Understanding African International Society:
An English School Approach

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Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of PhD
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DECLARATION

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

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This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Where *correction services* have been used, the extent and nature of the correction is clearly marked in a footnote(s).

Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references.

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Abstract

This thesis seeks to explore an English School understanding of regional international society and construct a conceptual framework derived from the body of English School literature that can provide significant insights into international society at the regional level. This conceptual framework will be applied to an analysis of three case studies from continental Africa: the Union Government debate, the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), and the African Union (AU) position on United Nations Security Council (UNSC) expansion. The framework is comprised of two multifaceted main themes: the degree of solidarism in regional international society, and the potential tensions between regional and global international societies.

The analysis of the case studies through the conceptual framework indicates that African international society is characterised by a low degree of solidarism; while the ambit of African international society has expanded considerably, there is still minimal consensus on the character of the African state, and minimal commitment to law enforcement, or the prioritisation of regional over national interests. Despite the presence of significant collaborative aspects, African international society's relationship with global international society is also marked by significant tensions, with a particularly prominent link between the desire to militate against global hegemony and global-regional identity dynamics.

Through the utilisation of the conceptual framework in the case studies, this thesis demonstrates viability of the framework and the potential of the English School in studying politics at the regional level. In addition to providing a better understanding of African international relations therefore, this thesis makes a theoretical contribution that could form the basis of future English School research on regions.
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