of the commonwealths, Pufendorf made two further important distinctions. The first, between 'irregular states' with a mixed constitution and 'state-systems'.[97] Within the type of 'states-system', Pufendorf distinguished 'personal unions' from 'confederations of states'. A confederation of states results

when several neighbouring states are so connected by perpetual alliance (treaty) that they renounce the intention of exercising some portions of their sovereign power, above all those which concern external defence, except with the consent of all, but apart from this the liberty and independence of the individual states remain intact.[98]

Thus, the notion of confederation of states served as 'a cure for irregularity'. In this regard, we should replace the distinction between 'regular' and 'irregular' states, by the more positive dual category of 'simple states' and 'states-system',[99] but always bearing in mind that the latter does not have the same meaning as the contemporary concept of 'international system'. Pufendorf explicitly distinguished between a 'loose' and a 'close' states systems. The 'loose' system was the political system formed 'between all peoples through natural law'.[100] It corresponds to our contemporary notion of international society. The confederation of states is an example of a 'close' states system. In other words, a republican confederation is an intermediate political body between the hierarchical unitary sovereign state, a regular state, and international anarchy, the loose states system.

After the Peace of Westphalia, Pufendorf included the German Empire in the category of a confederation of states. In fact, his constitutional works were written first and foremost to clarify the entity created by both the Treaties of Munster and Osnabruck. In this regard, Pufendorf makes recommendations to prevent the condition of the empire from deteriorating further. Thus, to the various political rulers of the German Empire, he recommended that they should preserve the confederation instead of trying to achieve full independence. This follows Pufendorf's belief that both the peace of the Empire and

[97] Pufendorf, *On the Duty of Man and Citizens*, p.144.
[98] *On the Duty of Man and Citizens*, pp.144-45.
[99] Krieger, *The Politics of Discretion*, p.163.
[100] Forsyth, *Unions of States*, pp.80-1. For the notion of 'loose system', see also Pufendorf, *On the Duty of Man and Citizens*, Book Ii, Chapter 17.

German liberties required the maintenance of the fragmented political order associated with the idea of confederation, which avoided the concentration of power either at the Imperial or at the states' level. Those political goals could not be sustained if the Emperor sought to reinforce its power, threatening thereby the states' liberties, or if the states attempted to consolidate their independence. Indeed, and tragically anticipating nineteenth century German and European history, Pufendorf declared that 'Germany...cannot be reduced back to the state of a regular monarchy, without the utter ruin of the nation and government'.[101]

Before I conclude the chapter, it is important to note that from Pufendorf's views on the nature of confederations, one does not draw a *theory* of political systems founded on divided sovereignty. To pursue this line of reasoning would mean to treat Pufendorf as a *theorist* of confederations of states who is able to provide answers about the way they function. This is not the point of this chapter, and I believe that it is not a relevant question (I even doubt that it can be raised at all).[102] My purpose is only to draw some implications regarding the nature of modern international society. The significance of Pufendorf's contribution lies fundamentally in two points. First of all, it shows that the collapse of an imperial political order is not necessarily replaced by an anarchical international system, as it is assumed in most of contemporary international political theory. By studying the historical evolution of the Holy Roman Empire, Pufendorf concluded that the collapse of the imperial medieval order could originate a situation in which a constitutional treaty gives origin to a union of states. This in turn leads Pufendorf to build a modern conceptual category called confederation of states. In this regard, it seems safe to suggest that Pufendorf saw in his conception of a confederated states-system a central contribution to the understanding of the modern political world that he saw unfolding in seventeenth century Europe. The constitutional work of Pufendorf teaches a fundamental lesson regarding the nature of modern politics. There are clear limits to the use of pure types of political systems, be it an essentialist conception of sovereign statehood or an abstract and unhistorical notion of anarchical international system composed by like-units. Moreover, these limits continued to be recognised by much of early modern political thought.[103]

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[101] *The Present State of Germany*, p.192.

[102] From Pufendorf constitutional study, we may perhaps conclude that it could be useful to engage in comparative historical studies on constitutional forms of international political organisation other than the unitary sovereign state.

[103] For instance, Leibniz defined the German Empire in terms of a balance and division of sovereignty between the Empire and the states. See Leibniz, *Political Writings* (Edited by Patrick Riley, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp.111-20. Later, Montesquieu treated the German Empire as a

Conclusion

The central claim of this chapter is that mixed confederations, whose normative structure rests on the division of the marks of sovereignty, have had a significant place in the theory and practice of modern international society. This view disputes the belief that the unitary sovereign state has been the exclusive political agent of modern international political history. When statist theorists define the modern concept of sovereignty exclusively in unitary terms, they are considering a particular manifestation of sovereignty, even if dominant, as synonymous with the very concept of sovereignty. As such, the fundamental importance of the idea of divided sovereignty in the historical development of modern international society entirely escapes them. In this chapter, I argue that in his analysis of a post-imperial political order in Germany, and building on views elaborated by Renaissance humanists, Pufendorf developed the republican idea of a mixed confederation of states. In this regard, he tells us that between the international state of nature and the unitary sovereign state, there are mixed forms of political systems where the marks of sovereignty are divided among different institutions. If we take Pufendorf seriously, we might have another way to tell the story of the development and expansion of modern international society. In this story, the conception of confederation of states plays surely a greater role than in the traditional account. Interesting enough, international lawyers themselves acknowledge the significance of the confederal principle and of the idea of divided sovereignty in the history of modern international society. In this regard, it is worth quoting Lassa Oppenheim.

> The distinction between full sovereign states and partially sovereign states implies that sovereignty is divisible, so that the powers connected with sovereignty need not necessarily be united in one hand...Particularly influenced by the experience of the member states of the German Empire after the Westphalian Peace, and the establishment of the United States of America, Switzerland and Germany as federal states with sovereign powers divided between the federal state and the constituent member states, the need to distinguish between absolute and partial sovereignty became widely...accepted.[104]

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confederation or, in his terms, as '*république fédérative*', see Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws* (Edited by Anne Cohler, Basia Miller and Harold Stone, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp.131-3. In addition, eighteenth century republican thinkers sought to reformulate the European colonial empires in terms of confederations. See Pagden, *Lords of All World.*

[104] Lassa Oppenheim, *International Law, Volume 1: Peace, Introduction and Part 1* (Ninth edition, edited by Sir Robert Jennings and Sir Arthur Watts, London: Longman, 1996), p.124. See also the discussion in pp.245-56 on 'composite international persons'. In the same vein, John Westlake affirms that 'sovereignty is partible'

Such a recognition demands International Relations scholars to address how the existence of confederations of states and divided sovereignty affect our understanding of the idea of international society.

By claiming, against the statist approach, that both divided sovereignty and mixed polities are important elements of modern international history, the argument of this chapter constitutes a further step to develop a conception of international society that escapes the ontological separation between domestic and international politics. In particular, it avoids two features of such a divide. First, it rejects the view that modern states emerged in the condition of the state of nature. Such a view is the result of the analogy between states and individuals. The contract between individuals gives origin to a collective person, which is seen as an autonomous agent in the state of nature. The implication of such an analogy is that by definition the central attribute of the person of the state, sovereignty, ought to be indivisible. However, and contrary to such an assertion, in this chapter, it was argued that the modern state, understood not as a person but as a political constitutional order, emerged within the framework of broader constitutional structures. In the particular case of the German confederation, it was established in the context of the fragmentation of imperial structures, and deeply influenced by constitutional and normative practices that originated in the Renaissance. Yet, if one assumes that sovereign states are like autonomous individuals in the state of nature, it is impossible to perceive this point. By rejecting the state of nature argument, the claim of this chapter escapes a second feature of the ontological divide; namely, that modern international society is exclusively formed of unitary sovereign states. If we understand that states are not persons but rather constitutional orders, which historically emerged in the framework of broader constitutional systems, we may then grasp that those constitutional orders can be both unitary sovereign states and mixed confederations.

The view that there is an intermediary level between the states system as a whole and the unitary sovereign state challenges the stark dichotomy between international and domestic politics, on which most theories of International Relations rest. In addition, in historical terms, this view suggests a different interpretation of the evolution of modern international society, emphasising the importance of the adaptation of post-imperial

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and discusses the notion of 'semi-sovereignty', see *Chapters on the Principles of International Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1894), pp.86-91.

structures to modern political conditions, which originated the emergence of mixed confederations. In other words, such a process of adaptation denotes the existence of an element of continuity between the medieval era and modernity. It illustrates what Gierke once observed, without the retention of some medieval elements 'the Modern World could not have been what it is'.[105] The ultimate implication of such a historical argument is that contemporary examples of mixed polities, such as for instance the European Union, should not be seen as examples of a 'post-Westphalian community', as Linklater puts it.[106] The European Union denotes rather the formation of a constitutional and political entity, which may be defined by the idea of 'multi-level polity', where sovereignty is dispersed 'across and between a variety of loosely interacting levels of governance'.[107] As this chapter tried to show, such a constitutional order should be understood as a manifestation of the *modern* Westphalian international society.

[105] *Political Theories*, p.5.
[106] See 'Citizenship and Sovereignty in the Post-Westphalian State', *European Journal of International Relations*, 2 (1996), pp.77-103.
[107] Richard Bellamy, 'A European Republic: Plural and Divisible', *Europa Europe* (1999), p.5.

CHAPTER 6: INTERNATIONAL *RESPUBLICA*: BETWEEN ANARCHY AND EMPIRE

The last two chapters are the first two stages of the overall attempt to develop a conception of international society that escapes the ontological separation between domestic and international politics. Chapter 4 puts forward a notion of *raison d'état* which includes the idea of the international public good and as such rejects the view that states' political interests only reveal narrow national concerns. Chapter 5 disputes the assertion that modern international society is exclusively composed of unitary sovereign states. Thus, these two chapters have corrected two consequences that follow from the ontological divide, which result in a misconstruction of both the principles of states' external conduct and the constitutional nature of international agents. This chapter will address a further consequence of the ontological divide, identified above in the introduction of the thesis as the 'second implication', namely that the international normative structure is exclusively created by sovereign states. Such a view rests on the assumption that modern states emerged and initially acted in a pre-societal and pre-normative state of nature. In this regard, the rejection of that implication involves a critique of this assumption.

In particular, this chapter directly addresses Wight's view about the need of formulating a conception of international society as a constitutional entity greater than the sum of its parts. In other words, an idea of international society that is distinct from the notion of a society of states. To show that international norms are formed in a social and normative context, and not in the state of nature, is a crucial part of such an endeavour. In accordance with the overall argument of this thesis, it will be argued that the republican political tradition provides us with a more satisfactory account of the development of the international normative structure. In this regard, the chapter will focus on the idea of international *respublica*. In addition, in developing my argument, I will offer in the process a different view of the historical origins and evolution of modern international society.

Given that the concept of international *respublica* emerged as a reaction against the ideas of universal monarchy and territorial conquest, the first part of the chapter will discuss the nature of such notions. In the second and most substantial part, the chapter will explore the eighteenth century conception of international *respublica*. Here the

focus will be mainly on the work of Charles de Montesquieu. In addition, the chapter will also discuss the views of other eighteenth century republican theorists, namely the contributions of David Hume.[1] The chapter shall conclude with a comparison between the republican conception of international society and the notion of the society of states, specifically addressing the two central problems associated with the latter notion, which were discussed in chapter 3: the distinction between international society and, on the one hand, international system and, on the other hand, world society.

Universal monarchy and political anarchy

The idea of universal monarchy

The expansionist strategy of the Habsburgs, from Charles V to Philip IV, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries marked the emergence of the project of universal monarchy in early modern European politics. Since the reign of Charles V, which started in 1519, the Habsburgs sought to implement an imperial order in Europe.[2] Simultaneously Holy Roman Emperor and Spanish monarch, Charles V became the political symbol of the universal monarchy.[3] Whereas the former title gave him a connection with the classical Roman Empire, the latter made him the ruler of an expansionist European empire. He could thus link the old to the new world and as such to integrate the Americas into a European universal monarchy. As it was observed, 'the sheer extent of his inheritance made possible a monarchy on a scale not seen since the

[1] The treatment of Hume as a republican thinker is not a consensual point among historians of political thought. In this regard, this chapter draws on a particular interpretation of Hume's thought, which suits the overall argument of this thesis. For Hume's republicanism, see in particular J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), pp.493-8, and 'Cambridge Paradigms and Scotch Philosophers: A Study of the Relations between the Civic Humanist and the Civil Jurisprudential Interpretation of Eighteenth-Century Social Thought', in Istvan Hont and Michael Ignatieff (eds.), *Wealth and Virtue: The Shaping of Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp.235-52; and John Robertson, 'The Scottish Enlightenment at the Limits of the Civic Tradition', in Hont and Ignatieff (eds.), *Wealth and Virtue*, pp.137-78. See also the discussion in Knud Haakonssen, 'The Structure of Hume's Political Theory' in David Fate Norton (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hume* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp.182-221.

[2] For the Habsburg expansionism, see J. H. Elliott, *Europe Divided 1559-1598* (London: Fontana Press, 1968); and Geoffrey Parker, *Europe in Crisis 1598-1648* (London: Fontana Press, 1979).

[3] For a discussion of the arguments used to defend Charles V's universal monarchy, see John M. Headley, 'The Habsburg World Empire and the Revival of Ghibellinism', in David Armitage (ed.), *Theories of Empire 1450-1800* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), pp.45-79.

Roman Empire'.[4] In this regard, Charles V could claim to be the 'universal and sole monarch of the world'.[5]

To fully understand the political significance and the appeal of the imperial ideology, it is necessary to briefly return to the medieval period. In the Middle Ages, the term universal monarchy stood for the government of those political powers with universal pretensions: the Papacy and the Empire. The legal and moral justification for world *imperium* came from Roman Law, which described the Emperor as *dominus mundi*, that is as the ruler that could claim to *monarchia universalis*, or to world domination.[6] For Roman Law, the term 'universal' had a double meaning. On the one hand, 'it referred to the superiority of the emperor over all other rulers'; and, on the other hand, 'it designated the area of imperial authority, which was regarded as universal and not circumscribed by any political borders'.[7] This usage of the term universal had also a double implication. First, no territorial limits could be imposed on the Emperor's authority and as such the world as a whole could be subject to his rule. Secondly, all other rulers of both the 'old' and the 'new' world were bound to the Emperor's law. Such a conception of universality could thus be used to justify any policy of expansionism. Those who favoured the project of universal monarchy in early modern Europe used these arguments quite consistently. Not only during the Habsburgs's period but also in the eighteenth century during the reign of the French king Louis XIV, as we shall see below.

For those who defended the project of universal empire, the Emperor was bound to fulfil two central functions: to preserve peace within Christendom, and to expand and defend the Christian faith against non-Christians. The first function, inherited from the Roman Empire, gave origin to the idea of 'imperial peace', which was first elaborated in early Renaissance by the Florentine writer Dante.[8] In his book, *De Monarchia*, published in the fourteenth century, Dante called for political unity under the authority of the emperor. He claimed that only a strong universal authority could maintain peace among Christians. As he put it,

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[4] John Robertson, 'Empire and Union: Two Concepts of the Early Modern European Political Order', in John Robertson, *A Union for Empire: Political Thought and the British Union of 1707* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p.6.

[5] Anthony Pagden, *Lords of All the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France c.1500-c.1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), p.40.

[6] For a discussion of the way the Roman legacy was used to justify universal monarchy, see Pagden, *Lords of All the World*, pp.11-28.

[7] See Franz Bosbach, 'The European Debate on Universal Monarchy', in Armitage (ed.), *Theories of Empire*, p.85.

[8] According to Pagden, the Piedmontese Mercurio de Gattinara, Charles V's grand chancellor, was 'an admirer of Dante's *De Monarchia*', see *Lords of All the World*, p.40.

Human race is at its best when a single prince and one law rule it. So it is evidently necessary for the welfare of the world that there should be a single monarchy or princedom, which men call the Empire. Whenever disputes arise, there must be judgement. Between any two independent princes controversy may arise and then judgement is necessary. Now an equal cannot rule over his equal, so there must be a third prince of wider jurisdiction who is ruler over both, to decide the dispute. This third ruler must be the monarch or Emperor. And so monarchy is necessary for the world...the world is ordered best when justice is most powerful, and justice is most powerful under a monarchy or empire.[9]

Thus, the memory of the Roman peace in antiquity originated a 'vision of order and peace under a Universal Empire'. For many Europeans, the Roman Empire became the symbol for political unity of the Western civilisation, and *Pax Romana* stood for 'peace and order'.[10] The other function, the preservation of the Christian faith, demanded from the Emperor the capacity to defend Christendom from the external menace of the Turk and to impose religious unity challenged from within by the Protestant Reformation. The maintenance of universal peace and the preservation of Christian orthodoxy allowed the Emperor to legitimately use military power and engage in an aggressive political behaviour.[11]

The idea of universal monarchy was recovered during the first half of the seventeenth century to legitimise the imperial claims of the Habsburgs. In 1640, an influential treaty, *De Monarquia Hispanica*, which defended the idea of universal monarchy, was published by a Napolitan thinker, Tommasio de Campanella. Despite the title, Campanella considered the Habsburgs, and not only the Spanish monarch, as the new Roman emperors. Following Dante and other proponents of universal monarchy, Campanella also argued that the establishment of the empire was fundamental in order to maintain peace in Europe, to defeat the Protestant revolt, and to defend Christendom from the Ottoman threat.[12] Campanella's work also demonstrates that for many in Europe the issue that was really at stake in the Thirty

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[9] Cited in Frank L. Schuman, *International Politics: The Western State System* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958) p.48. Adam Watson also notes Dante's support for the empire as means to achieve peace. See *The Evolution of International Society* (London: Routledge, 1992), p.143. For two helpful discussions of Dante's political thought, see Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought, Volume One, The Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), pp.16-8; and Antony Black, *Political Thought in Europe 1250-1450* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp.96-100.

[10] Watson, *The Evolution*, p.99. Watson goes as far as observing that the 'desire for an international authority or world government' still exists in the twentieth century, see p. 106.

[11] See Bosbach, 'The European Debate', pp.87-8.

[12] See Anthony Pagden, 'Instruments of Empire: Tommaso Campanella and the Universal Monarchy of Spain', in *Spanish Imperialism and the Political Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), pp.37-63; and Richard Tuck, *Philosophy and Government 1572-1651* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp.69-72.

Years' War was whether the future of the international political order would follow the imperial model of the universal monarchy. To a large extent, the central issues of the War, both religious and political, were the outcome of unsolved conflicts and struggles that had emerged during the sixteenth century. The background against which we should understand all those questions was the opposition between those who fought for universal monarchy and those who resisted in name of the liberty of Europe.

The ideology of conquest and political anarchy

In this section, I want to focus on two issues. First, I shall point to the close association between the idea of universal monarchy and the ideology of conquest. Secondly, I will show how the pursuit of the ideology of conquest gave rise to a condition which was characterised by republican thinkers as political anarchy. It will also be clear that the definition of such a political condition, which resembles the realist idea of a state of war, results from a historical analysis and in this sense does not suffer from the abstractedness of the notion of the state of nature. The affinity between the ideologies of universal imperialism and conquest appears in a clear way in the work of yet another Italian, Botero, who also favoured the establishment of a universal monarchy by the Habsburgs. However, contrary to Dante and Campanella, who focused above all on the legitimacy and the functions of the universal emperor, Botero concentrated on the strategies to achieve universal dominion. A key idea of Botero's work is the inevitable progress of 'extended empires'.[13] In this regard, it is not surprising that the title of his main book is 'reason of state', which reflects his attempt to locate '*ragion di stato*...in the Catholic imperialism of the Habsburgs'.[14] True reason of state, affirmed Botero in a direct criticism of France's alliance with Protestant rulers, should aim at Christian unity under the supreme authority of the universal monarch, who for the Italian writer was the Spanish king. As Machiavelli argued in the *Prince*, for Botero the ultimate goal of a strategy of conquest is the formation of an empire. In other words, the universal monarchy can only be achieved by a commonwealth for expansion, to use another distinct Machiavellian notion. It is perhaps more than a historical coincidence that Charles V inherited his Spanish dominions from his grandfather, Ferdinand of Aragon,

[13] Pagden, *Lords of All the World*, p.108.
[14] Tuck, *Philosophy and Government*, p.66. Of course, Botero's conception of reason of state should be distinguished from Lipsius's and Richelieu's conception. See the discussion in chapter 4.

praised by Machiavelli as the example of a new prince, mainly due to his policy of conquest. Following Dante and Campanella, and indeed Machiavelli, Botero always believed that the Spanish imperial dominion could produce universal peace. Now a major problem arises if world politics is dominated by states for expansion, without any of them being able to impose an imperial peace.

As we saw above, the idea of universal monarchy could be used to justify any policy of expansionism. Such a link anticipated a crucial historical transformation from the idea of universal monarchy to the spirit of conquest. When during the eighteenth century, it gradually became clear that the implementation of the project of universal monarchy was rendered impossible by the growth of a multiplicity of political powers, the imperial ideology turned into strategies of permanent conquest. In this regard, the latter was the heir of the former. The implications were enormous. Instead of establishing a universal empire, which could perhaps maintain world peace, strategies of permanent conquest gave rise to a condition of endless wars. Eighteenth century republican thinkers understood this and saw the ideology of conquest as their main intellectual enemy. For instance, in his essay on the balance of power, Hume strongly criticises the spirit of conquest. Likewise, Montesquieu condemned the Spanish preference for conquest over commerce. Against the idea of empires for expansion, the republican political tradition developed the notion of empires for preservation, whose establishment became the condition for the existence of a peaceful international *respublica*. Already in the seventeenth century, Samuel Pufendorf had this in mind when he distinguished 'imaginary' from 'real interests'. It is worth considering how Pufendorf developed such a distinction. Imaginary interests aim

> At universal monarchy, a monopoly, or some other thing of the like kind. [It] can never be pursued by a Prince without infinite expense and destruction to his subjects...the attempt [to universal monarchy] would certainly fail: it being for the interest of all other States to oppose it with all their might.

Thus, the real interest of states is 'to preserve the Balance of Power'.[15] In accordance with his initial distinction, throughout the book, Pufendorf consistently argues that European states should base their policies on three principles. First, never aim at universal monarchy; secondly, be always aware of any attempt of 'aggrandisement' by a great power, particularly France; and, thirdly, develop commercial relations with all other states in order to promote peace in Europe.

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[15] Samuel Pufendorf, *An Introduction to the History of the Principal States of Europe, in Two Volumes* (London, 1748), pp.ix-x.

It can be argued that to consider the idea of universal monarchy today, almost three centuries after it ceased to be a relevant political option, is somehow anachronistic. In fact, the project of a world empire seems to be excluded from the contemporary agenda of international relations. There are, however, three reasons why I believe that an exposition of the concept of universal monarchy is fundamental in the context of this work. The first is the obvious historical reason. It was against strategies of universal dominion that the idea of international *respublica* emerged, and this concept is a central concern of this thesis. Secondly, as it has just been argued, the impact of the ideology of conquest on external statecraft, which historically gave origin to the condition of international political anarchy, cannot be properly understood if we do not place its origins within the idea of universal monarchy. Given that the idea of a state of war has strongly influenced contemporary thinking about international relations, it is important to understand how republican thinkers characterise it. In line with republican thought, the first chapter of the thesis tried to show that the characterisation of international politics as a state of war results not from the absence of an international sovereign authority, as many International Relations students argue, but from the mixture of an extreme aggressive conception of the nationalist ideology with imperialist policies, which knew its historical pinnacle in the second half of the nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth century. Thirdly, as we shall see below, notions such as sovereign statehood and balance of power, these days often identified with the realist theory, gain an entirely new significance if placed against the background of the idea of universal monarchy. In this regard, we should now turn to the idea of international *respublica*.

A republican conception of international society

The secular conception of respublica Christiana and the Peace of Westphalia

Since the Renaissance, we find European republican thinkers consistently using four types of arguments against universal monarchy. First, such form of empire could never claim any kind of political legitimacy, for it was an example of unjust rule. To characterise such form of injustice, they often recurred to terms such as tyranny and corrupted rulership. Secondly, even if it could in the end produce peace, universal monarchy threatens political liberty, and as such it is morally unacceptable. Thirdly,

every action to achieve world empire constitutes an aggression against all other states. Fourthly, all states are justified to combine their forces to wage a defensive and just war against the potential universal tyrant.[16]

The idea of *respublica Christiana* as a particular conception of international order gained full recognition in the Peace of Westphalia of 1648. For instance, Andreas Osiander argues that European states felt a sort of collective social obligation towards Christendom, or Europe. In this regard, the political and diplomatic community referred to the Conferences in Munster and Osnabruck as the 'senate of the Christian world'.[17] Although the term *Christiana* was often used, this should not lead us to overlook the *secular* conception of the seventeenth century international order.[18] In fact, secularism was the only possible solution for a political order that had to recognise confessional pluralism and sought to end with the religious conflicts that so deeply affected European politics since the first quarter of the sixteenth century. More than on a common Christian religion, European public peace rested on 'a common secular heritage'.[19] Ideas such as the opposition to universal monarchy, the rule of law, just war, a defensive conception of reason of state, division of power and political equilibrium were the central elements of that legacy, which had undoubtedly a strong humanist and republican flavour. Quite significantly, Pufendorf and Leibniz associated the Peace of Westphalia with the seventeenth century European republican peace.[20] Moreover, they both strongly opposed Louis XIV's attempts to impose a universal monarchy in Europe. Leibniz devoted a great deal of his political writings to combat the French monarch's expansionist policies.[21] As for Pufendorf, he warned that 'if the French nation should aim at universal Monarchy the attempt would be vain', for 'the other powers of Europe would join against France'.[22] However, none of these writers explicitly developed a republican conception of international society. For instance, in Leibniz's idea of *Respublica Christiana*, we can still notice a strong medieval outlook, where the papacy

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[16] See Bosbach, 'The European Debate'.
[17] Andreas Osiander, *The States System of Europe, 1640-1990: Peacemaking and the Conditions of International Stability* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), p.27.
[18] It is appropriate to remember that the Pope did not recognize any legitimacy to the Peace of Westphalia.
[19] Osiander, *The States System of Europe*, p.74.
[20] See Pufendorf, *An Introduction to the History*; and Leibniz, '*Mars Christianissimus* (Most Christian War-God', in Leibniz, *Political Writings* (Second Edition, edited by Patrick Riley, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p.123.
[21] See in particular, '*Mars Christianissimus*', pp.121-45; 'Manifesto for the Defense of the Rights of Charles III', pp.146-63; and 'Letters to Thomas Burnett', pp.194-5, all in Leibniz, *Political Writings*.
[22] *An Introduction to the History*, pp.309 and 392.

and the Emperor play a vital role.[23] As we shall see now, a truly secular notion of international *respublica* was only formulated during the eighteenth century.

Eighteenth century republican thinkers and world politics: Resisting empire and avoiding anarchy

The republican political tradition was still of the most important political traditions in eighteenth century Europe. This chapter discusses eighteenth century republican thought by focusing mainly on the work of Montesquieu and, to a certain extent, of Hume. Within International Relations, Montesquieu's and Hume's thought have been almost ignored. For instance, in his lectures on 'International Theory', which discuss more than a fair number of thinkers, 'who happened to have said something about international politics', Wight ignores Montesquieu. As for Hume, Wight mainly refers to him as someone who wrote an essay on the balance of power.[24] Moreover, things have not improved lately. Excluding the case of Nicholas Onuf,[25] the most recent books on so-called 'classical theories' do not discuss the work of either of these two republican thinkers. In their exhaustive treatments of the history of international political thought, Michael Doyle devotes three lines to Montesquieu, and David Boucher does not devote even one.[26] Hume is also almost absent from these two books. Likewise, in the collection edited by Ian Clark and Iver Neumann, there is no chapter on any of the two.[27]

This general ignorance is quite strange given that Montesquieu and Hume spent a considerable amount of time investigating relevant questions to international politics, such as alliances, confederations of republics, conquest, the relation between commerce and peace, the laws of war, and the implications of political republicanism for international justice and order. Here, I shall attempt, first, to show that both Montesquieu and Hume were engaged in answering the same questions that worried also Renaissance republican thinkers, namely how to resist the creation of an imperial

[23] See '*Codex Iuris Gentium*', pp.165-76; and 'Observations on the Abbé's *Project for Perpetual Peace*', pp.178-83, both in Leibniz, *Political Writings*.
[24] See Martin Wight, *International Theory: The Three Traditions* (Edited by Gabrielle Wight and Brian Porter, Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1991), pp.165-6, 171, and 260-1.
[25] See Nicholas Greenwood Onuf, *The Republican Legacy in International Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
[26] Michael W. Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace* (London: W.W. Norton, 1997), and David Boucher, *Political Theories of International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).
[27] Ian Clark, and Iver B. Neumann (eds.), *Classical Theories of International Relations* (London: Macmillan, 1996).

order in Europe and, simultaneously, how to avoid the condition of political anarchy. Secondly, I want to argue that in some crucial respects both thinkers provided more satisfactory answers than their Renaissance predecessors, adding some typical republican notions to deal with those questions. In particular, they both developed the idea of international *respublica*.

The threat of universal monarchy returned to European politics four decades after the Peace of Westphalia, during the last quarter of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth century. This time, the project of world empire was pursued by the French Bourbons. After his hegemonic pretensions during the final stages of the negotiations that led to the signature of the Peace of Westphalia, Louis XIV's strategy of conquest started in 1672 with the Dutch War. Despite the Peace of Nijmegen, which ended the war, French expansionist policy continued during the 1680s. The French monarchy returned to its plan of territorial expansionism by invading the German Empire in 1688. At the same time, France was heavily involved in English politics, supporting the Catholic Stuarts against William of Orange. Given that universal monarchy was linked to political dominion both in the German Empire and in England, the struggle for succession for the English throne was thus bound up in the Bourbon expansionist attempt. This imperial project originated a grand alliance between Austria, England and the Dutch to oppose French policy of conquests, which eventually led to the Nine Years War, between 1689 and 1698. After the end of that war, which managed to halt for a brief moment French expansionism, the Spanish succession dominated the European diplomatic agenda.

In February 1701, Philip V, a grandson of Louis XIV, became head of the Spanish Empire. Simultaneously, the French monarch renewed his policy of conquest and in March of the same year French troops moved towards the Dutch borders. As a result, in September 1701, Austria allied again with the maritime powers, England and the Netherlands. On 15 May 1702, the war of the Spanish Succession started. While Louis XIV supported Philip V as the legitimate Spanish monarch, the members of the grand alliance favoured the candidature of the Habsburg Archduke Charles for the Spanish throne. The eventual recognition of Philip V as Spanish king, moreover after the death of the Duke of Burgundy, the successor of Louis XIV, raised the possibility of a dynastic union between France and Spain. Thus, besides the Spanish succession, the French succession was also a central issue. In addition, the English succession was also at stake. William died in 1702, and the French recognised James III, exiled in Paris, as the legitimate pretender of the English throne. Furthermore, France pursued its

expansionism in the German Empire, and its diplomacy was attempting to have Louis XIV elected Holy Roman Emperor, an old pretension of the monarch.[28] A union between the French and the Spanish empires, the election of Louis XIV, or his successor, to the Imperial throne in Germany, and finally a Stuart in the English throne would signify the establishment of a world empire, under the leadership of the Bourbons. In Pagden's words, 'Louis XIV's project for an *état unifié*...came to seem to many Europeans to be the successor state to the Habsburg Universal Monarchy'.[29] This shows quite clearly that the idea of universal monarchy was the most pressing issue of international relations at the time. At the intellectual level, Campanella's arguments defending the merits associated with imperial peace were recovered by a number of essays, this time supporting the pretensions of Louis XIV to create a universal monarchy.[30] It is in this context that we need to understand the eighteenth century concept of international *respublica*, developed mainly by Hume and Montesquieu.

The study of the rise and the decline of the Roman Empire was a central part of Montesquieu's attempt to oppose the project of universal monarchy. As a biographer of the French thinker observed, analyses such as this one were specially relevant when 'empires were on the agenda of every major modern state in Europe'.[31] In his work on the Roman imperial ideology, Montesquieu addresses two central themes.[32] The first is the emergence of militarism, which was mainly the result of the Roman agrarian social structure.[33] The love for land, and the need of slave labour to work it, originated a great interest in territorial conquest. In this way, Roman urge for expansion led to a strategy of 'constant warfare' and permanent conquest.[34] Moreover, as a result of the rise of militarism, the Romans developed 'the means to subjugate all other peoples'.[35] It was thus the strategy of conquest, supported by a militarist spirit, that enabled Rome to

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[28] For the historical narrative, see Jeremy Black, *The Rise of the European Powers 1679-1793* (London: Edward Arnold, 1990), pp.28-54; Kalevi J. Holsti, *Peace and War: Armed Conflicts and International Order 1648-1989* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp.43-70; and Osiander, *The States System of Europe*, 90-6.

[29] Pagden, *Lords of All the World*, p.150.

[30] See Robert Shackleton, *Montesquieu: A Critical Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), pp.147-9.

[31] Judith N. Shklar, *Montesquieu* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p.50. The issues of universal monarchy and empire dominated the thought of many political thinkers in eighteenth century Europe. See, *inter alia*, Pagden, *Lords of All the World*.

[32] See Montesquieu, *Considerations on the Causes of the Romans' Greatness and Decline*, in Melvin Richter, *The Political Theory of Montesquieu* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

[33] Richard Myers, 'Montesquieu on the Causes of Roman Greatness', *History of Political Thought*, XVI (1995), p.37-47.

[34] See Roger B. Oake, 'Montesquieu's Analysis of Roman History', *Journal of the History of Ideas* (1955), pp.44-59.

[35] This is the theme of one of the longest chapters of the book, chapter VI. See Montesquieu , *Considerations on the Causes*, pp.147-54.

conquer the 'world'. The militarization of Roman politics was characterised, says Montesquieu, by the separation of military from civil virtue and by the incapacity of the civil institutions to control the military forces. The troops started to be used for the private economic ambitions of senators, with the conquest of foreign lands giving rise to private armies. From a defensive force, composed of citizens, and fighting for self-defence, the army became an expansionist institution, 'fighting for the sake of spoils victory brings in land and booty'.[36] In the process, the 'universal monarchy' corrupted itself domestically. This brings us to the second theme addressed by Montesquieu: the Roman decline.

The second part of Montesquieu's history tells 'Rome's downfall'. For the French thinker, Roman fall occurred mainly due to internal corruption and the rise of domestic factions.[37] In order to support an extended empire, it was necessary to create imperial institutions. Internally, during the first century BC the state went through a process of extreme centralisation, in which the civic constitution was seized by the dictators, culminating with the rise of the first Emperor, Augustus. The empire was gradually transformed into an indivisible state, and such a constitutional transformation resulted in the victory of tyrannical rulership over the self-government of the peoples that were part of the empire. Externally, the conquest of foreign lands became violent and was pursued without respect for moral and legal principles. In particular, the consequence of such aggressive policies of territorial conquest resulted in the abandonment of both the doctrine of just war and the practice of concluding treaties of alliances. It should be noted that the period of early Roman expansion took place through alliances, flexible diplomacy and the respect for the rule of law.[38] For instance, the historical record shows, during the republican period, the existence of treaties of alliance with republican semi-sovereign *civitas*. Yet, the strategy of military conquest overthrew the republican principles of that early period. In the end, Roman military despotism, which had already caused domestic corruption and tyranny, produced the collapse of the Empire.

From his historical analysis, Montesquieu drew three conclusions. First, a systematic policy of conquest leads inevitably to the decline and defeat of the aggressive state. In other words, a strategy of external expansionism produces inevitably internal corruption. As Judith Shklar so aptly put it, the exigencies of

[36] Michael W. Doyle, *Empires* (London: Cornell University Press, 1986), p.88.
[37] Montesquieu, *Considerations on the Causes*, p.159-62.
[38] See Doyle, *Empires*, pp.84-5.

expansion make domestic politics 'hostage to military projects'. In the end, Rome 'expanded beyond its ability to govern itself as a republic'.[39] Secondly, Montesquieu tells his readers the story that Edward Gibbon was later to call the 'immoderate greatness' of Roman imperialism.[40] When Gibbon used such an expression, he had in mind the 'republican contradiction', also noted by Montesquieu, and which deeply concerned eighteenth century republican thinkers. As it was demonstrated by Roman history, the collapse of republics might occur in consequence of the republican virtue. Because the Roman republic 'was virtuous it defeated its enemies; because it defeated its enemies it acquired empire'.[41] Paradoxically, it was the virtue of the Roman republic that ultimately led to imperial expansionism and to the subsequent decline. Yet, it should be noted that the target of republican thinkers such as Montesquieu or Gibbon was not imperial expansion as such. They accepted that imperialism could be compatible with republican values. Indeed, for republican thinkers Rome was always an empire: first, a republican empire; and later, a monarchical empire. Thus, the real problem was the form of imperialism that is founded on military conquest and seeks to achieve universal monarchy. Pocock has captured this fundamental distinction, when he affirms that the Roman republic 'corrupted itself in the transformation of empire into a universal monarchy'.[42] Thus, the history of Rome's expansion and fall raised a crucial question to republican thinkers: how can modern republics avoid the fate of Rome? This was the question that, as in the case of other eighteenth century republican thinkers, concerned Montesquieu for a long period of his intellectual life. In addition, and thirdly, Montesquieu also concluded from his historical work that the project of universal monarchy is closely associated with the condition of political anarchy.

The connection between the quest for universal empire and political anarchy is further developed in a short essay (31 pages long), published in 1734 (which to my knowledge is not translated into English). The title is *Reflexions sur la Monarchie Universelle en Europe*.[43] The first point to note about the essay is that, as the *Considerations on the Causes*, it was also written as a contribution to the European debate about the project of universal monarchy. To respond to the proponents of the ideology of empire, Montesquieu starts his essay by raising the following question:

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[39] Shklar, *Montesquieu*, pp.57-9.
[40] Cited by Doyle, *Empires*, p.98.
[41] J. G. A. Pocock, 'Gibbon's *Decline and Fall* and the World View of the Late Enlightenment', in J. G. A. Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p.146.
[42] J.G.A. Pocock, 'Conservative Enlightenment and Democratic Revolutions: The American and French Cases in British Perspective', *Government and Opposition*, 24 (1989), p.93.
[43] *Reflexions sur la Monarchie Universelle en Europe*, in *Deux Opuscules de Montesquieu* (Bordeaux: G. Gounouilhou, M.DCCC.XCI), pp.11-42.

Can one nation achieve a permanent superiority over all other nations in Europe, as the Romans achieved in antiquity?[44] To answer such a question, Montesquieu develops an analysis of the historical development of Europe since the fall of the Roman Empire in the West to the eighteenth century. He identifies four imperial attempts during this period. Charlesmagne's during the eighth and ninth centuries; the subsequent attempts of the Popes to become the supreme monarchs in Europe; Charles V's during the sixteenth century; and finally, Louis XIV's during the second half of the seventeenth century and the first half of the eighteenth century.[45]

In the *Reflexions*, Montesquieu tries to show why, after the fall of the Roman Empire, imperial attempts failed in Europe. He argues that all imperial projects in Europe were opposed by both the spirit of nationalism, which turned small communities into greater nations under the leadership of a common ruler, and the spirit of freedom, which led European nations to ally with each other to resist the hegemonic threat.[46] For instance, English and French nationalism emerged and grew in the struggles against the Papacy and the Habsburgs. Likewise, Dutch nationalism solidified with the resistance to Charles V and the Philips. Finally, the freedom of the European nations was confirmed with the defeat of the last imperial attempt witnessed by Montesquieu, that of Louis XIV.[47] If Montesquieu's discussion ended here, it would be quite similar to conventional accounts within International Relations, which see the historical evolution of modern international society in terms of hegemonic attempts, counter-hegemonic alliances, and balances of power.[48] Yet, Montesquieu is not entirely happy with this kind of argument. He believes that a satisfactory conception of international political society cannot rest only on the idea of national freedom.

This point is clearly made in the *Reflexions*. In a revealing way, and contrary to the common view in International Relations, Montesquieu does not define medieval politics as a hierarchical political system. Despite the imperial attempts of the Holly Roman Emperors and of the Popes, national freedom prevailed from an early age. From almost immediately after the fall of the Roman Empire in the West, 'Europe was divided into many sovereign communities'.[49] However, the struggle for national freedom produced a condition of political anarchy in medieval Europe, characterised by

[44] Montesqiueu, *Reflexions*, p.11.
[45] Montesquieu, *Reflexions*, pp.20-34.
[46] Montesquieu, *Reflexions*, pp.21-8. Montesquieu adds that the geographical disposition of Europe also helps nations to resist imperial attempts, p.20.
[47] Montesquieu, *Reflexions*, p.17, and pp.29-34.
[48] See in particular the argument in Watson, *The Evolution of International Society*.
[49] Montesquieu, *Reflexions*, p.21.

permanent territorial conquests and by a militarist ideology.[50] If on the one hand, these military monarchies were able to resist imperialism; on the other hand, they never constituted a proper international *respublica*. In the Middle Ages, European nations lived in a condition of political anarchy. Yet, this should not be confused with the Hobbesian idea of the state of nature, which is a pre-social stage. For Montesquieu, medieval European nations constituted a political system; they had common customs, and even common rules. What they did not form, largely due to the prevalence of a military *ethos*, was an international *respublica*.

Montesquieu saw the emergence of a similar form of political anarchy in Europe during the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth centuries. Again, as a result of both the nationalist spirit and of the imperial ideology of conquest. The first consequence was, in Montesquieu's words, the 'distortions of international law'. Here, his target was the expansionist policy of Louis XIV. The corruption of the principles of public international law, recognised by the Peace of Westphalia, was the outcome of France's policy of conquest during the last quarter of the seventeenth century and the first quarter of the eighteenth century. As a consequence, in contemporary Europe, tyrannical rulers saw the law of nations as

> a science that explains to kings how far they can violate justice without damaging their own interests. What a dreadful idea...You would almost think...that there were two entirely different types of justice: one, regulating the affairs of private individuals...civil law; the other, regulating the differences that arises between nations, tyrannises over international law.[51]

The other consequence was the return of the 'military spirit' and of arms race between sovereign states.

> A new disease has spread across Europe; it has afflicted our princes and made them keep an inordinate number of troops. It redoubles in strength and necessarily becomes contagious; for, as soon as one state increases what it calls its troops, the others suddenly increase theirs, so that nothing is gained thereby by the common ruin. Each monarch keeps ready all the armies he would have if his peoples were in danger of being exterminated...Thus Europe is so ruined...we are poor with the wealth and commerce of the

[50] Montesquieu, *Reflexions*, pp.21-2.
[51] Montesquieu, *Persian Letters* (London: Penguin, 1993), p. 176. It should be noted that the *Persian Letters* is generally considered to be a critique of Louis XIV's despotism. Published in 1721, after the monarch's death, who died in 1715, the book is about two Persians who are visiting Europe, and spend long time in Paris. Uzbek and Rica, the two main characters of the story, write regularly to their families and friends at home telling their impressions about Europe in general and France in particular. Being from a country regarded in Europe as tyrannical, any resemblance that they could find between French and Persian political systems would be seen as a criticism of French absolutism.

whole universe, and soon, as a result of these soldiers, we shall have nothing but soldiers and we shall be like the Tartars.[52]

This demonstrates that, for Montesquieu, the rise of the military spirit and the formulation of policies purely based on self-interest are the negative consequences of imperial projects. To defend from Louis XIV's aggressive policies, all European states had to enter into a process of arms race. This 'military disease' has also domestic implications, in the sense that it leads the ruler to reinforce its power, in an arbitrary way, which ignores the common good. In this regard, imperialism not only corrupts the aggressive state, but also other states, which are obliged to pursue military policies. In short, it is the whole international *respublica* that ends up in a state of general corruption; or, in other words, political anarchy.

Reacting against this state of international political corruption, in particular the military ethos of glory, Montesquieu denounced the influence of the 'spirit of conquest' on national policies. 'There would be no justice in making war on account of the private disputes of the monarch...any more than a private individual can kill someone who refuses to give him precedence'.[53] In this regard, the doctrine of just war permits only defensive wars against aggression and conquest: 'There are only two cases in which war is just: first, in order to resist the aggression of an enemy, and second, in order to help an ally who has been attacked'.[54] At this point, a clarification is required. Chapter 3 of the book 10 of the *Spirit of the Laws* is entitled 'on the right of conquest', which seems to suggest that Montesquieu accepts a policy of conquests. Such a view would contradict Montesquieu's strong criticism of both the idea of universal monarchy and the ideology of conquest. In this regard, we need to clarify what Montesquieu means by the right of conquest. Montesquieu says that 'From the right of war derives that of conquest'.[55] As we saw, for Montesquieu, defence against aggression is the only right of war. However, defensive wars might give origin to territorial acquisitions, and in this sense the defensive state may in the end engage in a policy of conquest. But the conquest has to follow the spirit of political justice: 'Conquest is an acquisition; the spirit of acquisition carries with it the spirit of preservation and use, and not that of destruction'.[56] In fact, Montesquieu refers to two forms of conquest. According to one,

[52] Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws* (Edited by Anne Cohler, Basia Miller and Harold Stone, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p.224.
[53] Montesquieu, *Persian Letters*, p.177.
[54] Montesquieu, *Persian Letters*, p.177. See also *The Spirit of the Laws*, pp.138-9.
[55] *The Spirit of the Laws*, p.139.
[56] *The Spirit of the Laws*, p.139.

the conquered people is preserved and the conqueror has the duty to give 'this people a good political right and good civil laws';[57] as for the other form of conquest, it destroys the society and citizens of the conquered state.[58] The former conforms to the right of nations, and the latter to the practices of the Roman Empire.[59] Contrary to the tradition of *realpolitik*, to which military victories are a sign of moral superiority and as such legitimise any form of conquest, for Montesquieu we need other justifications to explain the right of conquest. It is, first, a right that derives from self-defence, and secondly, it implies political duties.[60]

From Montesquieu's analysis of world politics, one can infer two points. First, his discussion of the rise and decline of the Roman Empire, crucially defined as a form of universal monarchy, clearly shows that Montesquieu was deeply concerned with eighteenth century international politics, in particular with the revival of the project of universal monarchy.[61] Secondly, and quite significantly, in his critique of the project of universal monarchy, the French thinker resorted to republican arguments, which were developed initially in Renaissance. The criticism of 'corruption', 'tyranny', 'aggression', and 'conquest', and the defence of moderation, rule of law, the virtues of the division of power, political liberty and of the right of resistance are all central ideas in Montesquieu's historical work. Similarly, one of Hume's central concerns was the tendency for imperial expansionism that he saw unfolding in eighteenth century Europe. He saw the ideology of conquest as inimical to a political system of moderate and peaceful relations, which could only be created by the growth of republicanism. Thus, the concern with eighteenth century politics is at the root of Hume and Montesquieu's considerations on world politics. Moreover, as we shall see now, they both resort to republican arguments in order to develop the notion of international *respublica*.

The idea of international respublica

For Montesquieu, and for Hume, the rule of law, the balance of power, and the spirit of commerce were the central ideas of the concept of international *respublica*. Such a

[57] *The Spirit of the Laws*, p.139 and p.144.
[58] *The Spirit of the Laws*, pp.139-40.
[59] *The Spirit of the Laws*, p.139.
[60] For a general, and very helpful discussion of the right of conquest, see Sharon Korman, *The Right of Conquest: The Acquisition of Territory by Force in International Law and Practice* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).
[61] In the *Spirit of the Laws*, Montesquieu attributes to Louis XIV the pursuit of 'the project of universal monarchy', p.136.

conception of international society guarantees political freedom and a just political order. It is in this context that we shall understand Montesquieu's famous definition of international law as being founded on 'the principle that the various nations should do to one another in times of peace the most good possible, and in times of war the least ill possible'.[62] Besides guaranteeing a just political order, the international rule of law, resting on the rights of nations, would also ensure the political liberties of Europe.[63] In addition to the respect for the rule of law, the existence of a general political equilibrium and the spread of the spirit of commerce were also essential for the creation of a republican international political order.

The idea of political equilibrium was expressed in the notion of the balance of power. Hume was the greatest defender of the republican conception of the balance of power. Like Montesquieu and other eighteenth century republican thinkers, Hume was deeply concerned with the project of universal monarchy. In the essay 'Of the Balance of Power', he sees the balance of power as a response to strategies of 'universal monarchy' and identifies in the eighteenth century a new threat to 'the liberties of Europe'.[64] In accordance with the republican tradition, Hume also associated the universal monarchy with the spirit of conquest and expansionism. He was a very strong critic of 'the endless view of increasing',[65] which would cause the disruption of the republican peace and the consequent state of political anarchy.[66] This would mean the return of Europe 'to the maxims of ancient policy', where 'all neighbours were continually in arms' and states 'lived in perpetual war'.[67] Political anarchy had of course domestic effects: 'extensive conquests...must be the ruin of every free government'.[68] One of the worst consequences of all would be the increase of public debts to pay external wars and standing armies. In this circumstances, civil order falls easily victim of 'arbitrary governments'.[69] Being the foundation of a republican order, the existence of a general balance of power would end with political anarchy. In this way, the notion of the balance of power is also associated with the international rule of law. For

[62] Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, p.7.
[63] For Montesquieu, the rule of law and the balance of power are the vital conditions for political liberty. See *The Spirit of the Laws*, pp.155-6.
[64] David Hume, 'Of the Balance of Power', in Hume, *Political Essays* (Edited by Knud Haakonssen, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp.156-8. See also, John Robertson, 'Universal Monarchy and the Liberties of Europe: David Hume's Critique of an English Whig Doctrine', in Nicholas Phillipson and Quentin Skinner (eds.), *Political Discourses in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp.349-73.
[65] Robertson, 'Universal Monarchy', p.358.
[66] Hume, 'Of the Balance of Power', in *Political Essays*, p.159.
[67] Hume, 'Of Commerce', in *Political Essays*, p.97.
[68] Hume, 'Idea of a Perfect Commonwealth', in *Political Essays*, p.233.
[69] Hume, 'Of Public Credit', in *Political Essays*, pp.168-76

instance, Hume considers a military intervention to maintain the balance of power as a just war.[70]

For both Montesquieu and Hume, the rise of the 'spirit of commerce' during the eighteenth century had considerably changed the nature of modern republics. As we saw in Montesquieu's history of Rome, the ancient political virtue was warlike because it mainly resulted from the Roman agrarian structure, which required the conquest of land and slave work. In the eighteenth century, with an economic system based on exchange, the trading bourgeois individual of an urban commercial society was not inclined to military conquest and could be a virtuous citizen of a moderate republic. In this regard, being commercial polities, modern states could move away from the fate of Rome. Yet, republicans were also well aware of the commercial perils and adopted an attitude of critical evaluation to the growth of commerce. In particular, a commercial economic order could alienate the citizens from the public life and as such cause in the long run political corruption. Thus, the question that arose in the republican minds was what remedies ought to be taken against the commercial evils?[71] If these evils could be assimilated to or eliminated by the republican values, then commercial polities could become 'commonwealths for preservation'. It was this belief that led Montesquieu to affirm that 'The natural effect of commerce is peace'.[72] Hume agreed with Montesquieu and saw in free trade and the growth of commercial relations a crucial contribution to a republican and peaceful international order.[73]

The defeat of Louis XIV's project of universal monarchy led Montesquieu to refer to Europe as '*une grande Republique*': all nations 'are members of a grand republic', and political relations between those nations occur through 'treaties' and civil interchange.[74] Likewise, Hume saw Europe as a republic of 'a number of neighbouring and independent states, connected together by commerce and policy'.[75] This

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[70] 'Of the Balance of Power', p.158.

[71] See J.G.A. Pocock, 'Between Gog and Magog: The Republican Thesis and the *Ideologia Americana*', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, XLVIII (1987), pp.340-3.

[72] *The Spirit of the Laws*, p.338. See also the discussion in Pagden, *Lords of All the World*, pp.103-15, and 179-84.

[73] See 'Of Civil Liberty', pp.52-5, and 'Of the Jealousy of Commerce', pp.150-3, in *Political Essays*. See also, Robertson, 'Universal Monarchy', pp.370-1. It should be noted however that, as other republican thinkers, Hume was well aware of the possible dangers of commerce, in particular of commercial mercantilism which could lead to strategies of imperial expansion. It is in this sense that he criticizes the British commercial empire. See 'Of the Balance of Power', p.159, and 'Of the Balance of Trade', in *Political Essays*, pp.136-49. Here, Hume disagrees with Montesquieu, who offered an apologia for British commercial empire. See *The Spirit of the Laws*, pp.156-66, and 325-33. See also the discussion in Robertson, 'Universal Monarchy', pp.367-73. For Hume's critique of the British commercial empire, see also J.G.A. Pocock, 'Hume and the American Revolution: The Dying Thoughts of a North Briton', in *Virtue, Commerce, and History*, pp.125-141.

[74] Montesquieu, *Reflexions*, p.15.

[75] 'Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences', in *Political Essays*, p.64.

international republic gained political recognition in 'the great treaties which had begun with the Peace of Westphalia', and were pursued with the Peace of Utrecht.[76] Such a confederacy, the other term normally used, was maintained, as we saw, through commerce, the balance of power, and the rule of law. Therefore, in the place of universal monarchy and political anarchy, 'Europe had been visualized as a *république confédérative*, held together by treaties and activated by a shared history'.[77] In Edward Gibbon's words, this confederal structure resulted from a 'happy mixture of union and independence'.[78] In terms of historical memory, the image of the Achaean League, 'rather than the Roman *Imperium*', or the 'unrestrained state of nature', became the model 'for governing the relationship between the nations of the world'.[79] The international *respublica* was then the solution to the problem faced by republican thinkers: how to avoid the fate of Rome. In opposition to universal empire, this vision of the international order would not be the result of the collapse of republicanism, but rather its natural conclusion.[80]

As it is clear from Montesquieu's and Hume's views so far, they relate strategies of conquest to both domestic corruption and international political anarchy. As Montesquieu so eloquently puts it, 'An immense conquest presupposes despotism'.[81] As a consequence, they also associate political moderation with external defensive strategies, the maintenance of domestic republican virtues, and the creation of an international *respublica*. Again in Montesquieu's words, 'the spirit of republics is peace and moderation'.[82] These associations between internal corruption and universal monarchy, on the one hand, and internal and external republican virtues, on the other hand, suggest that for these two republican thinkers the ideas of international political anarchy and international *respublica* do not merely represent different views about the *states system* but rather distinct conceptions of *world political organisation*, which encompass the domestic and the international. As Hume so clearly perceived, it was only with the general acceptance of republican principles of free government that the improvement of international society could properly begin. In addition, the formation of an international *respublica* would create the conditions for the rise of domestic

[76] See Pocock, *The Politics of Extent and the Problem of Freedom*, pp.8 and 14; and 'States, Republics, and Empires', pp.69-70.
[77] Pocock, 'Conservative Enlightenment', p.89. Emphasis in the original.
[78] Quoted in Jeremy Black, 'Empire and Enlightenment in Edward Gibbon's Treatment of International Relations', *The International History Review*, XVII (1995), p.442.
[79] Pagden, *Lords of All the World*, p.187.
[80] See Pagden, *Lords of All the World*, p.189.
[81] *The Spirit of the Laws*, p.152.
[82] *The Spirit of the Laws*, p.132, see also pp.24-5, where Montesquieu says that 'moderation founded on virtue' is the principle of republics.

republican societies.[83] The view of a unified world political society is expressed by Montesquieu in the following terms: 'Europe is a Nation composed of many nations', and the welfare of one is the welfare of all.[84] In this way, the law of nations is 'the law of the world'.[85] Crucially, Hume's and Montesquieu's treatment of international society suggests that the concept of international *respublica* is significantly different from the notion of the society of states.

Distinguishing international *respublica* from the society of states

As we saw in chapter 3, the conception of the society of states embraces an individualist perspective, according to which states give origin to international society. We see here the analogy between individuals and states contracting in the state of nature to create a political society[86]. In turn, this view is supported on a historical narrative that emphasises the ontological prior status of the modern state over international society. Two main theoretical implications follow from such a view. First, the formation of international society is necessarily anticipated by the emergence of a states system. In an initial moment, states live in the state of nature and then, in a subsequent moment, those states create a political society. For the English school, and indeed for realists, these two moments are recurrent. After a major international war, which corresponds to the collapse of the previous political society and thus to the moment of the international state of nature, state rulers build a society of states again. The second implication of the statist approach is that cosmopolitan ideas and principles are seen as posing a threat to the survival of the society of states. For the English school, in historical terms, a cosmopolitan view of world order corresponds either to what existed before the emergence of the modern society of states, medieval imperialism, or to what may, in a

[83] See Hume, 'Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences', pp.63-77.
[84] In Montesquieu's words: 'L'Europe n'est plus qu'une Nation composee de plusieurs, la France & l'Angleterre ont besoin de l'opulence de la Pologne & de la Moscovie, comme une de leurs Provinces a besoin des autres: & l'Etat qui croit augmenter sa puissance par la ruine de celiu que le touche, s'affoiblit ordinairement avec lui', *Reflexions*, p.36. In the same vein, Hume says that European nations form 'at large...what GREECE was formerly a pattern in miniature', 'Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences', pp.65-6.
[85] *The Spirit of the Laws*, p.176.
[86] For an explicit contractarian approach to the international order, see the recent work by John Charvet, respectively, 'Contractarianism and International Political Theory' in David Boucher and Paul Kelly (eds.), *The Social Contract from Hobbes to Rawls* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp.175-90; and 'International Society from a Contractarian Perspective' in David R. Mapel and Terry Nardin (eds.), *International Society: Diverse Ethical Perspectives* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), pp.114-31. It should be noted, however, that Charvet distinguishes his approach from the 'society of states' theory of international relations', 'Contractarianism and International Political Theory', p.187.

revolutionary way, replace such a society. Not surprisingly, Hedley Bull's use of the term 'neo-medievalism' denotes an explicit attempt to make an intellectual connection between those two 'cosmopolitan' conceptions of world order. The republican conception of international society disputes these views, as we shall see in more detail now.

The states system presupposes the existence of an international society (and not the other way around)

As we saw in chapter 3, for the English school, the formation of a society of states is anticipated by the emergence of a system of states. The fundamental historical transformation is the evolution from a condition of *system* to a condition of *society*; hence the significance of the Peace of Westphalia for Bull. Such a historical process may be summarised as follows. After the appearance of the modern sovereign state, and thereby of the states system, and through a sort of an international social contract, states created a normative structure to regulate their relations. This reveals, as it was already pointed out, the ontological priority given to the sovereign state over international society, which makes the English school's attempt to overcome the ontological separation between domestic and international politics not completely successful. Indeed, the historical view of the English school is somehow odd. It treats, initially, international society in non-societal and non-normative way, which corresponds to the moment of the state of nature, before the international social contract. It is only after the contract between states and the creation of the society of states, that the school's approach shifts to a social and normative view of world politics. To understand this, though, we need to adopt an historical approach; this is why, for instance, Alexander Wendt fails to grasp it.[87] The crucial problem that stems from this approach is that the English school separates the normative principles of the society of states from the constitutional and ideological structure of international society. I shall return to this last notion below, but before let me illustrate with some examples what I mean.

Take the case of the balance of power. For the English school, the balance of power is an *international* normative principle created by sovereign states. Although, due to their historical sensitivity, the members of the school implicitly perceived the

[87] See Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp.31-2.

republican nature of the concept of the balance of power,[88] they persisted in linking its creation to the emergence of the states system.[89] However, if we consider for instance Hume's views on the balance of power, we see that such views are associated with the republican political principle of division of power. Such a principle applies to any political system, and cannot be treated merely as a normative principle created by sovereign states to regulate their mutual relations.[90] Hume's view indicates that the principle of the balance of power is associated with the republican ideology of free government, and its general principle that any stable political system has to rest on an equilibrium and division of power. The international *respublica*, Hume believed, must incorporate the principle of maintaining a balance between its political parts, as it happens in the domestic constitution of republics.[91] Thus, the institution of the balance of power, as it is defined by the republican tradition, is not the result of any logic of anarchy, as realists believe, nor is it only the consequence of states' concern for survival, as Bull argues. In historical terms, as we saw both in this chapter and in chapter 1, imperial policies of conquest, and indeed of universal dominion, which disrupt the balance of power, have been adopted as the adequate strategies to live in anarchy and to guarantee national survival. This means that the respect for the institution of the balance of power requires a political culture that values the division of power, the limits on the exercise of power, political freedom, and defensive strategies. In short, the principle of balance of power derives from the 'republican spirit'.

In addition, this spirit, or ideology, influences the nature of international agents. This occurred for instance in the case of 'civilised monarchies', which for Hume were a product of the rise of the spirit of republicanism during the eighteenth century. In Hume's words, 'the monarchical form...owes all its perfection to the republican'. In particular, 'It must borrow its laws and methods, and institutions, and consequently its stability and order, from free governments'.[92] Hume's approach suggests that a republican view of political order, founded on the division of power, constitutes both the international principle of the balance of power and the 'constitutional commonwealth', including both republics and civilised monarchies. It also suggests that international normative principles, such as the balance of power, are not created by

[88] See in particular Herbert Butterfield, 'The Balance of Power', pp.132-48; Martin Wight, 'The Balance of Power', pp.149-75, both in Herbert Butterfield and Martin Wight, *Diplomatic Investigations* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1966); and Martin Wight, 'The Balance of Power and International Order', in Alan James (ed.), *Bases of International Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp.85-115.
[89] See Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, p.106.
[90] See in particular Hume's essay 'Of Civil Liberty', p.55.
[91] 'Of the Rise and Progress', pp.64-5.
[92] 'Of the Rise and Progress', p.68.

states merely out of their need to coexist peacefully and orderly, but result rather from the international constitutional and ideological structure. In historical terms, such a structure predated the emergence of sovereign states and indeed provided the social and normative framework in which the states system was constituted. For republicans, the belief in the virtues of the division of power anticipates the emergence of the international *respublica*. Indeed, such a belief is a fundamental condition. Thus, this view rejects the English school's belief that the formation of international society was preceded by a pre-social and pre-normative state of nature. In addition, and crucially, such an international normative framework is mainly founded on cosmopolitan principles.

Cosmopolitan values are the foundation of (and not a threat to) international society

As we just saw, the principle of the balance of power stems from a republican conception of political organisation, which rests on universal principles. In addition, the spirit of law, a central idea in Montesquieu's work, is closely related to a universal conception of 'justice'. As we saw in this chapter, the constitutional treaties, such as Westphalia and Utrecht, constitute a central element in the republican notion of world political order. Ultimately, the fundamental significance of treaties derives from the value attributed to the rule of *pacta sunt servanda*. International treaties can only have any effect if there is a reasonable assurance that agreements will be followed. In this way, the rule of *pacta sunt servanda* is founded on the belief that agreements and promises must be kept, which originates what has been called 'legitimate expectations'.[93] This analysis raises two points. First, the concept of *pacta sunt servanda* is a 'general principle about the *nature* of international law', and states ought to accept it before they regard treaties as binding.[94] The second point refers to the origins of the rule of *pacta sunt servanda*.

Although sovereign rulers make treaties, historically, they did not create such a rule. As it was recently noted, states 'cannot by treaty establish the principle that treaties are binding'.[95] Indeed, the rule of *pacta sunt servanda* expresses more fundamental

[93] See Michael Byers, *Custom, Power and the Power of Rules: International Relations and Customary International Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.175, and p.36.
[94] Anthony Clark Arend, *Legal Rules and International Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p.52. Emphasis in the original.
[95] Arend, *Legal Rules*, p.52.

assumptions about the nature of a just political order.[96] It was a Roman legacy, which derived from the belief that law should promote a sense of equity and fair dealing. From Rome, and through the Renaissance, it became a universal principle of the law of nations. In this regard, it is Jean Bodin himself, for many a strong statist thinker, that refers to 'the absolute rule that agreements should be faithfully kept'; and that no invocation, even on the grounds of *raison d'état*, could justify a broken agreement.[97] Even if the rule of *pacta sunt servanda* was subsequently approved by the consent of states, its moral force did not derive originally from states' practices, but rather from a universal moral and legal principle. These brief considerations on the principle of *pacta sunt servanda* indicate that another fundamental normative institution of international society, treaty-making, is also founded on a universal principle, which applies to any type of political order. In addition, it also demonstrates that a vital institution of the states system was not created by states, but rather derived from established societal and normative practices.

Furthermore, the republican understanding of commerce was also deeply cosmopolitan. For republican thinkers, commerce was 'far more than the simple exchange of commodities'; and a commercial international order required 'the understanding of a common humanity'. In particular, republicans believed in 'the humanizing power' of commerce: the belief that the social interaction caused by commerce would render individuals more open and cosmopolitan.[98] In Montesquieu's formulation: 'Commerce cures destructive prejudices, and it is an almost general rule that everywhere there are gentle mores, there is commerce and that everywhere there is commerce, there are gentle mores'.[99] Therefore, we can safely conclude that the idea of international *respublica* is founded on cosmopolitan values, which denote the existence of common world political principles. As Pocock put it, the European republic was a 'cosmopolitan confederacy'.[100] Returning to the English school's use of the idea of world society, discussed in chapter 3, we can make two concluding points. First, although the republican conception of international society emerged against the idea of universal empire, it rested from its emergence on cosmopolitan principles and values. Secondly, the awareness of this cosmopolitan elements allows us to rethink the

[96] See, for instance, Hume's remarks in 'Of the Law of Nations', in David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (Edited by Ernest C. Mossner, London: Penguin Books, 1985).
[97] See the discussion in Bodin, *On Sovereignty* (Edited by Julian H. Franklin, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), book V, chapter 6.
[98] See Pagden, *Lords of All the World*, pp.180-1.
[99] *The Spirit of the Laws*, p.338.
[100] 'Conservative Enlightenment', p.93.

revolutionist category, as it was created by Wight, and to realise that certain so-called 'revolutionary' concepts are indeed a central part of the notion of international society. To fully understand the significance of the idea of international *respublica*, we need now to briefly explain what I call the constitutional and ideological structure of international society.

Two central ideas define the notion of 'constitutional and ideological structure'. First, it presents a view of a just world political order, which includes both its normative principles and the nature of its political agents. When Hume and Montesquieu refer to the spirit of republicanism they have in mind a view of a just political order. When I affirmed above that the principle of the balance of power ultimately derives from the republican spirit, I was implicitly referring to the ideological structure of world politics. Another eighteenth century republican thinker, Gibbon, nicely summarised this notion of ideological structure with the expression 'the general manners of the times'.[101] The second defining idea refers to the constitutive effects of the ideological and constitutional structure on the institutions and normative principles of international society. As we saw earlier during our discussion of Hume's and Montesquieu's notion of international *respublica*, the republican view of the world political order encompasses both domestic and international politics. A just political order at both levels rests on the same ideological structure. For instance, in the case of Montesquieu, it is clear that a just domestic order and a just international order, that is a world political order, both rest on the republican principles of virtue and moderation.[102] In this regard, in the case of international society, the relevant point is to investigate how the ideological and constitutional structure determines the international normative principles. For instance, in the case of the balance of power, we could outline such a connection in the following way. The republican spirit of free government, characterised by a division of power, is part of the overall international ideological structure, which affects the organisation of domestic and international politics alike. What is at stake is the opposition between two political ideologies: the ideology of moderation which limits the exercise of power and the ideology of a tyrannical use of political power. From a consensus at the ideological level on the virtues of the division of power, it follows that the balance of power, protecting against strategies of conquest, and guaranteeing political freedom, becomes a key normative principle of international society. The same could be said of the relation between the spirit of commerce and the

[101] Quoted in Black, 'Empire and Enlightenment', p.442.
[102] See *The Spirit of the Laws*, pp.22-8, p.125, and p.132.

normative principle of commercial reciprocity; or of the relation between the spirit of the law and the normative principle that treaties ought to be respected. These connections demonstrate why eighteenth century republican thinkers believed that an understanding of the international ideological context was crucially important to grasp the nature of international society.

It should be noted that a similar emphasis on 'ideational causation' marks the recent work of constructivists. For instance, in his analysis of the 'world polity', John Gerard Ruggie uses the notion of 'intersubjective beliefs' to stress that international institutions can only function within a social context that recognises them to be legitimate.[103] Such a social context, 'suffused with ideational factors',[104] constitutes the foundation of international society by producing its normative structure. This is what Ruggie calls the constitutive role of international collective beliefs. In a similar way, Wendt alludes to the 'ideational structure' or 'shared beliefs' as the key factors to understand international politics.[105] This thesis also attempts to explain the nature of the normative structure of international society by emphasising the fundamental importance of the international ideological structure. In this regard, it claims that it is crucial to study how the dominant spirits or the general manners of the times, in eighteenth century's words, or the international political culture, in contemporary language, constitute the normative principles of international society. This thesis undertakes such a task by discussing how the republican political tradition defines international society. To a certain extent, the implication of such an approach is that what we call these days constructivism is not on the whole an intellectual revolution but, to a large extent, a return to old premises about the nature of the social and political world. It is my belief that those premises are visible in the work of the republican political tradition.[106] As such, this thesis tries to develop a historically informed constructivist conception of international society. The emphasis on the constitutive function of the ideological and constitutional structure also indicates to what extent the republican conception of international society differs from the notion of the society of states, where the consideration of such a structure is almost absent.

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[103] John Gerard Ruggie, *Constructing the World Polity: Essays on International Institutionalization* (London: Routledge, 1998), p.20.
[104] Ruggie, *Constructing the World Polity*, p.33.
[105] Wendt, *Social Theory*, pp.139 and 160. Wendt says that 'its political culture is the most fundamental fact about the structure of an international system', p.250.
[106] In this regard, it is interesting to note that Onuf's work attempts at the same time to develop a *constructivist* approach and to emphasize the significance of *republican* political thought to understand modern international politics.

Therefore, the idea of international *respublica*, with its stress on ideational causation, helps us to develop a notion of international society 'as a constitutional entity greater than the sum of the parts'.[107] For both Montesquieu and Hume international society was the greater political *respublica* that exists above the states. In Montesquieu's words, it is 'a society of societies'.[108] This explains the fundamental importance that they attached to constitutional treaties, such as Westphalia and Utrecht. It was during these 'constitutional moments' that the normative principles of the international *respublica* were recognised. Here, it is crucial to firmly distinguish between 'creating' and 'recognising' the normative principles of international society. To recover an important distinction made by Hume, whereas the first terms implies a group of primitive agents in the state of nature establishing through consensus a political society from its foundations; the second expresses the view that states are social entities that agree on the terms of their social and political coexistence through compromises achieved within an established social and normative context.[109] It is in this sense that international society can be seen as a constitutional entity greater than the sum of its parts. In historical terms, this point is visible when we grasp that the emergence of the sovereign state and of the states system occurred in the context of a formed political society and not in the state of nature. When Wight criticised 'the doctrine that the state is the ultimate unit of political society', because 'it entails the doctrine that there is no wider society to embrace states',[110] he was, I believe, defending such a view of an international political society. In other words, the same view that we find in the work of republican thinkers.

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[107] It should be noted that Jennifer Welsh also attributes a similar conception to Edmund Burke. Burke believed in, as she puts it, 'the existence of a larger international society which exercises restraint upon its members; in this regard, states are 'relatively, not absolutely perfect, and...parts of a greater whole'. See Jennifer M. Wesh, *Edmund Burke and International Relations: The Commonwealth of Europe and the Crusade against the French Revolution* (London: St. Martin's Press, 1994), p.33.

[108] *The Spirit of the Laws*, p.131.

[109] Hume's critique of the state of nature and social contract doctrines appears in 'Of Justice' and 'Of Political Society', both in David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (Edited by J.B. Schneewind, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1983), pp.20-38; and in 'Of the Origin of Government', and 'Of the Original Contract', both in Hume, *Political Essyas*, pp.20-3, and 186-201. For a discussion of Hume's critique of those two doctrines, see Dario Castiglione, 'History, Reason and Experience: Hume's Arguments against Contract Theories', in Boucher and Kelly (eds.), *The Social Contract*, pp.95-114.

[110] Martin Wight, 'Western Values in International Relations', in Butterfield and Wight (eds.), *Diplomatic Investigations*, p.92.

Conclusion

As I noted in the introduction of the thesis, the belief that 'sovereignty precedes the international and gives rise to it' is one of the implications of the ontological divide.[111] Seen as ontological primitive agents, and interacting in the state of nature, sovereign states are understood to be the creators of the international normative structure. Such a view rests on the assumption that states, originally, emerged and acted in a pre-social and pre-normative condition. This view is for instance clear in the first paper on international theory produced by Bull, where against the Hobbesian argument he recovered the Lockean double contract thesis.[112] Although states do not enter into a *pactum subjectionis*, or a political contract, to establish an international government, they enter into a *pactum societas*, or a social contract, and as such create an international political society.[113] In the very beginning of this chapter, I said that the rejection of the view of the *statist* origins of international society involves a critique of the *state of nature* assumption. This chapter has attempted to accomplish such a task. For republican thinkers, world politics were never in the state of nature. Rather, what they investigate is how the ideological and constitutional structure is continuously reproduced in historical terms and how it affects the fundamental institutions of international society. By showing that for republicans the constitution of international society is the result of a set of intersubjective beliefs about the meaning of a just political order, this chapter has demonstrated that for the republican tradition states did not interact originally in a pre-societal and pre-normative state of nature. Rather, international political agents emerged and act within an ideological context. To understand the nature of the normative structure of international society, that is the existence of institutions such as balance of power, international law, state sovereignty and so on, it is essentially to grasp how the ideological structure constitutes those institutions. In other words, it is necessary to be aware of the ideational causation.

Such a perspective has a double merit. First, it permits a more accurate analytical approach, in the sense that the normative structure, or the fundamental international institutions, are seen as constituted by the ideological and constitutional structure, and not as emerging in an ideological vacuum. In historical terms, it disputes

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[111] See above p.3.
[112] See Hedley Bull, 'Society and Anarchy in International Relations', in James Der Derian (ed.), *International Theory: Critical Investigations* (London: Macmillan, 1995), pp.75-93.
[113] For the distinction between these two types of contracts, see Castiglione, 'History, Reason and Experience', pp.95-6.

the belief in a stark separation between medieval and modern international society. When did *modern* international society emerge? is, to a certain extent, a wrong question. From an analytical perspective, it is not possible to completely understand the nature of modern international society by ignoring its medieval roots. Although such a historical transformation is characterised by some discontinuities, it is also marked by important continuities.[114] For instance, during the negotiations that led to the Peace of Westphalia, it s clear that the majority of the participants saw themselves as reconstituting the *respublica Christiana*. The second merit of the republican approach is a normative one.

For eighteenth century republican thinkers, the construction of an international *respublica* would resolve the problems of aggressive conquests and wars. The republican moment that they believed they were witnessing during their age is part of a distinct view of the history of modern international society. Thinkers such as Hume or Montesquieu firmly believed that the emergence of a republican political order signified the triumph of civilisation over barbarism, both religious and tyrannical barbarism.[115] Thus, in this respect, the idea of international *respublica* denoted a historical discontinuity with the medieval political order. Yet, even in this case, the political morality of republicanism is not the result of a complete break with the past but rather stems from the recovery of classical and Renaissance republican values. Of course, the return of barbarism, with the triumph of expansionist nationalism during the nineteenth century, indicates that the idea of international *respublica* is somehow associated with a story of a political failure. However, political failure does not necessarily mean intellectual failure. When in the early 1960s, Wight tried to recover a constitutional conception of international society, he was recognising the intellectual merits of those thinkers, whom he included within the category of rationalism. This chapter, following the general purpose of this thesis, tried to develop the legacy of a particular strand of such a broad category: republican political tradition. The central claim is that such a tradition permits us to fully explore the idea of international society, as presenting a conception of a just political order, and not merely a view of international order, where justice is seen in conflict with order.

[114] The element of continuity is of course a central point of the argument advanced in chapter 5 concerning the idea of divided sovereignty.

[115] See the recent work by J.G.A. Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion. Volume Two: Narratives of Civil Government* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of a thesis is normally the end of a long intellectual journey. To finish the intellectual journey of this thesis, I must still accomplish three brief tasks. First, I need to summarise the main stages of such a journey. Secondly, I shall emphasise the principal components of my reformulation of the concept of international society, which is the central task of this thesis. Thirdly, I will briefly refer to the significance of this thesis in the context of the discipline of International Relations.

I have built the argument of this thesis in three stages. First, in chapter 1, I discussed the realist conception of international anarchy as a state of war. I made three claims. First, the origins of the contemporary realist theory are to be found in the nationalist revolution of the nineteenth century, and I used Leopold Ranke's work to illustrate this claim. It was this tradition of 'nationalist *realpolitik*' that Hans Morgenthau brought to the discipline of International Relations, during its 'second' founding moment, just after World War II. Secondly, I argued that a strong ontological separation between domestic and international politics is the central consequence of such a nationalist definition of the world political system. Thirdly, I demonstrated how the tradition of *realpolitik* presents modern political history in nationalist terms. It was against this approach to the study of international relations that the British Committee reacted, and as a consequence its members developed the idea of international society. This suggests two reasons that justify my discussion of the *realpolitik* tradition in chapter 1. First, given that the condition of anarchy constitutes the strongest realist claim to validate its view of the international system, it is fundamental to show that anarchy itself can be theorised in different ways. It is important to constantly remind ourselves that the realist conception of anarchy, as a state of war, reveals a particular view of international politics, which is deeply rooted in the nationalist and *realpolitik* traditions. This is what, ultimately, the work of the English school demonstrates. In this regard, and secondly, we only properly understand the significance of the English school's idea of international society if we grasp that the school reacted against the realist view of international anarchy. This takes me to the second stage of the thesis.

In chapter 2, I discussed the reaction of the English school against realism. My claim is that the members of the British Committee were strongly committed to develop an alternative approach to the study of international relations. As a result of such an

attempt, the British Committee built the tradition of rationalism, and formulated the concept of international society, with both resting on a re-interpretation of past political thought. This shows that the conceptual effort was from the very beginning accompanied by what I called the 'return to history'. Crucially, the members of the English school sought to demonstrate that it was possible, in opposition to realism, to define modernity in a non-nationalist way, emphasising the internationalist, or rationalist, elements of modern international society. This belief that theory cannot be divorced from history constitutes, in my view, one of the most valuable legacies of the English school, and one that inspires this thesis. As it was also argued in chapter 2, the concept of international society constitutes the initial step to overcome the ontological divide between domestic and international politics. This point is specially clear in Martin Wight's early contribution to the British Committee, 'Western Values in International Relations'. Indeed, as it was argued, Wight put forward the idea of an *international political society* not only as a critique of the realist idea of the state of war but also as in opposition to the legal positivist notion of the *society of states*. However, in the end it was the latter concept that prevailed, and the view of international society as a society of states became the conceptual legacy of the school.

Chapter 3 addresses the problems that result from the way the English school finally conceptualised international society. The problematic definition of international society is clearly visible in three claims. First, in both Wight's, in particular in the *Systems of States*, and Hedley Bull's accounts of the origins of modern international society, where the state has an ontological priority over international society. Secondly, and related with the first, in their view that international society evolves necessarily from a states system. Thirdly, from these two first claims it follows that the notion of 'world society', the domain that includes the non-statist and universal elements of international relations, is opposed to international society. As a result, the concept of society of states is not fully able to escape the ontological divide and in this sense the English school did not entirely succeed in its fundamental conceptual task. In the end, as realism, although adopting a different conception, the English school also starts from the idea of international anarchy.

The final, and crucial, step of the thesis is the attempt to reformulate the concept of international society, building on Wight's views presented in 'Western Values'. Such an enterprise proceeded in the light of the republican tradition, never fully explored by the English school. This third step of the thesis was accomplished in chapters 4, 5, and 6. In chapter 4, I addressed the issue of the external conduct of states and argued that

reason of state should not be defined in accordance with any fixed historical definition. Against the realist conception, which stresses offensive and aggressive strategies, the republican tradition develops a notion of *raison d'état*, which expresses a concern for the international public good. Such a concern was the result of the republican idea of political virtue. The 'rational state' and the normative principle of 'virtuous *raison d'etat*' were in historical terms both constituted by early modern republican conceptions of just political order and responsible political behaviour. Thus, this is yet another example where states' practices were not self-constituted but rather constituted by international ideological factors. Chapter 5 discusses the constitutional nature of international agents. Contrary to statist approaches to international society, the chapter claims that modern international society is not exclusively composed of unitary sovereignty states. Such a claim results from a discussion of Pufendorf's analysis of the constitutional nature of the German empire after the Peace of Westphalia. The implication of such an analysis is the view that the ideas and practices of divided sovereignty and mixed polities were also an important part of the development of modern international society. The chapter attempts, to quote Ian Clark, 'to break the exclusive link between sovereignty and the state by questioning the proposition that it is a concept which only applies to the state'.[1] As the chapter tried to demonstrate, sovereignty also applies to international confederations and mixed polities.

In chapter 6, I move from questions associated with the identity of international agents to the issue of the international normative structure. I address such an issue through the reconstruction of the idea of international *respublica*. This central republican concept emerged in the Renaissance, against the ideas of universal empire and territorial conquest, and was further developed in the eighteenth century by republican thinkers such as Hume and Montesquieu. As I argued in the chapter, international *respublica*, or the world political system, allows us to escape two problems identified in the work of the English school, namely that international society is anticipated by the emergence of the states system and that it is threatened by the idea of world society. Contrary to these assertions, the chapter argued that international society does not evolve from a states system, but rather the other way around. The modern states system emerged in a societal context, not in the state of nature. Moreover, the nature of the political institutions of such a system were constituted by normative practices, which were already firmly established, and which were inherited from older

[1] Ian Clark, *Globalization and International Relations Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.72.

social and political orders, such as for instance the Renaissance political system and classical Rome. Hence, historically, it is a mistake not only to give ontological priority to the emergence of the state over international society, but also to see the normative structure of the latter as a pure result of a consensus among states. In addition, the chapter argued that cosmopolitan ideas and principles have been a crucial, and highly influential, part of modern international society. Thus, it is again a mistake to oppose this meaning of the term world society to international society. To see international society as a society of states, whose existence is threatened by 'revolutionary' cosmopolitan ideas is not accurate. The right approach, I believe, is to explore the influence of cosmopolitanism in the nature and evolution of international society. Whereas some cosmopolitan ideas and principles are indeed rejected, others are part of the foundation of international society.

After the recapitulation of the argument of the thesis, it is now necessary to offer my reformulation of the concept of international society. It is helpful to return to the idea of the ontological divide between domestic and international politics and to the statist approach. As I observed in the beginning of the thesis, the identification between the international political system and the Hobbesian notion of the state of war is the first implication of the ontological divide. As we also saw, the English school disputed such a view by developing the concept of international society. Yet, by accepting the belief that states emerged in a pre-societal and a pre-normative condition, and only in a subsequent moment created the society of states, the English school failed to entirely escape the ontological divide. Thus, someone like Bull fails to notice that when states reach compromises regarding the normative structure of international society, they are embedded in an ideological and societal context that deeply affects their choices. Moreover, Bull also misunderstands the identity of modern international agents. In particular, on the one hand, he ignores the ideas of divided sovereignty and of mixed polities; and on the other hand, and contrary to some of the suggestions raised by his own work, he seems to accept the realist understanding of reason of state. It is in this sense that Bull ends up with a statist conception of international society, or a *society of states*.

It is such a notion that this work tries to reformulate. The reformulated concept of international society rejects the second implication of the ontological divide, namely that the state precedes the international and gives rise to it. States did not emerge in the state of nature and have never enjoyed complete autonomy. Rather, states were constituted in an ideological and social framework. The nature of such a political

condition has been excellently characterised by Nicholas Onuf as 'the paradox of independence and connectedness'.[2] The implication is that the international state of nature is a chimera. Indeed, in historical terms, it was the existence of previous societal and normative ideological beliefs and structures that made possible the very emergence of states, as agents enjoying certain political rights. This idea of the international embedded state was developed by chapters 4 and 5. Such a notion allows the concept of international society developed here to avoid the third and fourth implications of the ontological divide. Thus, the republican conception of international society includes the notions of mixed polities, which resulted from the international process of imperial fragmentation, and virtuous *raison d'etat*, which is associated with the idea of the international public good. In other words, the early modern republican ideology offers the foundations to build a conception of international society in which institutions such as the balance of power, collective security, defensive confederations, and the international agents enjoy a distinct *republican* nature. In a fundamental way, such a conception escapes the ontological divide for all the components of international society ultimately derive from the overall republican world view, which includes both domestic and international politics.

Before I offer my definition of international society, it is appropriate to remember once again how Wight defined an international political society in 'Western Values'. For Wight, international society is a constitutional entity greater than the states system, composed of individuals and political organisations other than the unitary sovereign state, which presupposes an international social consciousness, and whose political order rests on the practice of collective security. The result of my conceptual reformulation is the following definition of international society: *International society is a constitutional entity greater than the states system, whose institutional structure results from the continuous adaptation of inherited societal and normative practices, which ultimately derive from the ideological structure. Such a political society is composed both of unitary sovereign states and mixed polities, whose political interests include a concern for the international public good.* Thus, from Wight's definition I sought to develop, and to clarify, three ideas: that international society is a constitutional entity greater than the states system; that it is also formed by international agents other than the unitary sovereign state (focusing in particular on mixed polities); and that collective security implies a conception of *raison d'etat* that includes a concern

[2] Nicholas Greenwood Onuf, *The Republican Legacy in International Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p.4.

for the international common good. I must recognise that such a definition looses the elegance of Bull's conception, but political reality is not as elegant as Bull's conception of the society of states suggests. In this regard, I believe that my reformulation better captures the intellectual and political diversity of modern international society, and in this sense it is historically more accurate. As I often argued throughout the thesis, for republican thinkers, the concept of international society was perceived to lie 'between anarchy and empire', as the title of the thesis indicates, and was never understood as an 'anarchical society'.

A word of caution is necessary at this point. The republican political order espoused in this thesis should not be taken as reflecting the view that it is possible to create such a political order once and for all times, a kind of political utopia. What is presented here is a view of international society which is bound to compete with other visions of world political order. The normative ideals embedded in the notion of international *respublica*, such as political virtue, liberty, division of power, defensive strategies, concern for the public good, are all fragile, even ambiguous, ideas which compete with power politics, expansionism, aggression, and so on. These conflicts and tensions will probably continue for a long period. However, such a recognition cannot stop us from developing a vision that offers the basis for a just and legitimate political order. I would even add that such a task is inevitable when one focuses on the concept of international society.

Besides the primary goal of reformulating the concept of international society, this thesis may also offer some subsidiary contributions for contemporary International Relations. It seems to me that there are three points worth noting. The first concerns the terms of my reformulation of the concept of international society. As it was indicated in the very beginning of the thesis, with the brief discussion of the work of Barry Buzan and Richard Little, Daniel Deudney, Andrew Linklater, Nicholas Onuf, and John Gerard Ruggie, such a reformulation shall be seen as part of a larger current enterprise within the discipline of International Relations. As I showed, a crucial task for many students of international relations is to reconceptualise international society in a way that escapes the ontological divide. In addition, this is related to other contemporary concerns regarding the nature of the post-Cold War international society. In particular, there is a growing interest in defining the constitutional structure of international society, with an emphasis on ideological causation, in addressing the case of mixed polities, and in developing a conception of political interest that includes a concern for the international common good.

Secondly, this thesis may also offer a contribution to the recent revival in interest in the legacy of the English school. In particular, one of the points made here is that we should build our theoretical efforts on the English school's view that theory and historical analyses are complementary tasks. In this regard, my reformulation of the concept of international society was accompanied by rethinking the nature of modern international political history. More specifically, this historical exercise occurred at the level of political thought. The thesis tells the ways in which some political thinkers have viewed the historical evolution and the nature of international society. As such, I focused on debates and on views on what international society should be rather than on what international politics actually were. This is linked with my belief that there is room to further explore the thought of the figures included by Wight in the category of rationalism. Such a belief takes me to my third and final point.

This thesis should also be seen as a contribution to the study of international political thought. On the one hand, I questioned current interpretations of past political thinkers; and, on the other hand, I emphasised the importance of political traditions that are often considered to be irrelevant to the study of international relations. Implicitly, this also involved a critique of the way the discipline of Political Theory has appropriated the thought of many past thinkers by stressing their 'domestic' dimension. Although to a certain extent this strategy may be legitimate, given that political theorists are often concerned with the political life of bounded societies, it constitutes a misunderstanding of the work of many of those past political thinkers. Yet, it is upon International Relations students that falls the burden to offer new interpretations of past political thought, in particular regarding its relevance for the understanding of modern world politics. This last point is related with the importance of historical studies to the understanding of modern international relations. It is the case, I believe, that our understanding of political modernity needs to be improved. In this respect, it is quite unfortunate to hear voices calling for the death of modernity and anticipating the advent of the post-Westphalian political order. Rather than showing such readiness to leave modernity we should try to improve our understanding of it. By reformulating the notion of modern international society, this thesis offers a contribution to such a crucial task.

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