

goes, but I wished for a bit more clarity on the part of the author and less hedging on the theoretical implications of the mixed results of his empirical chapters.

Kapstein uses two main theoretical vehicles to drive his study: the *grievance theory* literature from the field of comparative politics and what he elaborates here as a *reformist intervention strategy* that largely incorporates ideas from the field of US foreign policy analysis. One of his most important theoretical contributions is showing that US policy makers during the Cold War “turned to grievance theory as a framework that shaped their causal beliefs” (p. 53). The main idea behind this theory was that poverty and economic inequality led to political instability, which in turn rendered Third World countries vulnerable to Soviet and communist propaganda and even to potential communist-leaning revolutions. Therefore, the argument went, in addition to the provision of military aid such as that called for in the famous Truman Doctrine strategy, US government officials believed “domestic reforms could counteract the communist threat” (p. 52). This belief led to the adoption of what Kapstein labels “reformist intervention.”

In delineating the strategy of reformist intervention, the author follows established work by Macdonald in defining it as “the active attempt by one state to alter the domestic politics of other states... [by] the manipulation of the cost-benefit calculations of decision-makers in target states in a future direction preferred by decision-makers in the recipient state” (p. 73). Kapstein refines this definition slightly by broadening the targets of intervention to encompass the country’s “elites” inside and outside government. Unlike earlier literature that focused on whether the host state is democratic or authoritarian, this book instead focuses on the “economic structure of elites” to determine whether the donor state adopting reformist intervention succeeds in its goals. The reforms analyzed in this study are limited to land reforms; more specifically, the author emphasizes *redistributive* policies as a key theoretical variable.

How well do the case studies support the book’s hypotheses? Kapstein examines land reform efforts across four eras and places: early Cold War efforts in Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and Italy; later counterinsurgency-focused efforts in the Philippines and South Vietnam; the mix of land reform and revolutions in Latin America from 1950s through the 1980s; and the particular case of Iran in the 1950s and 1960s during the Shah’s ill-fated efforts at economic reform. The overall evidence is admittedly mixed (pp. 249–50), but the author is convincing in arguing that at least the main theoretical proposition is well supported by the empirical analysis: “where elite assets were highly concentrated in land and incomes were thus dependent upon agricultural rents, as in Vietnam, El Salvador, and Guatemala...reform was more difficult to implement and the process more violent than in countries where elite assets were more diversified, as in Venezuela and Taiwan” (p. 251). Having said that, the book would

be even more convincing if Kapstein would have structured the case studies more similarly and been more explicit in the research design concerning how he intended to examine the theory’s predictions in each of the cases.

Policy relevance and outlining policy recommendations for current and future US government attempts at “reformist intervention” are key parts of this book, as the author makes clear on more than one occasion. He contends that, to maintain or restore the post–World War II liberal world order, the United States will have to try to continue to “win hearts and minds,” and therefore the connection between “economic reform” and “national security” will remain a key pillar of US foreign aid policy (p. 247). To make such efforts more successful than was the case in the recent ill-fated efforts at reform in Afghanistan and Iraq, Kapstein points to three conclusions: first, he warns that reform can be destabilizing; second, expertise and the time horizons of policy makers are crucial; and third, the coherence of the policy is very important. Although these three principles may seem quite intuitive and noncontroversial for most government and policy experts, the author nevertheless makes a useful contribution to the policy literature by providing further empirical evidence to support them.

But is US foreign policy post-COVID really going back to an era of concern with funding and promoting internal economic reform in faraway places, as was the case during the Cold War and the War on Terror, in the name of anticommunism or antiterrorism, respectively? While a few expert voices in Washington might call for it, it seems fairly unlikely that either the American public, Congress, or most of the members of the Biden administration would push US priorities in that direction. The main grand strategic challenge faced by Washington is the rise of high-end military, economic, and technological competition with China, but even a “new Cold War” between the US and China is not likely to spur the kind of interest in reforming poor client states, as did the original Cold War against the USSR. Therefore, although this book certainly makes a valuable contribution to understanding the mechanisms when such reformist strategies might be effective, the demand and appetite for such interventions on Washington’s part in the coming future are likely to be very limited.

### **The Closure of the International System: How Institutions Create Political Equalities and Hierarchies.**

By Lora Anne Viola. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020. 273p. \$99.99 cloth.

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In *The Closure of the International System*, Lora Anne Viola grapples with the contradiction between two views among

international relations (IR) scholars. On the one hand, the liberal approach to international institutions posits that the international system has become more inclusive, democratic, and egalitarian in the twentieth century with the globalization of international institutions and the spread of liberal democratic norms. On the other hand, an emerging literature in the field treats hierarchy as a key ordering principle of international politics. Rather than attempt to adjudicate between these views, *The Closure of the International System* proposes that equality and inequality represent two sides of the same coin.

To resolve the contradiction between hierarchy and sovereign equality, Viola turns to the Weberian concept of social closure. Weber defines social closure as the establishment of a boundary between a group and outsiders based on the group's distinctiveness, which serves to justify the group's exclusive access to valuable resources and opportunities (Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, 1922). Viola astutely applies this concept to international relations, arguing that the formation of the modern international system narrowed the range of legitimate political actors. Whereas different types of actors enjoyed political authority during the system's early stages, Viola notes, the sovereign state acquired unparalleled legitimacy over time. From a closure perspective, equality implies inequality: deciding which actors count as equals requires deciding which actors do not.

In chapters 1 and 2, Viola introduces her closure thesis and applies it to the formation of the modern international system. In particular, she combines the idea of social closure with "a materialist interpretation that understands institutions as providers of club goods" (p. 24). This argument involves two claims. First, international institutions provide goods to a limited set of actors, because only those political units recognized as independent enjoy legal personhood in international law and have access to system benefits like loans or disaster relief. Second, expanding the availability of such goods decreases the benefits for existing members, because membership heterogeneity increases transaction costs and creates demands for redistribution. Given this incentive structure, Viola claims, powerful members respond to pressures for inclusion by gradating rights within the club of sovereign states.

Based on this theoretical foundation, chapters 3–5 examine the formation of the international system since the fifteenth century. Viola aptly describes her approach here as "tak[ing] a bird's eye view of politics in favor of teasing out a deeper structural logic" (p. 34). Each chapter focuses on a key institution that constitutes system membership: diplomacy, international law, and international organizations. Whereas IR scholars usually see each of these institutions as conducive to cooperation and democratization, Viola argues that they serve as mechanisms of closure that distinguish between those who count as equals

(European territorial states) and those that do not (non-state actors and non-European actors). Even as the system's institutions expanded to include non-European polities in the twentieth century, Viola notes, recognition hinged on assimilation to European standards, and sovereign equality did not entail procedural equality or equal voice.

Chapter 3 highlights the diplomatic practices that constitute system membership. Whereas IR scholars typically see diplomacy as a tool of mediation following the dissolution of Christendom, Viola argues that diplomacy introduced selectivity to transboundary relations. Multiple types of principals and agents engaged in political communication after the fall of the Roman Empire, but the emergence of diplomatic practices narrowed down the range of legitimate participants in transboundary communication. Over time, those actors recognized as legitimate formed an exclusive, homogeneous group that enjoys privileged access to exclusive domestic jurisdiction, transboundary communication, and governance institutions. Diplomacy thus helped produce the system's political boundaries, rather than merely serving to mediate among existing units.

In chapter 4, Viola argues that international law serves as a closure mechanism that delimits the range of political actors with legitimate access to the rights to self-rule, make treaties, and wage war. Examining the work of early jurists since the seventeenth century, Viola contends that powerful actors use international law to justify two forms of domination: exclusion, whereby only the territorial state is recognized as entitled to rights, and assimilation, whereby system membership depends on conformity to European standards. Because international law establishes equality among European territorial states by defining sovereignty in their image, it provides a basis for the inequality of other actors that are vulnerable to colonialism and intervention.

In chapter 5, Viola argues that powerful states control access to membership in international organizations (IOs) and its benefits. In response to pressures for membership expansion, core states adopt three strategies to protect their authority and interests: conditioning membership on assimilation into the European nation-state paradigm; allocating governance authority unequally among members, as in the creation of the UN Security Council; and creating new, exclusive organizations like the G20. To Viola, system expansion implied closure: as the number of IOs and states increased, the sovereign state became more narrowly defined based on the self-determination principle, to the detriment of alternative organizational forms. Moreover, newcomers' demands for institutional recognition were met with new forms of exclusion.

The goal of her book, Viola explains, is to contribute to "a newly emerging literature concerned specifically with dynamics of stratification" (p. 11). In particular, Viola aims to make three contributions: (1) moving beyond an

either—or view of hierarchy and equality in IR to theorize about the relationship between the two, (2) theorizing simultaneously about the social and material dynamics that underpin hierarchy, and (3) avoiding “the presentist bias in much of the IR literature ... by taking a longer view of the development of the international system” (p. 22). The book accomplishes the first and third of these goals well. The chapters tease out the interdependence between sovereign equality and hierarchy, drawing our attention to political domination within institutions that IR scholars typically associate with equality. In addition, Viola’s wide-ranging applications cover formative moments in the development of the international system, highlighting alternative forms of political organization that were gradually winnowed out.

The book is somewhat less effective in accomplishing the goal of integrating social and material factors into the study of hierarchy. Viola’s choice to focus on the institutionalist and materialist dimensions of hierarchy (p. 11) has two implications. First, from a materialist perspective, matters of inclusion or exclusion become struggles over redistribution. This move leaves little room to examine those distinctive processes that characterize struggles for recognition. Second, from an institutionalist perspective, international outcomes derive from the intentionality of powerful actors. As Viola asserts, “Powerful members are in the structural position to determine the terms of inclusion and exclusion” in the club (p. 81). This move leaves little room to examine the processes of legitimation that sustain international order and neglects the structural constraints placed on all actors. As a result, Viola’s analysis privileges material or strategic factors over social or symbolic ones. But, overall, the book’s provocative argument and wide-ranging applications provide fertile ground for studies of hierarchy in international relations, like its author intended.

**Finding Faith in Foreign Policy: Religion and American Diplomacy in a Postsecular World.** By Gregorio Bettiza. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019. 336p. \$78.00 cloth.

**Religious Freedom in Islam: The Fate of a Universal Human Right in the Muslim World Today.** By Daniel Philpott. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019. 328p. \$36.95 cloth. doi:10.1017/S1537592721000438

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Recent years have witnessed a renewed focus on questions of religion in the social sciences; in particular, there has been a call for closer examination of the relationship between religion and the state, both at the domestic and international levels. These two recent books do precisely that: they engage important questions of what religious freedom looks like around the globe, and how religion and religious freedom have developed as a part of US foreign policy.

In *Religious Freedom in Islam: The Fate of a Universal Human Right in the Muslim World Today*, Daniel Philpott explores why Muslim-majority countries seem to embrace the principle of religious freedom at lower rates than other countries. Philpott challenges skeptics of Islam who argue that Islam is inherently antithetical to religious freedom. Although Philpott notes that Muslim-majority countries tend to perform worse on religious freedom measures than Christian-majority countries, he shows that the relationship between Islam and religious freedom is less straightforward upon closer look. Using detailed case studies, Philpott illustrates that there are in fact a number of Muslim-majority countries that embrace religious freedom, including several countries in West Africa such as Senegal, Mali, and the Gambia. Moreover, a number of the Muslim-majority countries that lack religious freedom have what Philpott terms “secular repressive” governments, including countries like Turkey, Egypt, and Syria. These case studies indicate that religious freedom can exist and be supported by Islamic teachings in the Muslim world (as in West Africa) and that, in places where religious freedom does not exist, the repression of religion is often justified on secular rather than religious grounds (as in Turkey).

There is, however, a third category that Philpott identifies: “religiously repressive” states. These countries use government policy to promote a conservative form of Islam and use religion as a pretext to limit the rights of religious minorities or punish those who do not adopt the dominant religious ideology and practice. These religiously repressive states include Iran, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Malaysia. Some of the policies adopted in these countries seem to support Islamoskeptics’ fears about Islam’s relationship to religious freedom. Thus, in the second half of the book, Philpott turns to the question of whether Islam has the potential to promote religious freedom. He argues that the seeds of religious freedom already exist in the Quran and hadith, as well as in the historical practice of Islam and contemporary support for liberal Islam. What is needed is for the principle of religious freedom to be rooted in these religious teachings and traditions, rather than for it to be perceived as a Western value.

Philpott makes several important contributions to the study of religious freedom. First, through the careful selection of cases, he shows that political reforms and democratic institutions are not necessarily linked to increased levels of religious freedom. Muslim-majority democracies like Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Indonesia place many of the same limits on religious freedom as autocracies like Iran and Saudi Arabia. And, with the exception of Tunisia, the Arab Uprisings of 2010 and 2011 seemingly only heightened polarization between secular and religious forces in the region and did not advance a broadly shared conception of religious freedom.