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Group Constitution and Social Mobility in International Society

Tristen Naylor, Visiting Doctoral Student to Sciences Po for three months (March-May 2014), from the DPIR, University of Oxford.

Introduction

This working paper examines the implications of different status groups – or, clubs – within international society being constituted by different institutions of the society of states.¹ Examining the 18th and 19th century Family of Civilised Nations, the 19th century Great Powers’ club, and the contemporary G7/8 and G20, I argue that a different institution of international society constitutes each of these clubs and that this has significant implications for the social mobility of actors within each of these groups. I argue that mobility is surprisingly more restricted in G-summitry than in the other clubs, despite G-summitry being an ostensibly more open, inclusive, and just governance group. As such, it is more difficult for an actor to improve its status position in G-summitry than in the other clubs and, conversely, it is easier for an actor to maintain its status position in the face of a myriad of factors that would suggest that its status position ought to be on the decline. Furthermore, I argue that because status positions can be maintained by a reliance on the institutional norms, practices, and rules of a club’s constitutive institution – what I define as ‘mobility dampeners’ – status may be denied (and, maintained) by more furtive means than outright conflict.

Constitutive Institutions

It is necessary to highlight that a different institution of international society constitutes each of the clubs under examination here.² What follows is a discussion of the English School’s conception of international institutions and their relevance to the clubs under consideration here. One of the key differences between the clubs under examination here and the way the status game is played in and around them is that each is constituted by different institutions of international society.³ What is significant about the following discussion is that it dramatically reforms social closure theory, demonstrating how the institutional contexts within which the closure game is played matter.⁴ Closure is not just achieved through strategies, but also through the norms, values, and practices that imbedded within the field in which the closure game is played.

English School scholarship does not tend to problematise group constitution and yet the very heart of the paradigm’s understandings of the effects of institutions suggests that it should be. To build upon Buzan (who builds upon Manning), the institutions of international society define in the game of states “what the pieces are and how the game is played.”⁵ More than this, though, institutions not only constitute actors but also the social categories through which they arrange themselves. That is, the institutions of international society constitute the status groups through which actors signal their identity as well as constituting the actors themselves.⁶

¹ I am focusing only on the Western European international society given that it is this international society that has become universal.

² For the classical formulation of international society’s institutions, see Bull 1977; for a more up-to-date take, see Buzan 2004.

³ See also: Neumann 2008, 148; Zarakol 2010, 197

⁴ For classical discussions of closure theory, see: Parkin 1979, Murphy 1988.

⁵ Buzan 2004, 162

⁶ Buzan 2004, 167

This is significant because different institutions imbue that which it constitutes with different norms, values, and practices which means that the way the closure game is played in each club is different because the field upon which it is played is fundamentally different. It is this dimension of club constitution that sets the status game in G-summitry apart from the other clubs more than any other because its constitution as a club of the diplomatic institution means that particular norms are in play that render G-summitry's closure system more closed than other clubs. As is argued throughout this thesis, while the diplomatic institution renders G-summitry apparently more open because it permits the inclusion of non-state actors into the game, it is only ostensibly so as the norms of the institution allow for closure practices that actually entrench the *status quo* order.

Institutions structure order. Order expressed as rank is defined by international society's institutions as they define what types of actors are permitted to have any sort of standing in a society. That is, they define who counts. Order expressed as norms, values, and practices is structured by defining how those who count relate to one another, particularly as concerns how those actors preserve their society. To use Bull's classical formulation of the institutions as an example, the Balance of Power's function has been to prevent the emergence of world empire and domination as well as provide the conditions through which the other institutions can operate.⁷ International law has provided the organising principle of sovereignty, states the rules of coexistence of sovereign states, and mobilises compliance with international rules.⁸ Diplomacy contributes through facilitating communication, negotiating agreements, gathering information, reducing friction, and symbolically reproducing the society.⁹ War has determined the shape of the international system, provided the impetus for maintaining the system, and provided a means of enforcing international rules.¹⁰ Finally, Great Powers have provided a means of resolving conflict, containing conflict, and promoting the survival of international society itself.¹¹ Later generations of English School scholars have added to the list of institutions and their functions, including the market, nationalism, human rights, and environmentalism.¹² Keene notes that the Standard of Civilisation has also been added to this list on the basis of its function in determining the membership of International Society, as "the key institution for differentiating political communities in the global international system and mediating their 'entry' into international society."¹³ Each institution thus makes a different contribution to maintaining the same order, though in varying degrees depending on the type of society and the particularly historical context, while reinforcing one another.¹⁴ This is

⁷ Bull 1977, 102

⁸ Bull 1977, 134–6

⁹ Bull 1977, 163–6

¹⁰ Bull 1977, 180–1

¹¹ Bull 1977, 199–200. Of course, later generations of English School scholars have reformed Bull's formulation considerably and often. See especially: Buzan 2004

¹² Buzan 2004, 187

¹³ Keene 2014

¹⁴ Buzan 2004

significant for understanding closure because the norms, ideas, values, beliefs, and practices of a club's constitutive institution condition how closure works in that club.

Clubs can be products of different institutions in that their identity, practices, norms, values, and beliefs have their origins in those of a particular institution (or combination of institutions). If we accept the addition of the Standard to the list of international society's institutions then it is easy to identify the institutional roots of two of the three status groups under examination here. G-summitry's institutional roots are not so straightforward as it is not in and of itself an institution of international society. The institutions of war and international law can be discounted as possibilities for being G-summitry's constitutive institutions as the club shares little in the way of norms, values, beliefs, and practices with these institutions. This is not to say that issues of war and peace have not been discussed by the club - they have since its very beginning - but rather that the club is not a venue that actors deem to be legitimate for making authoritative decisions concerning international security. As concerns international law, the club has played a role in perpetuating the organising principle of sovereignty - indeed, this is a central claim of this thesis - but this is not an explicitly defined or intended function of the club. Moreover, the club itself does not even have standing in international law.

The Balance of Power and Great Powers institutions can also be ruled out as G-summitry's constitutive institutions for a number of reasons. First, the configuration of the club is not like any that are products of such institutions, such as the UN Security Council or the Concert of Europe. G-summitry is by no means a concert. This is particularly so in the case of the G7 as it includes non-great powers and as it does not include all the great powers.¹⁵ For most of the club's existence its composition excluded powers of sufficient size and geopolitical import that they would be expected to be included, namely Russia and China, while including states that can make no reasonable claim to be worth of that status, namely Canada and Italy. Additionally, the club's creators never saw the group as a club of great powers, but rather as a club of major industrialised economies (and, later with the G20, a group of economically systematically significant countries). Additionally, the club failed to get the consent of lesser, excluded powers, which is necessary in a great power management system, and the club's focus at its founding was economics rather than geopolitics.¹⁶

If we accept the market/trade as an institution it appears to be a likely candidate for the constitutive institution of G-summitry given the club's core focus on economic and financial matters.¹⁷ The thematic focus of a club should not be confused with the club's underlying constitution, however. What is important to focus on is *how* the club operates rather than whatever particular task it happens to be doing. This seems to be what delineates War and the Balance of Power as institutions in Bull's formulation.¹⁸ Both institutions are primarily tasked with

¹⁵ Kirton 1989. This second dimension does not hold in the case of the G20, but the first does.

¹⁶ At least, ostensibly.

¹⁷ Buzan 2004, 183-5

¹⁸ I share the position of later English School scholars who have subsumed one into the other, though refer to Bull's formulation here for sake of ease of argument.

maintaining the shape of the international system, though achieve it in very different ways. The market can thus also be ruled out as the constitutive institution of G-summitry.

G-summitry is best understood as a construction of the diplomatic institution. G-summitry displays all the hallmarks of the diplomatic institution. First, one of the defining characteristics of the group is the emphasis on personal contact and frank, informal exchange. The public face of diplomacy is characterised by much formality, most often articulated as protocol. The private face of diplomacy, in sharp contrast, is very much the opposite. Indeed, what was interesting about people's reactions to Wikileaks' release of secret diplomatic cables was not so much the content of the messages, but the informality through which their content was communicated. Parris and Bryson's books presenting British diplomats' valedictory messages are intended as comedy but equally reveal this point- in private the conduct of diplomacy is very informal.¹⁹ Informality was at the very heart of what French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing had envisaged for the group, given its centrality in the club's immediate antecedent, The Library Group.²⁰ Indeed, Giscard vehemently objected to the entry of any new members on the grounds that it would reduce the ability of the group to conduct itself informally.²¹ In objecting to the inclusion of the EC he argued, "that further additions were likely to destroy the informality of these meetings."²² So centrally important is frank exchange to the operation of the club that when the G20 was established at the ministerial level, Paul Martin ensured that the practice of interacting in frank, informal exchanges would be adopted by all the new entrants to the club. Observing that "certain members had some difficulty adjusting to the G7's tradition of informal, unscripted exchanges with all members at equal footing", Martin started the first G20 meeting by inviting the South African finance minister, Trevor Manuel, and Lawrence Summers to "have at it on the issue of agricultural subsidies."²³ Martin's intent was to show the new members how to conduct themselves in the meetings, to demonstrate that frank, informal exchange was not just allowed, but was the rule. This is so for Sherpas as much as it is for leaders. Sherpas repeatedly stressed the importance of informality in their contact with one another.²⁴ As British Sherpa Lord Armstrong related, Sherpas "meet often enough to develop a camaraderie and a network of personal friendships which persists even when they cease to be Sherpas."²⁵ Indeed, G-summitry was created through personal diplomacy. It required personal diplomacy on the part of George Shultz to meet with Wilson, Giscard, and Schmidt to get the idea off the ground. Thereafter, it was the diplomats in the invited countries that shepherded the idea to fruition; and, conversely, it was through diplomatic channels that the excluded states protested their status as outsiders.²⁶

¹⁹ Parris 2011; Parris 2012

²⁰ See below for further details of The Library Group

²¹ Archival document: Kissinger and Sonnenfeldt 1975

²² Archival documents: Callaghan and Giscard 1977; "Record of a Telephone Conversation Between Chancellor Schmidt and the Prime Minister on Wednesday 16 March 1977" 1977; UK Government 1977

²³ Martin 2013

²⁴ Interviews: Harder 2012; Smith 2011a

²⁵ Armstrong 1991, 43

²⁶ Archival documents: Greenwald 1975; Hillebrand 1975b; Wright 1976

G-summitry is not a single, annual meeting of leaders; it is a continuous diplomatic process. Cardinal Richelieu is axiomatically marked as being the progenitor of “continuous diplomacy” which has even since been at the heart of the diplomatic institution’s practice.²⁷ G-summitry is not limited to one (or two) summit(s) per year as they are popularly portrayed. Rather, G-summitry is a year-round process that involves constant interaction between leaders, their Sherpas, ministers, and their foreign and finance departments.²⁸ Third, the symbolic emphasis of the summit is placed on a textual output, just as it is in diplomacy. The summit communiqués are the pinnacle of the preparatory process. The communiqué is the outcome that all stakeholders are trying to influence, the dimension of the summit that involves the most intense negotiation by the Sherpas, and is the artefact that is used by outsiders as a means to gain inclusion. Indeed, that the focus of the entire summitry process is a negotiation over the communiqué further emphasises the extent to which G-summitry is a diplomatic institution- the process itself is an exercise of one of the essential elements of diplomacy.²⁹

Mobility Dampeners

G-summitry is thus a normative context – or, field – that is significantly different from its historical antecedents. The contemporary governance context is a highly institutionalised one within which actors’ interdependence is mediated via diplomacy.³⁰ As is detailed in the following chapter, this removes more assertive, geopolitical status claiming strategies from the closure game as they are rendered both more difficult to carry out and less legitimate even if they are.³¹ The second consequence of this is that diplomatic norms enter the status game which has a profound effect on how the status game is played.

As G-summitry is constituted by the diplomatic institution, the norms, values, beliefs, and practices that are central to diplomacy serve as the foundation of the club’s operation and it is these norms that inject mobility dampeners into the club. Specifically, it is the diplomatic principles of pragmatism and precedence that bolster closure in this way. Pragmatism privileges concerns for expediency over principles of fairness or justice while precedence gives privileged standing to incumbents to the detriment of newcomers. In the case of the G20, the principle of representative governance is also central to its construction. That is, the G20 is not just a club of systematically significant economies but also is a club whose membership was crafted to ensure just geographic and cultural representation in order for the club to be able to claim the representative legitimacy that the G7/8 lacks. In attempting to be a more representatively legitimate institution, however, the G20 ends up actually being a more unfair closure system because of the twin effects of precedence and pragmatism. Thus,

²⁷ Berridge, Keens-Soper, and Otte 2001

²⁸ And many more departments too as the club’s agenda grows, including labour, environment, and international development ministries.

²⁹ Jönsson and Hall 2005; Nicolson 1988

³⁰ Ikenberry 2009; Keohane and Nye 1977; Sharp 2009

³¹ Russia’s recent annexation of Crimea illustrates this point well. While such a move was possible it has not been accepted by the international community as being legitimate. Furthermore, it as is detailed in the following chapter, it has prompted its effective suspension from the G8.

despite well-intentioned principles guiding its composition, the institutions which shape its identity and operation as a club actually render G-summitry as more closed than its antecedents.

Unevenly applied credentialism is the other way in which mobility dampening renders G-summitry more closed than the Family of Civilised Nations and the Great Powers club. Similarly to the principle of representative legitimacy, the notion of testing the credentials of club entrants is well-intentioned and serves the goal of ensuring that the club's composition is made up of only those actors that are worthy of inclusion. Credentialism, in other words, is a meritocratic means of governing closure. In the case of G-summitry, however, credentials are unevenly tested. The credentials of potential entrants to the club are tested while the credentials of those inside the club are not. Outsiders can be denied entry because of insufficient credentials but insiders cannot be kicked out of the club for lacking those same credentials. Both dimensions of social inertia caused by mobility dampeners may be observed here: at once the upward mobility of outsiders is prevented by testing their suitability for the club, while, concurrently, the downward mobility of insiders is prevented by not testing their suitability. Actors could be - and were - expelled from the Family of Civilised Nations and the Great Powers clubs based on their credentials. In G-summitry, however, they cannot be.

Pragmatism

Pragmatism guided the club's membership composition from the very beginnings of G-summitry. The purpose of the brief history below is to highlight the extent to which G-summitry is a diplomatic institution in which pragmatism is central in two ways: in guiding the foundation of the club and in justifying the exclusion of outsiders from the club. Pragmatism is thus a central dimension of the construction of the club, the erection of barriers to divide insiders and outsiders, and the dampening of mobility in the contemporary international status group.

The G7 was envisaged as being small and exclusive so as to help ensure that the group's meetings were intimate and informal. The rationale guiding this imperative was that the fewer the number of people in the room, the more likely that frank, informal exchanges could be used to break political deadlocks. This was what prompted US Treasury Secretary George Shultz to first bring together the individuals whom would later be key in founding the club. The standard account of the G7's development puts its roots in "The Library Group," describing the G7 as the elevation of this group to the leaders' level.³² The Library Group was composed of the UK, US, French, German, and Japanese finance ministers who met in the early 1970's in response to the oil crisis and problems with the international monetary system. As Chapter Seven details, the group quickly took on a political dimension and thus is properly understood as not just being an economic club, but as political one too. Indeed, it is important to recognise that the club formed not just in the midst of economic upheaval, but also against a volatile backdrop including détente in the Cold War and the end of the decolonisation processes. That

³² See, for example: Putnam and Bayne 1984

said, the group first came together in 1972 as a result of an effort lead by Shultz to fix the international monetary system. The Smithsonian Agreement, which was signed in December 1971 and amended the Bretton Woods system of fixed exchange rates, had failed to work as the signatories had hoped, with further devaluation of the US dollar against European currencies and readjustment of the value of the US dollar against gold required. Prior to an IMF G20 meeting³³ Shultz invited the finance ministers of Germany, France, UK, and Japan to come to his office one at a time to read a speech that he had prepared about the problems with the current system in an effort to forge some sort of common position before meeting with the larger, “unwieldy” IMF G20.³⁴ This group continued to meet on the sides of IMF meetings as well as at other times.³⁵ They met often enough and was small enough that the members became friends who, in the words of Shultz, “could call on one another... we could trust each other, we were honest and candid.”³⁶

In July 1975 Giscard mused about the idea of a summit of “industrialised nations” to discuss economic and monetary affairs.³⁷ Giscard suggested a summit in Paris in the autumn amongst France, UK, US, West Germany, Italy, and “other industrialised nations” which would not reach any formal agreements, but would focus on frank, informal exchanges over the course of a week of private talks.³⁸ From the moment that the possibility of a summit was raised those who thought they ought to be included began lobbying for an invitation, most notably Canada and Italy.³⁹ Outsiders seeking inclusion continued for a number of years as the summit became an annual event, with appeals made by smaller Europeans including Luxembourg, Belgium, Ireland, and Denmark; as well as Australia.⁴⁰ There are two important things to note: first, those seeking inclusion did so by mobilising their diplomatic corps (as is explored further in the following chapter), thus lending weight to the argument here that G-summitry is a derivative of the diplomatic institution. Outsiders did not appeal to international law or threaten to wage war; rather, they mobilised their diplomats.⁴¹

Second, the club repeatedly denied entry to outsiders on the grounds that doing so would jeopardise the informality and intimacy of the summit. The club excluded outsiders in order to keep the group small and

³³ Not to be confused with the current G20.

³⁴ Interview: Shultz 2012

³⁵ Interview: Shultz 2012

³⁶ Interview: Shultz 2012

³⁷ Archival document: UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office 1976. It’s unclear when exactly the interview occurred. Bayne refers to the idea having been reported in the press on the 8th and 9th of July, 1975 (Bayne 1975), later references to the interview state that it was on the 9th of July (UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office 1976). Unfortunately, the original transcript of the interview has been lost.

³⁸ Archival document: Ingersoll 1975

³⁹ Archival documents: Volpe 1975a; Volpe 1975b; Kissinger 1975d; “Memorandum of Conversation” 1975; Morris and Kissinger 1975; Morris 1975; Volpe 1975c; Hillebrand 1975a; Kissinger 1975f; Sonnenfeldt and Ingersoll 1975b; Sonnenfeldt and Ingersoll 1975a; Kissinger 1975e; Hodgson 1975; Kissinger 1975g; Kissinger 1975c; Kissinger 1975a; Kissinger 1975b; Volpe 1975d; Volpe 1975e; Greenwald 1975; Kissinger and Sonnenfeldt 1975; Porter 1975a; Porter 1975b; Hillebrand 1975b; Rush 1975; Callaghan 1976; Ford 1976a; Ford 1976b; Ford 1976c; Ford 1976d; Ford 1976e; Enders 1976

⁴⁰ On exclusion of smaller Europeans: Wright 1976; on exclusion of Australia: Percival 1976; Hunt 1978; Rose 1979; Government of Australia 1976; Government of Australia 1975

⁴¹ Luxembourg went so far as to send a formal diplomatic *demarche* to the US to protest their exclusion. Archival document: Wright 1976

therefore effective. Giscard was particularly adamant on not letting anyone but the original G5 countries into the group on these grounds. This was most clearly articulated in objecting to Canada's inclusion wherein he stated that increased membership would reduce the informality and flexibility and would increase the difficulty in "declining the claims to participation from still additional countries; especially in Europe, and from international organisations like the OECD."⁴² Similarly, in objecting to the participation of the European Community Giscard likewise argued "that further additions were likely to destroy the informality of these meetings."⁴³ It is worthwhile to note here that Giscard not only objected on the grounds that the inclusion of more actors in this particular case would threaten the efficacy of the meetings, but also objected to the possibility of a non-state actor having the same standing as a sovereign state, threatening that "[i]f the view was taken that the Commission had to attend, by right, he would not himself go."⁴⁴

The pragmatic imperative to keep summits small in order to remain effective has endured throughout G-summitry's history. Sherpas repeatedly brought up the extent to which summits had expanded far beyond the small gatherings they were envisaged to be.⁴⁵ The 2009 L'Aquila G8 summit was popularly regarded as being the most extreme example of this, being described as "an absolute circus" with the G8, the O5, 13 other guest countries, ten IOs, and civil society invited.⁴⁶ The Canadian government, who hosted the following summit, purposely designed their Muskoka summit to halt this trend and "strip the summit back to what it was."⁴⁷ For this reason the Canadian government invited only the G8 heads of government (and the EU) to the summit, much angering those actors whom had become accustomed to inclusion, such as representatives of the UN, IFIs, and civil society. The continued imperative to keep the club small remains as it was in 1975- to ensure that the club is effective. This is particularly important for the G7/8 who lack representative legitimacy. It is only by being effective that they can maintain some - however marginal - claim to their special status.⁴⁸ Sherpas often stated that the biggest threat to the G20's survival is that it will be unable to reach meaningful consensus decisions because the club has become too large.⁴⁹ Much contemporary scholarship on the G20 also focuses on this trade-off between the size of the membership and the legitimacy that it confers and the efficacy of the group.⁵⁰

The point to emphasise here is that pragmatism is a guiding principle for determining the composition of the G-summitry club. Outsiders, despite a potential ability to functionally contribute to the club and/or be potentially worthy of inclusion by virtue of achieved characteristics, are excluded on these grounds. This has the twin

⁴² Archival document: Kissinger and Sonnenfeldt 1975

⁴³ Archival documents: Callaghan and Giscard 1977; "Record of a Telephone Conversation Between Chancellor Schmidt and the Prime Minister on Wednesday 16 March 1977" 1977; UK Government 1977

⁴⁴ Archival document: UK Government 1977

⁴⁵ Interviews: Allan 2012; Bayne 2012; Carin 2012; Cunliffe 2013; Edwards 2012; Fowler 2012; Harder 2012; Khatchadourian 2012; Kitajima 2012; Ramos 2012; Smith 2011b

⁴⁶ Interviews: Burnley 2012; Edwards 2012; Khatchadourian 2012; Rea 2012

⁴⁷ Interviews: Edwards 2012; Khatchadourian 2012

⁴⁸ Interviews: Rea 2012

⁴⁹ Interviews: Edwards 2012; Harder 2012; Smith 2011b

⁵⁰ See especially: Cooper and Bradford 2010; Cooper 2012; Martin 2013

effect of maintaining the status of insiders as (i) no additional members means that the prestige derived from inclusion in the group is not diluted by more actors being in the group and as (ii) the continuance of a smaller group increases the likelihood of the club being effective and therefore maintaining its claim to the right of special status. Conversely, this pragmatic exclusion prevents the upward mobility of outsiders whom otherwise might be expected to be in the club.

This is distinctly different from the Family of Civilised Nations and the Great Powers club as in neither of these clubs was exclusion of an actor whom otherwise was judged to be suitable for inclusion denied entry for reasons of expediency. Indeed, it would not make sense for these clubs to exclude on such grounds by virtue of the functions that these institutions of International Society are responsible for. It does not make sense for International Society to exclude those whom are judged to be worthy of inclusion and as such could contribute to the society. The same is the case for the Great Powers club, it does not make sense - in fact, it is counterproductive - to exclude a power of sufficient import as doing so prevents the club from effectively managing international affairs. As a diplomatic institution, however, G-summitry does close off opportunities for rising (or risen) outsiders as, in the case of this club, the larger its composition, the potentially less effective it is at achieving its function.

Precedence

The second mobility dampener in G-summitry that renders it a more closed group than previous clubs is the force of the diplomatic norm of precedence. Much of the status quo composition of the club can be explained as a result of the conservative nature of diplomacy in which precedence is a central norm for ensuring continuity and order. In terms of continuity, diplomacy is an inherently conservative practice, concerned with maintaining the status-quo, unless ordered otherwise by political masters.⁵¹ In terms of order, precedence governs protocol in all manners of diplomatic practice, such as in the identification of the doyen of a diplomatic corps - the longest serving diplomat in any given capital (that is, whomever happened to arrive in that capital before any of his or her peers). Precedence guides order in a landscape where, at least formally, all diplomats are meant to be equal in standing as representatives of sovereign states. It is the conservative dimension of precedence that is of most relevance to the present discussion concerning closure.

Precedence is a useful means of exclusion because it depersonalises the decision to exclude from any particular other, placing the responsibility for exclusion on an external norm rather than as an authoritative decision made by an individual. Questions of closure can be politically costly for a host leader, owing to the offence taken by the excluded. Giscard's decision to exclude Canada from Rambouillet was damaging to the relationship between France and Canada, and between Giscard and Trudeau personally.⁵² Precedence as a norm provides a means to avoid the personal political cost of excluding others. Korea's expulsion of the Netherlands from the G20 as an invited guest was thus convenient for Sarkozy who would be the next summit host. Sarkozy was

⁵¹ Neumann 2007; Neumann 2012

⁵² Interview: Bayne 2012

under pressure to reduce the number of Europeans around the table in order to increase the legitimacy of the group. He did not want to have to be the one to take the decision to exclude a fellow European owing to the difficulties this could yield within the EU.⁵³ Korea's decision to exclude the Netherlands from the Seoul summit, in a status-motivated move that would display Korea's standing as a power capable of "shooting a European", provided Sarkozy with the precedence not to include the Netherlands. For this reason France did not come to the Netherlands' rescue in Sherpa meetings to argue for its continued inclusion as an invitee.⁵⁴

The same holds true for any contemplation of major revisions to the club's membership. One of the G20's founders, Paul Martin, described it as a "Pandora's box that no leader in their right mind would try to open."⁵⁵ Revisiting membership subjects the club to bids for inclusion that it likely will have to turn down and thus cause offence to the excluded which comes with political costs. It is less costly to appeal to precedence. It is for this reason that the composition of the G20 did not change when it was elevated to the leaders' level in 2008.⁵⁶ This holds for the mass addition of invitees to the summit too. As a prime example, in crafting the invitation list for the Kananaskis summit in 2002 the Canadian hosts had to decide which African countries to include as invitees. The Canadian Sherpa, Robert Fowler, decided to rely on precedence as the strategy to craft the invitation list so as to cause minimal offence to the excluded and provide a clear rationale with which to confront bids for inclusion.⁵⁷ He decided to invite the New Economic Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) framers.⁵⁸ Despite "lobbying from all of Africa and the rest of the G7 to let others in" the Canadians held the line along this rationale.⁵⁹

More significantly, precedence allows for actors whose relative standing in international affairs has fallen to remain in the club. There are more Europeans in the club than states from any other region. At first glance this seems to suggest collectivist closure but, as above, it is not. Rather, the continued plurality of Europeans in the group is better explained as being a result of the club being governed by individualist closure wherein the in-group, composed disproportionately by those who first industrialised and grew their economies to be larger and more systematically significant than others, has found a way to protect its status position through means other than closing itself off on the basis of collectivist attributes. The mechanism through which this is achieved is the norm that once an actor is in the club, it cannot be kicked out as precedence is a governing norm. Despite the original club members no longer being undisputedly larger economies than all other states, they remain in the top-tier group. G7 members have not maintained the relative economic power that they enjoyed in 1975. Within only five years both China and Brazil had displaced Italy to make it ranked eighth in 1980.⁶⁰ By the time the G20 was established at the ministerial level in 1999, India had achieved the rank of being the seventh

⁵³ Interview: Anonymous Sherpa

⁵⁴ Interview: Anonymous Sherpa

⁵⁵ Interview: Martin 2012

⁵⁶ Interviews: Martin 2012; Summers 2012

⁵⁷ Interview: Fowler 2012

⁵⁸ Interview: Fowler 2012

⁵⁹ Interview: Fowler: Fowler 2012. Only Algeria "played a spoiler role" (Fowler 2012)

⁶⁰ Canada was never ranked as a top seven economy.

largest economy.⁶¹ Despite club members' declining relative power their status was unaffected. This was particularly so for Italy and Canada. They were able to maintain their G7 status because of the central importance of precedence.⁶² As a result, having gained inclusion they could not lose it; by extension, having gained status, they could not lose it.

The same could be said of actors whose continued presence in the club detracts from the legitimacy of the club, as is the case with the predominance of Western states in G-summitry. Whether the argument for their unsuitability for membership is articulated in power-political terms of no longer meeting the economic size criterion or in normative terms of unfairly over-representing the developed, industrialised West, the point remains the same that precedence prevents incumbents from being kicked out of the club. This is especially disadvantageous to outsiders who want into the club but are in the same geographic region as the plurality of insiders- namely, other Europeans. This is a significant observation. The club is reluctant to include other Europeans as doing so detracts from the club's already shaky legitimacy. The club could fend off critiques of its illegitimacy by virtue of its unrepresentativeness by reducing the number of Europeans in the group but it is unable to do so by virtue of precedence. As such, the best it can do is not increase the number of Europeans in the club, an imperative which drove closure in the early years of the G7 when smaller European states were clamouring for inclusion and in the formation of G20 at the ministerial level and in its elevation to the leaders' level.⁶³ States who otherwise meet individualist criteria for inclusion - whether it be economic size in the G7 or systematic significance in the G20 - are thus denied entry because of the twin effect of precedence and the need for representative legitimacy. The Czech Republic, Switzerland, Poland, Spain, and the Netherlands all sought inclusion in the club but were excluded because of the combined effect of geography and precedence. The latter three, in terms of economic rank, would be expected to be in the club if economic heft were the sole inclusion criterion. This is significant. The norm requiring global governance groups to have fair geographic representation actually serves to exclude actors whom might otherwise be included in a purely individualist system which lacks a precedence as a mobility dampener. This is also a significant observation for IR theory as it undercuts simplistic, Eurocentric analyses that delineate the system's broad status groups as being the West versus the rest.

To a degree the effect of precedence may be observed in the Great Powers club wherein falling or fallen powers' status is secured, at least temporarily, by remaining in the club despite having lost the material basis that warrants its inclusion. Austria-Hungary after the Seven Years War and Britain and France after 1945 serve as good examples.⁶⁴ As is detailed in Chapter Seven, Volgy *et al.* describe this as the "halo effect."⁶⁵

⁶¹ When the G20 was elevated to the leaders' level in 2008 India was ranked 4th

⁶² Not only was Canada never ranked as a top seven economy, Italy has not been worthy of the distinction since 1980.

⁶³ Interviews: Anonymous Sherpa 1.1; Martin 2012; Summers 2012; Archival sources: Wright 1976; Hillebrand 1975b; Morris 1975

⁶⁴ Scott 2006; Wight 1946, 50. Bridge and Bullen contend that Spain and Sweden "clung tenaciously to great-power status long after they had ceased to possess its attributes" in the 20th century (Bridge and Bullen 2005, 1). While they may have

Precedence in the group may thus allow for exit from the club to be softened. Note, though, that there is still an exit, however delayed. This is not the case in G-summitry. It is possible to point to the Netherlands' eventual exclusion from the G20 as an incidence of an actor being removed from the club. The Netherlands, though, were never fully included as a member but rather marginally kept on the periphery of the club as an "invited guest". That they were no longer extended an invitation after the Toronto G20 summit in 2010 is not so much an exit from club, but rather best understood as a denial of entry.

Precedence is thus one significant way in which, in the absence of collectivist safe-guards to potential losses of status, insiders protect their positions.⁶⁶ The system is thus not purely individualist and meritocratic. However, it is not purely so because of collectivist elements but because diplomatic norms underpin its operation in the absence of any formally set rules.⁶⁷ Members cannot be kicked out. This marks G-summitry as being distinctly different from the great powers club and the family of civilised nations as states could be kicked out of those groups. In this way there is less social mobility in contemporary international society than it was in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Credentialism

Social theorists, Collins chief among them, have pointed to credentialism as a significant way of ordering individualist societies- something that makes them notably distinct from collectivist societies.⁶⁸ Credentials are achieved characteristics which signal the competence of an actor. Testing the credentials of an actor is a meritocratic way of ascertaining the suitability of an actor for inclusion in a group. The most evident domestic analogy is the use of academic degrees to indicate the suitability of an individual for employment.

Credentialism features in each of the international status groups under consideration here as credentials signal the suitability of an actor for admission to the club. Much of the content discussed in the following chapter may be read as the strategies by which outsiders achieve and signal these credentials. That credentialism is so present in international society is itself further evidence of one of this chapter's general claims that the closure game is actually a fairly open one in international society. However, credentialism does not work in the same way in all of the clubs. The way credentialism works in G-summitry renders it less fair to outsiders than it does in the family of civilised nations and the Great Powers clubs. Hence, from this perspective too, G-summitry is surprisingly less open than the other clubs.

The Standard of Civilisation, as above, served as a clear list of the credentials that an outsider needed to achieve in order to gain entry into International Society. What is significant about the Standard in the context of the

claimed the status, it is highly questionable as to whether or not other great power or lesser powers recognised them as such.

⁶⁵ Volgy et al. 2011, 7

⁶⁶ In addition to the other mobility dampeners discussed in this chapter, see also the discussion of how insiders create substrata to maintain their relative position in chapter 5.

⁶⁷ That is, not as concerns state actors. It is not purely so for non-state actors because of collectivist elements.

⁶⁸ See: Collins 1979; Parkin 1979, 54–60

current argument is that it was applied both to the club's insiders and outsiders.⁶⁹ While the notion of the Family of Civilised Nations ceased and its accompanying Standard of Civilisation was no longer in use by the 1920's, implicitly the key dimensions of the Standard still governed a division amongst states such that an actor could be kicked out of the club if it failed to uphold the membership criteria. Bolshevik Russia serves as a prime example. In an earlier period when the Standard was in use, the removal of smaller Germanic and Italian principalities from international society denotes their failure to meet the legal-collectivist criteria for inclusion.⁷⁰

Likewise, states that no longer met the criteria for the status as a Great Power were kicked out of the club. "A great power", Wight remarks, "does not die in its bed."⁷¹ Great powers have their membership credentials tested in war. This is not surprising given that the closure criteria for the Great Powers club is so predominantly based on military power.⁷² A failure to meet the criteria almost necessarily means a violent loss of status. The loss of status, like its achievement, is often a gradual process such that pointing to a specific event or battle cannot denote the moment of an actor's exit from the club but may serve as a useful proxy.⁷³ Status may be lost by defeat - such as Sweden's loss to Russia in the Great Northern War in 1721 or Spain's loss to Napoleon in the Peninsula War in 1808 - or by Pyrrhic victory - such as Holland's defeat of Louis IX's France in 1672 or Britain's defeat of Nazi Germany in 1945 - after which the victor becomes dependent on other, greater powers.⁷⁴ Conversely, a successful 'display' of a power's credentials in conflict either verifies its position as a Great Power or, as is examined in further depth in the following chapter, confirms a state's entry into the club. The relatively modest contribution of Austria-Hungary to fighting the Boxer Rebellion exemplifies two aspects of credentialism in the great powers club. First, that Austria-Hungary contributed military assets at all signifies the importance of contributing just to stay in the club. Austria-Hungary had no real interest in China and comparatively few resources to send, but did so anyway because doing so signalled their status. Second, as a falling power, contributing to the club's cause kept the state in the club, thus dampening its exit from the group.

In G-summitry, credentialism is exercised in a particular way that serves as a means of protecting the status positions of existing members. First, it is only the credentials of aspirant members that are tested. Existing members' credentials are not re-tested. This uneven application of credentialism acts as a mobility dampener, because their suitability is not re-tested, they cannot be kicked out. Credentialism in G-summitry is thus distinctly different than it is in the other clubs. As above, the relative decline of the economic importance of G7 club members, particularly Canada and Italy, has not resulted in their dismissal from the club. The force of precedence is here again evident and reveals how G-summitry, as a diplomatic institution, is relatively closed

⁶⁹ Though not necessarily equally- insiders were held to a lesser standard than outsiders. The general point holds, however, as insiders were nonetheless still measured against a standard and failing to meet it meant the possibility of being kicked out of the club.

⁷⁰ c.f. Fazal 2007; Spruyt 1996

⁷¹ Wight 1946, 47; See also: Bridge and Bullen 2005, 7; Levy 1984; Scott 2006

⁷² Levy 1984, 24; Modelski 1972, 150

⁷³ Levy 1984, 24; see also: Volgy et al. 2011; Volgy et al. 2014

⁷⁴ Wight 1946, 48. Wight notes that Great Powers may also temporarily lose status after war.

by virtue of this norm. Precedence prevents the incumbents' credentials from being tested. From the beginning of G-summitry Italy had been regarded as not contributing much to the club.⁷⁵ Unlike in the Great Powers club, though, a lack of contribution does not provide the grounds for the country's dismissal because as an incumbent insider in this particular club, this is irrelevant- the credentials of insiders are not tested. In contrast, as the above cases of Malaysia, Indonesia, and Nigeria exemplify, and as the following chapter does too, the credentials of ascendant outsiders are scrutinised considerably and a failure to meet the entry criteria means exclusion from the club. This uneven application of credentialism in G-summitry thus dampens mobility in both directions. It prevents the falling powers from losing status because their credentials are not tested as they otherwise were in the great powers system. It conversely limits or slows the rise of ascendant actors by scrutinising their credentials.

Russia's nominal expulsion from the G8 in March 2014 as a censure of its annexation of Crimea provides an opportunity to test one of this thesis' main claims, that G-summitry is a relatively closed club because, unlike in the Family of Civilised Nations or the club of Great Powers, members cannot be kicked out. Russia, however, was not kicked out. G7 members met in The Hague on the side-lines of the Third Nuclear Security Summit to discuss Russia's possible expulsion.⁷⁶ In advance of the meeting, Canada was most vocal about expelling Russia from the club, with Italy taking the opposing position.⁷⁷ The language in the sixth paragraph of the meeting's communiqué is the relevant one for our purposes here.⁷⁸ The G7 neither suspended nor expelled Russia from the G8 but rather suspended themselves from the G8, "[w]e will suspend our participation in the G-8 until Russia changes course and the environment comes back to where the G-8 is able to have a meaningful discussion..." Not only was Russia not kicked out of the club, in the same sentence as the G7's self-suspension was announced, the intention to meet in the future as a G8 is expressed. As one G7 foreign minister stated, "[f]or the time being we will keep the suspension but in the long term we want Russia to be part of the group."⁷⁹ This is significant. Not only was Russia neither suspended nor expelled, there was no intended permanency to the act of the G7 suspending themselves. The club, at best, took a hiatus from itself.⁸⁰

The most significant theoretical insight to draw from this case is to note that Russia's credentials for membership were tested by the rest of the club, but its failure to meet this standard had no serious consequences for its inclusion. The G7 stated in their Hague communiqué that "This Group came together because of shared beliefs and shared responsibilities. Russia's actions in recent weeks are not consistent with

⁷⁵ Archival document: Hunt 1976

⁷⁶ Russian annexation of territory has been relevant to discussions of its suitability for membership since inclusion was first discussed by the club. Japan originally opposed Russian inclusion because of its annexation of the Kuril Islands (Oxenstierna 1993, 18)

⁷⁷ Canadian and Associated Press 2014; Goodman 2014; ITAR-TASS News Agency 2014; Lunn 2014; Parry 2014

⁷⁸ See: President, European Council 2014

⁷⁹ McGregor and Fontanella-Khan 2014

⁸⁰ This case presents us with a solid means to test the validity of a major claim of this thesis. Should upper tier of G-summitry return to being a G7 with the G8 never meeting again, the argument that G-summitry is a less fair closure system because of its unevenly applied collectivism would be disproved.

them” thus testing Russia’s suitability for inclusion against the principles and purpose of the club.⁸¹ This case thus lends considerable weight to this thesis’ claim concerning unevenly applied credentialism. Despite a military invasion of sovereign state and the annexation of territory “flagrantly violating international law and the order the G7 has helped to build since the end of the Cold War”, as President Obama’s Deputy National Security Advisor Ben Rhodes characterised it, Russia was not kicked out of the club.⁸² It is difficult to imagine another scenario, short of a declaration of all-out offensive war that would identify a state as failing to be suitable for membership. Russia was given a ‘time out’ but remained a member. This is the only time in its history that the club considered expelling a member and it has proven to be unable to do it. Just as the failure of G8 members to remain the ranking global economies fails to have the effect of removing them from the club, so too does the failure of a member to continue to abide by values of the club fail to result in the loss of their membership.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov captured the essence of how membership in the club works in response to the suspension, “[t]he G8 is an informal club. No one hands out membership cards and no one can be kicked out of it.”⁸³ Lavrov here eludes to the G8’s institutional underpinnings as a diplomatic club, with an emphasis on informality and precedence. This move isolated, however temporarily, Russia from the rest of the group; however, by virtue of the way that closure works in G-summitry, distinct from its historical antecedents, the group could not expel a member, but could only have members suspend themselves. It may come across as trivial to distinguish between the expulsion of others and self-suspension given that the outcome is effectively the same, but from a closure perspective it is a significant distinction for analysing the membership dynamics of any club. G-summitry is atypical of other clubs given that it is a product of the diplomatic institution of International Society and social mobility is significantly restricted in it as a result. In this case, errant members cannot be stripped of their status, thus dampening downward mobility.

The opportunities for the testing of credentials in G-summitry are fewer than in the other clubs, thus further narrowing the chances of outsiders to attempt entry into the club and thereby further marking out G-summitry as being more closed. International conferences are typically used as proxies for identifying an actor’s membership status in International Society and wars have served the same purpose with respect to the Great Powers club. Entries and exits from clubs are properly understood as more gradual processes but conferences and wars are usual means of pinpointing events in which actors can demonstrate their suitability - or lack thereof - for inclusion.⁸⁴ In the case of International Society, however, participation in international conferences is not the sole opportunity for an actor to demonstrate its suitability owing to the fact that there are more dimensions to the standard than just diplomatic engagement. Japan’s ‘just’ conduct and victory in the Sino-Japanese War and the Russo-Japanese War just as well signals the state’s suitability for entry as does the

⁸¹ President, European Council 2014

⁸² McGregor and Fontanella-Khan 2014

⁸³ De Clercq 2014

⁸⁴ c.f. Levy 1984, 24; Neumann 2011, 466

Ottoman Empire's participation in the Treaty of Paris in 1856.⁸⁵ Different dimensions of an actor's adherence to the standard could be tested in the different institutions, be it, as examples, war or diplomacy. There are thus multiple avenues through which an actor may have its credentials tested to enter International Society owing to the multidimensional nature of the Standard. Moreover, there are fewer temporal constraints on when an actor could seek admission owing to the fact that there are multiple forums demonstrating suitability and as the relative frequency of some of these events, such as international conferences, is greater.⁸⁶

This is less the case with the great powers and G-summitry. There are fewer opportunities for testing credentials in the Great Powers club because the credentials required for inclusion are so predominantly focused on military power and so, as above, credentials are only tested in war or military interventions. Thus it is only at times of war that the recognition of Great Power status can be won or lost and therefore there are fewer opportunities for club membership to be achieved (or lost). A power may rise or decline in interim periods but it is only in war that its suitability is actually tested. The composition of the Great Powers club may then change depending on whether or not there is a change in the distribution of power as a result of conflict, with those included in the club being those powers of sufficient size that as a concert they can provide the club's functional goal in international society of providing a relatively stable political order.

With economic power being the predominant criterion for inclusion in G-summitry, it is similarly the case that there are comparatively fewer opportunities for inclusion as it is only at significant historical moments where the club is unable to accomplish its functional aim of ensuring international economic stability that the club is amenable to change. Even at those historical moments where club membership may be revisited, it is done so in a way that is less open than the great powers club because incumbency is protected by the norm of precedence. G-summitry has thus changed very little since its inception in 1975- surprisingly little given the breath of changes internationally in the ensuing forty years.

Mobility dampeners are thus means other than barriers of maintaining a *status quo*, relying on the normative context to achieve closure. They are not overt means of exclusion; rather, they are a means of achieving closure by stealth.

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⁸⁵ Clark 1989, 95; Gong 1984, 32 and 107; Holbraad 1970, 2; Okagaki 2013, 86; Neumann and Welsh 1991, 343.

⁸⁶ Though, not necessarily often.

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