

Social closure and the reproduction of stratified international order

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Abstract

This article investigates how the means by which actors compete for position in the management of international society stratifies international order. Advancing scholarship on hierarchies, it applies a theory of social closure to examine two status groups, The Family of Civilised Nations and the G20, arguing that stratification is reproduced by a dynamic interplay of top-down collectivist exclusion on the part of superiorly positioned actors and bottom-up mimicry performed by those inferiorly positioned. As such, the same means of closure which used the Standard of Civilisation to exclude outsiders from the Family of Civilised Nations in the past stratifies non-state actors today, particularly international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) seeking to play a role in-the G20. This article offers amendments to closure theory in IR, demonstrating its utility for analysing contemporary international politics, engaging in trans-historical analysis, and in incorporating non-state actors into enquiry.

Keywords

G20, hierarchy, social closure, standard of civilisation, status, stratification

Introduction

Processes that historically stratified international society continue to do so in the contemporary international domain. Specifically, a dynamic interplay between superiorly and inferiorly positioned actors perpetuates stratification as they compete for position in the management of international society. Historically this process played out as actors vied for position within international society as it globalised; today it finds expression as actors compete for influence within global governance.¹ What follows applies social closure theory to capture this dynamic and explore its implications.²

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While the concern here generally is with hierarchies, relationships between actors in relative positions of super- and sub-ordination, I follow McConaughy, Musgrave and Nexon, Edward Keene and Carsten-Andreas Shultz in placing *stratification* at the centre of the conceptual framework rather than hierarchy.³ Stratification allows us to account for multiple types of ranked orders at once, acknowledging that authority derives from several forms of hierarchy, not just those defined as being based on authority relationships.⁴ This stems from Max Weber's foundational work on stratification, providing a multi-dimensional understanding of power as deriving from class, status, and authority, which both Keene and Shultz place centrally in their importations of Weber into IR.⁵ Conceptually, stratification also prompts us to think about relative positions of *groups* in international social order, rather than individual actors, as is more typically the case in hierarchies scholarship.⁶ Doing so allows us to emphasise the relational nature of status ascription beyond merely acknowledging that status is inter-subjectively ascribed based on unit-level attributes, but also on system-level group relationships.⁷ Status, in other words, is not just about what you have and who you are, but also who you hang out with.

In assessing the state of hierarchies scholarship, Ayşe Zarakol asserts that this work can best advance by focusing on two topics: the origins and nature of hierarchies, and actors' behaviours within them.⁸ Meanwhile, Shultz has demonstrated how a neo-Weberian account of stratification, by way of a theory of 'social closure', particularly helps advance the latter of these two research programmes.⁹ What follows builds upon the theorisation produced by Shultz by asking two empirical questions: first, how does closure – the means by which superiorly positioned actors attempt to occlude others and monopolise advantages for themselves and, conversely, the means by which the ostracised try to overcome their marginalisation – actually play out amongst actors competing for position in ranking status groups? And, second, has it changed over time? While engagement with closure theory in IR has produced a rigorous theoretical framework and demonstrated its application in historical contexts, we lack both a contemporary application of the theory and any trans-historical analysis to comparatively assess closure's effects across time. This article fills these gaps, articulating a twin dynamic in the reproduction of order, in which stratification is perpetuated by both top-down collectivism on the part of superiorly positioned actors and a bottom-up mimicry performed by inferiorly positioned actors seeking to improve their standing (and thereby increase the likelihood of advancing their interests). Stratification is thus not just a result of the impositions of the superiorly positioned and advantaged, it is also partly a function of behaviours of the inferiorly positioned.

This single framework facilitates examination of enduring practices of stratified ordering in the international domain across time. I argue that the same means of social closure which used the Standard of Civilisation to produce what Keene calls the 'charmed circle' of the so-called Family of Civilised Nations in the past, positioning those ascribed as unworthy as being 'uncivilised' lessers, stratifies non-state actors today, such as international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) seeking to play a role in international society's management by way of the G20 engagement process.¹⁰ From above, this is achieved via two specific forms of collectivism: legal-collectivism (i.e. the ascribed lack of sovereignty) and collectivist stereotyping (i.e. the perceived lack of desired attributes). Moreover, I argue that occluded actors attempt to enhance their position in the

management of contemporary international society by way of the same sort of mimicry of superiorly positioned actors that was demanded by the Standard to get into the 'charmed circle' in the past. As such, stratified order is also partly reproduced by the very ways that the inferiorly positioned attempt to improve their standing. To be clear, my argument is not that there is a new Standard in operation with respect to non-state actors. Rather, the claims I am advancing are that (i) the *means* of stratification exercised in the past endure today in the structuring of global governance order, and that (ii) the *means* by which inferiorly positioned actors attempt to improve their positions are equally similar and, likewise, actually serve in part to bolster the hierarchical status quo. Furthermore, I do not contend that non-state actors seek status as the equals of sovereign states; rather, it is that the means by which they seek position to help manage international society and the means by which their marginal, subordinate inclusion in governance processes are regulated are the same as those that ordered international society historically.¹¹ While it might appear odd to compare the mimicry of non-state actors today with that of sovereign states in the past (rather than, for example, non-state actors in the past), the objective is to look at the strategies of actors, irrespective of type, vying for position in ranking status groups. It just so happens that in the two epochs analysed here the relevant actors are of a different category. Furthermore, this is an effort to broaden application of the an otherwise straightjacketed version of closure theory so as to consider multiple types of actors at once, beyond the typical, state-centric analysis. As I note in the conclusion, the state centrality of closure theory undermines its potential in IR.

What follows contributes to hierarchies, status, and stratification focused scholarship in two primary ways.¹² First, it furthers groundwork laid by Keene, Zarakol, Shultz, Duque and Naylor to use a neo-Weberian theory of social closure to account for the reproduction of stratified patterns of super- and sub-ordination in the international domain.¹³ Second, it builds upon Ann Town's work, which finds that actors' relative hierarchical positions affect their behaviours.¹⁴ A social closure lens brings into focus how different actions from differently positioned actors affect the reproduction of the hierarchies in which they are embedded in the first place. Additionally, while I in part empirically rely on English School and historical sociology-rooted scholarship, I speak back to those literatures by demonstrating how a social closure lens allows such approaches, traditionally focused on historical contexts, to examine contemporary global governance.¹⁵

I do so via analysis of 19th century international society's Family of Civilised Nations and today's G20- both exclusive, exalted status groups playing managerial roles in the international domain.¹⁶ The analytical focus is on international society's top strata because the concern is not with status or hierarchies for their own sake, which would necessitate broader enquiry across international society's ranks, but rather with how competition for position at the top reproduces stratification generally. Empirically, the G20 provides a useful context through which to analyse the positions and behaviours of non-state actors – particularly INGOs – engaging with states in the management of international society. Indeed, what renders the G20 an appropriate context for the aim here – as opposed to the World Economic Forum or the Bilderberg Group – is that it is explicitly recognised as an institution through which the stability and survival of international society is partly managed, rather than primarily as a conference of elites. It is further

appropriate as the G20 is designed to substantively include both state and non-state actors in driving the year-round summitry process, principally through its ‘engagement groups’.¹⁷ While stratification features centrally in accounts of international society and its globalisation story, the G20 is specifically designed to be a less hierarchical, more open, inclusive, and participatory governance forum, distinct from the states-only multi-lateral forums that otherwise constitute global governance.¹⁸ One advantage of the theoretical lens employed here is that it allows us to see that such a characterisation exaggerates the degree to which the G20 is a break from the past. Stratification does not just endure in contemporary global governance, it is a defining feature.

The G20 is especially useful as we can observe multiple hierarchies at once, allowing us to produce a portrait of the stratified international social order that highlights which actors benefit most from social closure’s operation. Four hierarchical relationships are particularly evident: (i) between those states included in the summit who have coveted, exclusive seats around the table and those who are outright excluded from it; (ii) between sovereign and non-sovereign actors, which formally casts international organisations (IOs), INGOs, and corporate actors into marginal positions in the summitry process; (iii) amongst certain IOs and international financial institutions (IFIs) included in the summitry process over sovereign actors without seats at the table; and (iv) with regard to INGOs, both between INGOs themselves and, as with IOs and IFIs, their privileged position over other actors – state and non-state alike – who are not included in the process at all.¹⁹ This is not simply to observe that the plurality of the G20’s state membership is Western, nor just that its non-Western members were included given their subscription to neoliberal economic policy and systematic significance in the Western-oriented global economy; but it also clarifies that non-sovereign actors included in the summitry process are likewise largely Western products. This is especially the case with INGOs who have achieved the most success in influencing the summitry process – well-resourced organisations like Oxfam, The Gates Foundation, and ONE. This is not to say that such actors necessarily represent status quo interests, but to highlight that when it comes to governance hierarchies, even among non-sovereign actors a Western advantage persists. Not only is contemporary global governance not substantively less stratified than in the past, it is not substantively less Western either.²⁰

Collectivist exclusion

Keene has brought collectivist exclusion into discussions of stratification in IR, noting that such ‘exclusion discriminates on the basis of *group* characteristics, often in terms of highly visible markers such as race, gender, religions and even symbolic indicators such as clothing’.²¹ Drawing on sociologist Frank Parkin, Keene contends that it tends ‘to create “a subordinate group of a communal character – that is, one defined in terms of an all-encompassing negative status”’.²² The introduction of collectivist exclusion (and its dyadic partner, individualist exclusion, wherein discrimination is on the basis of individual characteristics) shifts the analytical focus from the structure of order and actors’ positions within it, to *mobility* – or lack thereof – within that order, adding a capacity to capture behavioural dynamics of order’s reproduction and contestation. We gain an ability to analyse actors’ attempts to change their positions and attempts by others to resist those changes.

The Standard of Civilisation was the primary institution governing international social order as Western European international society globalised.²³ The Standard served the purpose of stratifying the international domain in two ways: (i) defining who was positioned where in the international topography and (ii) ensuring that superiorly ranked actors had a particular set of attributes which categorised them as ‘civilised’ – generally, that they resembled a liberal, Western European state.²⁴ As such, the Standard stratified international order in setting the relative status positions of actors within international society and in reproducing a particular set of norms, values, beliefs, institutions, and practices shared by The Family of Civilised Nations’ members.

This club’s base requirement of sovereignty was a form of legal-collectivism. Paul Keal traces its roots to the shift from natural to positive international law while others, notably Haldén and Keene, focus on the increase in treaty making capacities.²⁵ According to Keal, individuals could be included in international society according to natural law, but ‘the more that international society came to be defined as a body of rules to regulate relations between states, the more it excluded individuals, sub-state groups, and political communities that did not meet European criteria for statehood’.²⁶ Gerry Simpson echoes this observation, nothing that ‘[t]he whole idea of statehood and sovereignty operates as a discourse of exclusion and hierarchy. Equality is possessed by sovereigns and states are universally subject to international law. The state has monopolised international legal life to the exclusion of other forms of political organisation’.²⁷

It was not always the case that non-state actors were unable to gain recognition within international society. It was only with the calcification of the Standard that the achievement of the possession and recognition of sovereignty became unachievable to non-state actors. During the early formation of the European international society and its globalisation, some non-state entities gained recognition as states (or as being sufficiently state-like) that they could gain recognition. Tomoko Okagaki describes such entities as ‘functional equivalents’ that ‘could be remoulded and recreated so that they would fit the Western mould’.²⁸ Legal collectivism has thus always been central to the history of international society’s globalisation, however the sovereignty it came to demand was not always absolutely out of reach actors who did not readily appear like a state in the Western European image.

Reshaping a polity as a sovereign state according to this image was necessary for contesting an inferior position, but did not guarantee a substantive move up the status hierarchy. As position was fundamentally a game of inter-subjective recognition, the achievement or possession of any required markers of higher status needed to be recognised by ranking actors. Self-declaration was not enough. The West remained superiorly positioned and privileged to grant or deny position. As such, the significance of legal-collectivism went beyond the identification of sovereignty as the primary criterion for positioning an actor, it also tells us how a particular stratified order was reinforced and perpetuated within international society. Antony Anghie argues that the recognition of outsiders ‘was about affirming the power of the European states to claim sovereignty, to reinforce their authority to make such determinations, and consequently, to make sovereignty a possession that they could then proceed to dispense, deny, create, or grant partially’.²⁹

This legal-collectivist exclusion was not just achieved through denying recognition. International society’s ranking actors also actively prevented inferiors from being able to satisfy the Standard’s requirements, as is exemplified through the imposition of unequal

treaties on some outsiders. While the club required territorial sovereignty as a condition for entry, at the same time one of the unintended consequences of the levying of unequal treaties was the denial of the achievement of full territorial sovereignty.³⁰ The articles of the 1901 Boxer Protocol, for example, exemplify the degree to which unequal treaties undermined China's ability to claim full sovereignty, granting Europeans the right to occupation in twelve Chinese regions as well as exclusive control of – and the right to defend with force – the Legation Quarters in Beijing.

Contemporary legal collectivism

Turning attention to today's 'charmed circle', in 2009 the G20 declared itself as the international system's 'premier economic forum', positioning itself as the ranking global economic governance group.³¹ Its membership list was first put together in the late-1990's by then-Canadian finance minister, Paul Martin, and then-US treasury secretary, Larry Summers. They based membership on two fundamental criteria: a subscription to the neoliberal Washington Consensus internationally and adherence to the 'good governance' agenda domestically.³² While it claims primacy as the directorate made up of an exclusive selection of 'systematically significant' economies, it also claims itself to be an open and inclusive governance forum owing to its engagement processes with businesses, labour unions, civil society, academia, young people, and women. While legal-collectivism no longer outright denies non-state actors participation in the management of international society, it now stratifies their incorporation within global governance. Some non-state actors enjoy relatively substantive inclusion in the G20. The European Union, the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organisation, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, the Financial Stability Board, and the UN (and some of its specialised agencies) are included based on their functional import and – as expanded upon below – their mimetic success in the eyes of the state members of the group. These IOs and IFIs, though, are denied full standing, exemplified physically by often only being brought into summit sessions when relevant topics are discussed and/or by being seated on the margins of the main summit table. Their marginalisation is justified by both state representatives and representatives of these actors themselves owing to their lack of sovereignty.³³

What is significant to note about their stratified inclusion is that these actors accept this division and condition their behaviour during the summit process. They never challenge the primacy of state members nor their legitimacy to meet; and they limit their involvement to reporting and advice, never participating in political decision making.³⁴ While this reflects functional differentiation between state and non-state actors generally, what is noteworthy is that its acceptance by these particular actors is reflective of the degree to which they benefit from the status quo order. Deference to the prevailing order maintains their position, accepting relative subordination in exchange for relatively substantive inclusion in the overall process. This set of large, well-resourced, Western-rooted actors has a clear incentive to participate in the perpetuation of the status quo, while those non-state actors excluded from the summit process – but nonetheless wanting to influence it – do not, and thus behave quite differently at summits. Simply put, protestors outside the summit lobbing bricks and dodging tear gas adopt no such deferential

mimicry of the prevailing order. In ‘playing the game’, included IOs and IFIs at once both perpetuate the status quo and, in so doing, socially differentiate themselves from those non-state actors so inferiorly positioned they are outright excluded from the process. Legal-collectivism thus has an effect not just in ordering the general status hierarchy involving sovereign and non-sovereign actors in the international domain broadly, but has a secondary effect on the status hierarchy amongst non-state actors.

While the inclusion of this particular set of IOs and IFIs is stratified such that they are cast into subordinate positions at the summit, they are included nonetheless. They enjoy relative superiority vis-à-vis the vast majority actors not included in the process at all, state and non-state alike. Here the overlapping hierarchies that are a hallmark feature of global governance particularly come into focus. Despite some IOs and IFIs being included in the G20 process, *who* those actors are and *how* they deferentially act serve to entrench the stratified order in which Western actors are privileged across the multiple hierarchies that comprise it. Their inclusion does not just mark out hierarchy amongst non-state actors, but is also indicative of a hierarchy in which these particular actors, who are deemed (by the few states identified as being the most significant in the neoliberal system) to be critical in the management of that system and all that it entails, enjoy privileges over sovereign states outright excluded from the G20.

Legal-collectivism thus had profound effects on ordering international society in the past and it continues to do so today. While in the past legal-collectivism broadly protected the superior position of those actors deemed to be fully sovereign relative to all others, today legal-collectivism no less protects the superiorly positioned, though no longer according to such a clear cut social division. While legal-collectivism protects the status positions of ranking states in the face of functionally important non-state actors, it affords no such protection to relatively inferior states. Legal-collectivism is thus not a tool of sovereign states in general – which reading only the historical context might lead one to conclude – but is better understood as a tool of the superiorly positioned, used to maintain the standing and privileges that come with ranking status.

Collectivist stereotyping

Beliefs about qualities which render the inferiorly positioned unsuitable for higher status need not be formalised to deny standing. Exclusion and marginalisation is also achieved in less formal ways, as any victim of racism or sexism could attest. In the international domain, non-state actors – particularly INGOs – are in part kept at the margins through such stereotyping. Scholarship on the Standard is ripe with examples of how such particularly racist stereotyping operated against those ascribed as being semi-civilised, barbarian, or savage. Suzuki and Zarakol in particular have shown how this stereotyping persists and continues to stratify, even after the achievement of formal sovereign equality by all states.³⁵ Rebecca Adler-Nissen’s work on stigmatisation likewise captures how the ascription of inferiorly positioned actors plays a central role in the construction of international society.³⁶

In the contemporary context it is a means of limiting INGOs’ inclusion and substantive participation, justifying relative marginalisation in G20 processes. INGOs are commonly described by state actors as being disorganised and narrowly interested; and, as

such, are ascribed as being unsuitable for inclusion beyond the club's engagement processes.³⁷ Despite a decade of engagement in the G20 and decades within global governance generally, the preconception that INGOs lack the capacity for meaningful engagement endures. Illustratively, a Mexican sous-Sherpa relayed that one of the primary motivations for granting unprecedented inclusion to INGOs at the 2012 Los Cabos G20 summit was to give them an opportunity to build 'the technical capacity and lobbying expertise that comes from experience' (Sherpas, and their deputies, sous-Sherpas, are the senior government officials responsible for a summit and their political leaders' participation in it).³⁸ Particularly revealing was the sous-Sherpa's comparison of INGOs with the B20, an entity created only two years prior at the 2010 Toronto G20 summit and the Think20, a initiative then in its first year, 'Who are the B20? This is a network that has met before, they're existing, have representation and legitimacy, having the capacity to organise themselves. . . They're entities already there. There is no core entity to civil society. . . not one cupola, no unified body. If they were like this, we would have taken care of them', he continued, 'Mexico has opened spaces for them to build this body, build a single platform like with the B20 or Think20'.³⁹ This echoes a comment relayed by a French sous-Sherpa to INGO representatives at the 2011 Cannes summit, '[we] know what to do with business and the unions, but we don't know what to do with you guys'.⁴⁰

Large advocacy organisations, such as Oxfam, ActionAid, the Gates Foundation, and ONE, have a long history of engaging in summitry and have no shortage of capacity to engage in this environment.⁴¹ Moreover, by working with umbrella organisations like Interaction in the United States and Bond in the United Kingdom, even smaller, less well-resourced organisations are able to substantively participate in the summitry process. The collectivist ascription thus serves to marginalise particular actors regardless of any individual attributes of any particular organisation. That other non-state groups like the B20 and Think20 are held as models to be emulated reveals the degree to which this collectivist stereotyping is particularly aimed against INGOs.

Collectivism thus persists in ordering the international domain. While Keene is right in asserting that international society is now a predominantly individualist game, this only holds true for state actors.⁴² Collectivism remains deeply embedded in the process by which order is perpetuated and this cannot be ignored if we are to achieve a comprehensive understanding of how stratification is reproduced. One of the primary targets of collectivism today are non-state actors and its purpose is to maintain the privileged position and status (and accompanying powers, resources, and opportunities) afforded to hierarchically ranking states.⁴³

Mimicry

Stratification is not solely reproduced from above- the operation of power in international society is not so inefficient. Order is also in part reproduced from below through mimicry, an act that involves two social claims at once by an aspirant, inferiorly positioned actor: demonstrating likeness with superiorly ranked actors while concurrently differentiating itself from other inferiors. While the well-developed literature on mimicry historically need not be rehearsed here, the sketches below highlight that (i) just as mimicry was a key dimension of aspirants' bids to improve their standing in the past, so

too is it instrumental to INGOs seeking position in the management of international society today; and (ii) that because of the deferential nature of mimicry, those seeking improved position nonetheless contribute to the reproduction of status quo order.⁴⁴

In seeking position in international society, aspirant state actors engaged in a sort of geopolitical mimicry, largely involving the acquisition of territory by force so as to copy the violent, imperial behaviour of European great powers. As Shogo Suzuki relates in reference to Keal, “[a]s the guardians of the Society are great powers, this often means that aspirant members have to recast themselves ‘in the image of the dominant power or group of powers at the time’”.⁴⁵ The acquisition of colonies was a particularly conspicuous means of signalling belonging.⁴⁶ Such mimicry was observed in the campaigns of Russia and Japan, particularly as both not only wanted to gain recognition as civilised states, but also wanted to do so claiming the status of a great power.⁴⁷ For Neumann, Russia was the constant ‘peripheral presence’ during the formation and calcification of Western European international society.⁴⁸ As Russia was held as being a barbaric (or, at best, semi-civilised) entity, much of its campaign for recognition involved overcoming this ascription. As Neumann details, a significant motivation behind Muscovy’s campaign against the Mongols and the conquest of their territory was to overcome this dual identity of being neither quite civilised nor quite great.⁴⁹ Russia’s desire to acquire Poland at the Congress of Vienna followed the same logic, ‘Poland would be Russia’s foot in the European door’.⁵⁰ As Talleyrand wrote to Louis XVIII quoting a Russian minister, ‘They [Europe] wanted to make an Asiatic power of us [Russia]; Poland will make us European’.⁵¹ Japan’s imperial activities were likewise moves in this game, particularly as a reaction to the ascription of racial inferiority. Japan pointed to Korea as a barbaric country and claimed that it could save Korea from being an uncivilised vassal of a barbaric China.⁵² Japan cast itself in a paternalist role in South East Asia as a civilised leader whom could bring the others towards civilisation.⁵³ The ‘foremost intellectual leader of the era’, Fukuzawa Yukichi’s “Theory of Leaving Asia” argued that, if Japan did not wish to be mixed with other underdeveloped countries, Japan must forget Asia’.⁵⁴

Such mimicry involved more than just taking territory by force- *how* that force was exercised also mattered. Violence was to be applied within the bounds of international law, thus signalling adherence to one of international society’s primary institutions and an explicit criterion of the Standard.⁵⁵ As the West was not convinced that Japan that would actually honour the Treaty of Geneva in warfare, despite signing it in 1886 as a signal of their adoption of Western civilisation,⁵⁶ deliberate steps were taken to ensure compliance, ‘[i]n their victorious war against China, Japanese soldiers were instructed to observe international law faithfully and to avoid any conduct that might invite accusations of violating these codes’.⁵⁷

The adoption of particular diplomatic, legal, trade, and cultural institutions and practices were equally critical to meeting the Standard. Events during and resulting from Japan’s Iwakura Mission exemplify such mimicry, with its ultimate aim to affect ‘the perceptions of the Japanese leaders concerning international politics and *on how Japan should act in order to enter the European club of international society*’.⁵⁸ Mimicry began almost immediately- Iwakura’s delegation ditched their kimonos upon arriving in the US and Iwakura himself cut off his traditional topknot, having being criticised for adhering to Japanese style.⁵⁹ Back in Japan, this mimicry involved the formal reorganisation of

domestic institutions, structures, and informal cultural practices, such as with the introduction of the European honorific social order with the abolition of clans, and the introduction of Western entertainment and sartorial habits.⁶⁰ Particularly useful for social differentiation, Japan's mimicry also manifested in their relations with outsiders. Japan began concluding treaty negotiations with Korea and China in English, and in accordance with European international law.⁶¹

Contemporary mimicry

Non-state actors do much the same today in order to achieve and maintain position in governance circles. As above, a particular set of IOs and IFIs successfully comport themselves as the 'functional equivalents' of the G20's state members. To note that the likes of the IMF and the WTO are institutionally alike state bureaucracies and that their representatives look and behave like state representatives is relatively intuitive and obvious (though is nonetheless relevant). INGOs who have successfully achieved degrees of inclusion in the G20 process likewise engage in mimicry to demonstrate their worthiness of inclusion in the management of international society. As with the included IOs and IFIs, INGOs particularly mimic states in terms of how they organise and manage their engagement in the summitry process.⁶² While a popular conception of civil society at international summits is as protestors, such an image captures a very narrow band of activity and almost entirely misses the substantive interaction between governments and INGOs.⁶³

The large, Western development-focused INGOs who have had the most substantive inclusion in the G20 – the likes of the Gates Foundation, Oxfam, World Vision, and ONE – are illustrative. Such advocacy organisations particularly rely on their experts and policy units that match – if not supersede on specific issues – those of state ministries. INGOs are staffed by the same cadre of people whom one might otherwise expect to find working in government and are tasked with the same sort of policy development aims.⁶⁴ As one INGO representative put it, 'the aim for civil society organisations is to figure out how to prove our relevancy, we need to show that we have something useful to say'.⁶⁵ Included INGOs – as well as the included IOs and IFIs – also communicate their relevancy and import to other non-state actors, particularly those without any degree of inclusion, acting as sort of intermediaries between the state members of the G20 and the panoply of actors outright excluded. Such behaviour is dressed up most authoritatively when these non-state actors use the briefing rooms in the summit's media centre – otherwise reserved for member states – to update the assembled media and civil society representatives accredited with access to the media centre (but not to the summit itself) on the summit's proceedings and – most critically of all – their roles in advancing their agendas.

Sartorially mimicking the established habitus of state representatives, INGO representatives also tend to wear formal suits at summits and in preparatory meetings, matching the garb of their governmental interlocutors and distancing themselves from the habit of protestors on the street. Particularly telling, representatives tend to dress informally in the days leading up to the summit, swapping casual clothing for dark suits only once the leaders arrive and the summit becomes formally constituted. While not as dramatic as

cutting off a topknot and ditching a kimono, an analogous move is being made. All of this is critical for overcoming the collectivist stereotype that lumps them together with those seen as inferiorly positioned- most notably, protest groups.

Indeed, protestors play a key role in the social differentiation process that is part and parcel of INGO's mimicry, in the same way that Japan in part used social differentiation as part of its bid to 'leave Asia'. Indeed, this is critical for reproducing the stratification within civil society, wherein professional, advocacy INGOs have the ranking positions. That it is the ranking INGOs who 'play the game' set by the included states reveals the extent to which the superior position of those states in the overall international domain affects multiple hierarchies, in this case conditioning that of the relative positions of civil society actors.

Mimicry is thus a key dimension of successful INGOs' bids to achieve inclusion in the summitry process, remaining as much a dimension in seeking position in global governance today as it was for those seeking position in international society in the past. Mimicry entrenches the values, beliefs, norms, practices, and institutions of the superiorly positioned, irrespective of actor-type. As concerns state actors, this perpetuated the ideational dimensions of Western European international society, safeguarding it in the face of the ascendancy of non-Western actors during its globalisation. In contemporary international politics, it continues to safeguard superiorly positioned sovereign states, their institutions, and practices, despite the necessary inclusion of non-Western and non-state actors in global governance. In both contexts, the *status quo* is threatened by those seeking to play a greater role in international society's management, but in both instances order is actually in part maintained by the very ways that those outsiders seek proverbial seats at the table.

Conclusion

I have shown how using the theoretical lens of social closure to examine international stratification reveals that (i) the actions of superiorly and inferiorly positioned actors serve to reproduce and perpetuate a stratified order; and (ii) that those actions are fundamentally the same in today's global governance context as they were in international society's past. Collectivism from above continues to reinforce hierarchy and safeguard the superiorly positioned, while mimicry continues to do so from below. This twin dynamic is baked into the constitution of international social order efficiently protecting the positions – and ensuing advantages – of ranking actors. Despite the opening of international society to include more actors and more *types* of actors in its management, social closure broadly protects the status quo.

The major implication that stems from this is that the particular set of actors advantaged in/by the management of international society today are not broadly dissimilar from those in the past. Historically, international social closure ensured that even a globalised international society remained normatively and institutionally Western. It also ensured that even as non-Western entrants were granted nominative equality in international society, they lacked privileged position in its status hierarchy. The twin dynamic of social closure stratified international society so as to protect the positions and dispositions of its Western incumbents. It does the same in the contemporary context. While

global governance involves multiple types of actors and multiple hierarchies, closure continues to protect the positions and privileges of those superiorly ranked, be it sovereign states' primacy over non-sovereign actors, or large INGOs – who have proven their functional value to ranking states – over less well resourced and organised civil society actors.

This holds true when we look at the 'bottom-up' dimension of closure. Because stratification is reproduced in part from below, even as new actors – state and non-state alike – come to play greater roles in the management of international society, ranking Western actors remain advantaged, particularly owing to the role of mimicry. International society and the means by which it is managed remain Western- institutionally, normatively, and procedurally. Despite its globalisation, international society's 'charmed circle' and the dynamics that govern inclusion within it thus endure.

What has been presented here also has theoretical implications for closure theory in IR overall, prompting possible revisions of its development and application. First, social closure has been largely articulated in terms of exclusion and inclusion- with relatively clear and absolute lines of social division being drawn. The preceding analysis has demonstrated how the prism of closure can be used to capture less rigidly defined social orderings, with the reproduction of stratification in a more fluid international domain, not just in the formation and maintenance of distinct groups. This overcomes an outdated understanding of international society as a club with distinct borders, as was traditionally articulated by Bull and Watson, fitting with more recent conceptualisations, as articulated by Keene, as well as Dunne and Reus-Smit.⁶⁶ With respect to closure theory, doing so overcomes a limitation of my earlier, more rigid account of social closure's operation in international society.⁶⁷

Extant closure theory also omits stratification within groups. As concerns international society as a club of sovereign states, it too readily obscures the stratification that persisted even after the recognition of new members in the club, though this has been corrected in the latest generation of scholarship on international society's globalisation.⁶⁸ Related, closure theory has been introduced into IR only as concerns state actors, leaving non-state actors out of the picture. What has been presented here captures a multiplicity of hierarchies between and amongst different categories of actor, particularly within governance groups.⁶⁹ An associated, third amendment concerns the statist ontology with which closure theory has so far been applied in historical IR, conditioning us to miss the fact that a significant social division between the inside and outside of international society had been put in place even before we come to look at the Standard of Civilisation's effects on international social order. Such a perspective causes us to miss closure dynamics that rendered international society a states-only club in the first place.

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Notes

1. By the management of international society, I mean participation in the setting of the values and priorities – and contributing to their achievement – towards which international society directs collective effort.
2. On closure theory, see: Frank Parkin, *Marxism and Class Theory: A Bourgeois Critique* (Tavistock, 1979); Raymond Murphy, *Social Closure: The Theory of Monopolization and Exclusion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988); Randall Collins, *Credential Society: An Historical Sociology of Education and Stratification* (New York, NY: Academic Press Inc, 1979). On closure theory in IR see: Edward Keene, ‘Social Status, Social Closure and the Idea of Europe as a ‘Normative Power’’, *European Journal of International Relations*, 19, 2013, pp. 939–56; Ayşe Zarakol, *After Defeat: How the East Learned to Live with the West* (Cambridge ; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Marina G. Duque, ‘Recognizing International Status: A Relational Approach’, *International Studies Quarterly*, 62(3), 2018, pp. 577–92.
3. Meghan McConaughy, Paul Musgrave and Daniel H. Nexon, ‘Beyond Anarchy: Logics of Political Organization, Hierarchy, and International Structure’, *International Theory*, 10(2), 2018, pp. 181–218; Carsten-Andreas Shultz, ‘Hierarchy Salience and Social Action: Disentangling Class, Status, and Authority in World Politics,’ *International Relations*, 33(1), 2019, pp. 88–108; Edward Keene, ‘The Standard of ‘Civilisation’ the Expansion Thesis and the 19th-Century International Social Space’, *Millennium*, 42(3), 2014, pp. 651–73. On stratification generally, see: Wendy Bottero, *Stratification: Social Division and Inequality* (London: Routledge, 2005).
4. McConaughy, Musgrave, and Nexon, ‘Beyond Anarchy’; Shultz, ‘Hierarchy Salience and Social Action: Disentangling Class, Status, and Authority in World Politics’; Janice Bially Mattern and Ayşe Zarakol, ‘Hierarchies in World Politics’, *International Organization*, 70(3), 2016, pp. 623–54. I note, though, that McConaughy *et al.* specifically focus on *authority* relationships, while others are broader in their approach.
5. Keene, ‘The Standard of ‘Civilisation’ the Expansion Thesis and the 19th-Century International Social Space’; Shultz, ‘Hierarchy Salience and Social Action: Disentangling Class, Status, and Authority in World Politics’; Max Weber, ‘Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology’, in Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (eds) (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1922).
6. John Scott, *Stratification and Power: Structures of Class, Status and Command* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), 1; Keene, ‘The Standard of ‘Civilisation’ the Expansion Thesis and the 19th-Century International Social Space’, p. 653.
7. Duque, ‘Recognizing International Status’, p. 583.
8. Ayşe Zarakol, ‘Theorising Hierarchies: An Introduction’, in Ayşe Zarakol (ed.), *Hierarchies in World Politics* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2017), p. 4.
9. Carsten-Andreas Schulz, ‘Hierarchy Salience and Social Action: Disentangling Class, Status, and Authority in World Politics’, *International Relations*, 33(1), 2019, pp. 88–108.
10. Keene, ‘The Standard of ‘Civilisation’ the Expansion Thesis and the 19th-Century International Social Space’, p. 653. On civil society and the G20, see: Tom Chodor, ‘The G20’s Engagement with Civil Society: Participation without Contestation?’, *Globalizations*, 17(6), 2020, pp. 903–16; Jonathan Luckhurst, ‘Governance Networks Shaping the G20 Through Inclusivity Practices’, *South African Journal of International Affairs*, 26(4), 2019, pp. 521–47.
11. Following Dunne and Reus-Smit (2017), I prefer ‘globalisation’ to capture the processes and trajectory of international society’s development. Though, as international society’s globalisation continues, I thus use the problematic – though still most commonly used – ‘expansion’ to refer to its historical development.

12. See especially: Keene, 'Social Status, Social Closure and the Idea of Europe as a 'Normative Power''; Keene, 'The Standard of 'Civilisation' the Expansion Thesis and the 19th-Century International Social Space'; Barry Buzan and Mathias Albert, 'Differentiation: A Sociological Approach to International Relations Theory', *European Journal of International Relations*, 16(3), 2010, pp. 315–37; Mathias Albert, Barry Buzan and Michael Zürn (eds), *Bringing Sociology to International Relations: World Politics as Differentiation Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Vincent Pouliot, *International Pecking Orders: The Politics and Practice of Multilateral Diplomacy*, 2016; Mattern and Zarakol, 'Hierarchies in World Politics'; Ayşe Zarakol (ed.), *Hierarchies in World Politics* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Ann E. Towns and Bahar Rumelili, 'Taking the Pressure: Unpacking the Relation between Norms, Social Hierarchies, and Social Pressures on States', *European Journal of International Relations*, 23(4), 2017, pp. 756–79; Ann E. Towns, *Women and States: Norms and Hierarchies in International Society* (Cambridge ; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
13. Keene, 'Social Status, Social Closure and the Idea of Europe as a 'Normative Power''; Keene, 'The Standard of 'Civilisation' the Expansion Thesis and the 19th-Century International Social Space'; Zarakol, *After Defeat*, pp. 51–3; Shultz, 'Hierarchy Salience and Social Action: Disentangling Class, Status, and Authority in World Politics,;'; Duque, 'Recognizing International Status'; Tristen Naylor, *Social Closure and International Society: Status Groups from the Family of Civilised Nations to the G20* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2019).
14. Ann E. Towns, 'Norms and Social Hierarchies: Understanding International Policy Diffusion 'From Below,' *International Organization*, 66(2), 2012, pp. 179–209; Towns, *Women and States*; Towns and Rumelili, 'Taking the Pressure'.
15. For canonical accounts on the Standard see: Hedley Bull and Adam Watson (eds), *The Expansion of International Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984); Adam Watson, *The Evolution of International Society: A Comparative Historical Analysis* (London: Routledge, 1992); Gerrit W. Gong, *The Standard of Civilization in International Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984). For particularly noteworthy reforms on the traditional account, see: *Millennium Special Issue on 'Rethinking the Standard(s) of Civilisation(s) in International Relations'*, 42(3), 2014; Tim Dunne and Christian Reus-Smit, 'The Globalization of International Society', in *The Globalization of International Society* (Oxford: OUP Oxford, 2017), pp. 18–40; Shogo Suzuki, *Civilization and Empire: China and Japan's Encounter with European International Society*, Reprint edition (Routledge, 2013); Zarakol, *After Defeat*; Tomoko T. Okagaki, *The Logic of Conformity: Japan's Entry into International Society* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013); Edward Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society: Grotius, Colonialism, and World Order* (Cambridge University Press, 2002).
16. As the G20 is the empirically novel context for this investigation, greater emphasis is given to it in the empirical dimension of the argument.
17. Government of Argentina, 'How Does the G20 Work?', 10 November 2017, available at: <https://www.g20.org/en/g20/how-it-works> (accessed 29 October, 2018).
18. Leonardo Martinez-Diaz and Ngaire Woods, *Networks of Influence?: Developing Countries in a Networked Global Order* (Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2009); Andrew F. Cooper, Jorge Heine, and Ramesh Thakur, 'Introduction: The Challenges of 21st Century Diplomacy', in Andrew F. Cooper, Jorge Heine and Ramesh Thakur (eds), *Oxford Handbook of Modern Diplomacy*, 1st ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 1–34; Jennifer Mitzen, *Power in Concert: The Nineteenth-Century Origins of Global Governance* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2013); Nick Bisley, *Great Powers in the Changing International Order*, 1st ed. (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2012).

19. See: Sarah Stroup and Wendy Wong, 'Leading Authority as Hierarchy among INGOs', in Ayse Zarakol (ed.), *Hierarchies in World Politics* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 175–97.
20. Pace Philip S Golub, 'From the New International Economic Order to the G20: How the 'Global South' Is Restructuring World Capitalism from Within', *Third World Quarterly*, 34(6), 2013, p. 1002. For a similar conclusion by way of a different route, see: Andrew F Cooper and Vincent Pouliot, 'How Much Is Global Governance Changing? The G20 as International Practice', *Cooperation and Conflict*, 50(3), 2015, pp. 334–50.
21. Keene, 'Social Status, Social Closure and the Idea of Europe as a 'Normative Power'', p. 949.
22. Keene, 'Social Status, Social Closure and the Idea of Europe as a 'Normative Power'', p. 949; Parkin, *Marxism and Class Theory: A Bourgeois Critique*, p. 68.
23. For canonical accounts see: Bull and Adam Watson, 'The Expansion of International Society'; Watson, 'The Evolution of International Society'; Gong, 'The Standard of Civilization in International Society'.
24. Gong, 'The Standard of Civilization in International Society'.
25. Peter Haldén, 'Republican Continuities in the Vienna Order and the German Confederation (1815–66)', *European Journal of International Relations*, 19(2), 2013, pp. 281–304; Keene, 'Social Status, Social Closure and the Idea of Europe as a 'Normative Power''.
26. Paul Keal, *European Conquest and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: The Moral Backwardness of International Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 83. See also: David Lake, 'The New Sovereignty in International Relations', *International Studies Review*, 5, 2003, pp. 303–23; Iver B. Neumann, 'Entry into International Society Reconceptualised: The Case of Russia,' *Review of International Studies*, 37(2), 2011, pp. 463–84; R. J. Vincent, *Human Rights and International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 106; Neta Crawford, 'Native Americans and the Making of International Society', in Tim Dunne and Christian Reus-Smit (eds), *The Globalization of International Society* (Oxford, United Kingdom: OUP Oxford, 2017), pp. 102–24.
27. Gerry Simpson, *Great Powers and Outlaw States: Unequal Sovereigns in the International Legal Order* (Cambridge; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 84.
28. Okagaki, *The Logic of Conformity*, pp. 97–101, p. 106.
29. Antony Anghie, 'Finding the Peripheries: Sovereignty and Colonialism in Nineteenth-Century International Law', *Harvard International Law Journal*, 40(1), 1999, p. 36. I would go one step further than Anghie to suggest that it was not broadly European states, but a particular set of ranking Western European states.
30. Gong, 'The Standard of Civilization in International Society', p. 67; Sally Marks, *The Ebbing of European Ascendancy: An International History of the World 1914-1945* (London ; New York, NY: Hodder Arnold, 2002), pp. 213–5; S. Prakash Sinha, 'Perspective of the Newly Independent States on the Binding Quality of International Law', *International & Comparative Law Quarterly*, 14(1), 1965, pp. 121–31.
31. For comprehensive backgrounders on the G20 see: Andrew F. Cooper and Ramesh Thakur, *The Group of Twenty* (Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY: Routledge, 2013); Peter I. Hajnal, *The G20: Evolution, Interrelationship, Documentation*, New ed. (Burlington: Ashgate, 2014); John J. Kirton, *G20 Governance for a Globalized World* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2013).
32. Paul Martin, former Canadian Prime Minister and Finance Minister, interview with author, August 23, 2012; Lawrence Summers, Former US Treasury Secretary, interview with author, October 23, 2012. Additionally, G7 members were automatically included.
33. Florian Kobele, EU Sous-Sherpa, interview with author, February 13, 2012; Gabrielle Ramos, OECD Sherpa and Chief of Staff, interview with author, April 20, 2012.
34. Gabrielle Ramos, April 20, 2012.

35. Shogo Suzuki, 'Seeking 'Legitimate' Great Power Status in Post-Cold War International Society: China's and Japan's Participation in UNPKO', *International Relations*, 22(1), 2008, pp. 45–63; Zarakol, *After Defeat*.
36. Rebecca Adler-Nissen, 'Stigma Management in International Relations: Transgressive Identities, Norms, and Order in International Society', *International Organization*, 68(1), 2014, pp. 143–76.
37. Processes – it should be noted – that have no discernable effect on summit outcomes.
38. Miguel Reynoso, Director General, CSO Liaison Office, Government of Mexico, interview with author, June 19, 2012.
39. Miguel Reynoso, interview with author, June 19, 2012.
40. Joanna Rea, Head of Policy and Public Affairs, Bond UK, interview with author, 9 February 2012.
41. Luckhurst, 'Governance Networks Shaping the G20 Through Inclusivity Practices'; Chodor, 'The G20's Engagement with Civil Society: Participation without Contestation?'; John J. Kirton and Peter I. Hajnal, *Sustainability, Civil Society and International Governance: Local, North American, and Global Contributions* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006); Peter Hajnal, 'Can Civil Society Influence G8 Accountability?', CSGR Working Paper Series No. #235/07 (Warwick: Warwick University, 2007).
42. Keene, 'Social Status, Social Closure and the Idea of Europe as a 'Normative Power.'"
43. C.f. Brett Bowden, 'To Rethink Standards of Civilisation, Start with the End', *Millennium*, 42(3), 2014, pp. 614–31.
44. Alastair I. Johnston, *Social States: China in International Institutions, 1980-2000* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008). See also: Homi Bhabha, 'Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse', *October*, 28, 1984, pp. 125–33; Suzuki, *Civilization and Empire*; Okagaki, *The Logic of Conformity*; Zarakol, *After Defeat*; Neumann, 'Entry into International Society Reconceptualised'; Gong, *The Standard of Civilization in International Society*; Yannis Stivachtis, 'Democracy: The Highest Stage of Civilized Statehood', *Global Dialogue*, 8(3–4), 2006, pp. 87–99.
45. Keal, *European Conquest and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, 72; Suzuki, *Civilization and Empire*, 12.
46. M. S. Anderson, *The Ascendancy of Europe, 1815-1914*, 3rd ed. (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2003), p. 277.
47. C.f. Zarakol, *After Defeat*, p. 164.
48. Neumann, 'Entry into International Society Reconceptualised', p. 148.
49. Neumann, pp. 481–3.
50. Andreas Osiander, 'The States System of Europe, 1640-1990: Peacemaking and the Conditions of International Stability (Clarendon Press, 1994)', p. 181.
51. Osiander, p. 181.
52. C.f. Hidemi Suganami, 'Japan's Entry in International Society', in *The Expansion of International Society*, in Hedley Bull and Adam Watson (ed.) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), pp. 185–99.
53. c.f. Okagaki, 'The Logic of Conformity', p. 73; Suzuki, 'Civilization and Empire', p. 176.
54. Okagaki, 'The Logic of Conformity', p. 78.
55. Japan conspicuously portrayed itself as conducting itself justly in the Sino-Japanese War while accusing China of not adhering to the rules. c.f. Okagaki, 'The Logic of Conformity'; Suzuki, 'Civilization and Empire'.
56. Okagaki, 'The Logic of Conformity', p. 86.
57. Okagaki, pp. 86–7. The Treaty of Geneva (1864) was the precursor to the Geneva Conventions, comprising its first ten articles. Japan did likewise in the Russo-Japanese war, see: Gong,

- The Standard of Civilization in International Society*, p. 183; M. B. Jansen, ed of *Civilization in International Society* (ed.), *Political Development in Modern Japan: Studies in the Modernization of Japan*, New ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974), p. 186.
58. Okagaki, *The Logic of Conformity*, p. 66. (Emphasis mine).
59. Okagaki, p. 108.
60. In Russia, the adoption of knighthoods mimicked the European honorific social order.
61. Alexis Dudden, 'Japan's Engagement with International Terms', in Lydia H. Liu (ed.), *Tokens of Exchange: The Problem of Translation in Global Circulations* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), p. 165.
62. C.f. Stephen Hopgood, *Keepers of the Flame: Understanding Amnesty International*, 1 ed. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006).
63. C.f. Andrew F. Cooper, 'Civil Society Relationships with the G20: An Extension of the G8 Template or Distinctive Pattern of Engagement?', *Global Society*, 27(2), 2013, pp. 179–200.
64. C.f. Rikha Sharma Rani, 'The Management Set', *BRIGHT Magazine* (blog), 2 March 2016, available at: <https://brightthemag.com/the-management-set-699e186469c3#.uquc27mab> (accessed 7 November 2020).
65. Joanna Rea, interview with author, 9 February 2012.
66. Keene, 'The Standard of 'Civilisation' the Expansion Thesis and the 19th-Century International Social Space'; Dunne and Reus-Smit, 'The Globalization of International Society'.
67. Naylor, 'Social Closure and International Society'.
68. See especially: Dunne and Reus-Smit, 'The Globalization of International Society'; Zarakol, *After Defeat*; Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society: Grotius, Colonialism, and World Order*; Towns, *Women and States*.
69. See: Zarakol, 'Hierarchies in World Politics'.

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