

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### **Risk and Hierarchy in International Society**

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Several recent works have emphasised contemporary hierarchical trends within international society that suggest a transition away from international society's pluralist constitution. These trends have been most readily demonstrated by the willingness of dominant states, such as the United States, to conduct interventions in support of the promotion and enforcement of liberal democratic values. Yet while many scholars have identified these hierarchical trends, few have considered what such trends suggest regarding the underlying normative constitution of international society. This paper seeks to explain why such a transition within the normative constitution of international society has occurred. Utilising Ulrich Beck's notions of risk and the 'world risk society', this paper suggests that an increasing preoccupation with globalised security risks within international society, particularly on the part of the West, underpins this constitutional transition. The West's perceived need to manage global security risks via intervention in so-called 'risky zones' structures the new normative basis of international society. Risk has altered the constitutional structure of international society in a way that gives rise to various hierarchical and anti-pluralist trends.

**Keywords:** Risk, international society, pluralism, hierarchy, constitutional transition, temporal and spatial de-bounding, liberalism, democracy, English School, Globalisation, United States, United Kingdom

#### **Introduction**

The formal end of colonialism, marked by the passing of The Declaration of the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples in the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in 1960, resulted in a fundamental reconstitution of international society. The result of decolonisation was that pluralism, the notion that all states have the equal freedom to constitute their internal social, political and economic institutions as they see fit,

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was entrenched as the central normative principle of the post-colonial international society.<sup>1</sup> Since 1960, this pluralist constitution of international society has resulted in rather undemanding and egalitarian criteria for legitimate statehood and membership of international society. Positive or substantive criteria for membership, such as the existence of particular political institutions or forms of governance, have, until recently, been generally discarded. Instead, negative rights of non-intervention and formal equality have prevailed. As Linklater and Sukanami argue: ‘The pluralist society of states can be regarded as the global expression of an ethic which privileges negative over positive obligations in the attempt to reduce the Hobbesian features of international politics’.<sup>2</sup> Pluralist international society is thus characterised by a high tolerance of domestic diversity amongst states.

However, the ending of the Cold War has ushered in a new era of interventionism on the part of Western governments and has called this pluralist constitution into question. Emboldened by the supposed victory of liberal democracy, which according to some represented an ‘end of history’,<sup>3</sup> and the removal of power constraints with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the West has sought to globally promote its own liberal values. The willingness of Western states, most notably the United States (US) and the United Kingdom (UK), to militarily intervene in places such as Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq in a bid to promote liberalism has led some scholars to suggest that the post-Cold War era has thus far been marked by a resurgence of hierarchical trends within international society.<sup>4</sup>

Yet while many scholars have identified these contemporary hierarchical trends, few have considered what such trends suggest regarding the underlying pluralist constitution of international society, particularly the way in which these trends affect legitimate statehood (rightful membership) and legitimate or rightful conduct within international society. Further, few have explored or explained what factors have given rise to these hierarchical trends. What compels Western states to intervene, in some cases forcefully, in order to promote

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Jackson discusses this transition in terms of a shift from a regime of positive sovereignty, wherein states are obliged to conform to positive domestic criteria in order to be recognised as sovereign, to a negative sovereignty regime in which the internal affairs of the state are no business of international society. See Robert H. Jackson, *Quasi States: Sovereignty, International Relations and the Third World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

<sup>2</sup> Andrew Linklater and Hidemi Sukanami, *The English School of International Relations: A Contemporary Reassessment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 179.

<sup>3</sup> Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Avon Books, 1992).

<sup>4</sup> See Christian Reus-Smit, ‘Liberal Hierarchy and the Licence to use Force’, *Review of International Studies* 31, no. S1 (2005), 71-92; Gerry Simpson, *Great Powers and Outlaw States: Unequal Sovereigns in the International Legal Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Christopher Hobson, ‘Democracy as Civilisation’, *Global Society* 22, no. 1 (2008), 75-95; Tim Dunne, ‘Society and Hierarchy in International Relations’, *International Relations* 17, no. 3 (2003), 303-20; William Bain, *Between Anarchy and Society: Trusteeship and the Obligations of Power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

liberal values? While the end of the Cold War may have facilitated the West's ability to intervene across the globe, this factor by itself does not fully explain why Western states seek to promote liberal values. Utilising Ulrich Beck's notions of risk and the 'world risk society',<sup>5</sup> this paper suggests that an increasing preoccupation with globalised security risks within international society, particularly on the part of the West, underpins these hierarchical trends and contemporary constitutional transition within international society.

Simply put, Beck suggests that continued processes of industrialisation have led to the emergence of new forms of risk within Western societies who, as they have grown more aware of such risks, have become increasingly anxious and insecure.<sup>6</sup> One of the main features of these new forms of security risks is their temporal and spatial de-bounding. Contemporary security risks such as terrorism are imprecisely defined and difficult to locate in terms of time and space. This de-bounding of risk is one of the central elements of Beck's notion of world risk society and is also crucial to understanding contemporary constitutional transition within international society.<sup>7</sup> Confronted with de-bounded, ill-defined global risks, Western states have focused on identifying and reshaping so-called 'zones of risk' – states which demonstrate internal characteristics that provide an environment conducive to the origination of risk. These potentially dangerous environments have primarily been defined in terms of a lack of liberal democratic political institutions or state failure.

Thus, the tolerance of diversity inherent in the notion of a pluralist international society means that pluralism becomes a risk in itself. This is because it is precisely such a tolerance of diversity that sustains the existence of failed and illiberal states that potentially act as originators of global risks. Risk has become central to the governing of social relations amongst states and subsequently is also a central element in constituting contemporary international society. In short, risk alters the constitutional structure of international society in a way that gives rise to various hierarchical and anti-pluralist trends. International society has become a new type of risk society, one in which the dominant members (the West) define and police so-called 'zones of risk'. Risk increasingly determines processes of inclusion, exclusion and modes of interaction between members of international society.

These changes in the processes of inclusion and exclusion and interaction between states are most evident in new liberal democratic standards of rightful membership within

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<sup>5</sup> Ulrich Beck, *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity* (London: Sage, 1992); Ulrich Beck *World Risk Society* (Malden: Polity, 1999).

<sup>6</sup> Ulrich Beck, 'The Terrorist Threat: World Risk Society Revisited', *Theory, Culture and Society* 19, no. 4 (2002), 40-2.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 41

international society. There has thus been a convergence of, on the one hand, democratic peace and other liberal theories that suggest that liberalism represents a superior ideology or form of governance and, on the other hand, the increasingly prevalent Western preoccupation with risks and, subsequently, risk management. Liberal values and governance become the key to managing security risks, which provides the impetus for forceful interventions aimed at promoting liberalism. Therefore, it is not simply liberal values *per se* that provide the rationale for Western interventionism, but the more utilitarian and self-interested notion that liberal democratic governance provides a way of minimising and managing the new risks of the post-Cold War era. As Rasmussen suggests: ‘Even the promise of democracy as a recipe for peace and human freedom is today rather a way to manage risk than to realise a liberal utopia’.<sup>8</sup>

The remainder of this paper proceeds as follows. Firstly, I outline the notion of risk and the idea of the world risk society popularised by Beck, and look at how international relations scholars have sought to incorporate and apply these ideas into the discipline. I then explore the question of how international society is constituted before examining existing accounts of hierarchy and constitutional revision within contemporary international society. Here I argue that these accounts of contemporary hierarchy within international society have inadequately dealt with the issue of why such hierarchical trends have emerged. The concluding section of the article suggests that new relations of hierarchy within international society are a consequence of an increasing Western preoccupation with globalised security risks and subsequent Western attempts at risk management.

### **Risk and the World Risk Society Thesis**

Since the early 1990s the concepts of risk and the ‘world risk society’ have become increasingly popular and influential within sociological discourse. Pioneered by sociologists such as Ulrich Beck and Anthony Giddens, the basic premise of these sociological theories of risk is that contemporary society is undergoing a period of radical transformation.<sup>9</sup> Beck characterises this social transformation, particularly predominant in Western societies, as one between what he terms ‘industrial society’ or the ‘first modernity’ and (world) risk society or the ‘second modernity’. Put simply, the argument is that modernisation has simultaneously (and paradoxically) brought great technological and scientific progress as well as more

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<sup>8</sup> Mikkel Vedby Rasmussen, *The Risk Society at War: Terror, Technology and Strategy in the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 206.

<sup>9</sup> Beck, *World Risk Society*, 1.

abstract and disembodied risks.<sup>10</sup> As technological capacity increases, so too does the incalculability of the consequences of the use of such technologies.

Before examining Beck's risk society thesis in more depth, we first need to be clear what is meant by the use of the term risk. One of the problems of much of the work on risk within both sociology and international relations is that risk is rarely ever clearly defined. However, Heng has usefully provided a clear and systematic definition of risk – on the one hand, risk can be invoked both as a descriptive term describing a particular danger, hazard or dangerous scenario and as a normative term that refers to a desire to engage in proactive, anticipatory risk management activities.<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, we must be careful to distinguish between risk and threat. It is all too easy to conflate risk with threat and use the terms interchangeably – indeed, much of the literature on risk has done just that, failing to clearly distinguish what is meant by threat and risk.

As Heng suggests, we can think of threats in terms of *capabilities* and *intentions*.<sup>12</sup> It was this notion of threat that clearly characterised the perception of the dangers posed to the West by the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Strategists on both sides of the Iron Curtain were primarily concerned with the military capabilities and intentions of the other side. Thus, during the Cold War, the West was faced with a clearly defined enemy with clearly defined capabilities – for instance, Western governments had a rough estimate of the number of Soviet nuclear warheads, they knew where Soviet missiles were targeted, and they knew they had the capability to strike back in the event of war. The dangers posed by the Soviet Union could thus be expressed *quantitatively* – number of warheads, tanks, troops; official Soviet policies and actions; etc.

Threats thus constitute an action-reaction relationship. This implies that threats should normally be relatively well defined – in order to react to something we need to know what it is we are reacting to. Contrast this with risk, which Heng defines in terms of *probabilities* and *consequences*.<sup>13</sup> Unlike threats, risks are not clearly defined or delineated; they are imprecise and uncertain. Thus in the post-Cold War era, in contrast to the Soviet threat, we know there are dangers 'out there': terrorism, human rights abuses, etc; but the location of these dangers and the consequences of their realisation are often unknown. These dangers thus represent less of a quantitative threat than they do a *qualitative* risk. They are qualitative in the sense

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<sup>10</sup> John Handmer and Paul James, 'Trust Us and Be Scared: The Changing Nature of Contemporary Risk', *Global Society* 21, no.1 (2007), 120.

<sup>11</sup> Yee Kuang Heng, *War as Risk Management: Strategy and Conflict in an Age of Globalised Risks* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 71.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

that we cannot know for a fact if a risk is ‘out there’ – how can we when risks are essentially probabilistic future scenarios.

Risk is therefore a concept that marries the present with the future, and can be conceptualised as an estimation of the dangerousness of the future.<sup>14</sup> Risks can only be understood in the context of futuristic scenarios that may or may not occur. Risk does not refer to a present danger so much as it refers to the possibility that a given object or event will pose dangers in the future. This is another way of distinguishing between risk and threat: a risk refers to a future threat that has not yet materialised and may never do so. When a risk is realised, when the consequences of any given risk become real, then the risk becomes a threat properly so-called. In the risk society, we thus look to the future rather than the past as we did during the first modernity to guide our present actions.

However, perhaps the key point concerning the nature of the new risks faced by Western societies, one that, as shall be seen, has direct implications when we examine risk in the context of perceived security threats to the West, is their uncontrollability. This uncontrollability is a result of the temporal and spatial de-bounding of risks in contemporary Western and international societies. Whereas in the past risks were generally localised in terms of time and space, and thus predictable, controllable and insurable to a certain extent; today’s risks are characterised by uncertainty, unpredictability and diffusiveness. As Jarvis argues:

With magnitudes of risk so great, with technological hazards and mishaps so extensive that they transcend both place and time by becoming international or global in scope and inter-generational in space, the prospects for the orderly control and distribution of risk across and within populations becomes both impossible and meaningless.<sup>15</sup>

As Beck argues, the concept of risk society is not about the increase of risks, but about their spatial and temporal de-bounding.<sup>16</sup> One of the defining characteristics of the new risks faced by Western societies is their tendency towards globalisation.<sup>17</sup> In the risk society, there are far too many ‘unknown unknowns’<sup>18</sup> for so-called experts to be able to give

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<sup>14</sup> Claudia Aradau, Luis Lobo-Guerrero and Rens Van Munster, ‘Security, Technologies of Risk, and the Political: Guest Editors’ Introduction’, *Security Dialogue* 39, no.2-3 (2008), 147-54.

<sup>15</sup> Darryl S.L. Jarvis, ‘Risk, Globalisation and the State: A Critical Appraisal of Ulrich Beck and the World Risk Society Thesis’, *Global Society* 21, no.1 (2007), 23-46.

<sup>16</sup> Beck, ‘The Terrorist Threat’, 41.

<sup>17</sup> Beck, *Risk Society*, 12.

<sup>18</sup> This phrase is from former US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld’s infamous reply to a question posed at a NATO Press Conference in June 2002, in which he argued that there are ‘...no ‘knowns’. There are things we know that we know. There are known unknowns. That is to say there are things that we now know we don’t know. But there are also unknown unknowns. There are things we don’t know we don’t know. So when we do the best we can and we pull all this information together, and we then say well that’s basically what we see as

authoritative answers on the risks we face. The most that can be expected are definitional struggles over the scale, degree and urgency of risks.<sup>19</sup> Thus, the risk society entails continuous social reflection on possible future dangers that may one day potentially materialise. For Beck, the advent of new globalised risks that transcend national boundaries opens a path towards the emergence of a truly cosmopolitan ‘world society’. However, as I suggest, while a Western preoccupation with global security risks does explain constitutional transition within international society, the result of such a transition is the emergence of new hierarchical trends within international society rather than the emergence of a cosmopolitan world society.

### **Hierarchy and Constitutional Transition within International Society**

In this section, I examine existing accounts of constitutional transition within international society, particularly contemporary accounts that focus on recent hierarchical trends within international society. One of the weaknesses of these accounts of contemporary hierarchy is that they take these trends at face value – little attention is paid to the underlying rationales or causal relationships that inform these new hierarchies. Further, few of these accounts have considered the implications of such trends for the constitutional structure of international society. In the next section, I address these weaknesses by employing Beck’s notions of risk and the world risk society in order to account for contemporary hierarchical trends within international society. I argue that the hierarchical trends associated with risk represent a fundamental alteration of international society’s constitution. International society is becoming a new type of risk society.

Firstly though, the question to be addressed is how is international society constituted? Hedley Bull’s famous quote in *The Anarchical Society* provided an account of *what* an international society is, i.e.: a common set of rules to which all states are bound and common or collective institutions that all share in the working of.<sup>20</sup> These rules and institutions provide for international order and allow for the pursuit of social goals. However, this does not tell us *how* an international society is constituted. How do states arrive at common rules which they feel obliged to follow? How are the core institutions of

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the situation, that is really only the known knowns and the known unknowns. And each year, we discover a few more of those unknown unknowns’. See Donald Rumsfeld ‘Press Conference by US Secretary of Defence, Donald Rumsfeld’, NATO Defence Minister’s Meeting, 6-7 June, <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2002/s020606g.htm> (accessed 10 May 2007).

<sup>19</sup> Mikkel Vedby Rasmussen, ‘It Sounds Like a Riddle’: Security Studies, the War on Terror and Risk’, *Millennium* 33, no. 2 (2004), 381-95.

<sup>20</sup> Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics* (London: Macmillan, 1977).

international society constructed and implemented and what explains institutional variation within international society over time? In other words, what is the basis for the rules and institutions that are adopted within international society?

Philpott and Reus Smit have both highlighted the centrality of norms in the constitutional structuring of international society.<sup>21</sup> Building on Bull's work, Reus-Smit suggests that international society is defined primarily by constitutional structures that inform the core institutions of international society.<sup>22</sup> For Reus-Smit, these constitutional structures can be disaggregated into three components – a norm of procedural justice, an organising principle of sovereignty and most importantly, the moral purpose of the state. These norms define legitimate statehood, rightful conduct and shape the prevailing institutional designs of a given international society.<sup>23</sup> Philpott's understanding of the constitutional structure of international society is very similar to Reus Smit's. As Philpott suggests:

...a constitution of international society is a set of norms, mutually agreed upon by polities who are members of the society, that define the holders of authority and their prerogatives, specifically in answer to three questions: Who are legitimate polities? What are the rules for becoming one of these polities? And, what are basic prerogatives of these polities? Constitutions of international society are both legitimate...and practiced, generally respected by all polities that are powerful enough regularly to violate them.<sup>24</sup>

Both Reus-Smit and Philpott therefore emphasise the role of norms in defining the contours and scope of international society. Both suggest that fundamental societal norms shape international society by determining processes of inclusion and exclusion, legitimate membership and legitimate conduct.

Taking a slightly different approach, Ian Clark highlights the centrality of principles of legitimacy in the constitutional structuring of international society. For Clark, legitimacy represents societal consensus over important principles and issues. Indeed, core principles of legitimacy express social agreement over who is entitled to participate in society and how members should behave.<sup>25</sup> This is akin to Philpott and Reus-Smit's suggestions that core norms shape rightful membership and conduct within international society. Indeed, Clark does not discount the role of norms, arguing that legitimacy is a composite of core norms

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<sup>21</sup> See Daniel Philpott, *Revolutions in Sovereignty: How Ideas Shaped the Modern World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997); Christian Reus-Smit, *The Moral Purpose of the State: Culture, Social Identity and Institutional Rationality in International Relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> Philpott, *Revolutions in Sovereignty*, 12.

<sup>25</sup> Ian Clark, *Legitimacy in International Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

within international society – legality, morality and constitutionality.<sup>26</sup> Most importantly, legitimacy, because it is an expression of a political condition grounded in social consensus over what is acceptable,<sup>27</sup> exists in a mutually constitutive relationship with international society. On the one hand, legitimacy has no meaning outside a societal construct – legitimacy is a product of consensus between society’s members; on the other hand by studying principles of legitimacy and how they are implemented, we can demonstrate the existence of the shared norms and rules that order social relations among states and provide the basis for fundamental rules and institutions.<sup>28</sup>

Each of these three accounts thus stress the role of ideas in the constitutional structuring of international society. Each adopt the constructivist notion that norms both shape and constrain state behaviour and identity – ideas of rightful membership and rightful conduct shape what constitutes a legitimate member of international society and how such members may behave.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, the very notion of what constitutes a legitimate state is shaped by prevailing norms and ideas within international society. During the colonial era, notions of ‘civilisation’ shaped what it meant to be a legitimate state and, subsequently, which polities could be admitted into international society as sovereign states and which would be denied sovereign status and remain outside international society’s confines.<sup>30</sup> Further, as Jackson suggests, norms are fluid and dynamic, meaning that the constitution, and hence the nature and scope, of international society is also dynamic and regularly re-constituted at various intervals.<sup>31</sup>

However, most English School works, including those mentioned above, continue to conceptualise constitutional revision and social change within what might be termed a ‘modernist’ framework, understanding social change within international society primarily in terms of the territorially discrete nation-state. This overlooks the extent to which social relations between states have been shaped and substantially altered since the end of the Cold War by processes of globalisation and the emergence of spatially and temporally debounded risks that transcend state boundaries and become global in scope. New forms of risk beyond the ambit of the nation-state, such as terrorism, have become central to interstate relationships

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 166

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 220.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 245.

<sup>29</sup> See Alexander Wendt, ‘Anarchy is what States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics’, *International Organization* 46, no.2 (1992), 391-425.

<sup>30</sup> See Gerrit W. Gong, *The Standard of ‘Civilisation’ in International Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984).

<sup>31</sup> Robert H. Jackson, *The Global Covenant: Human Conduct in a World of States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 15.

within international society. Therefore, such a modernist framework ignores the extent to which contemporary social relations between states are increasingly shaped by a 'precautionary governance of risk' as states attempt to manage perceived future dangers.<sup>32</sup> The problem here is that many English School theorists have attributed to contemporary international society a relative stability in its constitutional structure that fails to adequately conceptualise global social and political changes in the post Cold War era and their effects for the constitutional structure of international society.<sup>33</sup>

There has also generally been limited discussion of constitutional transition within international society, particularly as to the question of why international society undergoes constitutional revision in any given period. Historicist accounts of the evolution of international society, especially the work of Adam Watson, have generally told us how international society has evolved and what these changes have involved, but have not forcefully linked such transitions to changes in the underlying normative foundations of international society.<sup>34</sup> This is further demonstrated by Bull and Watson's conceptualisation of the inclusion of the former colonial territories into international society as merely representing an expansion of the European international society which remained constitutionally unaltered, rather than representing the emergence of new constitutional norms (pluralism) that fundamentally altered prevailing notions of rightful membership and rightful conduct, leading to a novel (globalised) form of international society.<sup>35</sup>

European international society was fundamentally altered and a new, globalised international society emerged in its place, albeit one bearing strong similarities to its European predecessor which reflected the continued predominance of the Western powers.<sup>36</sup> The problem in Bull and Watson's account of the expansion of international society is that this account of societal expansion is divorced from any consideration of the fundamental constitutional revisions, particularly in terms of rightful membership within international society, which such an expansion represented. This is a problem that is also common to

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<sup>32</sup> Claudia Aradau and Rens Van Munster, 'Governing Terrorism Through Risk: Taking Precautions, (un)Knowing the Future', *European Journal of International Relations* 13, no.1 (2007), 89-115.

<sup>33</sup> It is notable that both Philpott and Reus-Smit fail to discuss contemporary constitutional transition within international society, neither offering an analysis of international society in the post-Cold War era.

<sup>34</sup> Adam Watson, *The Evolution of International Society: A Comparative Historical Analysis* (Routledge: London, 1992).

<sup>35</sup> Hedley Bull and Adam Watson (eds), *The Expansion of International Society*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984).

<sup>36</sup> Interestingly, although Reus-Smit and Clark both undertake a historical analysis of the constitution of international society, neither include decolonisation as a fundamental moment of constitutional revision within international society. Conversely, Philpott argues that decolonisation, along with Westphalia, is a key moment of constitutional transition within international society.

contemporary accounts that suggest that international society is undergoing a contraction or re-hierarchisation – they fail to address the implications of such a re-hierarchisation or contraction for the constitutional structure of international society. In other words, there has been a failure to fully consider the processes by which such a constitution is revised and reformulated.

This is evident in the work of Gerry Simpson. While Simpson usefully draws attention to historical trends of anti-pluralism and hierarchy within international society, he does not consider the processes by which anti-pluralism gains ascendance in a given period.<sup>37</sup> Simpson is content in making the argument that the constitutional structure of international society is best understood as a continuous interplay between sovereign equality (pluralism) and anti-pluralism without providing an account of why, in each of his ‘constitutional moments’ where pluralism or anti-pluralism established ascendance, these constitutional shifts occurred.<sup>38</sup> Thus, one of the problems with Simpson’s account of anti-pluralism is that he fails to establish any mechanisms of change or causal relationships that might account for transitions between pluralist and anti-pluralist forms of international society. To be fair, this could be due to Simpson’s assertion that the two exist in continuous tension with one another, and while one may enjoy ascendancy over the other, both can be identified within international society in any given period.<sup>39</sup>

Arguably, Simpson’s project is simply concerned with outlining the need to understand international society and the international legal order in terms of both their pluralist and anti-pluralist faces, and the cyclical nature of transitions between these two faces. Still, if we do want to understand international society in pluralist/anti-pluralist terms, we need to be able to account for constitutional transitions within international society that reflect either pluralism or anti-pluralism. Why is it that one gains ascendance over the other in any given epoch? As Reus-Smit suggests, different societies of states develop different constitutional structures based upon variable cultural and historical circumstances.<sup>40</sup> What is missing from Simpson’s work then is a careful examination of these variable factors that influence and explain *why* international society adopts a pluralist or anti-pluralist face.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> See Gerry Simpson, ‘Two Liberalisms’, *European Journal of International Law* 12, no.3 (2001), 537-71.

<sup>38</sup> Simpson, *Great Powers and Outlaw States*, ix-xv.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> Reus-Smit, *The Moral Purpose of the State*, 6.

<sup>41</sup> This is particularly evident when Simpson considers the war in Afghanistan in the context of his thesis concerning sovereignty equality and anti-pluralism. Here, Simpson essentially argues that US intervention in Afghanistan (and Kosovo) is representative of a form of anti-pluralism and hierarchy within international society. What is missing from Simpson’s account is an analysis of precisely why such anti-pluralist and hierarchical trends have re-emerged. See Simpson, *Great Powers and Outlaw States*, 319-51.

Other scholars, such as Anghie, suggest that the constitutional structure of international society has actually remained rather constant. Anghie's study focuses on the enduring significance of colonialism for international law. Part of Anghie's argument is that old colonial hierarchies thought dead with decolonisation have in fact endured and still structure Western relations with the former colonies to this day. Indeed, Anghie's focus on colonialism suggests that interactions between the imperial powers and the former colonies have remained constant despite the end of colonialism and the obviously new criteria for inclusion into international society that resulted from this.<sup>42</sup> The main weakness of Anghie's focus on colonialism is that this focus masks both the different features of colonial hierarchies compared to contemporary hierarchies and the very different ways in which these different forms of hierarchy are operationalised within international society.

Despite the fact that colonialism has indelibly affected and shaped the current contours of international law and international society, Anghie's argument that contemporary interventions by the West constitute a continuing form of imperialism is misplaced. The colonial continuities within international law and international society that Anghie emphasises are overstated. While we can view the contemporary emphasis on liberal democracy as the basis of legitimate statehood as a reincarnation of the standard of civilisation, Anghie fails to examine the way in which this standard has been operationalised and given effect within international society in the post-Cold War era in terms of risk itself. However, he hints at the unique 'risk-focused' nature of contemporary interventions when he argues that '...the transformation of the offending society into a democracy is the most effective way of ensuring that it will pose *no future threat*'.<sup>43</sup>

Anghie's notion of enduring colonialism overlooks the fact that contemporary interventions do not conform to earlier colonial modes of intervention. Some post-Cold War interventions have involved the imposition of particular forms of governance, as did colonialism, but they have generally not been motivated by economic exploitation or territorial aggrandisement, nor is the sovereignty of target states completely disregarded. These states remain states, albeit states of 'lesser standing'. Anghie fails to take into account wider social changes that have occurred within Western societies and within international society. Thus, when Anghie examines contemporary Western 'imperialism' in relation to the 'War on Terror', he asserts that, although this 'imperialism' is defensive in nature and aimed

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<sup>42</sup> Antony Anghie, *Imperialism, Sovereignty and the Making of International Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 278 (italics mine).

at achieving security for the West, it is still the old colonial legal and political relationships that continue to structure relations between the West and the Periphery.<sup>44</sup> The question that Anghie's discussion raises, but does not address, is that if contemporary Western interventions do represent the continuance of colonialism in a new guise, then how do we account for the fact that the previous Western depiction of colonial peoples and territories as inherently inferior and thus ripe for conquest and exploitation has transformed so that these territories are now depicted as representing grave risks that the West must secure itself against? When, and why, did exploitation and paternalism transform into fear and anxiety?

Dunne has also identified contemporary hierarchical trends within international society and questions the extent to which a pluralistic international society is compatible with forms of hierarchy. Yet Dunne takes this argument further, questioning whether the concept of an international society itself is compatible with hierarchy. Dunne suggests that US interventionism, in particular the invasion of Iraq, endangers international society in the sense that the US, the world's dominant power, is now acting with little regard to the norms and rules that constitute international society.<sup>45</sup> Dunne concludes that while international society will continue to exist, the disregard of the US for the rules and norms of international society means that it has opted out of international society, at least for the time being.<sup>46</sup>

Dunne's argument is built on the notion that the US disregard for the prevailing norms of international society, demonstrated by the lack of a sound legal basis or widespread international legitimacy concerning the invasion of Iraq, means that the US now stands in opposition to international society.<sup>47</sup> The US is portrayed as an imperial power that has revolted against the core norms and institutions of international society.<sup>48</sup> Legitimacy is thus crucial to Dunne's understanding of international society – legitimation, or lack thereof, of a particular US intervention by the wider international society is determinative of whether the US is operating within international society or not. What Dunne does not consider is that the very notion of legitimacy within international society itself has changed in response to an increasing Western preoccupation with risk.

As highlighted earlier, the norms which underpin international society's institutions, rules and notions of legitimacy are fluid and dynamic. The problem with Dunne's account is that he ascribes to international society a relatively static, pluralist constitutional structure –

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 273-309.

<sup>45</sup> Dunne, 'Society and Hierarchy in International Relations', 303-320.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 315-316.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 308.

he depicts the US action in Iraq as contrary to the prevailing pluralist norms of international society and thus the US now sits beyond such a society. This overlooks the extent to which the invasion of Iraq is but one example that is representative of constitutional transition *within* international society rather than a signifier of a US withdrawal from such a society. In other words, the invasion of Iraq marks an ongoing process of constitutional transition within international society, not the withdrawal of the US from a pluralist, constitutionally static international society.

Indeed, Dunne does not consider the extent to which the intervention in Iraq shares common rationales and motives with other contemporary interventions such as Kosovo and Afghanistan. Rather than Iraq representing a novel situation which demonstrates a US withdrawal from a pluralist international society, it is actually one of a series of interventions that demonstrate a shift *within* international society away from its previously pluralist constitution. Indeed, Heng suggests that all of these interventions were actually aimed at the management of risk.<sup>49</sup> When one examines these interventions, one finds that the motives and rationales for intervention provided by the US and other Western states revolve around preventing undesirable future occurrences. Contemporary hierarchy within international society has taken on a fundamentally new form, structured around risk. The accounts of constitutional transition and hierarchical trends within contemporary international society surveyed have failed to either adequately conceptualise constitutional transition within international society or adequately conceptualise the nature of contemporary hierarchy.

These criticisms are also true of the limited number of scholars that have applied risk to international relations. Scholars such as Heng and Rasmussen have sought to apply risk to contemporary strategic studies and examine the changing nature of warfare through the lens of Beck's risk society framework.<sup>50</sup> Although these scholars have explicitly focused on the changing nature of warfare, neither has paused to consider the effect of such changes for interstate relations in general. While the argument that Western warfare is now centred on risk management is generally persuasive, the more interesting question that this new 'risk management mode' of warfare raises is how do such changes impact on the rules and norms that underpin interstate relations? It is this question of the impact of risk upon international society to which I now turn.

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<sup>49</sup> See Heng, *War as Risk Management*; Yee-Kuang Heng, 'The 'Transformation of War' Debate: Through the Looking Glass of Ulrich Beck's World Risk Society', *International Relations* 20, no. 1 (2006): 69-91.

<sup>50</sup> See Heng, *War as Risk Management*; Heng, 'The Transformation of War' Debate'; Mikkel Vedby Rasmussen, 'Reflexive Security: NATO and International Risk Society', *Millennium* 30, no. 2 (2001): 285-309; Rasmussen, 'It Sounds Like a Riddle'; and Rasmussen, *The Risk Society at War*.

## **Risk, Globalisation and International Society**

As noted, risk is a concept that has been relatively ignored within international relations. As Jarvis and Griffiths suggest, there has been scant utilisation, theorisation and application of risk to interstate relationships.<sup>51</sup> Yet, at least in Western societies, risk has become one of the defining concepts of our time.<sup>52</sup> Risk analysis and management are practices that have proliferated throughout Western society. In the workplace, risk analysis and management is a central feature of most occupational health and safety policies; in the media we are confronted almost weekly with medical research that shows a particular activity or a particular food group either increases or decreases the risk of contracting a certain disease or ailment. The risks associated with climate change have become one of the defining global political issues of our time. As I shall discuss below, risk and risk management have become core components of criminological studies. Sociologists such as Beck and Lupton have provided persuasive accounts of risk and its centrality to Western societies.<sup>53</sup> Given the Western preoccupation with risk domestically that these scholars have identified, it is little surprise that a similar focus on risk has been reflected in the way the West interacts externally with the wider international society.

Such a preoccupation with risk has become increasingly evident since the end of the Cold War. Indeed, the end of the Cold War has presented international relations observers with a paradox. On the one hand, the West no longer faces existential threats to its survival such as it did during the Cold War. Yet on the other hand, the West has seemingly become increasingly insecure, anxious and preoccupied with global security risks such as terrorism and the possibility of so-called rogue states acquiring weapons of mass destruction. As Beck argues, with the end of the Cold War and the bipolar order, we are moving from a world of enemies to one of risks.<sup>54</sup> Prevailing notions of security have been turned on their head, due in large part to the effects of globalisation. This is due to the temporally and spatially de-bounded nature of modern security issues – potential threats such as terrorism are now imprecisely defined, difficult to locate and potentially uncontrollable.

These new security issues are thus not easily identifiable in terms of capabilities and intentions. Indeed, the material power or capabilities of risks such as terrorism are difficult, if not impossible to ascertain.<sup>55</sup> Clearly defined enemies have been replaced with globalised

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<sup>51</sup> Jarvis and Griffiths, 'Risk, Globalisation and the State', 2.

<sup>52</sup> Aradau, Guerrero and Van Munster, 'Security, Technologies of Risk and the Political', 147.

<sup>53</sup> See Beck, *Risk Society*; Beck, *World Risk Society*; Deborah Lupton, *Risk* (New York: Routledge, 1999).

<sup>54</sup> Beck, *World Risk Society*, 3.

<sup>55</sup> Heng, 'The Transformation of War' Debate, 49

security risks. Processes of globalisation have been instrumental in the de-bounding of contemporary security issues, particularly their spatial de-bounding. Scholte defines globalisation as a de-territorialisation of social life; similarly Rasmussen suggests that 'A global infrastructure allows for the extension of social spaces beyond their traditional geographical confines'.<sup>56</sup> One of the results of this is that, as Bain argues, '...the notion of 'local conflict' has been drained of much of its meaning; and seeing that much of what was once local is now unavoidably global, and often dangerously so, distant islands of anarchy are now ignored only at the risk of great peril'.<sup>57</sup>

Processes of globalisation, particularly technological innovation in transport and communications, give rise to two interrelated consequences: one, they leave the West more exposed and therefore vulnerable to pockets of instability within the wider international society; two, they provide the means by which forces within these pockets of instability can potentially strike out at the West.<sup>58</sup> Globalisation, once viewed as a force for economic integration, development and the spread of liberalism and democracy, is now viewed as containing a 'dark side'. For instance, the Australian Department of Defence's 2007 *Defence Update* suggests that

Australians today are more connected with the wider world than at any other time in our history, but the negative side of globalisation is that this connectedness brings potential security threats closer to us. Globalisation speeds up the impact and significance of existing and new threats, shortening response times, and increasing uncertainty. People, money, and ideas now move faster around the world, not always for the good. While globalisation offers significant opportunities, it also can help the spread of extremist terrorism and diseases such as avian influenza.<sup>59</sup>

The emphasis in this statement on *potential* security threats is important. In the absence of clearly defined threats, Western societies have become preoccupied with ill-defined risks. Further, this statement highlights the uncertainty that is a feature of attempting to deal with globalised risks that are spatially and temporally de-bounded. Western societies now lack what Giddens terms 'ontological security' – the firm knowledge of what to

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<sup>56</sup> Jan Aart Scholte, *Globalisation: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 8-9; Mikkel Vedby Rasmussen, "'9-11': Globalisation, Security and World Order' (Working Paper 2002/2) (Copenhagen: Danish Institute of International Affairs, 2002), 6.

<sup>57</sup> Bain, *Between Anarchy and Society*, 5.

<sup>58</sup> James Gow, *Defending the West* (Cambridge: Polity, 2005), 59.

<sup>59</sup> Australian Department of Defence, *Australia's National Security: Defence Update 2007*, [http://www.defence.gov.au/ans/2007/pdf/Defence\\_update.pdf](http://www.defence.gov.au/ans/2007/pdf/Defence_update.pdf) (accessed 5 May 2008), 14.

expect.<sup>60</sup> As Rasmussen suggests, during the Cold War the risk of destruction for the West (and the East) was arguably much higher than it is today.<sup>61</sup> Yet, the Soviet Union was clearly definable in terms of military, economic and political capabilities and the US could, at least to a certain extent, gauge the intentions of the Soviet government. Thus, perversely, during the Cold War the West enjoyed a higher degree of ontological security – the threat was well defined and in a worst-case scenario, people knew what to expect.

This has changed – as Coker argues, Western societies now share a new ‘risk management ethos which has emerged in response to the greater insecurity that seems to stem from globalisation’.<sup>62</sup> The West’s current lack of ontological security is a derivative of the uncertainty that surrounds globalised security risks, itself a derivative of the spatially and temporally de-bounded nature of risk. The lack of clearly defined threats has meant that focus has shifted to risks and future undesirable possibilities. This new focus on risk and preoccupation with potentialities is well demonstrated in the work of several scholars. Cooper argues that the twenty-first century risks being overrun by technology and anarchy. The West is exposed to the new risks of a globalising world – we face the choice, according to Cooper, of a ‘defensive imperialism’ designed to manage global chaos or to live with chaos itself.<sup>63</sup>

This sort of dystopian narrative is not unique to Cooper. It is present in Huntington’s thesis on the Clash of Civilisations and his warning of future civilisational conflicts facing the West, or the complete breakdown of civilisation itself as envisaged by Kaplan.<sup>64</sup> What these dystopian narratives have in common is the theme of a Western society that faces grave risks and future dangers. None of these works actually describe imminent or immediately identifiable threats to the West. Rather, they warn of future possibilities, whether it is Huntington’s future civilisational conflicts or Cooper’s warning of the chaos exhibited in what he terms the ‘premodern zone’. In reflecting on globalisation and contemporary international society, these scholars have all focused on the risks generated by globalisation and international society. Emphasis is placed on future scenarios and the consequences of such scenarios.

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<sup>60</sup> Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), 35-69.

<sup>61</sup> Rasmussen, ‘9-11’: Globalisation, Security and World Order’, 11.

<sup>62</sup> Christopher Coker, ‘Risk Management Goes Global’, Spiked Online, <http://www.spiked-online.com/Printable/00000006D8BB.htm> (accessed 30 June 2007).

<sup>63</sup> Richard Cooper, *The Breaking of Nations: Order and Chaos in the Twenty-First Century* (London: Atlantic Books, 2004), 17.

<sup>64</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996); Robert D. Kaplan, *The Coming Anarchy: Shattering the Dreams of the Post-Cold War* (New York: Vintage Books, 2000).

Similarly, in its preoccupation with risk, the West has also become increasingly reflexive in its view of a pluralist international society in an age of globalisation. Western states have conspicuously engaged in reflection on the implications and consequences of a globalised, post-Cold War pluralist international society in which all states, regardless of their internal characteristics or even their ability to govern, are full and equal members of international society. While globalisation has played a role in the de-bounding of risk and increasing the vulnerability of the West to such risks, it is a facilitator, not an originator of risk. Rather, globalised security risks have been seen to originate in Cooper's 'zones of chaos' – failed states and states beset by conflict and political instability. The emergence of a pluralist international society provided independence for the former colonies and finally universalised international society. But one of the consequences of this, as Bain argues, is that '...the world's most destitute states, and the patterns of violence to which they give rise, are sustained in a rather perverse way by the constitutive norms of international society'.<sup>65</sup>

Western reflexivity is well-captured by Ian Clark who, although he does not explicitly utilise the concept of risk, argues that there is an ongoing 'double movement' within international society. As international society evolved into a pluralist society of states during the twentieth century, the West, reflecting on the vagaries, inconveniences and consequences of the open 'political market', has sought to forge a more overtly normative, 'thicker' version of international society based on liberal values. In other words, in response to the possible risks associated with an open, pluralist international society, the West has responded by attempting to manage these risks via the promotion of its own liberal democratic values. Clark argues that this process is inseparable from the evolution and eventual emergence of the pluralist international society during the twentieth century. Further, this process has intensified in the post-Cold War era.<sup>66</sup>

While such a 'double movement' has certainly found its most forceful expression in the post-Cold War era, it has not simply been pluralism *per se* that the West has reacted to. Rather, the West's reaction to the vagaries and consequences of a pluralist international society is better viewed as being conditioned in large part by both globalisation and, to a lesser extent, the end of the Cold War. Globalisation and the breakdown of the Cold War bipolar structure have left the West exposed to the risks posed by the wider pluralist international society, including new risks associated with state failure, ethnic conflict, human

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<sup>65</sup> Bain, *Between Anarchy and Society*, 143.

<sup>66</sup> Ian Clark, 'Another 'Double Movement': The Great Transformation After the Cold War?', *Review of International Studies* 27, no.5 (2001), 237-55.

rights abuses, etc. In essence, Clark's argument is similar to that presented here. Clark's core argument is that a more overtly normative, hierarchical international society has emerged in reaction to the evolution and emergence of a pluralist international society which has exposed the West to the new risks of the 'open political market'.

As Clark argues:

However, in the second stage (of the 'double movement'), the wider West—incorporating most of Europe but led by the United States—has struck back at the very pluralism that the global state system had generated, and of which the World Wars and Cold War were symptomatic. It has sought to reassert a greater central control of the international system. Its chosen instrument has been the forging of a new international society—adhering to a thicker set of legitimating principles embracing democracy, liberal values and capitalism—that has been progressively formed from within the original.<sup>67</sup>

In other words, confronted by the new risks of a pluralist international society, the West has sought to manage these risks by asserting greater control over international society via recourse to the promotion of liberal values and democracy.

This perception of the risks associated with contemporary pluralist international society encourages the perception of a division between a zone of risk and a zone at risk. Those states that have constituted their internal political and social institutions in an unacceptable way (e.g.: illiberal or undemocratic states), or those that have no meaningful political or social institutions to speak of belong to this zone of risk. Illiberal regimes and endemic governance problems in many post-colonial states are nothing new – pluralist international society affords states the freedom to choose their own domestic institutions for realising their society's particular version of the good life, even if they should fail in that endeavour. Yet in an age of globalisation, other sections of international society can no longer insulate themselves from the perceived security risks posed by these states. Thus, the rights normally associated with full membership of international society are suspended for states in the 'risky zone' which then potentially become subject to Western intervention.

Again, it is important to stress that while states consigned to the zone of risk pose no concrete existential security *threats* to the West in the way the Soviet Union did during the Cold War, they are perceived as posing ill-specified, amorphous security risks. The security implications of the internal conditions of these states are defined in terms of potential future occurrences and possible negative consequences. The uncertainty and ill-defined nature of security risks means that in seeking to manage and prevent risk, emphasis is placed on

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 254-5.

identifying and reshaping those environments deemed to be potentially dangerous. Thus, while it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to identify exactly what form a security risk will take, when such a risk is likely to be realised or what the consequences of its realisation will be, broad environmental conditions that are conducive to risk, such as illiberal regimes or state failure, can be identified and reshaped so as to prevent undesirable future events.

This notion of environmental reshaping bears similarities to new criminologies that emerged in Western countries during the 1970s. These new criminologies focused on crime not as an aberration or abnormality to be controlled, but as a risk to be managed via a range of different policing techniques and methods.<sup>68</sup> These new risk management-focused criminologies contain elements that are useful in understanding contemporary Western interventionism within international society, particularly their focus on managing risk through the reshaping of identified environments of risk. Prior to the emergence of new criminologies in the 1970s, the focus of crime control and prevention was on rehabilitating individual offenders and attempting to address the underlying causes of criminal behaviour.<sup>69</sup>

However, faced with rising crime rates despite attempts to rehabilitate offenders, criminologists admitted that crime could not be wholly eliminated. Instead, it would have to be accepted as a social risk to be managed. Policing thus became more about the management of the risk of criminal activity. Believing that crime could not be eradicated, Western governments and criminologists turned their attention to preventing criminal acts before they occurred. Managing crime has become more about managing the environment in which criminals operate rather than catching and rehabilitating criminals.<sup>70</sup> In other words, the previous emphasis on the criminal disposition of the individual has given way to an emphasis on the environmental situation within which crime occurs.<sup>71</sup> By reshaping risky environments, authorities can remove opportunities to engage in criminal activity and hence mitigate the risk of criminal conduct and the damage that such conduct may entail.<sup>72</sup>

This policing tactic is known as ‘situational crime prevention’, which Clarke defines as ‘...a pre-emptive approach that relies, not on improving society or its institutions, but

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<sup>68</sup> David Garland, ‘The Limits of the Sovereign State: Strategies of Crime Control in Contemporary Society’, *British Journal of Criminology* 36, no. 4 (1996), 445-71.

<sup>69</sup> Nancy Reichman, ‘Managing Crime Risks: Toward an Insurance Based Model of Social Control’, *Research in Law, Deviance and Social Control* 8, edited by Andrew T. Scull and Stephen Spitzer (Greenwich, Connecticut: JAI Press, 1986), 164.

<sup>70</sup> Rasmussen, *The Risk Society at War*, 108.

<sup>71</sup> Gordon Hughes, *Understanding Crime Prevention: Social Control, Risk and Late Modernity* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1998), 59.

<sup>72</sup> Reichman, ‘Managing Crime Risks’, 158.

simply on reducing the opportunities for crime'.<sup>73</sup> Faced with an inability to influence or change the causes of criminal behaviour, it is preferable to focus efforts on changing environmental factors which are susceptible to manipulation and change.<sup>74</sup> Situational crime prevention views crime as a risk to be managed – it focuses on preventing possible *future* crime by reshaping environments that are conducive to criminal activity.<sup>75</sup> There are numerous examples of situational crime prevention measures, such as Closed Circuit TV cameras on street corners in major cities and home alarm systems. These measures make it more difficult for individuals to engage in criminal activity without getting caught, and in doing so hopefully reduce the incentives for crime.

The increasing centrality of risk and risk management within criminology and policing is demonstrative of a wider social preoccupation with risk in late-modern Western societies. But these criminological studies of risk and risk management are important not simply because they demonstrate a preoccupation with risk similar to the West's view of the dangers posed by a globalised pluralist international society. They are important because this domestic policing model of environmental reshaping is one that the West has adopted in its attempts to manage globalised security risks within international society. As Coker argues:

In this world of uncertainties and risks, the only option open to governments is to police the world. And in a globalised age we see the emergence of a new concept of policing which takes its cue from the domestic model, where people have moved from 'community policing' to 'policing communities of risk'.<sup>76</sup>

States that exhibit particular internal characteristics or behavioural patterns are classified as potentially risky. Similar to the domestic policing model, Western interventionism is a form of situational prevention – territories deemed to pose an intolerable risk are reshaped via the promotion of liberal values and democratic governance.

The idea that a lack of liberalism constitutes a potentially dangerous environment, and consequently that the promotion of liberal values is the remedy to global risks, is based heavily upon the ideological prescriptions of the liberal or democratic peace theory and the work of neo-Kantian scholars.<sup>77</sup> Western governments have explicitly invoked liberalism and

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<sup>73</sup> Ronald Clarke, *Situational Crime Prevention: Successful Case Studies* (New York: Harrow and Heston, 1992), 4

<sup>74</sup> R.A. Litton, 'Crime Prevention and Insurance', *The Howard Journal* 21 (1982), 126.

<sup>75</sup> Hughes, *Understanding Crime Prevention*, 72.

<sup>76</sup> Coker, 'Risk Management Goes Global'.

<sup>77</sup> For useful works on democratic peace theory (including critiques), see Michael Doyle, 'Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs', *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 12, no.3 (1983): 205-35; Michael Doyle, 'Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs, Part 2', *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 12, no.4 (1983): 323-53; Bruce Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post-Cold War World* (Princeton: Princeton

democracy as the key to managing risk and to resolving security issues more generally. Both former US President Bill Clinton's and incumbent President George Bush's security strategies during the 1990s and 2000s have emphasised the security benefits of the promotion of liberal values.<sup>78</sup> Indeed, Bush's 2002 security strategy elevated democracy promotion to the status of 'Grand Strategy' in the fight against terrorism, the 2006 *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism* suggesting that 'The long-term solution for winning the War on Terror is the advancement of freedom and human dignity through effective democracy'.<sup>79</sup> Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair too has explicitly invoked liberal values as the key to addressing security risks.<sup>80</sup> As Clark suggests, within international society Western governments have pronounced an instrumental view of liberal values as the prerequisite for addressing security problems.<sup>81</sup>

As such, pluralism, as a fundamental and constitutive normative doctrine of international society, has been eroded by the notion that illiberal states or states suffering from poor governance potentially pose unacceptable security risks to the West. Risk mitigates the recognition of diversity and tolerance inherent in a pluralist international society because it is this very recognition that underwrites the existence of illiberal and failed states that now potentially act as originators of global security risks. International society's pluralist constitutive values become a theme and a problem in itself. These values, whilst allowing for diversity and the domestic freedom of states, have also spawned unintended security consequences. International society thus enters a transition towards a reflexive, hierarchical and anti-pluralist form of risk society as the West seeks to police the globe in an attempt to manage risk.

## Conclusion

Risk has become a central element in constituting contemporary international society – it erodes the pluralist constitutional basis of international society, leading to a novel form of

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University Press, 1993); John MacMillan, 'A Kantian Protest Against the Peculiar Discourse of Inter-Liberal State Peace', *Millennium* 24, no.3 (1995): 549-62; Tarak Barkawi and Mark Laffey, 'The Imperial Peace: Democracy, Force and Globalisation', *European Journal of International Relations* 5, no.4 (1999): 403-34; Hobson, 'Democracy as Civilisation'.

<sup>78</sup> The White House, *A National Security Strategy for a New Century*, October 1998, <http://www.fas.org/man/docs/nssr-98.pdf> (accessed 20 November 2006); The White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, September 2002, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.pdf> (accessed 10 February, 2005).

<sup>79</sup> The White House, *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, September 2006, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nsct/2006/nsct2006.pdf> (accessed 15 October 2006), 9.

<sup>80</sup> Tony Blair, 'Prime Minister's speech: Doctrine of the International community at the Economic Club, Chicago', <http://www.number-10.gov.uk/output/Page1297.asp> (accessed 20 April 2007).

<sup>81</sup> Clark, *Legitimacy in International Society*, 174.

international risk society policed by the West. As discussed earlier, other scholars have tended to view Western interventionism as merely representing a re-hierarchisation of international society. But they have failed to recognise the fundamental constitutional change that is at stake, as have scholars such as Jackson, who argues that while norms are dynamic and continually evolve within international society, its fundamental pluralist basis remains constant.<sup>82</sup> However, it is precisely this fundamental pluralist basis that is affected by risk. It is the very notion of pluralism itself that becomes the problem in an international society in which the dominant powers seem acutely sensitive to potential security risks that they are willing to prevent through interventionist risk management techniques.

The problem is that many English School works, including those that have explicitly focused on constitutional change within international society, have done so through the lens of a 'modernist' framework. This framework insufficiently captures the effects of globalisation and new forms of temporally and spatially de-bounded risks that lead to a Western emphasis on policing territories perceived to be potentially dangerous so as to mitigate the production and emergence of such risks. The result of this new emphasis on risk is a reconstitution of international society which involves increasingly prevalent hierarchical and anti-pluralist trends. The pluralist notion that all states should be left to constitute their internal governance systems as they see fit, even if these governance systems fail, has been steadily eroded in the post-Cold War era by the potential risks posed by the 'chaos' of these peripheral states. The identification of certain environments as conducive to the production of global security risks creates an imperative to reshape these environments, resulting in interventionist mechanisms of risk management aimed at the promotion of liberal democracy.

Importantly however, the promotion of liberal values is a result of instrumental considerations rather than a desire to promote liberalism and democracy simply for the sake of the 'inherent goodness' of these values themselves. Liberal values are promoted because they are perceived to be the key to managing risk. Interventions in Iraq, Afghanistan and Kosovo, for example, have all arguably been motivated by the perception of intolerable security risks to Western interests. In each case, the intervening powers have sought to effect liberal democratic reform in these territories. The result, as noted, is the erosion of international society's pluralist constitution and the emergence of a more hierarchical international society, one in which states are compelled to conform to positive standards of liberalism and democracy in order to qualify for full membership within international society.

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<sup>82</sup> Jackson, *The Global Covenant*, 15.

