



Buzan and Little

Chapter 1 & 2

•Questions?



Ahh, the first day teaching Natural Selection is always the best day.

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• Q&A

- What do you think Buzan and Little's central argument or point is?



• Overview

- Two main problems with mainstream theoretical conceptions
 - Closely tied to the Westphalian state system.
 - Distinctions between past and present minimized.
- Three premises of the book
 - No existing approach explains the emergence of international systems
 - Theoretical understanding has been retarded by our lack of historical analysis
 - International system is the most effective unit for developing world history as well as advancing macro-analysis of social reality



• Overview

- Three major historical systemic turning points
 - 40,000 years ago: hunter-gatherers begin to engage in long distance exchange
 - 5,500 years ago: first state-like units begin to emerge and interact.
 - 500 years ago: emergence of modern sovereign state
- Does this present a problem for IR theory?



• Overview

- How (or can) we think about the Soviet Union or Imperial Rome as international systems?
- Neorealism: shift from hierarchy to anarchy that marks the most profound political change in world history
- Buzan and Little: Change in the structure of the dominant units that represents the most fundamental transformation in international systems



• Peer discussion

- Buzan and Little have five critiques of modern IR theory. What are they and what do they mean?



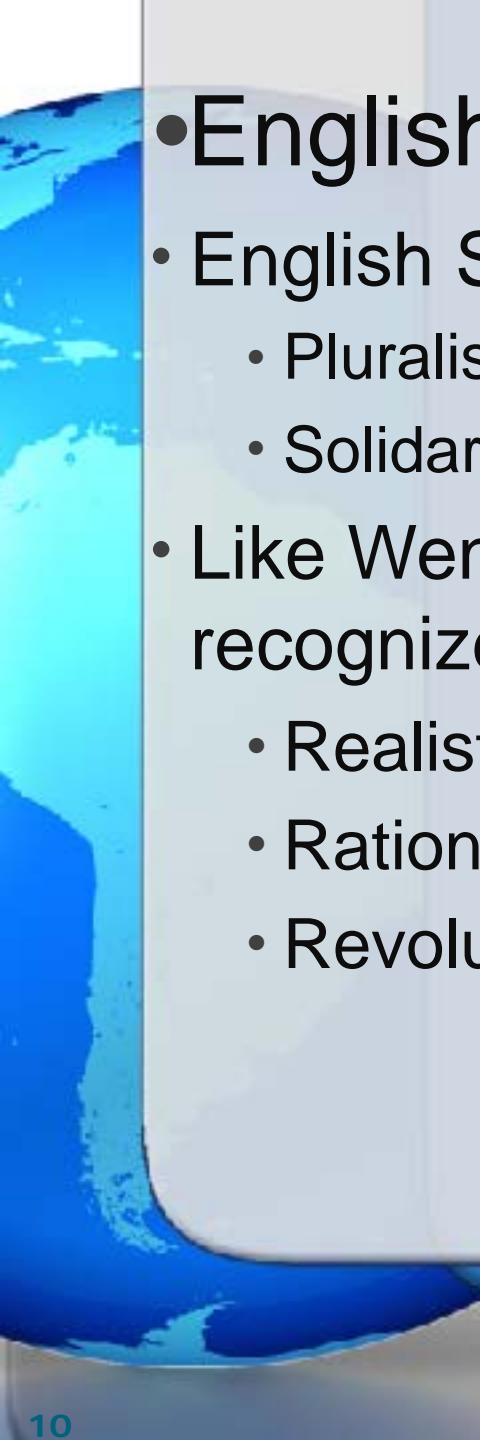
•Chapter 1

- What sort of interaction defines the international system?
- Why has the nature of the international system gone unexamined in IR?
 - Presentism
 - Ahistoricism
 - Eurocentrism
 - Anarchophilia
 - State-centrism
- What is the source of these characteristics?



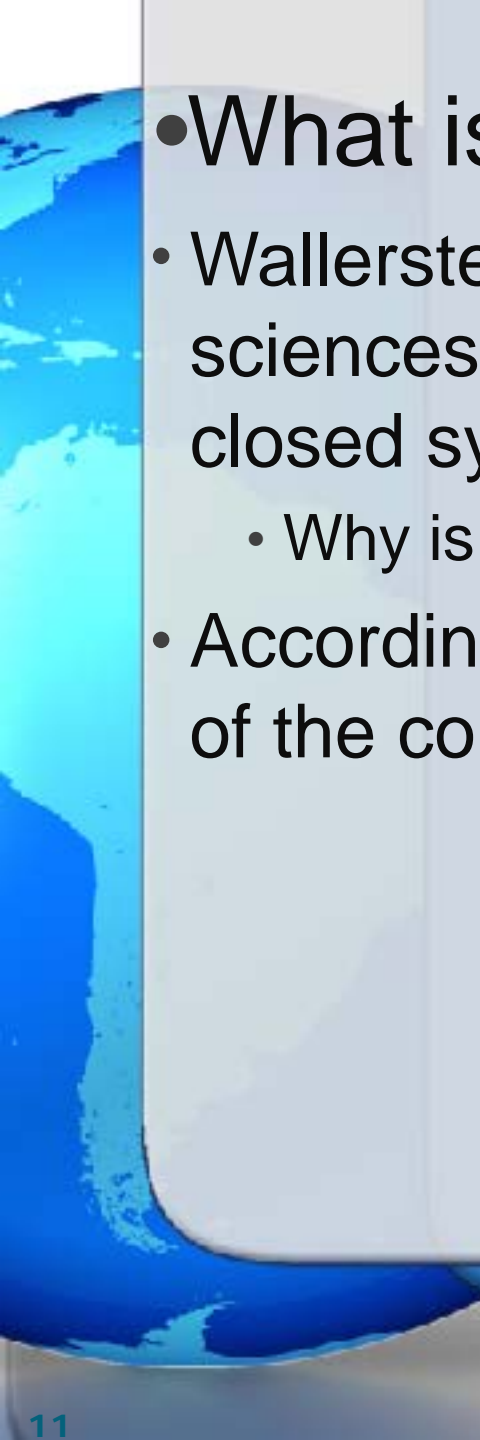
•English School

- English School plays an important role in the thinking of Buzan and Little
 - States form a society amongst themselves. This, combined with the structure of the international system, is the 'states-system'
 - The complexity of the system depends on the complexity of the society.
 - States-system is temporally contingent: Different times will have different states-systems
 - Why? Different times have different international societies with different cultural underpinnings.



• English School

- English School split into two primary camps
 - Pluralists
 - Solidarists
- Like Wendt (constructivists), the English School recognizes three international societies
 - Realist
 - Rationalist
 - Revolutionist

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- What is at stake?
 - Wallerstein: the great weakness of the social sciences is that they all operate on the basis of closed systems.
 - Why is this?
 - According to the authors, what is the significance of the concept 'international system'?



•Chapter 2

- Three approaches to the system in IR
 - Behavioural
 - Neorealists
 - Constructivist
- Buzan and Little alternative: Methodological pluralism



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17.41 Introduction to International Relations
Spring 2018

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