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The Anarchical Society
A Study of Order in World Politics
Third Edition

无政府社会 世界政治秩序研究 (第三版)

〔英〕赫德利·布尔 著
Hedley Bull



北京大学出版社
PEKING UNIVERSITY PRESS

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Index © Mary Bull 1995, 2002

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图书在版编目(CIP)数据

无政府社会：世界政治秩序研究(第三版)/(英)布尔著. 一影印本. 北京：北京大学出版社, 2007. 11

(世界政治与国际关系原版影印丛书·学术精品系列)

ISBN 978-7-301-13124-4

I. 无… II. 布… III. 国际政治—研究—英文 IV. D5

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2007)第 178335 号

书 名：无政府社会：世界政治秩序研究(第三版)

著作责任者：〔英〕赫德利·布尔 著

责任编辑：徐少燕

封面设计：常燕生

标准书号：ISBN 978-7-301-13124-4/D·1918

出版发行：北京大学出版社

地 址：北京市海淀区成府路 205 号 100871

网 址：<http://www.pup.cn> 电子信箱：ss@pup.pku.edu.cn

电 话：邮购部 62752015 发行部 62750672 出版部 62754962 编辑部 62753121/62765016

印刷者：北京宏伟双华印刷有限公司

经 销 者：新华书店

787 毫米×980 毫米 16 开本 22.75 印张 386 千字

2007 年 11 月第 1 版 2007 年 11 月第 1 次印刷

定 价：38.00 元

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出版说明

引进和交流,是国际研究诸学科发展壮大所不可或缺的环节和纽带。没有引进和交流,学术就难以活跃,也不易创新。每一位从事世界政治与国际关系研究的学者、每一位学习世界政治与国际关系的学生,无不深感阅读外文原文文献的重要性,他们都深知,原文的报刊、教材和专著,是获取最新国际信息、最新理论论争、最新参考资料的必不可少的重要来源,而获得这样的原文文献的机会是不均等的,因此,他们极其渴望更为方便地直接接触到原文文献。而在目前不易直接在国内购买原版书籍的情况下,采取原版影印的方式引进国际上的优秀教材和专著是解决问题的一条捷径,如此就可以使国内普通读者方便地获得最有权威的原文读物,从而可以快速了解国外同行的教学和学术成果,为深入学习和研究、为开展有效的对外学术交流、也为国际关系诸学科在我国的创新和发展,打下更坚实的基础。

这套《世界政治与国际关系原版影印丛书》,正是基于上述认识而组织出版的,并且得到了我国国际关系教学与科研领域最有权威的专家教授们的认可,他们分别来自于北京大学国际关系学院、复旦大学国际关系与公共事务学院、中国人民大学国际关系学院、外交学院、清华大学国际问题研究所、中国社会科学院世界经济与政治研究所、中共中央党校战略研究所等单位,作为本套丛书的学术顾问,他们愿意向我国该学科及相关领域的广大学者和学生共同推荐这套丛书。

本丛书第一批先行选入了一些经典文献选读性质的国外优秀教材,也包括美国大学中的一些知名国际关系学教员所编著的教材,内容主要在国际关系理论方面,也包括国际政治经济学和比较政治学方面的优秀教材。它们皆可称为原文中的精品,值得研读和收藏,不仅如此,由于它们本身在国外的大学课堂里都是应用较广的教材和读物,所以特别适合作为我国国际关系与世界政治专业大学教学中的参考读物,甚至可以直接作为以外文授课的课堂教材。在每本书的前面,我们都邀请国内比较权威的专家学者撰写了精彩的导论,以指导读者更好地阅读和使用这些文献。

根据读者的反映和我国建设中的国际关系学科的发展需要,我们决定在上述影印图书的基础上,开辟一个《学术精品系列》,以让我国国际关系专业的学者和学生有机会更方便地接触到那些堪称“精品中的精品”的学术书籍,比如摩根索的《国家间政治》、沃尔兹的《国际政治理论》和基欧汉的《权力与相互依赖》等等。这些作品大都已经有了中文译本,而且有的还不止一种中译本,它们的学术和学科地位是不言而喻的,在中国读者心目中也已有着持久深入的影响,正因如此,在这个新系列的每一种图书前面我们没有再烦请学术顾问们撰写导言。我们相信,如此有生命力的作品,当它们以新的面目出现在中国读者面前时,一定会引发新的阅读感受、新的理论遐思和新的战略决策思考。至少,

它们可以带给我们真正原汁原味的享受,让我们更加贴近当代的国际关系理论和国际关系理论家。

今后,我们会陆续推出更新、更好的原版教材和专著,希望广大读者提出宝贵意见和建议,尤其欢迎更多的专家学者向我们推荐适合引进的国外优秀教材和专著,以帮助我们完善这套丛书的出版,并最终形成一套完整的世界政治与国际关系及其相关学科适用的原文教学研究参考书系。·

最后也要特别提醒读者,我们引进这套丛书,目的主要在于推动学术交流、促进学科发育、完善教学体系,而其著作者的出发点和指导思想、基本观点和结论等,则完全属于由读者加以认识、比较、讨论甚至批评的内容,均不代表北京大学出版社。

Foreword to the Third Edition: *The Anarchical Society* 25 Years On

Andrew Hurrell

The status of *The Anarchical Society* as a classic text is clear. It provides the most elaborate and powerful exposition of the view that states form amongst themselves an international society; and it develops this idea as a powerful vantage point from which to analyse and assess the possibilities of order in world politics. It also remains a fundamental teaching text, not just as the exemplar of a particular position or as the representative of the so-called English School;¹ but also for its capacity to unsettle established and comfortable positions, for the clarity of its exposition, and for the sharpness of Bull's writing and his intellectual rigour. Clearly a very great deal has changed in the twenty-five years since the book was first published. The first part of this Foreword links *The Anarchical Society* to some of the main developments that have taken place within International Relations theory in this intervening period. The second section sets Bull's approach and some of his conclusions against some of the major changes that have occurred in the structures and practices of world politics.²

The Anarchical Society and the Study of International Relations

Bull's importance in the academic study of International Relations has long been recognised, but, as Stanley Hoffmann suggests in the foreword to the second edition, precisely where and how his work fits in is more contested.

Realism and Neorealism

Even a cursory reading of *The Anarchical Society* suggests Bull's many affinities with realism, not least his emphasis on the role of

power in international relations and the fact that the 'institutions' of international society that he analyses in *The Anarchical Society* include war, the Great Powers, the balance of power and diplomacy. Indeed, in a very important sense, the balance of power remains the most important foundation for Bull's conception of international society. Without a balance of power and without sustained and stable understandings between the major powers on the conduct of their mutual relations, then the 'softer' elements of international order (international law, international organisations, the existence of shared values) would be so many castles in the air. Bull also stressed the critical function of realist analysis – unmasking the pretensions of those who purport to speak on behalf of international or global society and underlining the extent to which, even when shared, universal or solidarist values will tend to further the interests of particular states. Finally, Bull's idea of international society grew out of his very close critical engagement with classical realists such as Carr and Morgenthau and retained many of their concerns, especially the relationship between power, law and morality.

Despite textbook stereotypes, a realist is not simply someone who writes about states and believes in the importance of power. Bull did both of these things but did not see himself as a realist: 'I am not a realist', he said unequivocally in a 1979 lecture.³ He emphasised the extent to which the classical realism of Carr, Kennan or Niebuhr was rooted in particular historical circumstances. It was part of the intellectual temper of a particular age – a period when conflict and anarchy was 'in fact the main ingredient in I[n]ternational R[elations] at the time'. From Bull's perspective, both classical realism and, even more, its neorealist variant (as in the hugely influential work of Kenneth Waltz) pay insufficient attention to the framework of rules, norms and shared understandings on which international society depends. This does not imply that norms somehow control the actions of states, acting upon them from outside. But it does mean that they shape the game of power politics, the nature and identity of the actors, the purposes for which force can be used, and the ways in which actors justify and legitimise their actions. Thus, on Bull's account, even conflict and war take place within a highly institutionalised set of normative structures – legal, moral and political. As he puts it: '... war is as a

matter of fact an inherently normative phenomenon; it is unimaginable apart from rules by which human beings recognise what behaviour is appropriate to it and define their attitude towards it. War is not simply a clash of forces; it is a clash between the agents of political groupings who are able to recognise one another as such and to direct their force at one another only because of the rules that they understand and apply.⁴

Similarly, even the quintessentially realist 'institution' of the balance of power appears not as a mechanical arrangement or as a constellation of forces that pushes and shoves states to act in particular ways from outside. It should, rather, be understood as a conscious and continuing shared practice in which the actors constantly debate and contest the meaning of the balance of power, its groundrules, and the role that it should play. Equally Great Powers are to be studied not simply in terms of the degree to which they can impose order on weaker states or within their spheres of influence on the back of crude coercion, but rather in terms of the extent to which their role and their managerial functions are perceived as legitimate by other states. Power remains central to Bull's analysis of international relations, but power is a social attribute. To understand power we must place it side by side with other quintessentially social concepts such as prestige, authority and legitimacy. International society is therefore centrally concerned with norms and institutions. But this does not necessarily lead, notwithstanding the influence of the seventeenth-century international lawyer Hugo Grotius on Bull's work, to a soft, liberal Grotianism concerned solely with the promotion of law and morality as is so often mistakenly assumed.

The distance and differences between Bull and neorealism are particularly clear: the international system simply cannot be viewed solely in material terms as a decentralised, anarchic structure in which functionally undifferentiated units vary only according to the distribution of power. Central to the 'system' is a historically created, and evolving, structure of common understandings, rules, norms, and mutual expectations. Indeed it was the dominance of Waltzian neorealism in the 1980s and early 1990s that explains the relative marginalisation of international society perspectives in that period.

Neo-liberal Institutionalism

On the face of it one would expect a significantly greater degree of overlap and commonality between Bull and liberal or rationalist institutionalists. In the first place the object of explanation is similar. The central problem is to establish that laws and norms exercise a compliance pull of their own, at least partially independent of the power and interests which underpin them and which are often responsible for their creation. There is also some degree of overlap in terms of how rules and institutions function. Institutionalists are concerned with ways in which institutions make it rational for states to cooperate out of self-interest. They view norms and institutions as purposively generated solutions to different kinds of collective-action problems. There is certainly a good deal of this kind of thinking in Bull's work: the notion that states will further their own interests by mutual respect for each others' sovereignty, by recognising certain limits on the use of force, and by accepting the principle that agreements between them should be honoured. Bull recognises that interest-driven cooperation can indeed be built on Hobbesian assumptions and a contractualist and rationalist logic runs through much of his discussion of the institutions of international society.

Yet there are also important differences between Bull and many institutionalists. One relates to Bull's distrust of attempts to understand cooperation purely in terms of abstract ahistorical rationalism. Bull was concerned with the processes by which understanding of common interest evolved and changed through time. Denying that 'Grotian theorists' had any great confidence in abstract human reason, he wrote that:

Grotius and other exponents of the natural law theory certainly did have 'confidence in human reason', but the Grotian idea of international society later came to rest on the element of consensus in the actual practice of states, and it is on this rather than on 'human reason' that (in common with other contemporary 'Grotians') I rest the case for taking international society seriously.⁵

⁵ Standing back, we can see that Bull examined international society from two distinct directions, one analytical, the other

historical. On the one side, he arrived at his understanding of international society by thinking through, in purely abstract terms, those essential elements that would have to be present for any society of states to be meaningfully so described. But, on the other, he insisted that, however plausible this abstract reasoning might be, it had to be set against the cultural and historical forces that had helped shape the consciousness of society at any particular time and had moulded perceptions of common values and common purposes.

This emphasis on historically constructed understandings leads to a second area of divergence: the extent to which successful cooperation often depends on a prior sense of community or, at least, on a common set of social, cultural or linguistic conventions. Rationalist models of cooperation may indeed explain how cooperation is possible once the parties have come to believe that they form part of a shared project or community in which there is a common interest that can be furthered by cooperative behaviour. But, from Bull's perspective, rationalist approaches neglect the factors which explain how and why contracting is possible in the first place and the potential barriers that can block the emergence of such a shared project – perhaps because institutionalist analysis has been so dominated by studies of cooperation amongst liberal developed states that enjoy a compatibility of major values and a common conceptualisation of such basic concepts as 'order', 'justice', 'state', 'law', 'contract' and so on. Yet so much of Bull's work was concerned with precisely these kinds of problems – the constant fascination with the boundaries of international society, with the criteria for membership, and with the position of groups that lie on or beyond its margins (infidels, pirates, barbarians).

Constructivism

Almost all constructivists make at least passing reference to Bull and recent writings have sought to compare Bull and the English School explicitly with constructivism.⁶ Constructivism is far from a unified position and is becoming ever less so. Yet a number of claims unite much constructivist writing on international relations, including the view that international norms are constitutive as well as regulative; the claim that norms, rules and institutions create meanings and enable, or make possible, different forms of social action; and the idea that many of the most important features of

international politics are produced and reproduced in the concrete practices of social actors.

It is evident that Bull was deeply committed to the centrality of norms and institutions in international politics and to the notion that society is constituted through diverse political practices built around shared, inter-subjective understandings – that is, understandings that exist between and amongst actors. Take, for example, his approving characterisation of the objectives of *Diplomatic Investigations* (one of the other classic texts of the English School):⁷

Above all, perhaps, they saw theory of international politics not as 'models' or 'conceptual frameworks' of their own to be tested against 'data' but as theories or doctrines in which men in international history have actually believed.⁸

Equally Bull's core definition of international society highlights *shared* conceptions of interests and common values and the *shared consciousness* of being bound by legal and moral rules.

And yet there are problems with trying to squeeze Bull into a constructivist mould that is too confining. He differs greatly from the influential constructivist work of Alexander Wendt in the much greater emphasis that he places on the actual historical evolution of different types of international society.⁹ Similarly he places more emphasis on international law as a concrete historical practice and set of normative structures which merit far more direct engagement than has been the case in most constructivist scholarship (and indeed within International Relations theory generally). Although ideas and language matter, Bull's philosophical realism distinguishes him from many of the more strongly reflectivist or discursive constructivists (and still more from post-modernism). Bull rejected the notion that international relations could be ever studied *solely* in terms of shared understandings rather than in terms of the interaction between material and social facts. For Bull, ideas mattered to the extent that they are taken up and acted upon by powerful states, and the relevance of particular norms and institutions would always be linked to the underlying distribution of material power. Finally, in contrast to more self-consciously 'critical' constructivists, Bull believed that brute material facts and cold power politics could act as a powerful check on both the aspirations of practitioners and the methods of the analyst.¹⁰

Other Approaches

The Anarchical Society also needs to be related to two other important bodies of academic work: the history of ideas about international relations and international normative theory.

Commentators routinely stress the importance of history in English School writing – both the historical method and the need to historicise international society itself. But within the English School, and certainly for Bull, the history of thought about international relations occupies a particularly important place. After all, Bull's three competing traditions of thought (Hobbesian, Grotian and Kantian), which he took and developed from Martin Wight and around which the book is constructed, were themselves the product of one reading of how the history of thought on international relations had evolved within Europe from the late fifteenth century.

The continued importance of this approach cannot be underestimated. The neglect of history and the relentless presentism of Political Science are all too evident. Examples abound, as in the common belief that it was only in the 20th century that realists came to stress the importance of systemic forces; that Kant is merely an early democratic peace theorist or, worse still, a believer in pro-democratic interventionism; or that we had to wait until the arrival of constructivism to discover that sovereignty was a constructed and contested concept.

All human societies rely on historical stories about themselves to legitimise notions of where they are and where they might be going. For Bull, a central element in the study of International Relations is about uncovering actors' understandings of international politics and the ways in which these understandings have been gathered into intelligible patterns, traditions, or ideologies. The past matters because of the changing, contested, plural, and completely unstraightforward nature of the concepts with which we map the international political landscape.

At the same time it is clear that contemporary readers of Bull's work will need to engage with the large amount of work that has been produced in this area over the past twenty-five years. Thus the study of classical theories of international relations has grown

significantly; there have been important reassessments of the major traditions of thought on the subject; Westphalia has been demythologised; and others have traced the evolution of the constitutional structures of international society and the revolutions in sovereignty that have taken place. And finally, there has been a very important move into the area of 'international relations' on the part of those working on the history of political thought and on the development of historical concepts and ideologies – a move which has expanded immensely the degree of sophistication in the study of the subject. A good deal of this work forces us to reconsider some of Bull's specific claims (for example, his reading of Kant) and even to rework quite radically his central theoretical category of a 'Grotian tradition'. But specific critiques and re-readings should not lead us to neglect the continued importance of the history of thought in the way in which International Relations is both taught and studied.

Finally, it is important to look briefly at the relation between Bull's work and the explosion of writing on moral and ethical issues in world politics. Here the criticisms of Bull are often sharper. For the critics, Bull (and the English School more generally) opened up a fertile realm of classical political thought but conceived of 'classical theory' in narrow and impoverished ways. The result was to separate the subject of International Relations from the far richer traditions of political and social theory to which it is necessarily intimately connected, and to downplay or ignore a range of fundamental questions about state, community and nation that could never be satisfactorily addressed solely from the perspective of the society of states. Much of this criticism is clearly justified, above all, if the aim is to develop a normative theory of international or world order. The range of intellectual resources available has expanded enormously over the past twenty-five years and anyone working in this area would very soon move beyond *The Anarchical Society*.¹¹

It is important to remember, however, that Bull's own purpose, while related, was a somewhat different one. The subtitle of his book is not 'A Study of Order' but 'A Study of Order in World Politics'. What makes Bull's approach fascinating, but also sometimes frustrating, was that he was interested in the relationship between order as fact and order as value, and with the bridges that have been, or might be, constructed between theory and practice. He was therefore centrally concerned with the legal and moral

understandings of order and justice as they had developed within and around international society; with the political and material prerequisites of a meaningful moral community; and with the complex and often dispiriting ways in which the procedural and substantive rules of international society are connected to concrete institutions, to power-political structures and to the often very rough trade of world politics.

Thus, unlike most political theorists, Bull's particular contribution is his insistence on the inevitably close links between the struggle for moral consensus and questions of political practice: for example, how particular normative issues are related to patterns of unequal power, to the coherence of states and state structures, and to the legitimacy of international norms and institutions. Bull's work suggests that many of the most pressing and intractable ethical dilemmas in the field of world politics are as much about the legitimacy of practice, power and process as they are about philosophical foundations. This is certainly not the only approach to the study of normative issues in world politics, but it remains an important one.

***The Anarchical Society* and Contemporary World Politics**

For many readers *The Anarchical Society* appears outdated because Bull so often emphasised continuities between past and present. As a result he seemed to downplay the dynamic forces at work in global politics and to fail to recognise the extent to which the system was moving decisively 'beyond Westphalia'. Factors such as the impact of economic globalisation and political democratisation, the increased importance of transnational civil society, the increased density, scope and range of international institutions, the multiple problems that result from the break-up of states and ethnic self-assertion have developed to such a point that, for many commentators, Bull's narrow focus on the society of states is now wholly inadequate and outdated.

It is clearly the case that much of Bull's work was heavily shaped by the concerns of the Cold War and of superpower rivalry; that he was openly sceptical about the possibility of radical change in the character of superpower relations; that he gave very little space in his work to economic factors and forces; that, at least in this book,

he expressed little interest in formal international institutions, including the United Nations; and that he was generally critical of 'Kantian' optimism about the spread and impact of liberal democracy – the set of claims that would subsequently develop into democratic peace theory. It is also clearly the case that *The Anarchical Society* was intended as a defence of a state-based international society as the best available means for the management of power and the mediation of difference. In response to charges of outdatedness, four points can be highlighted.

Systemic Change and Transformation

One response is simply to see *The Anarchical Society* as providing a model exposition of how to think about claims for change. Bull did not ignore change but he did advocate sobriety in analysing change. He argued consistently that contemporary trends and features which appear novel – from transnational corporations to the privatisation of violence in the form of terrorist groups or warlords – look more familiar when approached from a sufficiently long historical perspective. Equally, he suggested that we can gain much from comparing the present with previous epochs of change – hence his suggestive, if underdeveloped, ideas about 'neo-medievalism' and of a 'neo-Grotian moment'.

A further possibility is simply to view Bull's rather sober and sceptical conclusions as a mark in the sand against which more recent work should be judged. Pedagogically it makes great sense for students to read Bull alongside the many works of the 1990s that have stressed the idea of systemic transformation, especially in the context of globalisation. Which parts of Bull's picture still hold? Which do not? And why?

But a final possibility is to argue that he was often right to be sceptical. Clearly his own arguments cannot simply be replayed and there will be important differences of emphasis and of empirical application. And yet as the claims of the 1990s about globalisation have been subjected to scrutiny and criticism, the pattern of argumentation that we see in Bull's work and some substantive conclusions recur: that the historical novelty of current globalising forces has been exaggerated; that there was never a neat 'Westphalian model' in which understandings of sovereignty and norms of non-intervention were stable and uncontested and that can be easily

contrasted with the complexities of the post-Cold War world; and that the decline in state capacity has been overdone. Not only has globalisation been driven by state policies but state retreat is reversible and the power resources available to states are still critical and distinctive – Microsoft matters but so, too, do the marines.

Normative change and transformation

A second point to stress is that Bull's primary concern was not with change in general but with change within the international legal and normative structure of international society. This is arguably the aspect of the debate on globalisation and transformation that has been least well developed. On one side, ideas about 'post-sovereign states' or 'multi-layered geo-governance' do indeed point to potentially very important changes, but they are embedded in a discourse of transformation that is in most cases extremely difficult to pin down. On the other side, those who stress continuity within the Westphalian order often rely on such a one-dimensional view of the role of norms and such a very thin notion of the legal order that it becomes impossible to make sense of the tremendous changes that have indeed taken place, above all in the period since 1945.

There are different ways forward. Thus some have picked up on Bull's distinction between pluralist and solidarist versions of international society and have suggested that, contrary to the scepticism expressed in *The Anarchical Society*, a consensus has in fact developed around such expanded normative goals as humanitarian intervention.¹² In still more strongly progressivist mode, but still owing much to Bull's work, Linklater has explored how the changing conditions of global politics may be opening political and moral spaces for the transformation of political community.¹³

There are still other possibilities: for example, taking on board the degree to which regionalism has become an important characteristic of contemporary world politics but examining and comparing these 'regional international societies' within the framework of Bull's ideas and concepts. Or thinking through the notion of 'world society', whose importance Bull stresses but which is left underdeveloped in his work, and the complex ways in which international and world society relate to each other. Following this line of enquiry might lead the analyst to consider the structure of