

# Buzan and Little

## Chapter 5

# What defines a system?

- What types and levels of interaction define a system?
  - Can systems be purely economic?
  - What level of interaction qualifies as systemic?
- Political/military
  - High interaction capacity
- Economic
  - High to medium or even low interaction capacity
- Social
  - Lowest level of required interaction capacity

# Defining the system

- Four possible options
  - Anything goes
  - Eliminate cultural/social element
  - Eliminate economic element
  - Disaggregate into sectors.
  
- Which one do Buzan & Little choose?

# Three Types of System

## Full International System

- ★ High IC
- ★ All Sectors



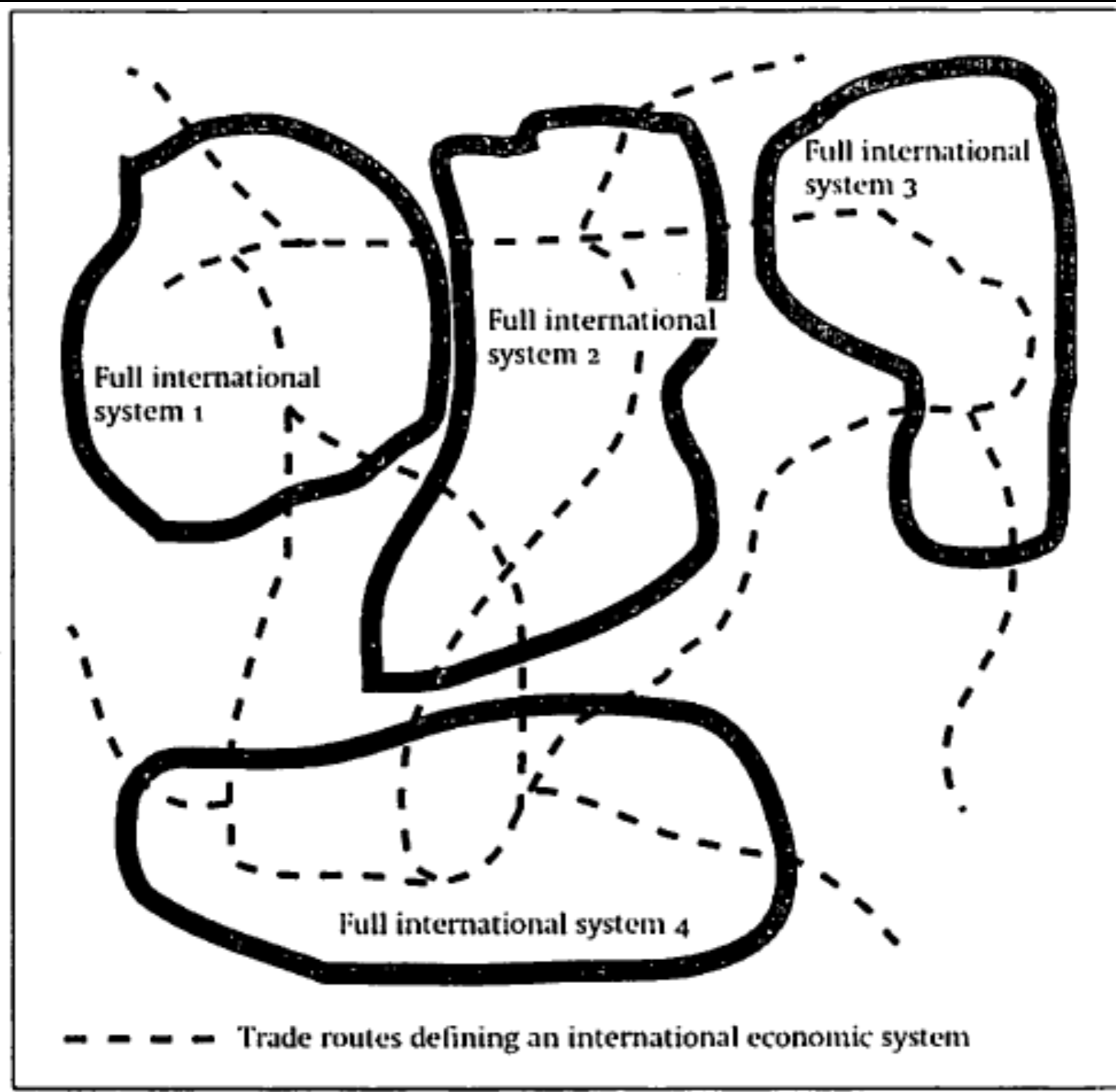
## Economic International System

- ★ Lower IC
- ★ No Political/Military Sector

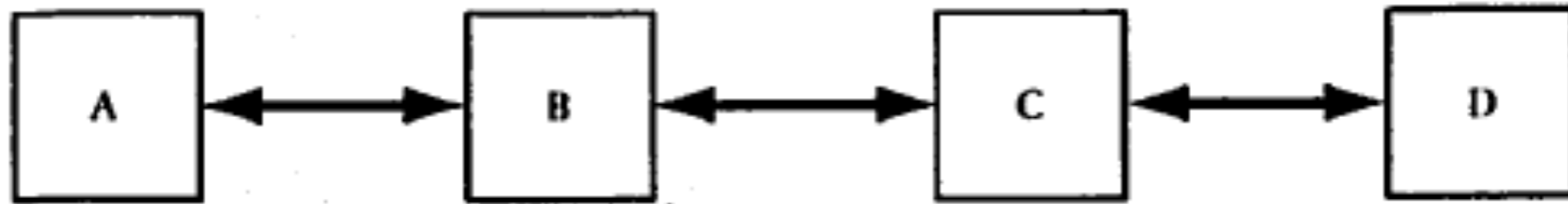


## Pre-International System

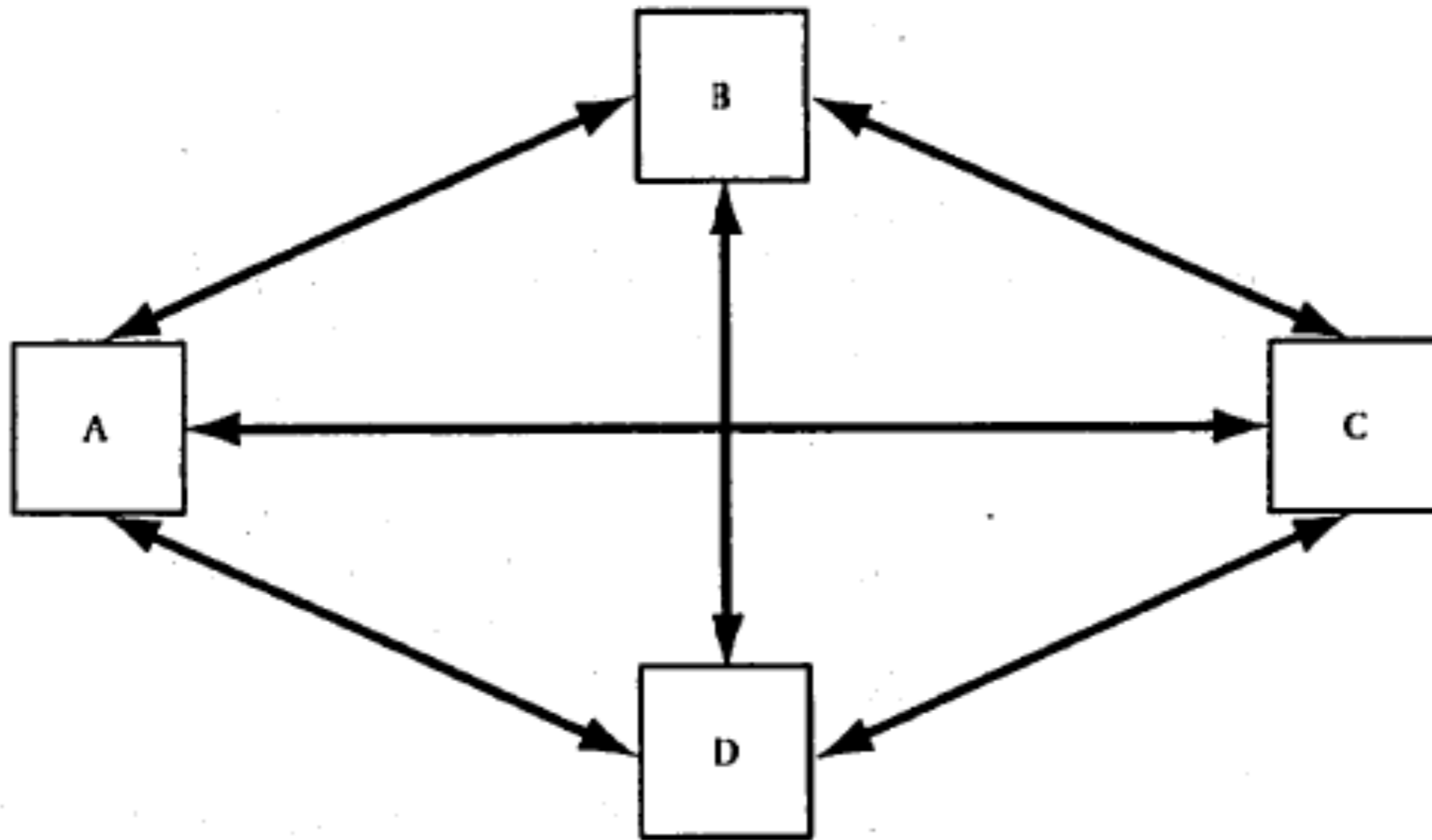
- ★ Low IC
- ★ Mostly Socio-Cultural



Buzan, Barry, and Richard Little. *International Systems in World History: Remaking the Study of International Relations*. Oxford University Press, 2000.  
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**Linear international system**



**Multiordinate international system**

# Units

- What are units?
  - Sufficiently cohesive so as to have actor qualities
  - Must let go of the assumption that units take on a particular form.

# Systems

- Mechanical
  - Most Realist and economic views of systems
  - Unity of Science
  - Interactions structurally determined
- Social
  - Perceptions major determinant of action
  - Remember: three kinds of system.
    - Nature of environment depends on the relative strength of all three



# Peer Discussion

- What is International Society?

# International Society

- Restated on page 104 (very important!)
- Units establish common rules and institutions for the conduct of relations
- International system (Hobbes), international society (Grotius), world society (Kant)
  - Transition from international system to society requires mutual *recognition* and legal equality
  - Cold War comprised of two international societies?

# Structuration

- Have to find a way to allow for both agency and the influence of structure...

# Moving forward

- Keep in mind these key questions
  - What is the scale of the system?
  - Linear or multiordinate?
  - What kind of units dominate the system?
  - High or low interaction capacity?
  - What types of processes define the system
  - What types of structure does the system possess?
  - How do units and structures interact?

# Questions

- Any questions?

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