The Making of International Status

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How Do Countries Achieve Status?

With great power rivalry on the rise again, many worry that struggles for status among states could lead to war. Questions of status lie at the root of international order: as Gilpin notes, governance in international politics is partly a function of the hierarchy of prestige, which determines which states will exert authority in the international system.[1] It is no surprise that states care deeply about status. In fact, bilateral relations between the United States on the one hand, and China and Russia on the other, have reached a low point in part because of disagreements about status. Acting out of a perception that it does not receive the respect it deserves from other countries, Russia has adopted increasingly confrontational policies toward the West—from sponsoring cyber attacks and election interference campaigns against Western targets to invading Ukraine.[2] And when then president-elect Joe Biden pledged to convene a global summit for democracy during his first year in office, Chinese and Russian leaders reacted with skepticism, suggesting that the U.S. should address problems at home before lecturing other countries.[3] Such disagreements can be dangerous. As a growing scholarly consensus indicates, status-dissatisfied states are more prone to conflict.[4] And historically, most hegemonic transitions have been violent: unable to reach an agreement about their relative status, established and emerging powers often resort to arms.

[1] Gilpin 1981, 33-34.

[2] *Financial Times*, "Biden warns cyber attacks could lead to a 'real shooting war,'" 27 July 2021, https://www.ft.com/content/5bbaa89b-2e85-4c5f-b918-566e6712d273; *BBC News*, "Russia-Ukraine border: Why Moscow is stoking tensions," 27 November 2021, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-59415885.

[3] *New York Times*, "As Biden Plans Global Democracy Summit, Skeptics Say: Heal Thyself First," 31 January 2021, https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/31/us/politics/biden-democracy-summit.

[4] Barnhart 2020; Dafoe, Renshon, and Huth 2014; Lebow 2010; Murray 2018; Renshon 2017; Ward 2017.

But whether states are satisfied or not with their status, a fundamental question remains: how do states achieve status? There was scant research about status in International Relations (IR) during the twentieth century, as scholars privileged material factors over intangible ones when developing theories or choosing research questions. During this period, status appeared in two strands of research: in classic theories of international politics developed by realist scholars, and in early quantitative studies of the relationship between status dissatisfaction and war.[5] In the 1980s and 1990s, however, interest in status reached a low ebb as the discipline made a shift toward rationalism, emphasizing individual choice and material factors to explain political phenomena.[6] Only at the turn of the twentieth-first century did a few studies eventually give rise to the current wave of research on status.[7] Drawing from diverse traditions, studies in this wave provide overwhelming evidence that the search for status motivates state behavior and may even cause wars.[8] But while existing research focuses on the actor level, showing that actors want status and do things to achieve status, it neglects the question of how countries ultimately achieve status.

Even though scholars rely on status to explain important phenomena in international politics, such as hegemonic wars and the foreign policies of emerging powers, we still understand little about the sources of status. Scholars traditionally assume that status is a function of the qualities of states, especially their military and economic capabilities—such that the richer or militarily stronger a country is, the higher its standing should be. However, theories of status that begin and end with state attributes leave important questions unanswered. First, because most studies assume that status depends on a state's material capabilities, they cannot explain why status and material capabilities often mismatch in practice. Second, we still lack a general framework to explain why certain state attributes (but not others) matter for status recognition. Third, even if we assume that state attributes evoke recognition, we still understand little about how they are converted into status—or,

[5] See, respectively, Gilpin 1981; Morgenthau 1948; and Doran, Hill, and Mladenka 1979; East 1972; Gochman 1980; Midlarsky 1975; Ray 1974; Wallace 1973.

[6] See Markey 1999, 130-32; Wohlforth and Kang 2009, 1.

[7] Larson and Shevchenko 2003; Markey 1999; O'Neill 2001; Schweller 1999; Volgy and Mayhall 1995.

[8] Barnhart 2016; de Carvalho and Neumann 2015; Gilady 2018; Lanoszka and Hunzeker 2015; Larson and Shevchenko 2010; Lebow 2008; Lindemann 2011; Murray 2010; Musgrave and Nexon 2018; Onea 2014; Paul, Larson, and Wohlforth 2014; Ringmar 2002; Wohlforth 2009; Wolf 2011.

more broadly, about the relationship between attributes and status. As a result, we still have a poor grasp of the processes whereby states ultimately achieve status.

Perhaps most importantly, although status is a relational concept, existing research does not study it relationally. Existing studies adopt an individualist approach, treating status as a function of the qualities of states, and especially of their material capabilities.[9] But because status is insufficiently differentiated from material capabilities, it is not clear why we need the concept of status in the first place. As a result, status remains in the background in IR theories: When some aspect of international politics cannot be explained based on security or survival, scholars resort to status. IR scholars are thus caught in a conundrum: they claim that status is a fundamental element of international relations, but ultimately render it a residual category.

Moreover, the supposed relationship between state attributes and status is assumed rather than tested; as such, it remains unverified from an empirical standpoint. To be sure, the assumption that status is a function of actors' qualities makes intuitive sense, since it is consistent with how most of us experience status in our everyday lives, as actors rather than researchers. Such an assumption is also convenient, since it allows researchers to measure status based on visible factors. However, IR scholars usually fail to examine this assumption systematically: they assume that certain state qualities determine status, but rarely investigate empirically how states achieve status.[10] The assumption that status depends on the qualities of states thus remains like a commonsense or folk theory of status—an explanation, based on contextual understandings that people employ in their everyday lives, which is taken to be true even though it has not been put to the test.[11]

In this book, I adopt a relational approach, from both a theoretical and an empirical standpoints, to investigate the sources of status. Drawing on an interdisciplinary body of research, I develop a *network theory of status*—a theoretical framework that captures the fundamentally social nature of status. I argue that status depends on states' positions in a social arrangement, rather than on the

[9] Pouliot's positional conception of standing is a notable exception to this trend. See Pouliot 2016.

[10] Notable exceptions are Duque 2018; Miller et al. 2015.

[11] See Boudon 1988; Watts 2011, 2014. As these authors note, commonsense or folk theories tend to be taken for granted rather than explicitly articulated. As a result, these theories often remain unchanged even after people have reasons to question their logical consistency or empirical validity.

qualities of states. To explain how states achieve status, I theorize the underlying relational effects that drive recognition in the international system. In particular, I argue that the structure of state relations itself shapes the conditions for status attainment. Status reinforces inequality, independently of material conditions, because it involves cumulative advantage: the higher standing a state enjoys, the more it attracts additional recognition. Moreover, the relevance of state attributes is socially defined: an attribute matters for status recognition because of its symbolic value, which can only be understood in the context of state relations.

My theoretical framework offers new answers to the fundamental questions about status that existing approaches insufficiently address. First, I argue that we should not expect status to go hand in hand with a state's material capabilities because status depends on a state's social position, rather than on its qualities. Second, I argue that a given state attribute becomes relevant for status recognition when actors share the belief that it symbolizes a latent quality: state competence. Status evaluations are based on prevailing conceptions of state competence that change over time, depending on who the high-status states are and how they behave. Finally, I argue that state attributes play only an indirect role in the process of status recognition: they impact recognition because of their symbolic value, which depends on the social context.

My theoretical framework implies that, to investigate how countries achieve status, we need to examine *the configuration of state relations*, rather than merely ranking states based on their attributes. Therefore, I adopt an empirical strategy that is consistent with the social nature of status. Because status depends on recognition, I investigate empirically the factors that produce such recognition. Since embassies express recognition among states, I use embassy exchange data as a proxy measure of status recognition. But instead of measuring status at the state level, like previous studies do, I incorporate information about the structure of diplomatic relations that existing studies discard. Using social network analysis tools uniquely suited to the study of status, I examine how the structure of state relations itself shapes the conditions for status attainment in the international system. This approach enables me to detect relational patterns of status recognition that previous studies mention in passing but do not examine empirically.

Given its innovative approach, this book makes theoretical and empirical contributions to existing scholarship. Although we are hitting a critical mass of research on status in IR, we still lack a basic understanding of fundamental questions related to status. In this context, this book makes four distinctive contributions. To begin, while existing research treats status as an actor motivation, this book is the first to address the question of how countries achieve status, focusing on international relations rather than on the state level. In addition, I develop a theoretical framework that highlights the social nature of status and, accordingly, use social network analysis tools ideally suited to the study of status. By integrating interdisciplinary insights to develop a consistently relational approach to status, moreover, this book brings research on status in IR in line with research in the social sciences more broadly. As a result, my analysis offers new lessons in areas that have drawn increasing scholarly interest in recent years—such as international hierarchies, international order, and power transitions—but that are still rarely linked to status. By showing that status is a distinctive phenomenon both conceptually and empirically, this book highlights the usefulness of the concept of status for the study of international politics.

1.1 What We (Don't) Know

IR scholars traditionally assume that status is a function of the qualities of states or the things that states have. Conventional approaches define status as a state's ranking based on certain traits or attributes, especially material attributes like economic or military capabilities. One of the most commonly used definitions of status in IR, for example, describes status as "collective beliefs about a given state's ranking in valued attributes (wealth, coercive capabilities, culture, demographic position, sociopolitical organization, and diplomatic clout)."[12] Other popular definitions of status likewise emphasize state attributes, positing that status "refers to attributes of an individual or social roles, especially those attributes related to position in a deference hierarchy"[13] or that status is "based

[12] Larson, Paul, and Wohlforth 2014, 7.
[13] Dafoe, Renshon, and Huth 2014, 373.

on a group's standing on some trait valued by society."[14] Although recent research tends to list a broader range of state attributes when defining status, the current wave of research thus carries forward the tradition initiated by early realist studies, which define prestige as a state's reputation for power—or more precisely, as a state's reputation for military strength.[15]

According to the conventional approach, then, international status is a function of a state's qualities: the larger a state's share of certain attributes, the higher its standing should be. In particular, existing research mentions two types of state attributes as symbols of international status. Most often, scholars list as status symbols material resources—which typically include economic, military, or technological capabilities; as well as nuclear weapons.[16] In addition, some scholars also consider as symbols of status certain nonmaterial factors—more precisely, certain fundamental values such as political system or ideology, culture or civilization, or "moral superiority."[17]

The conventional approach is consistent with two assumptions commonly adopted in IR. First, while the notion of inequality is not new in the study of international politics, IR scholars typically chalk it up to differences in the qualities of states. In other words, scholars usually rely on an *individualist framework* to account for inequality—assuming that states differentiate themselves into unequal positions because they differ in salient qualities.[18] As such, differential access to privileges among states results from disparities in their qualities. This assumption resembles the idea of meritocracy, according to which actors obtain differential access to resources or influence on the basis of their individual talent, ability, or effort. An individualist framework thus explains social outcomes based on the properties of actors. This framework is commonly used in IR (where it is often called reductionism), as well as in the social sciences more broadly.[19]

[14] Larson and Shevchenko 2010, 69.

[15] Gilpin 1981, 30-31; Morgenthau 2006, 89-90. See also Wohlforth 2009, 39. These scholars tend to favor the term "prestige," sometimes using the terms "status" and "prestige" interchangeably—as I do in this chapter. But in the rest of the book, I use the term status, which is more in line with contemporary research in the social sciences more broadly.

[16] Art 1980; Gilpin 1981; Larson and Shevchenko 2003, 2010; Larson, Paul, and Wohlforth 2014; Luard 1976; Neumann 2008, 2014; O'Neill 2006; Schweller 1999; Thompson 2014; Wohlforth 2009.

[17] Larson and Shevchenko 2003, 2010; Larson, Paul, and Wohlforth 2014; Luard 1976; Neumann 2008, 2014; Schweller 1999; Thompson 2014; Wohlforth 2009.

[18] See Gould 2002, 1144. An individualist framework contrasts with a structural framework, which accounts for inequality based on the positions actors occupy in a social system, rather than based on the qualities of actors.

[19] As Goddard and Nexon note, "The majority of theories in the social sciences adopt a reductionist approach to the Hobbesian problem, explaining social order—international or otherwise—with reference to the properties and

Second, the conventional approach usually ascribes inequality, in particular, to the uneven distribution of material capabilities among states. That is, IR scholars often combine an individualist framework with a *materialist approach* to status, assuming that the possession of material resources largely determines a state's standing. According to realist scholars, for example, certain states become great powers—enjoying special rights and responsibilities in the international system—because their material capabilities surpass those of other states.[20] And while the criteria used to identify great powers sometimes remain implicit, scholars from different research traditions typically mention military and economic capabilities as fundamental attributes (often, necessary conditions) for the attainment of major power status.[21] Coupling an individualist framework with a materialist approach, most scholars thus treat status as a function of disparities in the qualities of states, and especially in their material capabilities.[22]

But as I discuss next, theories of status that begin and end with state attributes leave important questions unanswered.

1.1.1 Why Do Status and Material Attributes Often Mismatch?

To begin, the assumption that status is a function of a state's material capabilities contradicts important empirical patterns. When examining the historical record, we find prominent examples of countries that failed to achieve recognition despite their material capabilities. Wilhelmine Germany is a case in point. At the turn of the twentieth century, Germany's material capabilities—including its manufacturing output, share of world trade, and land forces—rivaled those of neighboring coun-

interactions of its component parts." Goddard and Nexon 2005, 12. See also Jervis 1997, 12-13; Waltz 1979, 18-19.

[20] Morgenthau 1948, Ch. 25; Waltz 1979, 88, 109.

[21] See, for example, Bull 2002, 195; Levy 1983, 9-16; Buzan 2004, 69-72; Neumann 2008; Schweller 1993. Far from unique to realist approaches, materialism is a common assumption in IR research. See Gilpin 1981, 93-94; Wallerstein 1984, 5. See also Baldwin 2002.

[22] As Wendt notes, this approach stems from the view that, because no supranational authority stands above states, international relations resemble a competitive, self-help system. See Wendt 1992, Wendt and Friedheim 1995, 78. Yet, this assumption persists even in studies that treat international relations as hierarchic rather than anarchic. The measure of hierarchy most widely used in IR, for example, disaggregates hierarchy into two dimensions: (1) security hierarchy, measured by troop deployments and alliance portfolios; and (2) economic hierarchy, measured by exchange rate regimes and diversification in trade partners. See Lake 2009, Ch. 3. As such, most scholars treat international hierarchy as a ranking of states along certain attributes or issue areas, especially military and economic.

tries.[23] In addition, Germany's colonial possessions and naval capabilities were increasingly perceived as a challenge to British hegemony. And yet, despite marked improvements in Germany's material conditions, its decision-makers continued to feel that the country received less than its "fair share" of recognition.[24] Similarly, significant ink has been spent on Russia's dissatisfaction, since the time of Peter the Great, with the recognition it receives from other countries, especially Western powers.[25] By the end of the Second World War, Russia had conventional forces large enough to cover half of Europe. During the Cold War, moreover, Moscow instituted pro-Soviet regimes throughout Eastern Europe, acquired a sizable nuclear arsenal, and often led the space race against the United States. And yet, despite repeated showings of military strength, Russian decision-makers continued to feel that Western countries did not recognize Russia as an equal.

In fact, multiple studies indicate precisely that material capabilities are not a sufficient condition for international recognition. The mismatch between material resources and status is well documented, for example, in studies of the relationship between status dissatisfaction and war.[26] As these studies show, states are more prone to conflict when they receive less recognition than their material capabilities would warrant. That is, despite assuming a causal link between material capabilities and status, this research deals precisely with states' difficulties in converting their material capabilities into status.[27] Similarly, studies that draw on Hegel's struggle for recognition emphasize the disjuncture between a state's material capabilities and the recognition it receives from other countries. These studies show that, even though decision-makers from Wilhelmine Germany or Soviet Russia felt that their country deserved more recognition as its material conditions improved, other countries refrained from recognizing either country as a great power.[28]

Other cases illustrate well the disjuncture between status and material capabilities. Take the

[23] Onea 2014, 144-51.

[24] Renshon 2017, 182-220. See also Barnhart 2016; Murray 2010.

[25] Clunan 2009; Larson and Shevchenko 2003, 2010; Neumann 2008; Ringmar 2002.

[26] Doran, Hill, and Mladenka 1979; East 1972; Gochman 1980; Maoz 2010; Midlarsky 1975; Ray 1974; Renshon 2017; Volgy and Mayhall 1995; Wallace 1973.

[27] The mismatch between material capabilities and status is sometimes explained away in this literature as a problem of perceptual bias or incomplete information about material capabilities. However, there is neither an explicit theory about this, nor empirical tests to support this assumption.

[28] Murray 2018, 87-140; Ringmar 2002, 127-29.

example of North Korea. Even though IR scholars traditionally think of nuclear weapons as one of the accoutrements of great power status, the acquisition of nuclear weapons seems to have consolidated North Korea's status as a pariah state, rather than earning it the status of a great power. North Korea may receive attention, and even gain leverage in negotiations, because of its nuclear weapons. But the attention given to North Korea is best described as the attention given to a low-status actor who misbehaves, rather than the attention given to a major power.[29] The established powers do not invite Pyongyang to sit at the main table and help manage international relations. Much to the contrary; high-status states do not even hold high-level bilateral meetings with Pyongyang. Repeated U.S. administrations denied North Korea a bilateral summit until 2018, when the heads of government from each country held their first-ever face-to-face meeting.[30] Besides Donald Trump, no other Western head of state or government has ever participated in a bilateral meeting with a North Korean leader. And since Xi Jinping assumed power in China in 2013, even the high-level visits between North Korea and China—traditionally considered one of North Korea's closest allies—have reached a historical low.[31] Notwithstanding its nuclear weapons, North Korea remains at the margins of the international system.

But if material capabilities do not ensure international recognition on the one hand, neither does international recognition require material capabilities on the other hand, as some notable examples indicate. At the end of the Second World War, France received from the great powers precisely the invitation denied to North Korea—to sit at the main table and help manage international relations—despite having just been liberated by the Allied powers from years of German military occupation. As France became one of the five permanent members in the newly-created United Nations Security Council (UNSC), it was weak by any material metric. As Heimann notes:

[29] Although high status often commands attention, we should not conflate status with attention. As Magee and Galinsky note, the two constructs operate at different levels of complexity. As a process related to actor perception, attention is a more basic phenomenon than status. Giving attention to an actor is the same as taking notice or interest in them. But in and of itself, attention does not imply high status; in fact, low-status actors sometimes receive considerable attention, as the North Korean example illustrates. See Magee and Galinsky 2008, 360-61.

[30] *Council on Foreign Relations*, "Timeline: North Korean Nuclear Negotiations, 1985-2019," https://www.cfr.org/timeline/north-korean-nuclear-negotiations, accessed 3 November 2021.

[31] *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, "Dataset: China-North Korea High Level Visits Since 1953," https://beyondparallel.csis.org/china-dprk-high-level-visits-since-1953/, accessed 3 November 2021.

> France's resounding defeat by the German army, its humiliating surrender, and its occupation were clear evidence of the final descent of what once had been Europe's dominant power. Materially, France lay in ruins in the aftermath of liberation, with nearly its entire heavy industry destroyed or looted by the Germans. Militarily, France was a 'virtual pygmy'. The French army was reduced to eight divisions, equipped entirely with American weapons. Its economy was shattered and its institutions in chaos. (...) The French nation in 1945 was deemed to be 'internally divided, economically ruined and institutionally feeble'.[32]

Based on material factors alone, few would have expected France to acquire the privileges it did in the post-war order. And in fact, the military occupation by Nazi Germany would not be France's last military defeat during this period. When fighting without help from its allies, France would sustain unexpected losses in subsequent conflicts against smaller adversaries, both in Indochina (1954) and Algeria (1962). Yet historically, France is not alone in achieving a standing disproportionate to its material capabilities after a major war. Other countries—like China in 1945, or Italy and Japan in 1919—have similarly punched above their material weight during constitutional moments of the modern international order.[33] As Morgenthau notes, we observe a similar trend in the Concert of Europe: countries like Portugal, Spain, and Sweden were accorded the diplomatic rank of great powers in the Congress of Vienna (1815) only "out of traditional courtesy," rather than because their material capabilities justified such recognition.[34]

So what explains the observed mismatch between a state's material capabilities and the recognition it receives from other countries? If status is not a direct function of a state's material capabilities, how do states ultimately achieve status?

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[32] Heimann 2015*b*, 185-86. See also de Gaulle 1956, 81-82.
[33] See Buzan 2004, 62; Heimann 2015*b*, 186; Murray 2018.
[34] Morgenthau 1948, 270.

1.1.2 Why Do Certain Attributes Matter for Status?

In addition, the conventional approach leaves a second question unanswered: Why do certain state attributes become relevant for status recognition? IR scholars often emphasize material capabilities as status symbols. Behind this view is the often implicit assumption that material capabilities matter for status recognition because of their functional value, or because of what they enable the owner to do. This assumption is formulated most explicitly by Gilpin, to whom the value of prestige lies in allowing a state to compel or deter others without using force.[35] According to Gilpin, the value of prestige (defined as a state's reputation for material capabilities) lies in determining bargaining outcomes short of war, and sometimes even short of explicit threats of violence. Similarly, Morgenthau claims that the Cold War "was fought primarily with the weapons of prestige," as the U.S. and the Soviet Union sought to assert their relative superiority without paying the costs of war.[36] Following this line of reasoning, the higher a state's reputation for military strength, the less other states will be willing to take disputes with it to the battlefield. By signaling a state's coercive capabilities, prestige thus dissuades weaker states from challenging stronger ones.

That is, the connection between material capabilities and status relies on the traditional assumption that, because no supranational authority stands above states, force serves as the last resort in international relations—in line with the maxim from Thucydides' Melian Dialogue according to which "the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must."[37] In fact, this very assumption is present in Gilpin's work. While some parts of *War and Change* stress the similarity between domestic and international politics, tracing a parallel between authority and prestige, other parts of the book echo the conventional view of anarchy as the distinctive feature of international

[35] Gilpin 1981, 31.

[36] Morgenthau 2006, 92.

[37] Thucydides 1951. This assumption is perhaps elaborated most explicitly in Waltz's work. To begin, Waltz posits a sharp distinction between domestic politics, where authority is the main ordering principle; and international politics, where anarchy is the main ordering principle. To explain how order results in the absence of a central authority, he then proposes an "analogy to microeconomic theory," which "describes how an order is spontaneously formed from the self-interested acts and interactions of individual units." See Waltz 1979, 88-89. When no central government can settle disputes, Waltz argues, force becomes the coin of the realm: "there is then constant possibility that conflicts will be settled by force." See Waltz 1959, 188. Wars reveal information about military capabilities, telling apart the weak from the strong; and in a self-help system, states that fail to balance against threats risk falling by the wayside. See Blainey 1973; Waltz 1979, 112-18; but see also Fazal 2004.

politics. As Gilpin claims in the introduction, "International relations continue to be a recurring struggle for wealth and power among independent actors in a state of anarchy."[38] He thus conjectures in the conclusion that, were Thucydides to be "placed in our midst, he would (following an appropriate short course in geography, economics and modern technology) have a little trouble in understanding the power struggle of our age."[39] According to this view, military capabilities provide the ultimate measure of state power under anarchy.

However, the assumption that material capabilities matter for status recognition because of their functional value contradicts two important findings from existing studies. First, scholars typically notice that countries have acquired military equipment to "swagger," in an attempt to achieve prestige, precisely because such equipment provides little strategic utility.[40] Wilhelmine Germany, for example, built a "luxury fleet" against its security interests in continental Europe.[41] More recently, China directed vast resources into aircraft carriers despite their limited strategic use.[42] And as Gilady notes, countries like Brazil and France have spent a sizable portion of their naval budgets to acquire one aircraft carrier each, even though at least three carriers are typically needed to ensure that one carrier will be operational at any given time. Moreover, carrier owners usually lack the resources to properly maintain a carrier or to make it fully operational. Outdated and poorly equipped, most of the existing carriers today are unable to project power commensurate with their costs.[43] Status-seeking states invest scarce resources in actions that provide little strategic utility, from developing space programs[44] or nuclear weapons[45] to buying fighter jets.[46] But if status-seekers do not make choices based on strategic value, why do they invest in certain attributes?

In addition, the assumption that material capabilities matter for status recognition because of their functional value contradicts a second important pattern: status symbols comprise not only

[38] Gilpin 1981, 7.
[39] Gilpin 1981, 211; see also Gilpin 1981, 227-228.
[40] See Art 1973, 23-24, 36-37; Art 1980, 10-11; Morgenthau 1962, 303.
[41] Art 1973; Murray 2010. See also Herwig 1980.
[42] Ross 2009; Pu and Schweller 2014, 152-59.
[43] Gilady 2018, 69-88.
[44] Gilady 2018; Kinsella and Chima 2001; Musgrave and Nexon 2018; Paikowsky 2017; Van Dyke 1964.
[45] Hecht 2009; Hironaka 2017; Kinsella and Chima 2001; Miller 2014*a*; Sagan 1997.
[46] Eyre and Suchman 1996; Martin and Schmidt 1987.

material resources, but also fundamental values—such as political system, ideology, or culture. As multiple studies indicate, high status nowadays requires adopting fundamental values such as liberal democracy.[47] As Morgenthau himself argues, the policy of prestige became particularly important during the Cold War era, when the struggle for power between Washington and Moscow turned largely into a struggle for the minds of people around the world. In Morgenthau's words, "the Cold War [was] fought primarily in terms of competition between two rival political philosophies, economic systems, and ways of life."[48] And yet, a materialist approach cannot explain why nonmaterial attributes matter for status recognition, since there is no direct correspondence between a state's fundamental values and its ability to coerce other states.

Alternatively, some scholars argue that certain state attributes, like nuclear weapons, symbolize status because they are costly or hard to obtain. By acquiring rare or costly attributes, a state thus signals its superior military or economic capabilities. Based on this logic, high-status states have an incentive to restrict access to status-symbolizing attributes: If such attributes became widespread, they would no longer be informative as signals of high status.[49] But again, while this logic seems to apply well to certain material attributes like nuclear weapons, it is less applicable to nonmaterial attributes like liberal democracy. On the contrary: Rather than restricting access to their values, dominant countries often attempt to diffuse them among the subordinate. As Gilpin notes, "every dominant state (...) promotes a religion or ideology that justifies its domination over other states."[50] In the contemporary era, for example, repeated U.S. administrations have adopted a policy of promoting democracy abroad. Washington has spent significant resources on promoting democratic values, rather than restricting access to them.[51] As such, in and of itself, scarcity is insufficient to explain why certain state attributes matter for status recognition.

So why do actors consider nonmaterial attributes—or fundamental values like democracy, economic liberalism, or human rights—as symbols of international status? More broadly, why do cer-

[47] Neumann 2008, 2014; Pouliot 2014; Pouliot 2016, 79.
[48] Morgenthau 2006, 92.
[49] See Gilady 2018; O'Neill 2006.
[50] Gilpin 1981, 30.
[51] See Gordon 2020; Owen IV 2010.

tain state attributes (but not others) become relevant for status recognition?

1.1.3 How Are Attributes Converted into Status?

Finally, we still understand little about how state attributes are ultimately converted into status. Even if we assume that a state's attributes determine its status, it is not clear how different attributes would combine to produce status. Multiple attributes are considered relevant for status recognition. So what is the status of states that rank differently across dimensions? For example, does a country like Germany or Japan—which is wealthy but invests relatively little into military capabilities—rank higher or lower in status than a country like Russia, which has less than half of the respective gross national products of Germany and Japan but outspends either country in the military area? Similarly, while alliances and trade flows may reflect states' positions in the military and economic arenas respectively, it is not clear how these positions would combine to produce status.

Existing studies usually provide one of two answers to this question: either (1) they aggregate states' attributes or positions across dimensions to estimate their status; or (2) they compare states based on each dimension separately. However, either answer relies more on personal taste than on theoretical considerations or empirical evidence. On the one hand, the aggregation of rankings across dimensions depends heavily on assumptions about the relative weight of different rank-dimensions that seem hard to justify a priori. On the other hand, the decision to compare states based on a given dimension likewise depends heavily on the researcher's assumptions about which dimensions matter for status recognition. Yet, such assumptions seem hard to justify a priori, in the absence of clear theoretical considerations and empirical evidence. Waltz himself warns against the dangers of this approach—which tends to rely on the researcher's biases, rather than on the facts on the ground.[52] And as I discuss below, this approach goes against relevant research in related fields, which demonstrates that people form impressions about others based on multiple dimensions (or traits) simultaneously, rather than based on a single dimension separately.

In sum, the conventional approach of treating status as a function of state attributes, though

[52] Waltz 1979, 130.

intuitive, is not empirically tenable. Theories of status that begin and end with state attributes leave four important questions unanswered. First, why is there a consistent mismatch between states' material capabilities and the recognition they receive? Second, why do certain state attributes become relevant for status recognition? Third, how are state attributes converted into status? That is, what is the relationship between attributes and status? Fourth, and more broadly, if status is not a direct function of states' qualities, how do states ultimately achieve status?

1.2 Why It Matters

The question of how countries attain status matters for several reasons. To begin, questions of status lie at the heart of international order. In any society, hierarchies of status have major political implications, providing an answer to the fundamental question of "who gets what, when and how." As research across the social sciences shows, status is a fundamental aspect of life in society, which shapes relations among actors and groups.[53] Ubiquitous in social contexts, status hierarchies impact valued outcomes: in social environments, actors typically differentiate themselves into social positions that imply unequal expectations, rewards, and obligations. Within countries, for example, we observe durable inequality among groups despite socioeconomic change.[54] Even in developed democracies, women and racial minorities tend to earn lower incomes, get less prestigious jobs, and attain lower levels of education—outcomes that cannot be explained based on individual merit alone, in spite of what the negative stereotypes about these groups might imply.

Yet in domestic societies, state authority somewhat attenuates the effects of status hierarchies. Within states, a central government adjudicates disputes among actors, monopolizing the legitimate use of force. Actors share a system of norms, typically embodied in the state's constitution and enforced by those that occupy formal positions of authority. In addition, governments usually establish a system of redistribution—including policies aimed at improving social welfare, providing public access to education, or even promoting affirmative action. Left to their own devices, many

[53] Bourdieu and Passeron 1990; Tajfel and Turner 1979; Veblen 2007; Weber 1978.
[54] Ridgeway and Walker 1995; Ridgeway 2014; Tilly 1998.

citizens might oppose redistributive policies for fear of losing status.[55] But under state authority, redistribution assumes a mandatory character regardless of individual political preferences: as the old saying goes, nothing is certain but death and paying taxes.[56]

When it comes to relations among states, matters of status take on particular importance. In international relations, no clear authority stands above states. Shared norms and institutional structures are much weaker than in domestic societies. To the extent that foundational treaties like the UN Charter have a constitutional quality, no independent court with universal jurisdiction can enforce them. With few exceptions like the UN Security Council (UNSC), states rarely occupy formal positions of authority. And although the UNSC had an unusual period of activism in the 1990s, it has since reverted back to the gridlock that characterized most of its history. In the absence of a supranational authority to settle disputes, states often resort to more informal coordination channels, like the Group of Seven (G7), or to unilateral action. As such, the policies that could attenuate the impact of status hierarchies in world politics, like providing foreign aid or granting asylum to refugees, are not consistently enforced by a central authority. Rather, such policies are implemented at the discretion of each state, in a piecemeal fashion if at all.

Under the circumstances that characterize international relations, status becomes much more important in determining who gets what, when, and how. When no central authority can settle disputes, states might resort to the use of force (or its threat) to get what they want. However, major wars are increasingly costly, especially since the advent of nuclear weapons; and happen only rarely.[57] And in the aftermath of wars, status hierarchies determine the ensuing distribution of privileges among states. To the extent that shared norms and institutional structures exist in international politics, they are strongly influenced by those at the top.[58] High-status states play a key role during critical junctures like the aftermath of major wars, shaping the institutions that they will use to manage international relations thereafter.[59] As such, most of the time in international politics we

[55] See McClendon 2018; Thal 2020.
[56] Except, in the latter case, for the very rich.
[57] Brooks 1999; Mueller 1989; Sagan and Waltz 1995.
[58] Hurd 2017; Kupchan 2014; Pitts 2018.
[59] Ikenberry 2001; Schroeder 1986.

are arguably in the realm of status—where actors adjudicate disputes based on social esteem and voluntary deference, rather than based on the use of force or its threat. As Gilpin puts it, status is the "everyday currency of international relations, much as authority is the central ordering feature of domestic society."[60] While authority ensures that commands will be obeyed in domestic politics, in international politics "both power and prestige function to ensure that the lesser states in the system will obey the commands of the dominant state or states."[61]

In this context, it is not surprising that states and leaders care deeply about status. As Morgenthau notes, prestige "is as intrinsic an element of the relations between nations as the desire for prestige is of the relations between individuals."[62] Accordingly, overwhelming evidence indicates that states and leaders value status, sometimes to the point of fighting wars for the sake of recognition. Drawing on a wide range of theoretical traditions and empirical methods, numerous studies show that status is a fundamental motivation behind foreign policy behavior. These findings are consistent with a rich tradition of research in related fields, which places status as a fundamental human motivation with important implications at the social or group levels.[63]

In fact, actors care so deeply about status that they may be willing to compromise other fundamental goals—such as survival, security, or profit—for the sake of status. Following the humiliating loss of Alsace and Lorraine to Prussia in the late nineteenth century, for example, France initiated a scramble for colonial territory in Africa at the expense of its continental security, even though its colonial exploits provided little material benefit.[64] Motivated by a desire for recognition as a great power, Germany pursued naval ambitions at the turn of the twentieth century at the expense of its continental security, risking a security dilemma with Britain in the lead up to the First World War.[65]

[60] Gilpin 1981, 31.

[61] Gilpin 1981, 30.

[62] Morgenthau 2006, 83.

[63] As Ridgeway notes, "people care about status quite as intensely as they do about money and power." See Ridgeway 2014, 2. In psychology, numerous studies using experimental methods indicate that people value status (or social esteem) independently of material gain. See Fiske 2011; Huberman, Loch, and ÖNçüler 2016; Tajfel and Turner 1979; and Anderson, Hildreth, and Howland 2015; Cheng, Tracy, and Anderson 2014 for reviews. Likewise, recent studies in American and comparative politics find that status motivates political behavior at the individual level, shaping preferences toward redistribution in domestic societies and driving support for right-wing populism in developed democracies. See, respectively, McClendon 2018; Thal 2020; and Gidron and Hall 2017; Mutz 2018.

[64] Barnhart 2016, 2020.

[65] Murray 2010; Murray 2018, 87-140.

And during this war, status considerations motivated the Entente powers to reject Germany's peace overtures, unnecessarily prolonging the conflict.[66] Cumulative evidence indicates that actors care so deeply about status that they may sacrifice blood and treasure for the sake of recognition. As multiple studies indicate, states are more prone to conflict when they receive less recognition than they think they deserve[67] or than their material capabilities would warrant.[68]

The question of how states achieve status matters especially today, when the future of the international order is uncertain. After a period of optimism following the end of the Cold War, great power rivalry is on the rise again. While Western powers initially harbored hopes of assimilating China and Russia into the liberal international order, such hopes have since subsided.[69] As Western countries have started to see the Indo-Pacific as a decisive arena for great power competition in the near future, Russia has adopted increasingly confrontational policies toward the West, culminating in the invasion of Ukraine.[70] If U.S.-China relations during the Trump administration were marked by bravado and trade disputes, moreover, they have improved little under the Biden administration.[71] And when Biden hosted a Summit for Democracy in 2021 to rally more other countries against the autocratic models advanced by China and Russia, Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin held their own meeting to express mutual support, in Xi's words, "on issues concerning each other's core interests and safeguarding the dignity of each country."[72]

But to understand whether a potential power transition will be peaceful—or whether the established powers will recognize the emerging powers' claims to status as legitimate—we need to understand the sources of international status. As Clunan notes, "The question of peace and stability in the twenty-first century may (...) depend to a great extent on international status politics—the

66 Lanoszka and Hunzeker 2015.

67 Lindemann 2011; Murray 2018; Ringmar 2002; Ward 2017; Wolf 2011.

68 Maoz 2010; Renshon 2017; Volgy and Mayhall 1995.

69 Sarotte 2021; Tan 2021.

70 Adam Tooze, "Has Covid ended the neoliberal era?" *Guardian*, 2 September 2021, https://www.theguardian.com/news/2021/sep/02/covid-and-the-crisis-of-neoliberalism.

71 *Economist*, "Talks between Xi Jinping and Joe Biden do not herald a thaw," 18 November 2021, https://www.economist.com/china/talks-between-xi-jinping-and-joe-biden-do-not-herald-a-thaw/21806328; *New York Times*, "Tense Talks With China Left U.S. 'Cleareyed' About Beijing's Intentions, Officials Say," 19 March 2021, https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/19/world/asia/china-us-alaska.html.

72 *New York Times*, "Putin and Xi Show United Front Amid Rising Tensions With U.S.," 15 December 2021, https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/15/world/asia/china-russia-summit-xi-putin.html.

international social construction of criteria for status recognition, the status desired by rising powers (…) and the ability and willingness of others to grant these desires."[73] Existing research on status examines the foreign policies of emerging powers with the goal explaining hegemonic wars. But to adequately address this question, we need to understand how states achieve status. Status-seeking states may adopt different strategies. But what determines whether status-seekers will be satisfied with their status? When should we expect the established powers to recognize an emerging power as an equal—or instead to deny it the desired recognition?

1.2.1 Limitations from Existing Approaches

Pressing as these questions may be, the conventional approach hinders our ability to tackle them. Because this approach treats status as a function of the qualities of states, it ultimately neglects the distinctive feature of status—its social nature. To be sure, the conventional approach does not deny that status is social. Larson and colleagues, for example, observe that status "cannot be attained unilaterally; it must be recognized by others"[74] and that status "reflects *collective* beliefs, transcending individual state perceptions."[75] Similarly, Dafoe and colleagues consider status to involve second-order beliefs (or beliefs about what others believe) and to depend on the recognition of others.[76] But despite acknowledging the social nature of status, existing studies do not explore this aspect in depth. Because the conventional approach treats status as a function of state attributes, it is inconsistent with its own acknowledgement of status as a social phenomenon.

In particular, theories of status that begin and end with actor attributes impose three limitations. First, the conventional approach leads to what Elster calls *generalized fetishism*—the act of mistaking social relations for actors' properties.[77] By treating status as a function of state attributes, IR scholars equate status with the possession of status symbols. However, status is not reducible to symbols. A

[73] Clunan 2014, 274.
[74] Larson, Paul, and Wohlforth 2014, 10.
[75] Larson, Paul, and Wohlforth 2014, 8. See also Renshon 2017, 21.
[76] Dafoe, Renshon, and Huth 2014, 374-76. See also O'Neill 2001, 193.
[77] Elster 1976, 252.

symbol is an entity that stands for another entity, but should not be mistaken for it.[78] For instance, even though a flag represents a country, no one would claim that it *is* the country. In fact, the symbolic value of a given state attribute depends on the social context. A given attribute only matters for status recognition if actors share the belief that it symbolizes status.[79] Status symbols are part of a social, communicative process: they work as symbolic mediators in the relation between self and other.[80] By conflating status with symbols, however, the conventional approach neglects to specify the causal mechanisms whereby state attributes are converted into status. In doing so, it ignores the relational processes that drive status recognition among states.

Second, the conventional approach leads to *material reductionism*, since it often equates status with the possession of material resources. Influential scholars in the realist tradition define prestige as a state's reputation for military strength.[81] Based on the same notion, scholars in the status inconsistency tradition define status dissatisfaction as a mismatch between a state's material capabilities and the recognition it receives.[82] This perspective reduces status dissatisfaction to a problem of perceptual bias or incomplete information about military capabilities. While some might claim that this perspective involves a social element, since it assumes that military capabilities are estimated collectively, such an element is treated as a nuisance rather than as an object of substantive interest. In this perspective, status refers to military capabilities plus an error term; if military capability estimations were accurate, the concept of status would no longer be needed. Moreover, such an element is more cognitive than social per se, as it focuses on subjective perceptions at the actor level rather than on social processes that take place among actors.

From a theoretical standpoint, this approach is dissatisfactory for two reasons. To begin, the observed mismatch between status and material capabilities is substantively important: as many studies indicate, states are more prone to conflict when they receive less recognition than their material

[78] Dittmar 1992, 6; Goffman 1951, 294-95.

[79] Dittmar 1992, 6, 79; Goffman 1951, 294-95.

[80] Dittmar 1992, 9.

[81] Gilpin 1981, 31; Morgenthau 1948, 52, 55; Wohlforth 2009, 39.

[82] East 1972; Midlarsky 1975; Renshon 2017. While the two strands of research (early realist studies and studies of the relationship between status dissatisfaction and war) differ in their methodological orientation, they share common assumptions—emphasizing state attributes (and especially material capabilities) in their treatment of status.

capabilities would warrant. But by assuming that status is a function of material capabilities, scholars cannot explain why the two factors often mismatch in practice. Existing research treats cases in which material capabilities fail to evoke the corresponding recognition as empirical anomalies, rather than as information about how the world actually works. And by assuming that status refers to a state's military capabilities plus an error term, this perspective advances a concept of status that does not differ enough from material capabilities to prove analytically useful. Because scholars insufficiently differentiate status from military capabilities, it is unclear why we need the concept of status in the first place.[83] In fact, a term like "estimated military capability" would be more accurate than status in this case. The act of reducing status to material capabilities thus strips away the very aspects that make the concept useful analytically. Once stripped of its distinctive feature—its social nature—the concept of status has limited usefulness for IR theories.

Last but not least, the conventional approach incurs a *fallacy of composition*, since it assumes that we can study status in the international system simply by examining the system's component parts (states).[84] This fallacy typically involves the assumption that we can understand how countries achieve status by examining either the qualities of high-status states or the behavior of status-seeking states. On the one hand, the fact that high-status states have certain attributes is often taken as evidence that status depends on these attributes. As Tilly notes, "individualistic analyses of inequality ... lend themselves nicely to retroactive rationalization; confronted with unequal outcomes, their user searches the past for individual differences in skill, knowledge, determination, or moral worth that must explain differences in rewards."[85] From this perspective, status achievement becomes an autonomous act, which depends on the individual merit of a given state rather than on the social environment. On the other hand, the fallacy of composition likewise afflicts those approaches that explain status attainment based on the behavior of status-seeking states. The key finding from status inconsistency studies—that states are more prone to conflict when their recognition and material capabilities mismatch—is often taken as evidence that status depends on material capabilities. That

[83] Clunan 2014, 274.
[84] See Jervis 1997, 12-13.
[85] Tilly 1998, 33.

is, because some actors think that status *should be* based on military capabilities, scholars conclude that status *is* in fact based on military capabilities. In other words, this perspective makes the faulty assumption that outcomes follow from actors' intentions—even though in complex systems like international politics, actions often have unintended consequences.[86]

In sum, the conventional approach limits our understanding of status and, consequently, the concept's usefulness for the study of international politics. Even though status is a social concept, existing studies treat it as a function of the qualities of states. This approach substantively conflates social relations with actors' qualities, leads to material reductionism, and incurs a fallacy of composition—ultimately diminishing the usefulness of status for IR theories. Notwithstanding its importance, status makes only a limited contribution to our understanding of international relations, as it is used to explain those phenomena that cannot be explained based on traditional factors. Scholars are thus caught in a conundrum: they posit that status is a fundamental aspect of international politics, but ultimately render it a residual category.

Far from new, this conundrum can be traced back to early studies of status in IR. Even though Morgenthau wants to highlight the importance of prestige for international politics, he ultimately renders it a residual category. At the outset, Morgenthau deems the policy of prestige "an indispensable element of a rational foreign policy" and one of the "basic manifestations of the struggle for power on the international scene."[87] He notes that scholars nevertheless neglect the policy of prestige because they (1) privilege "the material aspect of power in the form of force" over intangible aspects like prestige;[88] (2) associate the policy of prestige with the diplomatic world and its archaic traditions; and (3) treat the policy of prestige as a means to achieve other ends, rather than as an end in itself. However, Morgenthau ultimately reinforces precisely these trends, as (1) he treats prestige as a function of material capabilities, asserting that "military strength is the obvious measure of a nation's power" to later define prestige as the reputation for power;[89] (2) his discussion of

[86] Jervis 1997, 61-68; Schelling 1978.
[87] Morgenthau 2006, 83, 92.
[88] Morgenthau 2006, 83.
[89] Morgenthau 2006, 89-90. Other work on international status from this period echoes this notion. See, for example, Lagos 1963, 131-32.

diplomacy includes mostly anecdotes about how diplomatic practices express prestige;[90] and (3) he treats prestige as a means to an end, claiming that "only foolhardy egocentrics are inclined to pursue a policy of prestige for its own sake."[91] In this way, Morgenthau reinforces precisely the aspects that lead scholars to neglect the fundamental role of prestige in international politics.

We observe a similar trend in Gilpin's work. At the outset, Gilpin deems prestige a fundamental aspect of international politics, positing that governance among states is partly a function of the hierarchy of prestige.[92] Moreover, he acknowledges the intangible nature of prestige, comparing it to what E. H. Carr calls "power over opinion"—a form of power that involves persuasion, propaganda, and the use of rhetoric.[93] Like authority, Gilpin argues, prestige has both moral and functional bases: less powerful states accept the leadership of a dominant state not only because they perceive the existing order as useful and predictable, since dominant states typically supply public goods; but also because less powerful states perceive the order as legitimate, since dominant states typically promote an ideology to justify their domination. Therefore, Gilpin concludes, "numerous factors, including respect and common interest, underlie the prestige of a state and the legitimacy of its rule." And yet, Gilpin ultimately argues that "the hierarchy of prestige in an international system rests on economic and military power."[94] This argument implies that authority in the international system depends primarily on coercion; as such, legitimation becomes epiphenomenal.[95] In the end, Gilpin allows only a limited scope for status: that of signaling coercive capabilities. Though initially acknowledged, the intangible aspects of prestige ultimately get lost in his argument.

The conventional approach in IR contrasts with research in the social sciences more broadly, which understands status as fundamentally social. The premises adopted in IR research contrast with those adopted in the disciplines that traditionally study status. To begin, status does not fit

[90] While Morgenthau claims that states pursue a policy of prestige via diplomatic ceremonial and the display of military capabilities, his discussion of the former includes mostly anecdotes about how diplomatic practices express prestige. By contrast, his discussion of the latter includes specific examples like the acquisition of nuclear weapons and the development of navies with global reach, providing a clear intuition that future research could (and would) explore.

[91] Morgenthau 2006, 91.

[92] Gilpin 1981, 34.

[93] Carr 1981, 120-130; Gilpin 1981, 14.

[94] Gilpin 1981, 30.

[95] See Gilpin 1981, 10-11, 30, 34, 199.

well with a materialist approach: as Ridgeway notes, "status, in contrast to resources and power, is based primarily in *cultural* beliefs rather than directly on material arrangements. That is, status is based on widely shared beliefs about the social categories or "types" of people that are ranked by society as more esteemed and respected compared to others."[96] Neither does status fit well with an individualist framework: as Ridgeway notes, "these cultural status beliefs work their effects on inequality primarily at the *social relational level* by shaping people's expectations for themselves and others and their consequent actions in social contexts."[97] IR scholars' reliance on conventional assumptions results in ad hoc accounts that often miss the distinctive features of status—or in what Goddard and Nexon call, in another context, "inconsistent and arbitrary explanatory frameworks."[98] Coupled with inadequate assumptions, status remains a residual category in the discipline. As a result, its implications for international politics remain obscured.

In this project, I address these limitations by drawing on an interdisciplinary body of research to develop a network theory of status, which adequately captures its social nature. I couple the concept of status with assumptions that reflect its distinctive features: its relational and intangible aspects. Status inequalities depend on processes that take place among states and groups of states, rather than being a matter decided at the individual or the bilateral levels. Moreover, status recognition involves primarily intangible or symbolic aspects, rather than material ones. To adequately capture what status is and how it matters for international politics, we need to focus on relational processes and symbolic factors. By highlighting the distinctive features of status both analytically and empirically, this book aims to move status from its current position as a residual category in IR to its rightful place as a concept central to the study of international politics.

[96] Ridgeway 2014, 2-3.
[97] Ridgeway 2014, 3.
[98] Goddard and Nexon 2005, 13.

1.3 The Argument

In this book, I argue that status depends on states' positions in a social arrangement, rather than directly on the qualities of states or the things that they have. To understand how international hierarchies of status form, I trace their roots back to key transformations that magnified global inequality in the nineteenth century, a foundational period for the contemporary international order. As Europeans made a turn to imperialism, they increasingly relied on a self-proclaimed standard of civilization that distinguished between "civilized" Europeans entitled to indivisible sovereignty on the one hand, and "uncivilized" non-Europeans unable to govern themselves on the other hand. Status distinctions thus served to legitimate and stabilize inequality, drawing a boundary between those states deemed competent—and therefore deserving of privileges like indivisible sovereignty—and the rest of the world. Once established, moreover, status distinctions reinforced inequality, independently from material conditions, via cumulative advantage mechanisms: the higher standing a state enjoys, the more it attracts additional recognition. It is no coincidence that, to this day, status evaluations rely on values associated with the West.

My argument couples the concept of status with assumptions that emphasize its distinctively social nature. In particular, I depart from the conventional approach in two ways. First, I develop theory using a *relational framework*—which ascribes inequality to the positions that actors occupy in a social arrangement, rather than to the qualities of actors.[99] I argue that states enjoy differential access to privileges in the international system to the extent that they occupy an advantageous social position. High-status states enjoy considerable advantages in maintaining high status, which result from their social position rather than directly from their attributes. Second, I focus on *symbolic* aspects, rather than material factors, to account for status inequalities among states. While status distinctions may initially stem from material arrangements, as in the case of nineteenth-century imperialism, status involves primarily symbolic factors.

[99] See Gould 2002, 1144. Relatively more common in sociology, this perspective is present in relational or network analytic approaches to international politics. See Goddard 2009; Jackson and Nexon 1999; McConaughey, Musgrave, and Nexon 2018; Nexon 2010; Oatley et al. 2013.

In particular, my argument involves three new propositions about the relationship between status and inequality. First, I argue that status does much more than signal a state's coercive capabilities; crucially, status *legitimates* inequality.[100] As Tilly notes, unequal relations based purely on coercion are inherently unstable, as they ultimately give rise to contention or struggles between dominant and subordinate actors.[101] Even an exploitative relationship like colonization cannot be sustained based on coercion alone, since such an arrangement would render domination too costly in the long run. To become durable, inequality requires some form of legitimation. Status distinctions play an important role in this context: they establish a relation of superiority and inferiority between types of actors.[102] Based on status distinctions, certain types are presumed to be "better" or superior to others. By creating categorical differences among actors, status distinctions justify why certain types are entitled to privileges that the other types lack.

Second, status *stabilizes* inequality by shaping social perceptions and behavior. As Ridgeway notes, status distinctions shape social perceptions: "by transforming mere control of resources into more essentialized differences among "types" of actors, status beliefs fuel social perceptions of difference." The creation of categorical differences leads actors "to focus on, exaggerate, and make broader, more systematic use of socially defined differences" during their interactions.[103] Moreover, status distinctions shape behavior: By drawing a boundary between those types perceived as superior and inferior, status distinctions create expectations about the ability of either type to exert authority in a given situation.[104] These expectations act as focal points, creating self-fulfilling prophecies during social interactions—as an actor tends to act according to what is expected of its type, while expecting others to act according to what is expected of their type. At the same time, status distinctions generate backlash when behavior deviates from what is expected. In particular, high-status states tend to be wary of behavior by low-status states that may be perceived as challenging established expectations for authority in a given situation.[105]

[100] See Jackman 1994; Ridgeway and Walker 1995; Ridgeway 2014, 3-4.
[101] Tilly 1998, 86-91. See also Weber 1978, 213, Goode 1978, Ch. 6.
[102] See Lamont 2012; Lamont and Fournier 1992.
[103] Ridgeway 2014, 4.
[104] See Ridgeway 2014, 5-6; Berger and Webster 2006; Correll and Ridgeway 2003.
[105] See Bobo 1999; Ridgeway 2014, 7; Ridgeway, Johnson, and Diekema 1994.

Finally, once status distinctions are established, status *reinforces* inequality, independently from material conditions, via cumulative advantage mechanisms.[106] To begin, consensus effects shape status recognition: the more a state receives recognition, the more others deem it worthy of recognition.[107] In addition, high-status states enjoy privileges that beget more status: they states act as standard-setters, shaping the criteria for status recognition, and as gatekeepers, shaping recognition decisions.[108] Finally, status distinctions involve social closure—or the establishment of a boundary between a status group and outsiders.[109] As such, status distinctions encourage solidarity among high-status states but undermine solidarity among low-status states. While well-connected states attract additional recognition, sparsely-connected states do not.

By coupling the concept of status with a set of assumptions that highlight the concept's distinctive features, this study offers new answers to fundamental questions about status that the conventional approach insufficiently addresses, as I discuss next.

1.3.1 Status Depends on Relational Processes

To begin, my theoretical framework addresses the first question the conventional approach leaves unanswered: Why do material capabilities and status often mismatch? I argue that status depends on a state's position in a social arrangement. Therefore, we should not expect status to go hand in hand with material capabilities (or, for that matter, with state attributes). Because status depends on social recognition, systematic social processes—which cannot be reduced to the qualities of states—influence status.[110] In particular, three relational processes shape status recognition. First, status results from a process of social closure, which involves two aspects. To begin, social closure involves connectedness: high-status actors share dense relations among themselves but sparse relations with

[106] See Smith and Faris 2015. Cumulative advantage is also known as positive feedback, the "Matthew Effect" (whereby the rich tend to get richer), or preferential attachment (whereby popular actors tend to receive more ties); in addition, it involves the dynamic of increasing returns that defines path dependence. See, respectively, Jervis 1997; Merton 1968; Newman 2001; Pierson 2000.

[107] See Betancourt, Kovács, and Otner 2018; Gould 2002; Salganik, Dodds, and Watts 2006.

[108] See Bourdieu 1993; Swartz 1997.

[109] Weber 1978, 43-46.

[110] Previous work suggests the existence of relational patterns in status relations, but does not systematically investigate these patterns. See, for example, Miller et al. 2015, 786-87.

outsiders.[111] Therefore, a state's existing relations influence its propensity to receive recognition. In addition, social closure involves commonality: high-status actors differentiate themselves from outsiders by adopting a distinctive way of life.[112] Therefore, the relevance of a given attribute for status recognition is socially defined, rather than intrinsic to that attribute.[113] Finally, the structure of state relations itself shapes the conditions for status mobility. Because status depends on peer attribution, it is subject to consensus effects: the more a state is recognized, the more others deem it worthy of recognition.[114] In other words, popularity itself brings status.

These relational processes account for some puzzling cases from a conventional standpoint. On the one hand, states at the margins of the international system struggle to earn recognition, even despite changes in their qualities. Despite acquiring nuclear weapons, for example, North Korea did not become a great power because it maintains only tenuous connections with other states—including most recently China, one of its traditional allies. On the other hand, these relational processes imply that states at the core of the international system enjoy considerable advantage in gaining recognition, simply because of their social position. Despite its material weakness at the end of the Second World War, for example, France maintained its high standing by virtue of its relations with the Allied states. As these cases illustrate, status depends on a state's position in a social arrangement, rather than directly on their qualities.

1.3.2 Symbolic Value Depends on the Social Context

In addition, my theoretical framework addresses a second question the conventional approach leaves unanswered: Why do certain state attributes become relevant for status recognition? I argue that state attributes matter for status recognition because of their symbolic value, which depends on the social context. For a given attribute to symbolize status, actors need to share the belief that it represents a given social standing.[115] In particular, state attributes become relevant for sta-

[111] Abbott 1995; Lamont 1992; Lamont and Molnár 2002.
[112] Weber 1978, 932-33; Elias and Scotson 1994; Merton 1972; Tilly 2005.
[113] Mark, Smith-Lovin, and Ridgeway 2009; Ridgeway 1991; Ridgeway and Correll 2006.
[114] See Correll et al. 2017; Ridgeway 2014.
[115] See Dittmar 1992, 6, 79; Goffman 1951, 294-95; O'Neill 2001, 241; Pouliot 2016, 81.

tus recognition when actors share the belief that such attributes symbolize a latent quality: state competence.[116] To explain why certain state attributes matter for status recognition, we thus need to understand how prevailing conceptions of state competence form, depending on who the high-status states are and what they do. High-status states act like standard setters, shaping definitions of state competence in a given era; and as gatekeepers, shaping group boundaries. Prevailing conceptions of state competence become more malleable during critical junctures like major wars, when the way of life associated with the winning state(s) shapes the standards that will be used to evaluate state competence thereafter. As such, critical junctures do more than establish a new pecking order: crucially, they update the standards that inform status recognition among states.

When it comes to its treatment of state attributes, my theoretical framework thus departs from the conventional approach in three ways. First, because status depends on estimations of social honor that may be connected to any kind of symbol, my argument accommodates both material and nonmaterial attributes as symbols of international status. Second, my argument implies that material capabilities impact recognition not because of their functional value, but rather because of their symbolic value (or what they communicate about state competence). Third, because status recognition depends on prevailing conceptions of state competence that change over time, state attributes play a secondary role in the process of status recognition, as I discuss next.

1.3.3 State Attributes Play a Secondary Role

Finally, my theoretical framework addresses a third question the conventional approach leaves unanswered: What is the relationship between state attributes and status? I argue that the relevance of a given attribute for status recognition is socially defined: attributes matter because of their symbolic value, which depends on the social context. In particular, the social context mediates the relevance of state attributes via three mechanisms. First, it is attribute similarity, rather than the possession of attributes per se, that drives recognition among states. This happens because status distinctions involve social closure: By adopting a distinctive way of life, high-status states

[116] See Cuddy et al. 2009; Fiske and Cuddy 2005.

differentiate themselves from outsiders. Second, status recognition is based on a way of life, rather than on separate attributes like nuclear weapons. To evoke status recognition, state attributes need to effectively represent the way of life associated with high status. Finally, the relevance of state attributes for status recognition changes over time, along with the prevailing conceptions of state competence. In particular, because high-status states act like standard-setters and gatekeepers, it matters who they are and how they behave.

1.4 Contributions

This book makes four distinctive contributions to existing scholarship. To begin, while existing research treats status as an actor motivation, this book is the first to investigate the sources of status, focusing on international relations rather than on the state level. As the first sustained, book-length effort to address the question of how countries achieve status, this book makes original contributions from both a theoretical and an empirical standpoints: it develops a theoretical framework that highlights the social nature of status and, accordingly, uses social network analysis tools ideally suited to the study of status. In addition, this book brings research on status in IR in line with research in the social sciences more broadly by integrating an interdisciplinary body of research. As a result, it offers new lessons in important research areas that are rarely linked to status—such as international hierarchies, international order, and power transitions. By establishing status as a distinctive phenomenon both conceptually and empirically, this book enables us to consider the role played by status in key aspects of international politics.

1.4.1 Investigating the Sources of Status

To begin, this book addresses a new and noteworthy question: How do states achieve status? While existing studies show that status motivates state behavior, we still understand little about the sources of status. Scholars traditionally assume that status is a function of state attributes, but do not put this assumption to the test. By choosing certain state attributes a priori, however, scholars cannot assess whether these attributes actually drive status recognition. So how can we know if decision-makers value the same attributes that scholars consider important for status recognition—or if state attributes determine status to begin with?

In this study, I move beyond ranking states based on attributes to test hypotheses about status attainment in the international system. To be empirically tenable, the sources of status need to be subject to falsification, rather than assumed a priori. Instead of takings actors' claims to status at face value, I assess the empirical validity of these claims. The fact that states are more prone to conflict when their recognition falls below their material capabilities, for example, tells us that these actors think that status should be based on military capabilities; however, it does not tell us that status is in fact based on military capabilities. The empirical investigation of status calls for an empirical strategy that moves beyond commonsense assumptions to test hypotheses about the sources of status. Because status is historically contingent, for example, scholars need to develop strategies to detect when the conditions for status attainment have changed. While researchers may have strong priors about which state attributes matter for status recognition, it is important to develop strategies to update these priors over time, as I propose here.

1.4.2 A Consistently Relational Approach

In addition, this book makes a second distinctive contribution: it adopts a consistently relational approach to the study of status. Although status is a relational concept, existing studies assume that it is a function of a state's attributes. In Tilly's words, they conjure an image of individual actors "with variable attributes who pass through a screening process that sorts them according to those attributes into positions that give them differential rewards."[117] In this view, states are sorted into social positions (such as great or emerging power) based on their qualities or the things they have. Empirically, scholars thus study status as a state property, measuring it by ranking states based on their material resources or the proportion of diplomatic representations received. That is, even though diplomatic exchange is a type of social relation, scholars typically treat it like a state attribute.

[117] Tilly 1998, 21-22.

In doing so, they discard information about the structure of diplomatic relations—such as who sends a representation to whom, what their previous history of relations (or lack thereof) is, and what ties they share with third parties. But without this information, it is not possible to examine empirically the relational effects that drive status recognition among states.

By contrast, I adopt a consistently relational approach to the study of status, from both a theoretical and an empirical standpoints. To begin, I develop a network theory of status, arguing that status depends on states' positions in a social arrangement rather than on their qualities. To explain how states achieve status, I theorize the underlying relational effects that drive status recognition in the international system. In particular, I argue that the structure of state relations itself shapes the conditions for status attainment. Because status distinctions involve social closure, a state's existing relations influence its ability to achieve status. That is, connectedness itself brings status. Moreover, consensus effects shape status recognition: the more a state is recognized, the more others deem it worthy of recognition. As such, popularity itself brings recognition. Finally, the relevance of a given state attribute for status recognition is socially defined: a given attribute matters for recognition because of its symbolic value, which depends on the social context.

My argument implies that, to understand how states achieve status, we need to examine the configuration of state relations, rather than merely ranking states based on their attributes. In line with my theoretical framework, I adopt a relational empirical strategy. Since embassies express recognition among states, I use embassy exchange data as a proxy measure of status recognition. But instead of measuring status at the state level (like previous studies), I incorporate information about the structure of diplomatic relations that existing studies discard. Using social network analysis, I examine how the structure of state relations itself shapes the conditions for status attainment, detecting relational patterns that previous studies mention but do not examine empirically. My empirical approach provides the added advantage of generalizability: Because it does not depend on assumptions about which state attributes matter for recognition, my approach can be used to study the sources of international status during any historical period.

More broadly, this study contributes to existing knowledge by showing that status is a distinctive phenomenon both conceptually and empirically—and, as such, is a useful concept for theories of international relations. Although status appeared in two strands of research in IR during the twentieth century, research on status eventually fizzled out. Insufficiently differentiated from material capabilities, status became a residual category. Compared to the first wave of status research in IR, the current wave seems to be at a lower risk of meeting the same fate, since it provides cumulative evidence that status motivates state behavior. At the same time, status has not reached its full potential in IR research yet. By studying status in its own right—as something distinguishable from material capabilities and other state attributes—I hope to show why it matters for international politics. The concept of status can achieve its full potential in IR scholarship when we give due attention to its distinctive feature: its fundamentally social nature. By doing so, we can consider not only how status may increase a state's propensity for conflict, but also how it plays a key role in international cooperation and the maintenance of international order, as I discuss below.

1.4.3 An Interdisciplinary Approach

In addition, this book makes a third distinctive contribution to the study of status: it adopts an interdisciplinary approach, integrating strands of research that rarely come into dialogue. Existing research on status relies on assumptions that, though commonly adopted in the IR discipline, have limited usefulness for the study of status. Crucially, the assumption that status depends on the qualities of states contrasts with research in the social sciences more broadly, which understands status as fundamentally social. This study overcomes this limitation by building off research on status in the social sciences. At the same time, I contextualize status in the international realm by integrating these interdisciplinary insights with research that examines key economic and cultural developments in international relations since the nineteenth century.

By relying on interdisciplinary insights, this study differs from previous ones in its rejection of *particularism*. The conventional approach in IR assumes that status depends on a state's qualities, especially its material capabilities. Behind this assumption is the often implicit notion that, because of anarchy (defined as a self-help system), status attainment among states follows causal processes unlike those in any other social realm. As Tilly notes, particularistic accounts were also common in research on inequality within domestic societies, which initially assumed that inequality based on gender, race, or nationality followed processes unique to each area. As such, "Observers often ground explanations for each form of inequality separately in perennial but peculiar forces. Each one seems sui generis, constituting its own mode of existence." As Tilly argues, however, "the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion in all these cases have such striking resemblances. They must have more common causal properties than particularistic accounts suggest."[118] Following this insight, I argue that categorical inequalities among states result from mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion that are remarkably similar to those observed in other social realms.

1.4.4 General Lessons

Finally, this book makes a fourth distinctive contribution to existing scholarship: it offers new lessons for research on international hierarchies, international order, and power transitions—areas that, despite drawing increasing scholarly attention in recent years, are still rarely linked to status. To begin, the book demonstrates that international hierarchies of status are far from meritocratic systems. By assuming that status is a function of states' qualities, existing studies suggest that status results from the talent or effort of individual states; as such, the best strategy to achieve status involves acquiring certain attributes. By contrast, I demonstrate that the established powers enjoy a cumulative advantage in status attainment, which derives from their social position rather than from their attributes. For emerging powers, this study implies that status recognition is not simply a matter decided at the state level. Rather, recognition as a great power depends on the broader social environment, as it ultimately involves reconfiguring social arrangements and reshaping predominant conceptions of state competence.

In addition, this book demonstrates that the role of status in international politics is broader, and more complex, than commonly assumed. Existing studies tend to equate status-seeking behavior with aggressive behavior, showing that status-dissatisfied states are more prone to conflict.[119]

[118] Tilly 1998, 16.

[119] Notable exceptions are de Carvalho and Neumann 2015; Gilady 2018, 90-120; Wohlforth et al. 2018, which argue

But while status may exacerbate conflict, it can also promote global governance. Since fundamental values like liberal democracy shape status recognition, status hierarchies create structural incentives for states to adopt international norms. This carries with it important implications. Among them: status-seeking behavior may also be cooperative behavior—that is, status may contribute to the maintenance of international order, as status-seeking states have an incentive to adopt prevailing international norms. And while mainstream approaches posit that great powers maintain international order using military or institutional instruments, this book demonstrates that great powers also lead by example, setting standards that other states adopt. As such, hegemony requires upholding existing standards not only internationally, but also domestically.

Finally, the book offers new insight into why disagreements about status can lead to hegemonic wars. Previous work argues that war can result when states receive less recognition than their capabilities would warrant, or when the established powers resist change. However, existing studies fall short of explaining why this happens. Why do the established powers treat some rising powers as legitimate but others as revisionist? This book suggests that disagreements about status emerge when the established and emerging powers have conflicting conceptions of state competence. As such, to assess whether hegemonic transitions will be violent, we should compare the models of statehood put forward by either side. If the hegemonic transition from Britain to the U.S. was peaceful, since both countries shared a similar conception of state competence, a potential transition from the U.S. to China is more likely to spell conflict—as China increasingly questions the liberal democratic foundations of the contemporary international order.

1.5 Plan of the Book

This book is presented in ten chapters. To begin, Chapter 2 defines status as a concept at the intersection of identity and power. Drawing on the concept formation methodology in the tradition of Giovanni Sartori, I define status as an effective claim to social esteem that involves privileges. As

that status may motivate pro-social or cooperative behavior among states.

such, the concept involves two necessary dimensions. First, status requires recognition: for an actor to achieve status, others need to recognize it. Second, status involves hierarchy: depending on an actor's social esteem, they acquire certain privileges. Compared to existing definitions, my conceptualization provides three advantages. First, it emphasizes the social nature of status, rather than reducing status to individual or material factors. Second, it differentiates status from related terms like material capabilities or hierarchy. Finally, it integrates research traditions in IR that rarely come into dialogue: the mainstream literature on status and conflict, which treats status as a means to an end; and the literature on recognition, which treats status as an end in itself.

Next, Chapter 3 develops a network theory of status. Drawing on the Weberian tradition, I argue that status depends on states' positions in a social arrangement, rather than on their qualities. To explain how states achieve status, I theorize the underlying relational effects that drive status recognition in the international system. I argue that the structure of state relations itself shapes the conditions for status attainment. Status reinforces inequality, independently of material conditions, because it involves cumulative advantage: the higher standing a state enjoys, the more it attracts additional recognition. Moreover, the relevance of a given state attribute for status recognition is socially defined: an attribute becomes relevant for status recognition not because of its intrinsic properties, but rather because of its symbolic value—which depends on the social context, especially on who the high-status states are and how they behave.

The next two chapters operationalize my concept of status and validate the proposed measure using multiple sources of evidence. In Chapter 4, I operationalize the concept of status developed in Chapter 2. Because status is a quality that cannot be directly observed, I use embassy exchange data as a proxy measure of status recognition. Under international law, embassy exchange is a longstanding practice that signifies recognition and creates social inequalities among states. Compared to other potential measures of status, embassy exchange provides important advantages: it is relational, behavioral, and multidimensional; moreover, it covers all states over a significant period and avoids measurement bias. While embassy exchange data reasonably meet all of these operationalization criteria, alternative measures present limitations based on two or more of the criteria.

Finally, I dispel common misconceptions about embassy exchange and its use as a measure of status. Next, Chapter 5 integrates qualitative and quantitative evidence to validate embassy exchange as a measure of status. In particular, I conduct two types of validation: content and discriminant validation. First, I show that the network of embassies adequately captures both recognition and hierarchy, the two necessary dimensions of my concept of status. Second, I show that states' positions in the network of embassies are not determined by their material capabilities, in line with the analytical distinction I draw between status and material capabilities.

Chapter 6 then presents the empirical strategy I use to investigate the sources of status in Chapters 7 through 9. Rather than examining status at the state level, I use the network of embassies as my unit of analysis—treating the network structure itself as an object of substantive interest. In the chapter's first section, I explain that social network analysis is ideally suited to investigate the observable implications from my theory due to its ability to infer social structure by examining the patterns of relations among actors. In particular, network analysis enables me to empirically uncover relational patterns in status recognition that are not observable using conventional methods. Next, I derive observable implications from my theory of status for diplomatic recognition among states. The chapter ends with a presentation of my empirical analysis plan.

To kick things off, Chapter 7 examines the implications of my argument for the formation of ties in the diplomatic network. Leveraging inferential network analysis, which enables me to directly test hypotheses involving network effects, I assess why states send embassies to certain destinations and not others. I show that my relational model performs much better than conventional explanations in theorizing the underlying dynamics of the diplomatic network. To begin, a state's existing relations affect its ability to achieve status: states prove more likely to recognize states that recognize them in return or that share diplomatic partners with them. Moreover, status is self-reinforcing: the more a state receives recognition, the more it attracts additional recognition. Finally, it is attribute similarity—rather than the possession of attributes per se—that drives recognition: states recognize those states that are like them, rather than the states with the largest share of attributes.

Next, Chapter 8 examines the implications of my argument at the structural level of the diplomatic network. First, I show that the network has a core-periphery structure—whereby states can be divided into a well-connected core, comprised mostly of Western or Western-aligned states, and a sparsely-connected periphery. States in the core are very likely to exchange embassies among themselves but not to send embassies to the periphery. By contrast, states in the periphery are more likely to send embassies to states in the core than in the periphery. As a result, the size and the composition of the network's core remain stable over time, even as the number of states in the system increases. Second, I show that membership in the network's core depends on a Western way of life that includes fundamental values like liberal democracy. Predominant conceptions of state competence thus involve not only the ability to fend for oneself under anarchy, as argued by the conventional approach, but also a Western standard of civilization.

Complementing the previous chapters, Chapter 9 uses the case of nuclear weapons to examine why certain state attributes become relevant for status recognition. While the conventional approach treats nuclear weapons as a status symbol, the relationship between nuclear weapons and status remains unexplored. I argue that state attributes matter for status recognition because of their symbolic value, which depends on the social context, rather than because of their functional value, or their destructive capacity. In particular, since nuclear weapons became stigmatized under the nonproliferation regime, I do not expect nuclearization to improve a country's standing after 1970. Using the synthetic control method, I first show that the acquisition of nuclear weapons does not increase the recognition a state receives. Using network analysis, I then show that nuclear weapons do not serve as a basis for social closure in the international system.

To conclude, Chapter 10 offers three general lessons based on this study for research on international hierarchies, international order, and power transitions.

Part I

A Relational Framework

2

What Is International Status?

Existing studies acknowledge the social nature of status, but do not explore this aspect in depth. To begin, previous research focuses on the state level, treating status as a motivation behind state action—or as something that comes from within states, rather than from state relations. Moreover, scholars traditionally define status as a state's ranking based on valued attributes, especially its military and economic capabilities—such that the richer or militarily stronger a country is, the higher its standing should be. Adopting an individualist approach, existing studies treat status as a function of the qualities of states, and especially of the things that they have. However, this approach leads to generalized fetishism, as it mistakes social relations for actors' properties; induces material reductionism, as it often equates status with the possession of material resources; and incurs a fallacy of composition, since it assumes that social inequalities result from the intentions of actors. And because status is insufficiently differentiated from material capabilities, it is not clear why we need the concept of status in the first place. As a result, status remains in the background in IR theories, invoked when some aspect of international politics cannot be explained using factors like security or survival. While considered as a fundamental element of international relations, status nonetheless remains a residual category.

In this chapter, I address the limitations from existing approaches by adopting an interdisciplinary approach. Drawing from a rich tradition of research in the social sciences, I develop a new conceptualization that highlights the fundamentally social (and relational) nature of status. Following the Weberian tradition, I define status as an effective claim to social esteem that involves privileges. As a concept at the intersection of identity and power, status involves two necessary dimensions: recognition (or respect) and hierarchy (or ranking). On the one hand, status requires recognition: for an actor to achieve a particular status, others need to recognize it. On the other hand, status involves hierarchy: depending on a group's level of social esteem, group members become entitled to certain privileges. By itself, neither dimension constitutes status; that is, status cannot be reduced to either recognition or hierarchy. Only when both dimensions are present are we dealing with status. By proposing a conceptualization of status that encompasses both recognition and hierarchy, this chapter integrates two traditions in IR research that rarely come into dialogue: the mainstream literature on status and conflict, which usually treats status as a means to an end; and the literature on recognition, which usually treats status as an end in itself.

Compared to existing definitions of status, the proposed conceptualization offers important advantages. Instead of reducing status to individual or material factors—such as states' properties, material resources, or intentions—my conceptualization emphasizes the fundamentally social nature of status. By integrating interdisciplinary insights to conceptualize status, this chapter helps bring research on status in IR in line with research in the social sciences more broadly. In addition, my conceptualization differentiates status from related terms like material capabilities and hierarchy. By showing that status is analytically distinct from either term, I aim to move status from its current position as a residual category in IR to its rightful place as a concept central to the study of international politics. The development of a clear conceptualization of status in this chapter allows me to develop a relational theory of status in Chapter 3 and, accordingly, to develop a relational empirical strategy to investigate the sources of international status in the following chapters. As such, this chapter lays the conceptual groundwork for us to consider the role that status plays in important phenomena in international relations—such as international cooperation and the maintenance of international order—that are still rarely associated with status.

Each of the chapter's sections deals with a different aspect of the conceptualization of status. The first section begins by introducing the methodology I use to conceptualize status, which draws on the literature on concept formation in the tradition of Giovanni Sartori.[1] In particular, I use the framework of three-level concepts and the structure of necessary and sufficient conditions to define status. In addition, I consciously explore the trade-offs among the desirable features in a concept—such as differentiation, familiarity, parsimony, depth, field utility, and theoretical utility.[2] Drawing on an interdisciplinary body of research, I locate status as a concept at the intersection of identity and power. At the abstract level, I define status as an effective claim to social esteem that involves privileges. At the intermediate level, the concept of status thus involves two necessary dimensions: recognition and hierarchy. The chapter's second section then focuses on the former dimension, while the third section discusses the latter dimension. In each of these sections, I define the semantic field of status by examining the relationship between status and, respectively, two important concepts in the study of politics: identity and power.

2.1 Concept Formation Methodology

In this chapter, I move from the background concept of status to a systematized concept of status. As Adcock and Collier note, a background concept "encompasses the constellation of potentially diverse meanings associated with a given concept."[3] As discussed below, a variety of definitions of status (and related terms) are used in IR. By contrast, a systematized concept refers to the specific formulation of a concept developed by a researcher. In this chapter, I first examine existing definitions of status and their limitations. Next, I develop a systematized concept of status based on an explicit definition and aimed at overcoming the limitations from existing definitions. This systematized concept serves as the foundation for the development of a relational theory of status in the next chapter, as well as for the operationalization of status in Chapter 4.

To conceptualize international status, I draw on the literature on concept formation in the tradition of Giovanni Sartori, which provides clear guidelines for the development of concepts in the

[1] Sartori 1970, 1975.
[2] Gerring 1999, 2012.
[3] Adcock and Collier 2001, 530.

social sciences. This approach offers two important advantages given my goals in this project. To begin, it provides a coherent framework for concept formation, allowing me to consciously explore the trade-offs involved in the process of conceptualizing status. Moreover, this approach provides a systematic way to address the "what is" question before dealing with the "how much" question.[4] In other words, a careful conceptualization of status in this chapter provides a clear roadmap for the operationalization of status to be conducted in Chapter 4.[5]

I use the framework of "three-level" concepts to conceptualize status.[6] My conceptualization comprises three levels that range from most to least abstract: the basic level, the secondary level, and the indicator level. While this chapter deals with the basic and secondary levels, Chapter 4 deals with the indicator level. At the basic, most abstract level, I define status as an effective claim to social esteem that involves privileges. At the secondary level—which connects the basic level to the more concrete indicator level—the proposed conceptualization involves two key dimensions: recognition and hierarchy. The two dimensions constitute status, rather than causing it. That is, the relationship between the basic-level concept and the secondary-level dimensions is one of identity rather than one of causation. In particular, I use the structure of necessary and sufficient conditions, rather than a family resemblance approach, to conceptualize status. I treat each of the secondary-level dimensions of the concept of status—recognition and hierarchy—as a necessary but not sufficient condition of status. I construct the concept of status as an ideal type; as such, the concept's extension (or the range of cases covered by the concept) is zero or almost zero.[7]

To formulate a useful concept of status, I follow a set of criteria proposed by Gerring and deemed critical to concept formation. My conceptualization seeks a balance among the desirable features in a concept: differentiation, familiarity, parsimony, depth, field utility, and theoretical utility.[8] Following this approach, a concept should be bounded or analytically *differentiated* from other concepts. A clear conceptualization differentiates a concept from neighboring concepts, delineating the

[4] Sartori 1970.
[5] See Adcock and Collier 2001, 531.
[6] See Goertz 2006.
[7] Goertz 2006, 83-85; Sartori 1970, 1041.
[8] Gerring 1999. See also Gerring 2012.

semantic field in which that concept is located.[9] In some cases, further conceptual differentiation may be desirable. If there are aspects of a phenomenon that are important enough to justify the creation of subtypes, for example, differentiation may prove useful. As Collier and Levitsky point out, the creation of subtypes of democracy, such as parliamentary or federal democracy, provides an example of useful conceptual differentiation: while each subtype of democracy can be included in the general definition of democracy, it also highlights important aspects that the broader concept of democracy neglects.[10] But even though a concept should be differentiated from other concepts, the strategy of making a definition more specific to highlight certain aspects (or to capture new cases) should be used with caution because it (1) unsettles the semantic field in which scholars are working; (2) tends to provoke definitional gerrymandering (or scholarly disputes over definitions); and (3) is bound to create confusion and miscommunication among researchers.[11]

As Gerring points out, excessive differentiation tends to compromise the other desirable features in a concept—familiarity, parsimony, depth, field utility, and theoretical utility.[12] First, excessive differentiation compromises a concept's *familiarity*, or the extent to which the concept resonates with established usage. Since closely related terms are used interchangeably in everyday language and in social scientific research, fine-grained distinctions among them tend to be idiosyncratic, and therefore hard to comprehend and recall. Second, excessive differentiation compromises *parsimony*, since strict definitions tend to involve an extensive list of attributes that serve to distinguish one term from the other. Third, fine-grained distinctions are likely to reduce a concept's *depth*, or its "ability to bundle characteristics."[13] As a concept get more differentiated, it emphasizes more specific aspects of a phenomenon, and so tends to provide a narrower picture of the phenomenon of interest. Fourth, excessive differentiation undermines a concept's *field utility*. By emphasizing specific aspects of a phenomenon, scholars unnecessarily limit the range of scholarly communities using a given concept, as well as the range of phenomena the concept is intended to cover. By highlighting

[9] Gerring 1999, 375-379; Gerring 2012, 127-30.
[10] Collier and Levitsky 1997, 435.
[11] Collier and Levitsky 1997, 444-445. See also Collier and Mahon 1993; Sartori 1970.
[12] Gerring 1999. See also Gerring 2012.
[13] Gerring 1999, 380.

certain aspects of a phenomenon while ignoring others, definitions that privilege differentiation ultimately narrow the scope of enquiry. Finally, the *theoretical utility* of such definitions—or their usefulness for theory development and assessment—is also restricted.

My conceptualization of status thus seeks a balance between differentiation and the other desirable features in a concept: familiarity, parsimony, depth, field utility, and theoretical utility. As such, the proposed conceptualization overcomes two limitations found in existing definitions of status in IR. On the one hand, certain definitions insufficiently differentiate status from terms like material capabilities or hierarchy. As a result, they render status a residual category. On the other hand, certain definitions excessively differentiate status either from related terms like honor and respect, or from existing definitions in the social sciences. As a result, they create conceptual confusion and an unnecessary fragmentation in the study of status. By contrast, I conscious explore below the trade-offs involved in the conceptualization of status.

2.1.1 Problem 1: Too Little Differentiation

To begin, some definitions of status in IR insufficiently differentiate the concept of status from related terms such as material capabilities or hierarchy. On the one hand, some scholars define status as a state's reputation for military strength, insufficiently differentiating status from material capabilities. But as discussed above, status and material capabilities often mismatch in practice. And importantly, such a mismatch is theoretically interesting—since states are more prone to conflict when they receive less international recognition than their capabilities would warrant. Yet, by treating status as a function of states' material capabilities, the conventional approach cannot explain why the two aspects often mismatch. More broadly, this approach reduces the analytical usefulness of status. If status refers to material capabilities plus an error term, it is not clear why we need the concept of status in the first place. To prove analytically useful, the concept of status thus needs to be differentiated from the notion of material capabilities.

On the other hand, some scholars define status as a state's position in a hierarchy, but fall short of specifying the kind of hierarchy that status involves. For example, Renshon defines status as "*standing or rank in a status community*," whereas a status community refers to "a hierarchy composed of the group of actors that a state perceives itself as being in competition with."[14] Hierarchy thus seems to assume a subjective form, as actors may perceive a state as competing with different groups; by contrast, the social aspect of status becomes more muted. Similarly, Dafoe and colleagues define status as "attributes of an individual or social roles, especially those attributes related to position in a deference hierarchy."[15] In this definition, hierarchy becomes associated with deference. However, the authors do not elaborate on this point, leaving important questions unaddressed. In particular: What is a deference hierarchy, and how does it differ from other kinds of hierarchy? As existing research in other areas indicates, hierarchies may be based on different dimensions. Following a Weberian approach, for example, some IR scholars posit that states can differentiate themselves based on material resources, social esteem, or authority.[16] Drawing on this work, I posit below that status involves a specific kind of hierarchy: one based on social esteem, rather than based on either material resources or authority.

2.1.2 Problem 2: Too Much Differentiation

Yet other definitions of status in IR excessively differentiate the concept either from closely related concepts or from existing definitions of status in the social sciences. On the one hand, some scholars propose new definitions of status without much conceptual elaboration, neglecting a rich tradition of research on status in the social sciences. On the other hand, some scholars draw boundaries among status and closely related terms.[17] As Table 2.1 shows, IR scholars use a diversity of terms—ranging from status to honor and respect—to discuss a similar notion, creating a cacophony of idiosyncratic definitions. As Gerring puts it:

[14] Renshon 2017, 4; see also Ward 2017, 35. Renshon adds that status has three "critical attributes": it is "positional (relative, not absolute, values are most salient), perceptual (based on beliefs), and social (the beliefs that matter are those higher-order, collective beliefs about where a given actor "stands" relative to others)." However, this approach falls short of specifying the kind of hierarchy that status involves. See Renshon 2017, 21; for a similar list of conceptual attributes, see Larson, Paul, and Wohlforth 2014, 7-8.

[15] Dafoe, Renshon, and Huth 2014, 373.

[16] See Keene 2014; Schulz 2019. See also Scott 1996; Weber 1978.

[17] See, for example, Lebow 2008, 62-69; O'Neill 2001, 193-94, 244; Wolf 2011, 114-16.

Table 2.1. Definitions of Status and Related Terms in the IR Literature

Term	*Definition*	*Author(s)*
Status	Collective perceptions of one's position vis-à-vis a comparison group, based on estimations of how one's characteristics rank relative to others	Barnhart (2020, 16)
	Attributes of an individual or social roles, especially those attributes related to position in a deference hierarchy	Dafoe, Renshon, and Huth (2014, 373)
	Collective beliefs about a state's ranking in valued attributes	Larson, Paul, and Wohlforth (2014, 7)
	A group's standing on some trait valued by society	Larson and Shevchenko (2010, 69)
	An actor's standing or rank in a hierarchy composed of the group of actors that a state perceives itself as being in competition with	Renshon (2017, 4)
	An actor's position within a social hierarchy, as recognized by others based on consensually valued characteristics	Ward (2017, 35)
Prestige	A reputation for power, and military power in particular	Gilpin (1981, 31)
	The reputation for power, which is based on military strength	Morgenthau (1948, 55); Morgenthau (2006, 89-90)
Honor	The desire to stand out among one's peers	Lebow (2008, 5)
	A quality within the individual as perceived by the group	O'Neill (2001, 244)
Recognition	An inter-subjective relation constructed through rapport between an actor's asserted image and the image returned by others	Lindemann (2011, 70)
	A social act in which another actor is constituted as a subject with legitimate social standing	Murray (2010, 660)
	Acceptance by others of one's existence as a subject of a certain kind	Ringmar (2002, 119)
Respect	Acceptance by others of the position one expects to deserve	Wolf (2011, 106)

Older concepts are redefined, leaving etymological trails that confuse the unwitting reader. New words are created to refer to things that were perhaps poorly articulated through existing concepts, creating a highly complex lexical terrain (given that old concepts continue to circulate). Word with similar meanings crowd around each other, vying for attention and stealing each other's attributes. Thus, we play musical chairs with words, in Giovanni Sartori's memorable phrase.[18]

The proliferation of definitions produces what Sartori calls a "Tower of Babel trend."[19] This trend compromises IR research on status in two ways. First, idiosyncratic definitions (or fine-grained distinctions among closely related terms) tend to cause conceptual confusion. As a result, they reduce a concept's familiarity as well as its parsimony. Second, the proliferation of definitions leads to an unnecessary fragmentation of the study of status across different intellectual traditions. As result, it reduces the concept's field utility and theoretical utility. In particular, a review of existing research reveals a lack of dialogue between two research camps, which roughly map onto the different terms shown in Table 2.1. On the one hand, mainstream approaches emphasize hierarchy or rank, treating status (or prestige) as a means to an end. Existing work in the realist tradition, for example, draws from economics research to highlight the competitive or positional nature of status.[20] On the other hand, alternative approaches emphasize honor, respect, or recognition—treating status as an end in itself. Drawing from political theory or social psychology, these approaches place status as an intrinsic human motivation, rather than as a means to achieve goals like security or wealth.[21] But by focusing on different dimensions of the same phenomenon, existing definitions ultimately reduce the concept's depth. In particular, fine-grained definitions ignore that status, much like power, can be either an end in itself or a means to other ends. In sum, like insufficient differentiation, excessive differentiation thus compromises the other desirable features in a concept.

2.1.3 A Goldilocks Approach: My Definition of Status

To develop my conceptualization of status, I draw from a rich tradition of research in the social sciences. I use as my point of departure Weber's classical definition of status, which sociologists have

[18] Gerring 2012, 113. See also Sartori 1975, 9; Sartori 1984, 38, 52-53.
[19] Sartori 1975, 7.
[20] Gilpin 1981; Morgenthau 1948; Schweller 1999; Wohlforth 2009. See also Frank 1985; Gurr 1970; Hirsch 1976.
[21] This idea is consistent with IR research on ontological security, which argues that states may become attached to relationships like enduring rivalries even at the expense of their physical security. See Mitzen 2006; Steele 2005.

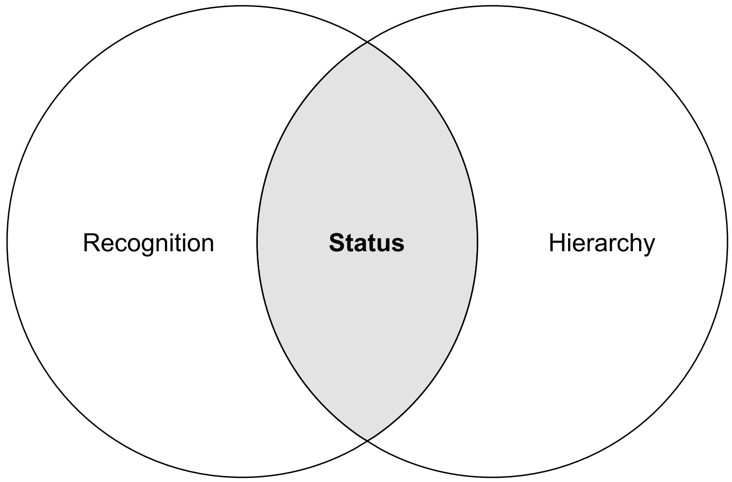


Figure 2.1. Necessary Dimensions of the Concept of Status

used extensively to investigate status in domestic societies.[22] Weber defines status as "an effective claim to social esteem in terms of positive or negative privileges."[23] Based on this definition, I develop a conceptualization of status that encompasses two dimensions: recognition and hierarchy. I understand each dimension as a necessary but insufficient condition of status. By itself, neither dimension constitutes status; that is, status cannot be reduced to either recognition or hierarchy. Only when both dimensions are present are we dealing with status. In other words, I consider status to operate at the intersection of both dimensions, as illustrated in Figure 2.1.

My conceptualization seeks a balance among the desirable features in a concept—namely, differentiation, familiarity, parsimony, depth, field utility, and theoretical utility. On the one hand, I *differentiate* the concept of status from related terms in three ways. First, I differentiate status from material capabilities by proposing a conceptualization that emphasizes social esteem rather than the qualities of states or the things that they have. Second, I differentiate status from hierarchy by connecting status to a specific kind of hierarchy, based on social esteem rather than material resources or authority. Finally, I define the semantic field of status by examining the relationship between status and, respectively, two important concepts in the study of politics: identity and power. As

[22] Lamont 2001; Ridgeway 2014; Scott 1996.
[23] Weber 1978, 305.

Gerring notes, a clear conceptualization requires differentiating the concept of interest from related concepts, or delineating the semantic field in which the concept is located.[24] I consider the concept of status as closely related to the concepts of identity and power, such that in practice they are rarely found in isolation. In particular, because the concept of status involves both recognition and hierarchy, I locate status as a concept at the intersection of identity and power. Yet analytically, status cannot be reduced to either identity or power, since each concept involves distinctive dimensions that the other concepts lack, as I discuss below.

On the other hand, I curtail excessive differentiation by incorporating both recognition and hierarchy into my concept of status. Instead of differentiating status from closely related terms—such as prestige, honor, recognition, or respect—I conceive of status as a complex phenomenon with two deeply interrelated dimensions: recognition and hierarchy. Based on the Weberian tradition in the study of status, I posit that both of these dimensions constitute necessary conditions of the broader concept of status, rather than independent dimensions that should be studied separately.[25] This approach enables me to reduce both conceptual confusion and the unnecessary fragmentation of the study of status. Compared to existing definitions, my conceptualization offers an important advantage: it integrates insights from two research traditions in IR that rarely come into dialogue. In particular, my definition straddles the divide between (1) mainstream approaches that emphasize the hierarchy dimension, treating status as a means to an end; and (2) alternative approaches that emphasize the recognition dimension, treating status as an end in itself.

Because it seeks just the right amount of differentiation between status and other concepts, the proposed conceptualization also reasonably meets the other criteria that make for a good concept in the social sciences. To begin, my definition is consistent with a rich tradition of status research in the social sciences while avoiding the use of jargon—thus enhancing the concept's *familiarity* to both scholars and non-specialists. Moreover, my definition of status reduces a complex phenomenon to a couple of dimensions with a few well-defined attributes, ensuring the concept's *parsimony*. In addition, I bundle two aspects usually considered in isolation the IR literature—hierarchy and

[24] See Gerring 1999, 375-379.
[25] See, for example, Fraser 2000, 2001; Ridgeway 2014.

recognition—to develop a *deeper* conceptualization that captures the fundamental aspects of status. As a result, my definition broadens the range of scholarly communities that can use the concept, as well as the range of phenomena the concept is intended to cover, thus enhancing the concept's *field utility*. Finally, the proposed conceptualization serves as the foundation for a relational theory of status that highlights the distinctive contribution of status to the study of international politics, thus enhancing the concept's *theoretical utility*.

In the next two sections, I discuss in more detail each of the necessary dimensions of my concept of status—recognition and hierarchy.

2.2 The First Dimension: Recognition (or Respect)

Recognition is the first necessary dimension in my concept of status. As Weber puts it, status involves "an effective claim to social esteem:" for an actor to achieve a particular status, others have to recognize it. The mere aspiration for a given status is not enough to achieve it; a successful claim requires external recognition.[26] In other words, recognition has a constitutive effect on a state's status, rather than merely a declaratory effect, whereby a previously existing status is simply acknowledged by others.[27] For example, a state may claim to be a great power, but great power status depends on whether other states (and especially the established great powers) consider that claim as legitimate. In fact, the historical record contains prominent examples of aspiring great powers, such as Wilhelmine Germany or Russia since the time of Peter the Great, that nonetheless failed to achieve the desired recognition.[28] As such, status cannot be reduced to the intentions of a given state; rather, it requires recognition from a broader community. Recognition of great power status, for example, can be formal—as in the institution of permanent membership in the UN Security Council or in the Council of the League of Nations—or informal, expressed by equal treatment or

[26] IR scholars working on recognition emphasize this point. See Lindemann 2011; Murray 2010; Ringmar 2002; Wendt 2003. The intuition behind this argument also appears in mainstream scholarship on status, though it is not explored in depth. See Dafoe, Renshon, and Huth 2014, 375-76; Larson, Paul, and Wohlforth 2014, 10.

[27] For reviews of the related literature on the constitutive and declaratory effects of recognition for state creation (rather than state status), see Agné et al. 2013; Bartelson 2013; Erman 2013.

[28] Neumann 2008; Renshon 2017, Ch. 6.

frequent consultations with the established great powers.[29]

In particular, status involves the acknowledgment of a state's social esteem, rather than merely of its attributes or material capabilities. As Weber observes, status involves social esteem—a "social estimation of honor" that may be connected with any type of symbol (or attribute with a socially recognized meaning).[30] Because status depends on social esteem, state attributes play only an indirect role in the process of status recognition. State attributes do not affect status directly, because of what they enable a state to do. For example, North Korea acquired nuclear weapons that increased its coercive capabilities, allowing Pyongyang to threaten or inflict considerable harm on neighboring states. However, North Korea was not recognized as a great power because it acquired nuclear weapons. Much to the contrary, the acquisition of nuclear weapons seems to have consolidated North Korea's status as a deviant or pariah state.

As the example illustrates, state attributes affect status indirectly, because of what they communicate to others about a state's quality.[31] Status primarily involves identification processes in which an actor gains admission into a club once members consider that the actor follow the club's rules of membership.[32] As Weber notes, the main expression of status refers to the identification with the distinctive way of life (or set of behaviors and practices) expected from the members of a given group.[33] For example, admission into formal clubs in international relations—such as the European Union (EU), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), or the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)—depends on standards such as democracy, human rights, and economic liberalism. On the other hand, deviations from a group's standards of membership result in disapproval from the group's members. In fact, a club may even revoke an actor's membership when the actor's behavior violates the rules of membership. In 2014, for example, the G7 decided to suspend Russia from the group, noting that Russia's forceful annexation of Crimea con-

[29] See Levy 1983, 17-18.

[30] Weber 1978, 932. Social esteem does not imply friendship; that is, other actors do not necessarily perceive high-status actors as warm, considerate, or authentic. As sociology research indicates, low-status actors may privately question the considerateness and authenticity of high-status actors. See Hahl and Zuckerman 2014.

[31] Form and Stone 1957; Goffman 1951.

[32] See Clunan 2014, 279.

[33] Scott 1996, 31; Weber 1978, 305, 538, 932.

tradicted the group's "shared beliefs and responsibilities."[34]

The symbolic value of a given state attribute—or what the attribute communicates about a state's quality—depends on social conventions, which shape a group's way of life or its standards for membership.[35] Social conventions regulate status recognition, determining the kinds of symbols and privileges that should "go together." Conventions are socially shared, and can be written or unwritten. As social psychologists note, conventions provide the basis for informational social influence: they describe what is commonly done and inform behavior via example.[36] During social interactions, actors use the behavior of others as evidence of reality; by observing what relevant others do, one can choose how to act.[37] In particular, social conventions reflect prevailing interpretations of what it means to be an upstanding member in a given group. In the international context, for example, certain conventions have determined what it means to be a "modern" or "civilized" state since the nineteenth century, as I discuss below.

From a theoretical standpoint, social conventions are the most interesting feature of status. To Weber, the search for the ultimate status symbol—or the attribute originally used for status distinctions—is of little interest. Status symbols vary across societies, are frequently chosen arbitrarily, and often become less relevant over time. What is puzzling, instead, is how conventions can perpetuate social divisions, even the initial reasons for status distinctions are forgotten.[38] Because conventions depend on social legitimation, they are bound to change over time, along with the prevailing practices and discourse within a group. As Elster notes, conventions work like equilibria: they matter because actors converge around them, rather than because of their specific content.[39] As such, conventions reflect social equilibria, rather than an actor's intrinsic "good" taste (or superior status). Likewise, Elster makes a similar point: "The snob follows the social norm, while believing that he simply has superior taste. When the norm changes, his preferences change with it. It is not

[34] *G7*. "The Hague Declaration." 24 March 2014. https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/03/24/hague-declaration.

[35] Weber 1978, 34, 307, 319-24.

[36] Deutsch and Gerard 1955.

[37] Cialdini, Reno, and Kallgren 1990; Cialdini 2003; Shaffer 1983.

[38] Scott 1996, 32; Weber 1978, 387.

[39] Elster 1989, 12.

that he has a taste for conformity, only that his tastes conform to those of others. The behavior of others is the cause of his utility function, not an argument in it."[40]

Importantly, recognition and conventions do not obviate one another. On the one hand, the existence of conventions does not imply that recognition is merely declaratory—or that membership in a club follows automatically once an actor fulfills the membership criteria, regardless of whether current members recognize the aspiring member as a peer.[41] The political act of recognition cannot reduced to a technical issue just because rules of membership exist. On the other hand, rules of membership do not become irrelevant just because recognition is a discretionary or political act. To the contrary: to be legitimate, acts of recognition typically have to be grounded on the pertinent rules of membership.[42] Conventions thus work as legitimating heuristics in the inherently political process of recognition.[43] Status recognition often involves public processes of justification—that is, the giving of reasons that requires acceptance (publicly if not privately) from a group's members.[44] Understanding the dynamics of status recognition thus requires understanding processes of legitimation in international relations, as I discuss in the next chapter.

2.2.1 A Social, Relational Definition

By defining status based on recognition and social esteem, I depart from the conventional approach to status in IR in three important ways. First, my conceptualization shifts the focus from state attributes to state relations. I define status in network terms, positing that high-status states are those

[40] Elster 1989, 108.

[41] The literature on state creation in international law makes a similar point. Even though membership in international society is usually conditioned on criteria such as control over a territory and population, state recognition remains a matter at the discretion of the recognizing state. See Kelsen 1941, 605, 609-10. See also Coggins 2011; Österud 1997.

[42] The literature on state creation in international law makes a similar point. The recognition of a new state that does not fulfill the criteria for statehood is considered a violation of international law, as it infringes upon the rights of the existing state from which the new state attempts to separate. See Kelsen 1941, 610; Lauterpacht 1944, 391-396. It is no coincidence that states usually coordinate their acts of recognition, so as to avoid positions that may be perceived as illegitimate. See Crawford 1996.

[43] See Wight 1972.

[44] See Goddard 2006; Jackson 2002, 2006.

that receive recognition from the relevant peers.[45] In shifting the focus to state relations, my conceptualization overcomes the generalized fetishism that often characterizes studies of international status. Existing definitions of status tend to emphasize state attributes; as a result, they neglect the relational processes whereby states ultimately achieve status. By contrast, my definition is agnostic about which state attributes should serve as a basis for social estimations of honor in a given context. Because the symbolic meaning of state attributes depends on inter-subjective understandings, it varies over time and across contexts. My definition implies that, to understand how states achieve status, we need to examine how actors define social esteem in a given context, rather than merely ranking states based on certain attributes.

Second, my conceptualization departs from the conventional approach because it highlights the fundamentally social (and relational) nature of status. In doing so, it overcomes the fallacy of composition that often characterizes studies of status in IR. Existing research tends to adopt an individualist approach, treating status as a function of the qualities of states and especially the things that states have. As such, the conventional approach derives social inequalities entirely from the properties of individual actors. By contrast, my conceptualization focuses on social aspects—recognition, social esteem, and conventions—that cannot be reduced to either the intentions or the behavior of individual actors. I understand status as something that results from relations among states and groups of states, rather than from the qualities of states.

Third, my definition comports with the empirical observation that symbols of international status can be material—things that states have—or ideational—norms that states adopt.[46] In doing so, it overcomes the material reductionism that often characterizes studies of status in IR. The conventional approach usually treats status as a function of material capabilities, often to the detriment of other factors. But as important studies demonstrate, norms supply yardsticks for differentiating and ranking states, providing actors with the raw material for status distinctions.[47] The relevance of norms for status evaluations becomes clear, for example, in then U.S. Deputy Secretary of State

[45] My approach is consistent with a long tradition of studies on status in the social sciences. See, for example, Bothner, Smith, and White 2010; Gould 2002; Ridgeway 1978; Smith and Faris 2015.

[46] de Carvalho and Neumann 2015; Clunan 2014, 274; Miller et al. 2015; Neumann 2008; Pouliot 2014.

[47] Cooley and Snyder 2015; Kelley and Simmons 2015; Towns 2012.

Robert Zoellick's call in 2005 for China to become a "responsible stakeholder," or a state that matches its economic growth with a commitment to the principles of capitalism, human rights, and democracy.[48] Similarly, immediately following the 2016 presidential elections in the U.S., then German Chancellor Angela Merkel issued a statement that emphasized democratic values as the foundation for close transatlantic relations and for continued U.S.-Germany cooperation.[49]

As these examples indicate, material resources do not determine status, even though the two dimensions may correlate in practice. As Weber notes, status relations are analytically distinct from class relations: whereas wealth is the currency in the latter, social honor is the currency in the former.[50] In fact, high-status groups adamantly oppose claims to base social ranking exclusively on material resources, as the fulfillment of these claims would undermine the status hierarchy.[51] If material resources determined status, status relations would collapse into class relations, and the nouveau riche would enjoy access to the same privileges as old money does.[52]

2.2.2 Status and Identity

Because recognition is a necessary dimension of status, the concepts of status and identity partially overlap. To clarify the conceptual relationship between status and identity, I compare next the main dimensions of each concept using Brubaker and Cooper's conceptualization of identity.[53] To begin, Brubaker and Cooper note that the term "identity" has disparate meanings in the social sciences, which results in ambiguity and conceptual confusion. To address this problem, Brubaker and Cooper suggest that scholars use instead a set of terms that focus on specific meanings associated identity. In particular, they disaggregate the general concept of identity into five terms: (self- and

[48] Zoellick 2005.
[49] Merkel 2016.
[50] Weber 1978, 926.
[51] Weber 1978, 936.
[52] This observation is consistent, for example, with popular accounts of relations among affluent families in New York during the Gilded Age, according to which established families looked down on newcomers despite the former's considerable wealth.
[53] See Brubaker and Cooper 2000.

external) identification, self-understanding, commonality, connectedness, and groupness.[54] Given their active and processual nature, these terms provide the added advantage of highlighting *who* conducts the identification or categorization of a given actor. For these reasons, I choose Brubaker and Cooper's taxonomy as a baseline for comparison.

Figure 2.2 illustrates the conceptual relationship between status and identity. The figure shows that, while the two concepts partially overlap, each involves distinctive features. On the one hand, status overlaps with identity through the recognition dimension, which is a necessary condition in my concept of status. In particular, recognition maps onto four of the dimensions of identity proposed by Brubaker and Cooper. First, since effective claims to status require recognition, status implies *external identification*—or how an actor is identified by others. Second, because the principal expression of status refers to the identification with a group and its distinctive way of life, status also involves *groupness*—or "the sense of belonging to a distinctive, bounded, solidary group."[55] In addition, status involves two other dimensions of identity. Because high-status groups differentiate themselves from outsiders by adopting distinctive symbols, status involves *commonality*—or the sharing of common attributes. And because identification with a group often imposes restrictions on social contact, relations tend to become dense within the group but sparse with outsiders. As such, status also involves *connectedness*—or the sharing of relational ties.

But while status overlaps with identity through the recognition dimension, each concept also involves distinctive dimensions. On the one hand, identity involves two dimensions—self-identification and self-understanding—that are not necessary conditions of status. While status involves identification processes that occur at the social level, both self-identification and self-understanding refer to processes that occur at the actor level. Status does not necessarily involve *self-identification*, or how the actor identifies themselves. As Brubaker and Cooper note, self- and external identification need not converge, even though the two aspects influence one another.[56] Likewise, status need not involve *self-understanding*—a dispositional term that designates "one's sense of who one is, of

[54]See Brubaker and Cooper 2000, 14, 20. We can treat each of these terms as a sufficient condition for the concept of identity, since each term can be used separately, in lieu of the more general concept of identity.

[55]Brubaker and Cooper 2000, 20.

[56]Brubaker and Cooper 2000, 15.

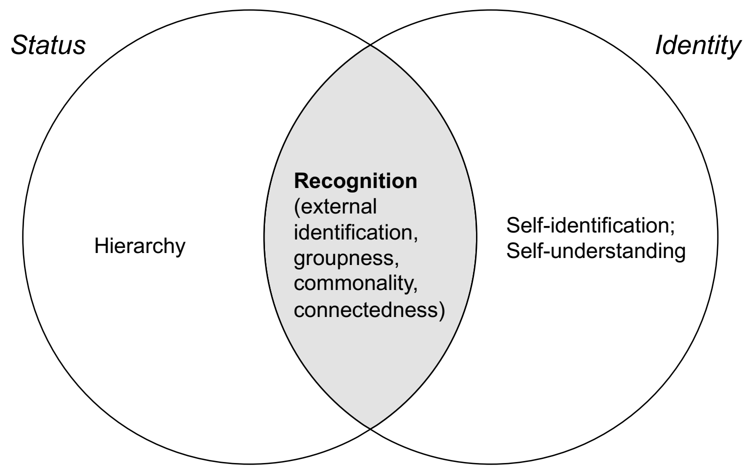


Figure 2.2. Conceptual Relationship Between Status and Identity.
Notes: Comparison between my concept of status and the concept of identity proposed by Brubaker and Cooper (2000).

one's social location, and of how (given the first two) one is prepared to act."[57] In fact, the distinction between status (a social-level process) on the one hand, and self-identification or understanding (actor-level processes) on the other hand, enables us to understand why the two dimensions sometimes mismatch. The distinction between these terms captures precisely the notion of status dissatisfaction that is central in IR scholarship. Status-dissatisfied states lack the recognition they expect from other states—that is, they are treated in a way that does not comport with their self-identification or understanding. To account for status dissatisfaction, we thus need to keep status analytically distinct from these actor-level processes.

At the same time, while status partially overlaps with identity, it involves a second necessary condition—hierarchy—that is not a necessary condition of identity. While status implies inequality, identity does not. To understand why, it is useful to consider the distinction that sociologists make between symbolic boundaries and social boundaries. As Lamont and Molnar put it, *symbolic boundaries* are "conceptual distinctions made by social actors to categorize objects, people, practices, and even time and space," while *social boundaries* are "objectified forms of social differences manifested in unequal access to and unequal distribution of resources (material and nonmaterial)

[57] Brubaker and Cooper 2000, 17.

and social opportunities."[58] While social boundaries imply exclusion, symbolic boundaries do not. Therefore, we can think of symbolic boundaries as a necessary but not sufficient condition for social boundaries. Likewise, social psychologists make a similar distinction between social categorization and prejudice.[59] On the one hand, social categorization refers to an automatic process whereby people are classified into groups, instead of perceived as individuals. This basic cognitive process simplifies the social world and gives it meaning. In and of itself, social categorization does not imply positive or negative attitudes toward a given group. By contrast, prejudice refers to a negative attitude toward a group. We can thus think of social categorization is a necessary but not sufficient condition for prejudice. Similarly, because status involves hierarchy, I understand recognition as a necessary but not sufficient condition for status, as I discuss next.

2.3 The Second Dimension: Hierarchy (or Ranking)

Hierarchy is the second necessary dimension in my concept of status. As Weber puts it, status refers to "an effective claim to social esteem *in terms of positive or negative privileges*."[60] Crucially, status involves privileges: depending on their level of social esteem, actors acquire differential access to opportunities and resources. As such, status inequalities among states have major political implications. On the one hand, high status comes with important privileges—culminating in the ability to act on behalf of the international community as a whole, as in the case of the great powers. During the twentieth century, for example, those states recognized as great powers acquired special rights and responsibilities, consolidated in institutions like permanent membership in the UN Security Council (UNSC) or its historical predecessor, the Council of the League of Nations.[61] By virtue of their status as great powers, some states got a permanent seat at the table, getting to decide which issues are brought into multilateral discussions and which potential resolutions are approved or vetoed. These states enjoy considerable latitude, for example, in determining which political units

[58] Lamont and Molnár 2002, 168.
[59] Brewer 1999; Duckitt 2003.
[60] Weber 1978, 305. Emphasis added.
[61] Bukovansky et al. 2012, 26-34; Bull 2002, 196; Gilpin 1981, 34-39.

become recognized (or not) as sovereign states, which instances of force are deemed as legitimate acts of self-defense (or violations of international norms), and who becomes (or not) the object of multilateral sanctions or even military intervention.

Not only do the great powers of an era manage international relations through institutions like the Concert of Vienna or the UNSC, but they also set the foundations of international order in the first place[62]—typically in their own image, based on their own practices and values.[63] In so doing, the great powers arrogate to themselves the ability to act in the name of the international community as a whole.[64] Penned mostly by delegates from the U.S., Britain, and the USSR, for example, the UN Charter has universalistic ambitions nonetheless, purporting to save humanity from the scourge of war.[65] Signed by U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill a few years earlier—as Britain gradually transferred the baton of global hegemony to its most prosperous former colony—the Atlantic Charter conveyed similarly universalistic ambitions, laying out a set of goals for the entire world once the Second World War came to an end. Great powers often frame their actions in terms of the common good rather than their self-interest, downplaying the disputes that inevitably arise in pluralistic societies.

While high status implies exorbitant privilege, low status brings severe disadvantage.[66] In particular, low status implies exclusion, reaching its nadir with restrictions to state sovereignty itself, as in the case of pariah states. To begin, most states lack the prerogatives associated with great power status, as they exert only limited influence over the formation of international order or its management. In 1814, for example, as European diplomats came together in the Congress of Vienna to negotiate a continental treaty that would shape the international order, deliberations mostly happened during informal meetings among representatives from the great powers of the time—Austria, Britain, France, Prussia, and Russia. Even though the Congress's Final Act (1815) paid lip service to the principle of sovereign equality, the other delegates in attendance merely signed a treaty pre-

[62] Gilpin 1981; Ikenberry 2001; Schroeder 1986.
[63] Hurd 2017; Kupchan 2014; Pitts 2018.
[64] Clunan 2014, 281-87; Hurd 2007; Thompson 2009.
[65] Hoopes and Brinkley 1997; Simpson 2004, Ch. 6.
[66] Adler-Nissen 2014; Zarakol 2011, 2014.

pared by the great powers, without being afforded the right to a formal vote.[67] Likewise, at San Francisco in 1945, the founding members of the UN voted on a treaty whose key principles had largely been defined by the Big Four—the U.S., Britain, the USSR, and China—in the previous year at Dumbarton Oaks.[68] Since then, non-permanent members in the UN Security Council participate in deliberations on a rotating basis, for a limited two-year period, and without the ability to veto draft resolutions. And while the UN General Assembly follows the principle of one state, one vote, its decisions lack the binding force of UNSC resolutions.

What is more, marginalized states have often been denied basic rights associated with statehood itself. Since the Treaty of Westphalia (1648) codified the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of sovereign actors, those states deemed as "uncivilized" or "outlaw" have enjoyed limited sovereignty nonetheless.[69] In the nineteenth century, for example, European states used military force to impose bilateral treaties with China, Japan, and Siam—who ceded land, opened trade ports, or granted extraterritorial rights to European citizens, despite not obtaining similar privileges in return.[70] As I discuss in the next chapter, Europeans justified such actions based on a self-proclaimed standard of civilization, which divided the world between "civilized" Europeans and "uncivilized" non-Europeans.[71] Whereas sovereign equality and mutual toleration served as cornerstones for relations among Europeans, relations with outsiders took the form of a civilizing mission.[72] As European liberalism made a turn to empire, beliefs in the distinction between civilization and the barbarity became increasingly secure—such that the moral obligation to civilize non-Europeans, perceived as incapable of self-government or self-improvement, justified the use of illiberal means.[73] Unlike the sovereignty of Europeans, the sovereignty of non-Europeans became divisible: non-European societies were considered sovereign enough to sign bilateral treaties, but not to retain autonomous control of their own territories or trade policies.[74]

[67] Jarrett 2013, 69-157; Simpson 2004, 112-13.
[68] Hoopes and Brinkley 1997; Simpson 2004, Ch. 6. See also Steil 2013.
[69] Donnelly 2006; Simpson 2004.
[70] Kayaoğlu 2010; Cassel 2012.
[71] Gong 1984; Schwarzenberger 1955.
[72] Keene 2002.
[73] Pitts 2005.
[74] Keene 2002.

In addition, other practices of semi-sovereignty have existed during the Westphalian era. During the twentieth century, for example, the international community restricted the sovereignty of those states recognized as "outlaw" states—those deemed to violate international norms, such as Iraq in the Gulf War—and subjected to forms of protection or guarantee those states seen as less than states due to their perceived weakness, backwardness, or decay—such as Kosovo, Bosnia, or Afghanistan in the 1990s and 2000s.[75] If anything, the range of domestic actions that may elicit international intervention has expanded since 1945. Those states deemed as disrespecting human rights norms, like South Africa during the apartheid or Syria under the Bashar al-Assad regime, are subject to multilateral sanctions and military intervention.[76] In recent decades, moreover, the Responsibility to Protect doctrine has legitimized intervention in those states deemed unable to protect the human rights of their nationals. As these examples indicate, states need to maintain a certain way of life in order to receive recognition as sovereign states and enjoy the corresponding privileges. For those states that fail to meet the standards of the international community, restrictions to sovereignty may be perceived as legitimate and even necessary. In sum, while status requires recognition, it cannot be reduced to recognition because it involves privileges.

2.3.1 Hierarchy Based on Social Esteem

At the same time, while status involves hierarchy, it cannot be reduced to hierarchy because it requires recognition. Status involves a specific kind of hierarchy—one based on social esteem, rather than based on material resources or authority. As Weber notes, actors differentiate themselves in domestic societies based on different dimensions.[77] Following a Weberian approach, some IR scholars note that states can differentiate themselves based on three dimensions: material resources, social esteem, or authority.[78] Although the different kinds of hierarchy may influence one another, each type corresponds to an analytically distinct domain. Because hierarchies may be based on dimen-

[75] Donnelly 2006, 146-51; Simpson 2004.
[76] Donnelly 1998.
[77] See Weber 1978; see also Scott 1996.
[78] See Keene 2014; Schulz 2019.

sions other than social esteem, status should not be equated with hierarchy.

Most importantly for the purposes of this chapter, hierarchies based on social esteem are analytically distinct from hierarchies based on material resources. To understand why, it is useful to consider the distinction Goode makes between the realm of status (constituted by status relations) and the realm of the market (constituted by the competitive exchange of material resources). As Goode notes, status relations contrast with competitive exchange because each operates under a distinct logic.[79] To begin, status relations involve primarily social groups rather than individual actors or dyads.[80] Status evaluations rely on standards established at the group level, as an emerging property. No single actor chooses the standards that the group will use to evaluate status claims; rather, the group reaches a working consensus about how to evaluate status claims. Likewise, no single actor determines the status of a given actor; rather, the group is the ultimate evaluator of status claims. What is more, the group also evaluates the responses of its members to specific status claims. In fact, if the group judges a member's response as "incorrect," the member's credibility within the group may be compromised. As Saunders notes in the international context, for example, many countries rejected the use by U.S. policymakers of the "rogue state" label to categorize countries like Iran and North Korea in the 1990s—and accordingly, opposed the policies proposed by Washington towards these countries.[81]

Because status relations involve primarily social groups, they lack the voluntaristic character of competitive exchange. As Goode notes, "one can leave the economic market, except for consumption, but one cannot leave the realm of prestige."[82] An actor cannot opt out of status relations, since they will be evaluated even if they try to seclude themselves; in fact, the very act of secluding oneself will be considered in status evaluations. In the international context, for example, North Korea may sever its economic ties with most countries in the world, opting out of the global trading system. However, North Korea cannot opt out of status evaluations. Pyongyang's seclusion does not prevent other countries from evaluating it as an autocratic or deviant state. As the example indicates,

[79] Goode 1978, Ch. 2. See also Fiske 1991.
[80] Goode 1978, 8, 13, 65.
[81] Saunders 2006.
[82] Goode 1978, 14.

status evaluations encompass all kinds of action, across domains or issue areas, rather than being restricted to domains like economic relations. And because status evaluations necessarily involve the group, actors are not free to renegotiate the terms of their status evaluations in the same way they are, in the market, free to renegotiate the terms of their contracts.

In addition, the realm of status differs from the realm of the market in another fundamental way. While competitive exchange is a means to an end, status relations are not purely instrumental, for a couple of reasons.[83] First, in status relations, the violation of group expectations elicits disapproval, disesteem, or exclusion; that is, it affects the relationship itself, rather than involving a mere penalty. Unlike competitive exchange, which is a means to obtain goods and services, status relations are valued intrinsically. Without relations with other actors, actors cannot form a stable sense of self—which is a necessary condition for an actor to have preferences in the first place. While it may be tempting to treat an actor's identity or self-worth as another term in their utility function, existing research provides reasons to resist this tendency. In the international context, for example, studies of ontological security show that states may become attached to certain relationships even at the expense of their very physical security.[84] Similarly, studies of status-seeking behavior demonstrate that disrespected states may be willing to compromise their very security or survival for the sake of recognition.[85] These patterns are puzzling from a conventional standpoint, since states cannot enjoy high status if they do not exist in the first place. More broadly, they indicate that status motivations do not always comport with instrumental reasoning.

In addition, a second aspect indicates that status relations are not purely instrumental: status recognition involves a sense of fairness that escapes a purely instrumental logic. Unlike competitive exchange, status relations require an element of authenticity. As Goode notes, an actor cannot will admiration or respect. Status evaluations "must rely on beliefs about *worth*, or the justice of giving rewards to this or that organization or person, the rightness of privileges that are enjoyed by different [groups]."[86] If status motivations were purely instrumental, one would expect every actor

[83] Goode 1978, ix–xi, 6–11.
[84] Kinnvall and Mitzen 2020; Mitzen 2006; Steele 2005.
[85] Barnhart 2016; Lanoszka and Hunzeker 2015; Murray 2010.
[86] Goode 1978, ix.

to strive for the highest standing possible, with an eye on obtaining the corresponding privileges. But instead, research at the individual level finds that people opt for a lower status rank when they believe that they would fail to meet the group's expectations toward high-status actors.[87] In the international context, we likewise observe that not all states seek great power status. Rather, aspiring great powers tend to be those states who could plausibly fit the prevailing expectations for great power status in a given era. It is no coincidence that the intensity of status motivations often varies in tandem with a country's performance over time. For example, while status motivations were salient in Brazil's foreign policy during the first Lula administration—that is, under the favorable economic conditions of the 2000s—such motivations quickly waned as economic conditions subsequently worsened in the following years.

In sum, while status involves hierarchy, it cannot be reduced to hierarchy because it requires recognition. Status involves a specific kind of hierarchy—one based on social esteem, rather than based on material resources or authority. Importantly, the realm of status differs from the realm of the market because each operates under a different logic. Status relations primarily involve the group rather than individual actors, and therefore lack the voluntaristic character of competitive exchange. Moreover, status recognition involves a sense of fairness that escapes a purely instrumental logic, as I discuss in more detail in the next chapter.

2.3.2 Status and Power

Because hierarchy is a necessary dimension of status, the concept of status partially overlaps with the concept of power, much like it partially overlaps with the concept of identity. To clarify the conceptual relationship between status and power, I compare next the main dimensions of each concept using Barnett and Duvall's conceptualization of power. Barnett and Duvall define power broadly as "the production, in and through social relations, of effects on actors that shape their capacity to control their fate."[88] I choose their conceptualization as a baseline for comparison because it offers

[87] Anderson et al. 2012.
[88] Barnett and Duvall 2005, 45.

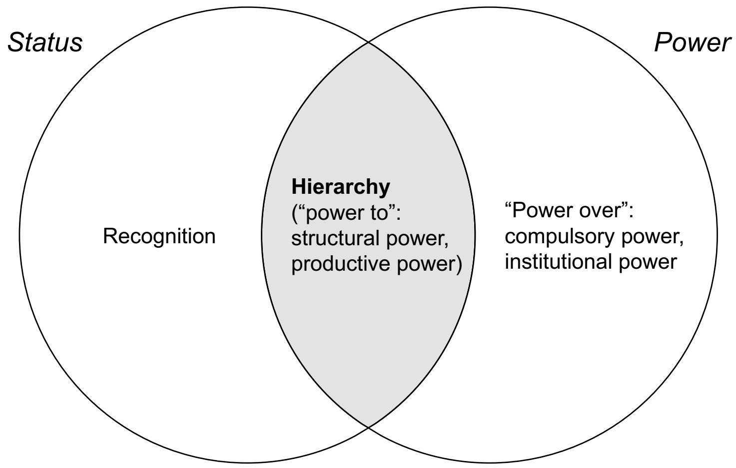


Figure 2.3. Conceptual Relationship Between Status and Power.
Notes: Comparison between my concept of status and the concept of power proposed by Barnett and Duvall (2005).

the advantage of integrating, under a unified framework, different uses of the concept of power not only in IR, but also in the social sciences more broadly.[89]

Figure 2.3 illustrates the conceptual relationship between status and power. The figure shows that, while the two concepts partially overlap, each involves distinctive features. On the one hand, status overlaps with power through the hierarchy dimension, which is a necessary condition in my concept of status. In particular, status involves a specific kind of hierarchy, based on social esteem. This type of hierarchy maps well onto Barnett and Duvall's notion of "power to"—the socially produced power of an actor that derives from "how social relations define who the actors are and what capacities and practices they are socially empowered to undertake."[90] As Barnett and Duvall note, "power to" is present in social relations of constitution. Accordingly, status concerns primarily identification processes in which actors are recognized as members of a group (and entitled to the

[89] Barnett and Duvall's taxonomy roughly maps onto Digeser's four faces of power. To Digeser, each face of power addresses a different question: "Under the first face of power the central question is, 'Who, if anyone, is exercising power?' Under the second face, 'What issues have been mobilized off the agenda and by whom?' Under the radical conception, 'Whose objective interests are being harmed?' Under the fourth face of power the critical issue is, 'What kind of subject is being produced?'" See Digeser 1992, 980.

[90] Barnett and Duvall 2005, 46. In John Scott's taxonomy of power, power that works in relations of social constitution is termed "persuasive influence" and is considered to have two main forms, signification and legitimation, which "operat[e] respectively through shared cognitive meanings and shared value commitments." It is thus persuasive influence that Scott relates to status. However, Barnett and Duvall's taxonomy is similar enough to Scott's that I consider persuasive influence as synonymous with the notion of "power to." See Scott 2001, 129.

corresponding privileges) once they are deemed to follow the group's rule of membership. As such, status involves specifically the socially produced power of an actor that derives from how social relations constitute actors' identities, practices, and social capacities.

In Barnett and Duvall's taxonomy, "power to" takes two forms: structural power and productive power. Both of these forms are related to status. To begin, status hierarchies involve structural power—that is, the mutual constitution of actors' social positions in direct relation to one another.[91] Structural power shapes the circumstances and fates of actors by constituting the subjective interests of actors and differentially allocating social privileges and capacities. In status hierarchies, actors obtain differential access to privileges depending on their levels of social esteem. Certain states become entitled to privileges like UNSC permanent membership, for example, on account of being recognized as great powers. Moreover, status hierarchies involve productive power—the diffuse constitution of social subjects in systems of signification and meaning through discursive practices.[92] Productive power shapes the circumstances of actors by situating their everyday practices, thus defining the imaginable and the possible; and by discursively constituting social identities and capacities. In status hierarchies, discursive practices constitute social identities and capacities by determining the kinds of symbols and privileges that should go together. Since the nineteenth century, for example, a Western standard of civilization has served to categorize certain states as "modern" or "civilized," and therefore entitled to privileges like indivisible sovereignty.

But if status overlaps with power through the hierarchy dimension, each concept also involves distinctive dimensions. On the one hand, the concept of status involves a necessary dimension (recognition) that is not a necessary condition for the concept of power. On the other hand, the second dimension of power—"power over," or the exercise of control over other actors—is not a necessary condition for the concept of status. In Barnett and Duvall's taxonomy, "power over" is present in social relations of interaction among previously constituted actors. This kind of power takes two forms: (1) compulsory power, or the ability to exert direct control over another state by means of coercion; and (2) institutional power, or the indirect control by one actor of another

[91] Barnett and Duvall 2005, 52-55.
[92] Barnett and Duvall 2005, 55-57.

through the use of formal or informal institutions.[93] To be sure, in practice status may correlate with compulsory or institutional power. High-status actors may acquire privileges that enable them to coerce other actors, or may set their privileges in stone using institutions—like, for example, the nonproliferation regime or permanent membership in the UN Security Council. However, neither compulsory nor institutional power is a necessary condition of status. Status works primarily through relations of constitution, which involve "power to," rather than through relations of interaction among previously constituted actors, which involve "power over." As I discuss in the next chapter, status involves the creation of categorical differences among states that serve to justify why certain states are entitled to privileges that others lack.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter moves from the background concept of status—the various potential meanings associated with status in IR—to a systematized concept based on an explicit definition, which serves as the foundation for the rest of this study. To conceptualize status, I draw on the literature on concept formation in the tradition of Giovanni Sartori, which provides clear guidelines for concept formation in the social sciences and allows me to consciously explore the trade-offs involved in the definition of a concept like status. My conceptualization seeks a balance between differentiation and the other desirable features in a concept, such as familiarity, depth, and theoretical utility. As such, it overcomes limitations from existing definitions in IR, which either (1) insufficiently different status from terms like material capabilities or hierarchy; or (2) excessively differentiate status from existing definitions. In addition, a careful conceptualization of status in this chapter provides a clear roadmap for the operationalization of status in Chapter 4.

I posit that the concept of status, long treated as a residual category in IR, can be made tractable when understood in the following way: as an effective claim to social esteem that involves privileges. Defined as such, status involves two necessary dimensions. First, status requires recognition:

[93] Barnett and Duvall 2005, 49-52. See also Bachrach and Baratz 1962; Baldwin 2002.

for a state to achieve a certain status, others have to recognize it. In particular, status involves the acknowledgment of a state's social esteem, rather than merely of its attributes or the things it has. State attributes affect status indirectly, because of what they communicate to others about a state's quality—rather than directly, because of what they enable the state to do. Moreover, the symbolic value of a given state attribute (or what it communicates about a state's quality) depends on social conventions or equilibria, which shape the standards for membership in a given group. In addition, status involves a second necessary dimension: hierarchy. In particular, status involves a specific kind of hierarchy, based on social esteem rather than material resources or authority. Depending on a state's level of social esteem, the state acquires differential access to privileges in the international system. Status inequalities among states thus have major political implications: while high status comes with exorbitant privilege, low status brings severe disadvantage.

By defining status based on recognition and social esteem, I depart from the conventional approach to status in IR in four important ways. First, the proposed conceptualization shifts the focus from state attributes to state relations. In doing so, it overcomes the generalized fetishism that often characterizes studies of international status. Second, my definition comports with the empirical observation that status symbols can be material—things that states have—or ideational—norms that states adopt. In doing so, it overcomes the material reductionism that often characterizes studies of status in IR. Third, my conceptualization departs from the conventional approach because it highlights the fundamentally social (and relational) nature of status. In doing so, it overcomes the fallacy of composition that often characterizes studies of status in IR. Finally, the proposed conceptualization provides the added advantage of integrating two research traditions in IR that rarely come into dialogue: mainstream approaches that treat status as a means to an end; and alternative approaches that treat status as an end in itself. Rather than adopting an either/or approach, I define status as a concept at the intersection of identity and power.

Because status involves both recognition and hierarchy, it partially overlaps with the concepts of identity and power. To begin, status maps onto four dimensions of identity: external identification, or how an actor is identified by others; groupness, or the sense of belonging to a distinctive group; commonality, or the sharing of common attributes; and connectedness, or the sharing of relational ties. At the same time, each concept involves distinctive dimensions. On the one hand, status involves identification processes that occur at the social level, while the concept of identity also involves certain processes that occur instead at the actor level. On the other hand, status involves a second necessary dimension—hierarchy—that is not a necessary condition of identity. And because hierarchy is a necessary dimension of status, the concepts of status and power partially overlap. In particular, status involves a kind of hierarchy based on social esteem, which refers to "power to"—the socially produced power of an actor that derives from how actors, their practices, and their capacities are defined in social relations. At the same time, each concept involves distinctive dimensions. On the one hand, the remaining dimension of power—"power over," or the exercise of control over other actors—is not a necessary condition of status. On the other hand, status involves a necessary dimension (recognition) that is not a necessary condition of power.

Crucially, my conceptualization emphasizes the relational nature of status—which makes the concept not only distinctive but also crucial to understanding phenomena of great interest in international politics, as will become clear in the next chapters. This chapter lays out the conceptual foundations for the development of a relational theory of status in Chapter 3 and a relational empirical strategy in chapters 4 through 6, which will be used to investigate the sources of international status in the rest of the book. In this chapter, I posit that status requires recognition and implies privileges. To investigate the sources of status, we thus need to understand why states are recognized, rather than merely ranking them based on their qualities or the things that they have. As such, I address in the next chapter the question of why states are recognized.

3

A Network Theory of Status

Even though IR scholars rely on status to explain important phenomena, we still understand little about the sources of international status. Existing studies typically treat status as a left-hand (or independent) variable, positing that status motivates foreign policy behavior and may even lead to war. On the other hand, existing research rarely treats status as an object of substantive interest, or as a right-hand (dependent) variable. In the absence of a clearly articulated theory of status, scholars tend to fall back on prevailing assumptions in the discipline, adopting an individualist and materialist perspective to account for status inequalities among states. Conventional approaches treat status as a function of state attributes, especially economic and military capabilities. In this view, the largest a state's share of certain attributes—and especially, the richer or militarily stronger the state is—the higher its standing should be. However, theories of status that begin and end with state attributes leave important questions unanswered:

1. Why do status and material capabilities often mismatch? Because the conventional approach treats status as a function of states' attributes—and especially of their material capabilities—it cannot explain why there is a (substantively important) disjuncture between status and material capabilities, which may lead to wars.

2. Why do certain state attributes (but not others) matter for status recognition? While existing studies list certain state attributes as status symbols, we still lack a general framework to explain why state attributes become relevant for status recognition.

3. What is the relationship between state attributes and status? Even if we assume that state attributes evoke international recognition, we still understand little about how state attributes are ultimately converted into status.

4. What are the sources of international status? Because the conventional approach insufficiently addresses each of the questions above, we still have a poor grasp of the processes whereby states ultimately achieve status.

In this chapter, I draw on an interdisciplinary body of research to develop a network theory of status—a theoretical framework that captures the fundamentally social nature of status. I argue that status depends on states' positions in a social arrangement, rather than on their qualities. To explain how states achieve status, I theorize the underlying relational effects that drive status recognition in the international system. I argue that the structure of state relations itself shapes the conditions for status attainment. Because status distinctions involve social closure (or the drawing of a social boundary between the established group and outsiders), a state's existing relations influence its ability to achieve status. Moreover, status distinctions reinforce inequality, independently of material conditions, because status involves cumulative advantage: the higher standing a state enjoys, the more it attracts additional recognition. Finally, the relevance of a given state attribute for status recognition is socially defined. A given state attribute matters for status recognition because of its symbolic value, which depends on the social context.

My theoretical framework offers new answers to the fundamental questions about status that are insufficiently addressed by the conventional approach:

1. I argue that we should not expect status to go hand in hand with a state's material capabilities—or, more broadly, with its attributes—because status depends on a state's position in a social arrangement, rather than on its qualities.

2. I argue that a given state attribute becomes relevant for status recognition when actors share the belief that it symbolizes a latent quality: state competence. Status evaluations are based on prevailing conceptions of state competence that change over time. During critical junctures

like the aftermath of major wars, the way of life associated with the winning state(s) shapes the standards that will be used to evaluate state competence thereafter. That is, besides updating the international pecking order, critical juncture also update the standards that inform recognition among states.

3. I argue that state attributes play a secondary role in the process of status recognition: they impact recognition because of their symbolic value, which depends on the social context. In particular, the social context mediates the relevance of state attributes via three mechanisms. First, because status distinctions involve social closure, it is attribute similarity—rather than the possession of attributes per se—that drives recognition among states. Second, status recognition is based on a way of life, rather than on isolated attributes like nuclear weapons. Finally, the relevance of state attributes for status recognition changes over time, depending on who the high-status states are and how they behave.

4. I argue that the fundamental causal mechanisms behind status inequality operate in the domain of state relations, rather than inside states. In particular, my argument involves three new propositions about the relationship between status and inequality. First, status distinctions *legitimate* inequality among states because they create categorical differences between types of states considered superior—and therefore deserving of exclusive privileges—and the rest. Second, status distinctions *stabilize* inequality because they set expectations about which types of states should exert authority in a given situation, shaping interaction outcomes. Third, once established, status distinctions *reinforce* inequality via cumulative advantage: The more recognition a state enjoys, the more it attracts additional recognition.

This chapter is divided into four sections. The first section begins by introducing the relational approach I use to develop my theory of status. The next three sections present, respectively, each of my propositions about the relationship between status and inequality.

3.1 Relations before Status

In this chapter, I develop a theoretical framework that departs in important ways from the conventional approach to status in IR. First and foremost, I adopt a *relational* approach, rather than an individualist perspective, to account for status inequalities among states. According to the conventional approach in IR, states sort themselves into unequal positions in the international system—such as great or emerging power—based on their qualities or the things that they have. Based on this individualist perspective, the differential access to privileges among states results from disparities in the qualities of states. This assumption resembles the idea of meritocracy, according to which actors obtain differential access to privileges on the basis of their individual talent, ability, or effort. However, the conventional approach incurs a fallacy of composition: it derives social outcomes (that is, status inequalities) from the properties of individual actors. As a result, it ignores the relational processes that shape recognition in the international system.

By contrast, I adopt a relational approach to develop a network theory of status.[1] I argue that status depends on states' positions in a social arrangement, rather than on their qualities. As such, the fundamental causal mechanisms behind status inequality operate in the domain of state relations, rather than inside states.[2] Crucially, the structure of state relations itself shapes the conditions for status attainment in the international system. Status recognition is interdependent: it depends not only on the history of relations between any two given states, but also on their relations with third states. Moreover, state attributes play a secondary role in the process of status recognition: they communicate a latent quality—state competence—whose very meaning depends on the social context. Therefore, status recognition is subject to nonlinear effects or emerging properties that differ from the properties of states. The processes that drive status recognition cannot be reduced to the characteristics of states, or even to an aggregation of these characteristics. Rather, status depends on emerging properties beyond the control of any single state.

[1] My approach draws on a growing number of relational and network analytic approaches to international relations. See, respectively, Jackson and Nexon 1999, 2019; Jervis 1997; Nexon 2010; Pouliot 2016; and Cranmer and Desmarais 2016; Goddard 2009; Hafner-Burton, Kahler, and Montgomery 2009; Winecoff 2015.

[2] See Tilly 1998, 33.

Instead of reducing status to the things that states have, I understand state attributes as part of a broader relational process: the institution of categorical inequalities among states. State attributes serve to mark the distinction between different kinds of states—which are deemed more (or less) competent, and therefore entitled (or not) to certain privileges in the international system. Status involves the drawing of a social boundary between types of states. Such a boundary is symbolic rather than material: it delimits appropriate behavior within the established group, promoting within-group integration; and stigmatizes deviant behavior, enabling the exclusion of outsiders. As such, status does much more than signal a state's material capabilities to other states; crucially, status distinctions legitimate and stabilize inequality. Once established, moreover, status distinctions independently reinforce inequality through cumulative advantage mechanisms: the higher standing a state enjoys, the more it attracts additional recognition. By bringing front and center the relational processes that drive status recognition, my argument overcomes the fallacy of composition that afflicts the conventional approach to status in IR.

In my argument, state attributes play a secondary role in status recognition: they work as communication devices.[3] Actors rely on symbols to navigate the social world: through symbols, actors express their self-identification and categorize one another. One side of this communication process—what Pu and Schweller call "status signaling"—is well documented in IR research, which shows that status-seeking states do things like acquiring advanced weapons in an attempt to obtain international recognition.[4] However, the other side of this communication process—signal reception—remains relatively unexplored. How do actors evaluate the status of a given state? To begin, I argue that status evaluations depend on a state's existing relations, rather than on its qualities. Moreover, I argue that observers rely on state attributes to assess the extent to which a given state fits prevailing conceptions of state competence. As such, state attributes matter for recognition because of their symbolic value, rather than because of their intrinsic properties. A given state attribute becomes relevant for status recognition when actors share the belief that it symbolizes a latent quality: state competence.

[3] Form and Stone 1957; Goffman 1951.

[4] See Eyre and Suchman 1996; Gilady 2018; Pu and Schweller 2014.

To develop a network theory of status, I adopt an interdisciplinary approach, integrating strands of research that rarely come into dialogue. On the one hand, I draw on a rich tradition of research in the social sciences, which examines the processes that drive status inequalities within domestic societies. At the same time, I contextualize status in the international realm by integrating these interdisciplinary insights with research on international order and international law. In doing so, I reject the particularism that characterizes the conventional approach to status in IR. According to this approach, status results from forces peculiar to international politics. Because the international system is distinctively anarchic, status attainment among states follows causal processes unlike those in any other social realm. The absence of a supranational authority above states turns international relations into a self-help system, in which force serves as the last resort. As such, the value of status lies in allowing a state to coerce others without using force.

The conventional approach relies on assumptions that, though commonly adopted in IR, contrast with research on status in the social sciences more broadly, which understands status as fundamentally social. These assumptions impose significant limitations, as the conventional approach ultimately mistakes social relations for actors' properties and leads to material reductionism. By treating status as a function of state attributes, this approach neglects to specify the causal mechanisms whereby states attain status in the international system. But perhaps most importantly, the conventional approach advances a concept of status that does not differ enough from material capabilities to prove analytically useful. Once stripped of its distinctive feature—its social nature—the concept of status has limited usefulness for IR theories; it can do little more than the notion of material capabilities already does. IR scholars thus consider status as a fundamental element of international politics, but ultimately render it a residual category.

By contrast, I argue that status inequalities among states result from mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion that are remarkably similar to the mechanisms observed in other social realms. My interdisciplinary approach is consistent with contemporary research about status in the social sciences—which focuses on fundamental social processes that straddle different social realms, rather than on forces unique to specific domains such as race or gender relations. This research highlights causal processes that underpin all instantiations of status inequalities among groups, regardless of domain. Such an approach provides an important advantage: it enables theory development and refinement across domains, preventing the degeneration of research programs. The study of status across social realms not only promotes a cross-fertilization of ideas, but also enables researchers to detect underlying causal processes and scope conditions that are difficult to observe when we consider a given social realm, such as international relations, in isolation. By integrating interdisciplinary insights to develop a theory of international status, this project brings the study of status in IR closer to the study of status in the social sciences more broadly.

As will become clear in the next chapters, my relational approach offers important advantages. To begin, this project studies status in its own right—as something distinguishable from material capabilities and other state attributes. In doing so, it allows us to consider not only how status may increase a state's propensity for conflict, as previous studies show, but also how status plays a key role in the maintenance of international order. The concept of status can achieve its full potential in IR theories when we give due attention to its distinctive social nature. In addition, this study speaks directly to existing research on the modern international order. Rather than abstracting away from historical transformations, my theoretical framework incorporates them. Instead of treating status as a function of the same state attributes throughout history, I show how the parameters of recognition depend on the social context. Last but not least, my relational approach provides a rich and detailed theoretical framework, with testable hypotheses at multiple levels of analysis.

In the next sections, I present my argument in three steps.

3.2 Status Legitimates Inequality

To begin, I argue that status does much more than signal a state's coercive capabilities to other states, as argued by the conventional approach in IR. Crucially, status *legitimates* inequality among states.[5] As Tilly points out, unequal relations based purely on coercion are inherently unstable, as they

[5] See Jackman 1994; Ridgeway 2014, 3-4.

ultimately give rise to contention or struggles between dominant and subordinate actors.[6] Even an exploitative relationship like colonization cannot be sustained based on coercion alone, since such an arrangement would render domination too costly in the long run. To become durable, inequality requires some form of legitimation. As Ridgeway and Walker note, legitimation transforms unequal relations into "systems of rights and obligations"—whereby dominant actors acquire the right to demand obedience, and subordinate actors accept the obligation to obey. Over time, deference assumes a seemingly voluntary character.[7]

Status distinctions play an important role in the legitimation of inequality. To start, status distinctions involve categorization—the creation of different types of actors, and the classification of actors into these categories.[8] In addition, status distinctions involve legitimation—the establishment of a relationship of superiority and inferiority between types of actors, or the evaluative ranking of certain types as better than others.[9] Status distinctions legitimate inequality because they involve a working consensus, across both sides of a social boundary, that certain types—those who belong in the dominant group—are better than the others.[10] In Bourdieusian terms, status distinctions entail a form of "symbolic violence," as the dominant group smoothes over unequal relations by legitimizing its way of life as superior.[11] As Goode notes, status distinctions involve the "celebration of heroes," as even low-status actors publicly concede their placement in a hierarchy.[12] And indeed, extensive research in social psychology demonstrates that members of disadvantaged groups often perceive status hierarchies as legitimate and fair.[13]

[6] Tilly 1998, 86-91. See also Weber 1978, 213, Goode 1978, Ch. 6. For similar arguments in IR, see Bukovansky 2002; Reus-Smit 2017.

[7] Ridgeway and Walker 1995, 282.

[8] As Tilly notes, "Durable inequality depends heavily on the institutionalization of categorical pairs" such as man/woman, white/black, or citizen/foreigner. Tilly 1998, 7-8.

[9] See Lamont 2012; Lamont and Fournier 1992.

[10] Jackman 1994; Ridgeway and Correll 2006.

[11] Bourdieu 1984, 245; Bourdieu and Passeron 1990, 4.

[12] Goode 1978. See also Hahl and Zuckerman 2014.

[13] Research on system justification theory, for example, indicates that people have a tendency not only to defend their ego and their in-group, but also to defend and rationalize the status quo—sometimes even to the detriment of their self-interest or in-group interest, as in the case of low-status actors. The tendency to defend the status quo depends on psychological predispositions and seems to address epistemic, existential, and relational motives. This program of research demonstrates that perceptions of legitimacy are not merely a function of an actor's position in a status hierarchy. See Jost, Banaji, and Nosek 2004; Jost 2019.

Importantly, legitimation cannot be reduced to an individual-level phenomenon for two reasons. First, legitimation depends on mechanisms that are external to the actor. As Ridgeway notes, status beliefs—that is, beliefs about the relative standing of social groups—are "macro-level cultural beliefs" that result from social processes at both the micro and the macro levels.[14] Likewise, Elias and Scotson observe that stigmatization cannot be reduced to a matter of individual prejudice because it is a function of a *figuration formed between social groups*.[15] Second, legitimation influences behavior through mechanisms that are likewise external to the actor. As Ridgeway notes, "status beliefs are beliefs about what "most people" think. The presumption that "most people" would accept a given status belief gives that belief a social validity that allows it to constrain people's behavior."[16] For status beliefs to constrain behavior, an actor does not have to find these beliefs proper—that is, they need not internalize these beliefs or personally approve of them. Rather, the actor needs only recognize that "most people" treat these beliefs as valid, such that acting in accordance with them is "the way things are supposed to be done."[17]

3.2.1 The Established-Outsider Figuration

As Elias and Scotson observe, this process of legitimation corresponds to "a universal human theme. One can observe again and again that members of groups which are, in terms of *power*, stronger than other groups, think of themselves in human terms as *better* than the others."[18] In fact, social scientists have repeatedly uncovered this very theme in intergroup relations of all kinds, regardless of whether group lines are drawn on the basis of socioeconomic class, race, ethnicity, religion, gender, or nationality. In each case, the dominant group not only exerts more power but also views itself as inherently better than the disadvantaged group. While the basis for status distinctions may vary

[14] Ridgeway 2002, 332.

[15] Elias and Scotson 1994, xx.

[16] Ridgeway 2002, 327. See also Ridgeway and Walker 1995, 297-98; Weber 1978, 31-33. For a similar discussion in IR, see Jackson 2002, 498-56.

[17] Ridgeway and Walker 1995, 298; see also Zelditch 2006, 329. Sociological research on legitimacy distinguishes between propriety, which refers to legitimacy at the individual level; and validity, which refers to legitimacy at the group level. While propriety implies that an actor personally approves of the standards of conduct, validity only implies that they recognize the existence of such standards.

[18] Elias and Scotson 1994, xv.

across cases, each case corresponds to a variation on the same theme.

In fact, status distinctions can legitimate inequality even when there are minimal differences between social groups. In the mid-twentieth century, for example, Elias and Scotson observed this universal theme in "miniature" as they set out to investigate intergroup relations in Winston Parva, a suburban community in the English midlands. In this community, Elias and Scotson identified a sharp distinction between two groups of people—who bore no discernible differences based on traits like nationality, socioeconomic class, ethnicity, or race. The two groups only differed along a single dimension: while one of the groups consisted of residents established in the area for a couple of generations, the other group consisted of newcomers to the neighborhood. And yet, despite the minimal differences between the groups, the study showed

> a sharp division (...) between an old-established group and a newer group of residents, whose members were treated as outsiders by the established group. The latter closed ranks against them and stigmatised them generally as people of lesser human worth. They were thought to lack the superior human virtue—the distinguishing group charisma—which the dominant group attributed to itself.[19]

This sharp division between the established group and outsiders encapsulates what Elias and Scotson would call the *established-outsider figuration*—whereby members of an established group (1) ascribe "superior human characteristics" to themselves; (2) exclude outsiders from social contact with the established group; and (3) maintain restrictions on social contact via social control, for example by boosting the reputation of those members who observe the restrictions on social contact, while threatening to downgrade the reputation of those members who violate the restrictions.[20] As Weber notes, effective claims to status entail *social closure*—the establishment of a social boundary between a status group and outsiders. High-status actors differentiate themselves from outsiders by adopting a distinctive way of life. Based on its distinctiveness, a status group justifies its exclusive access to certain privileges.[21] Likewise, Bourdieu observes that the logic of distinction

[19] Elias and Scotson 1994, xv.
[20] Elias and Scotson 1994, xvi.
[21] Weber 1978, 43-46, 935; see also Scott 1996, 31-32.

organizes social life. By establishing their own culture as superior, dominant groups justify the monopolization of privileges and exclude outsiders. Symbolic distinctions thus have major political implications: they "freeze a particular state of the social struggle, i.e. a given state of the distribution of advantages and obligations."[22] Status distinctions legitimate inequality because they involve a symbolic distinction between the advantaged and the disadvantaged, which serves to rationalize their differential access to privileges in a social system.

As Elias and Scotson note, the establisher-outsider figuration involves two key elements. First, the establisher-outsider figuration is founded on *an imbalance of power* between an established group that occupies positions of power on the one hand, and outsiders that are excluded from such positions on the other hand. Second, the establisher-outsider figuration involves the *stigmatization* of outsiders by the established group, which serves to justify the exclusion of the former.[23] In fact, status construction studies show that, in the face of material inequalities, individuals can quickly develop the belief that some actors—those with more resources—are "better" than other actors when interacting in small groups.[24] As Ridgeway notes, status distinctions can be constructed when unequal control over resources in a social setting correlates at least partially with a salient categorical difference between types of actors—based for example on dimensions like gender, race, or occupation. By mapping material inequality onto a categorical difference, actors form the belief that the types with more resources are better than the types with fewer resources. By transforming material inequality into a status difference, actors justify the unequal control over resources based on the assumed superiority of the advantaged group.[25]

In what follows, I discuss how this universal theme—the established-outsider figuration—applies to a specific type of intergroup relations: those among states. I argue that categorical inequalities among states reflect, on a broader scale, the same theme uncovered in other social realms. To un-

[22] Bourdieu 1984, 477. Besides the studies discussed here, a long tradition of sociological research highlights how symbolic boundaries organize social life by classifying actors into distinct social groups. See Becker 1963; Bourdieu and Passeron 1990; Douglas 1966, 1986; Durkheim 1995, 99-157; Goffman 1959, 1963; Mauss 2006, 57-74. For reviews of this literature, see Lamont 2001; Lamont and Molnár 2002.

[23] Elias and Scotson 1994, xx.

[24] Ridgeway 1991; Ridgeway et al. 1998; Ridgeway and Erickson 2000; Ridgeway et al. 2009.

[25] Ridgeway 2014, 3.

derstand how status distinctions emerge in international politics, I trace their roots back to key transformations that magnified global inequality in the nineteenth century. As I discuss next, both elements of the establisher-outsider figuration characterized the foundation of the modern international order. As the European society of states became globalized, we observe not only an imbalance of power between European states and non-European peoples, but also the stigmatization of the latter, which served to justify their exclusion and subsequent assimilation.

3.2.2 The Global Transformation and the Standard of Civilization

During the nineteenth century, both elements of the establisher-outsider figuration characterized international relations. To begin, the establisher-outsider figuration is founded on *an imbalance of power* between an established group that occupies positions of power on the one hand, and outsiders that are excluded from such positions on the other hand. And indeed, the nineteenth century witnessed key transformations that magnified global inequality.[26] In particular, two structural developments led to an exponential increase in material inequality during this period. First, industrialization in Europe brought about not only wealth but also advances in transportation and military technology that enabled more engagement with non-Europeans, which eventually turned into exploitation. Second, colonization and imperialism further exacerbated the material inequality between Europeans and non-Europeans. As Buzan and Lawson note, the global transformation in the nineteenth century "changed the distribution of power by generating a shift from a 'polycentric world with no dominant center' to a 'core-periphery' order in which the centre of gravity resided in the West."[27] The global transformation created an unprecedented gap between core and periphery, at the same time that it increased the density of interactions between them.[28]

As the global transformation magnified material inequality, the second element of the establisher-outsider figuration—the *stigmatization* of outsiders by the established group, which serves to justify the exclusion of outsiders from positions of power—also characterized international relations. As

[26] Buzan and Lawson 2015; Milanovic 2016, 118-54.
[27] Buzan and Lawson 2015, 1.
[28] Buzan and Lawson 2015, 171-96.

Europeans made a turn to imperialism, they increasingly relied on a self-proclaimed standard of civilization that distinguished between "civilized" Europeans entitled to indivisible sovereignty on the one hand, and "uncivilized" non-Europeans unable to govern themselves on the other hand.[29] Whereas sovereign equality and mutual toleration served as cornerstones for relations among Europeans, relations between Europeans and non-Europeans took the form of a civilizing mission.[30] As Pitts notes, moreover, beliefs in the distinction between civilization and the barbarity became increasingly secure over time—such that the moral obligation to civilize non-Europeans, perceived as incapable of self-government, justified even the use of illiberal means.[31]

The standard of civilization manifested itself in international legal doctrine. As Simpson observes, the nineteenth century witnessed a shift to anti-pluralism in Europe. In 1815, international law started to make distinctions among states based on their values or practices—initially, based on cultural practices (e.g., Christianism); and later, based on ideological credentials (e.g., liberal governance). Beginning in the early nineteenth century, Europeans explicitly incorporated anti-pluralism into the international legal structure with the distinction between "civilized" and "uncivilized" peoples.[32] This distinction mirrored broader trends in political culture, which essentialized differences between the West and other parts of the world. As Hobson notes, Europeans began to articulate the vision of a pristine West in the nineteenth century, even though West and East had been interlinked for centuries through trade and communications networks. At the same time, Europeans began to downplay the contributions of non-Europeans to world history, portraying the latter as passive bystanders in a triumphant story of Western progress.[33]

In addition, the standard of civilization manifested itself in international legal practice. Dividing the world into a European Family of Nations and a non-European zone of uncivilized or semi-sovereign states, European practitioners established with the latter a regime of unequal treaties and extra-territorial jurisdictions via a system of capitulations.[34] Unlike the sovereignty of Europeans,

[29] Gong 1984; Simpson 2004.
[30] Keene 2002.
[31] Pitts 2005.
[32] Simpson 2004, 227-53. See also Pitts 2018, Viola 2020, 119-62.
[33] Hobson 2004. See also Pitts 2005.
[34] Simpson 2004, 227-53.

the sovereignty of non-Europeans became divisible: societies in areas like China, Japan, or Siam were considered sovereign enough to sign bilateral treaties, but not to retain autonomous control of their own territories or trade policies.[35] Using military force, European states imposed treaties on China, Japan, and Siam—who unilaterally ceded land, opened trade ports, or granted extraterritorial rights to European citizens, despite not obtaining similar privileges in return.[36]

In this way, the standard of civilization performed the functions of (1) gatekeeping membership to the European society of states and (2) assimilating non-Europeans into European standards. During the period of colonial expansion, European states denied recognition to non-European peoples on the grounds that they lacked sovereignty or were uncivilized.[37] Moreover, Europeans excluded non-Europeans from the constitutional bodies of the modern international order.[38] As the European society of states became global,[39] international law became a universalizing project[40]—though it constituted a case of parochial universalism, since it imposed European standards on the rest of the world.[41] When non-Europeans later joined the international society of states, moreover, their recognition was conditioned on assimilation into European standards.[42]

In sum, both elements of the establisher-outsider figuration characterized the foundation of the modern international order. During the nineteenth century, industrialization and colonization created an unprecedented imbalance of power between Europeans and non-Europeans. At the same time, a European standard of civilization stigmatized non-European peoples as inferior, justifying their exclusion from positions of power. Status distinctions thus served to legitimate inequality, drawing a boundary between "civilized" Europeans—entitled to exclusive privileges like indivisible sovereignty—and "uncivilized" non-Europeans.[43] On the one hand, the presumption of civilization

[35] Keene 2002, 2014.
[36] Kayaoğlu 2010; Cassel 2012.
[37] Keene 2007.
[38] Simpson 2004, 227-53.
[39] Dunne and Reus-Smit 2017.
[40] Simpson 2004, 12-13.
[41] Pitts 2018.
[42] Englehart 2010; Okagaki 2013; Suzuki 2005.
[43] To use Tilly's words, "Inequality in rewards result[ed] from the matching of exploitation boundaries with categorical differences. It rest[ed] not on individual-by-individual experience but on organized social relations." See Tilly 1998, 135.

implied that Europeans had earned their privileges fairly, on the basis of their own merit. On the other hand, this presumption justified European intervention abroad. Colonial exploitation was rendered normatively acceptable by the belief that, because non-Europeans were unable to govern themselves, Europeans should take on the responsibility of socializing them into European norms and beliefs, thus stewarding their progress toward civilization.[44]

3.3 Status Stabilizes Inequality

In addition, my argument involves a second proposition about the relationship between status and inequality: I argue that status *stabilizes* inequality. In particular, status distinctions lock inequality into place via two mechanisms. To begin, status distinctions shape social perceptions, as they transform inequality into a categorical difference between actors that are perceived, respectively, as superior or inferior. More specifically, as an interdisciplinary body of research shows, members of high-status groups are typically perceived as competent, while members of low-status groups are typically presumed incompetent. Cross-cultural studies reveal a persistent correlation between status and perceived competence. As Fiske and Cuddy note,

> To an extraordinary degree, people assume that groups of high status deserve it. (...) people all over the world agree that rich people, professionals, employers, and entrepreneurial immigrants achieve their high status with traits reflecting intelligence, competence, capability, and skill. Conversely, people all agree that others who are poor, homeless, drug addicted, or unemployed likewise deserve it because they are stupid, incompetent, incapable, and unskilled.[45]

The presumption of (in)competence stabilizes inequality because it provides a powerful form of legitimation: it implies that high-status actors have won their privileges by virtue of their merit, while low-status actors have failed to achieve similar privileges for lack of merit. Based on this presumption, privileges are distributed fairly in society, in proportion to the relative merit of each type

[44] See Pitts 2005.

[45] Fiske and Cuddy 2005, 249. See also Berger, Cohen, and Zelditch 1972; Berger et al. 1977; Cuddy et al. 2009.

of actor. While the advantaged group is deemed as deserving of privileges on the basis of its superior human qualities (its competence), the disadvantaged group is excluded from such privileges on the basis of its perceived inferiority (its incompetence). In this way, the presumption of (in)competence makes inequality seem merited, spontaneous, and even natural.

In addition, status distinctions stabilize inequality via a second mechanism: they shape behavior. By drawing a boundary between types of actors perceived as superior or inferior, status distinctions create expectations about the ability of either type to exert authority in a given situation.[46] These expectations act as focal points during social interactions, creating self-fulfilling prophecies—as actors tend to act according to what is expected of their type, while expecting that others will likewise act according to what is expected of their type. On the one hand, status distinctions shape how different kinds of actors behave, since actors often act according to social expectations about their own group. On the other hand, status distinctions also shape how different kinds of actors are treated, since they involve social expectations about the relative competence of each group. Moreover, status distinctions generate backlash when actor behavior deviates from social expectations. In particular, high-status actors tend to be especially wary of behavior by low-status actors that may be perceived as challenging established expectations for authority in a given situation.[47] In this way, social expectations about relative competence shape interaction outcomes: While actors from social groups deemed superior enjoy or seek more privileges, actors from social groups deemed inferior enjoy or seek fewer privileges. As Ridgeway and Walker note,

> Legitimacy transforms a status structure from a system of behavioral inequalities (what is) into a system of rights and obligations (what ought to be). In a legitimated structure, the actions and demeanors by which high- and low-status actors enact their positions become status markers that signify the order for the members, giving status relations a ritual quality (...). Behaviors on the part of either high- or low-status actors that contradict the legitimated order become status violations that are subject to sanction by other members. Thus legitimation processes play an important role in creating stability in

[46] See Ridgeway 2014, 5-6; Berger and Webster 2006; Correll and Ridgeway 2003.
[47] See Bobo 1999; Ridgeway 2014, 7; Ridgeway, Johnson, and Diekema 1994.

> newly formed status structures and in maintaining the stability of existing structures. They are also crucial to the process by which macrolevel systems of stratification are reproduced and maintained in face-to-face settings.[48]

Importantly, social expectations about relative competence are not specific to a given task or issue area. Rather, members of high-status groups tend to be perceived as more competent *overall*, regardless of the issue at hand. As a result, they tend to exert more authority during social interactions even when their characteristics are irrelevant to the issue at hand. As extensive research on the status dynamics of small groups shows, status beliefs play a key role in organizing group activities as consequential as reaching a jury decision. During such activities, individuals who display characteristics associated with status—such as being male or white—tend to participate more in group deliberations, to exert more influence over group decisions, and to be perceived as more competent by other group members.[49] That is, social expectations about relative competence create a halo effect, whereby a characteristic associated with status influences overall perceptions of an actor's competence. Through a status generalization process, observers attribute more competence to (and defer more to) those individuals who display characteristics associated with status, even when these characteristics do not objectively impact performance in a given area.

3.3.1 Status and State Competence

In international relations, we observe a similar association between status and presumed competence. High-status states are typically perceived as more competent than other states, across issue areas. This happens even when high-status states have demonstrated superior abilities in a specific area, such as the battlefield. Highly salient events, such as international crises or major wars, play a key role in defining the predominant conceptions of state competence in the international system. During such critical junctures, the way of life associated with the winning state(s) is taken to symbolize state competence—or the extent to which a given state is considered able to perform the

[48] Ridgeway and Walker 1995, 296. For a discussion of legitimacy and special responsibilities in IR, see Bukovansky et al. 2012.

[49] See Berger, Cohen, and Zelditch 1972; Berger et al. 1977; Ridgeway 2002.

functions attributed to states—via a status generalization process. In the aftermath of international political upheavals, shared understandings of state competence are updated to reflect the set of principles adopted by the winning coalition.[50] As such, critical junctures do more than establish a new hierarchy of prestige. Besides updating the international pecking order, critical junctures also serve to update the standards that inform recognition among states.

At their foundation, international orders involve specific conceptions of legitimate statehood and rightful state action. Such conceptions are social artifacts: they emerge from the set of principles that legitimize political authority in a particular era, and are therefore bound to change over time.[51] During the nineteenth century—a foundational moment for the contemporary international order—the nation-state replaced the dynastic state as the dominant model of political authority in the world. As Bukovansky notes, the French Revolution accelerated a transformation in the sources of legitimate political authority in Europe: "Bloodlines and divine sanction began to lose their symbolic power as sources of legitimacy; popular will—however nebulously defined—began its ascent as the ultimate source of legitimate authority."[52] The transition from dynastic to popular rule implied a redefinition of what Reus-Smit calls the moral purpose of the state—or the reasons given to justify state authority. Whereas in absolutist Europe the state was considered responsible for maintaining a social order ordained by God, by the mid-nineteenth century the state became responsible for advancing the purposes and potentialities of individuals.[53] During the twentieth century, moreover, the moral purpose of the state became increasingly identified with the protection of certain individual rights.[54] Fundamental values like liberal democracy and human rights thus formed a new standard of civilization in the international system.[55]

Even as Western countries moved away from formal practices of colonization after the Second World War, they instituted a system of intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) that further con-

[50] Barkin and Cronin 1994; Gilpin 1981, 34-36; Kupchan 2014; Lascurettes 2020.
[51] Reus-Smit 2001, 520, 526. See also Clark 2007, 4-5, Reus-Smit 2017.
[52] Bukovansky 2002, 3.
[53] Reus-Smit 1999.
[54] Reus-Smit 2001, 533-36.
[55] Bowden and Seabrooke 2006; Donnelly 1998; Fidler 2000; Gong 2002.

solidated Western conceptions of state competence as legitimate.[56] We can observe this process, for example, in the emergence and proliferation of governance performance indicators. As Ward observes, intergovernmental organizations have played a key role in selecting which aspects of state performance should be measured since 1945. Initially, these aspects involved primarily economic issues, which were considered a less controversial area for IGO intervention. Gradually, however, the mandate of IGOs expanded to include social issues that were initially considered controversial.[57] The practice of quantifying state performance gained momentum in the 1960s and blossomed in the 1990s, with the end of the Cold War. A survey conducted in 2008 identified as many as 178 indicators, formulated not only by IGOs but also by nongovernmental organizations and governmental agencies from Western countries.[58] Since the end of the Cold War, moreover, state performance has been defined in an increasingly specific way—as indicators have expanded to cover issues ranging from corruption and creditworthiness to gender equality and human trafficking.[59]

By laying the foundations for the differentiation of states into positions that involve differential rights and obligations, prevailing conceptions of state competence stabilize inequality among states. Governance performance indicators, for example, have both evaluative and constitutive functions. At the surface level, performance indicators provide a basis for social pressure, which can influence policy adoption. But most importantly, performance indicators form a "discursive field" that constitutes the realm of legitimate state responsibilities.[60] By providing quantifiable, comparable measures of state performance, performance indicators set standards for all states. That is, performance indicators help define what competent state performance means in the first place. Based on prevailing conceptions of state competence, states rank one another, and act accordingly.[61] From this process, international hierarchies of status emerge—as different state identities, such as "developed" or "developing," translate into social positions that entail differential rights and obligations. It is therefore not surprising that countries are highly sensitive to how they are ranked, and fiercely

[56] See Viola 2020, 163-219.
[57] Ward 2004, 20-21, 143, 151.
[58] Bandura 2008.
[59] See Cooley and Snyder 2015; Kelley 2017.
[60] Löwenheim 2008. See also Hansen and Mühlen-Schulte 2012.
[61] Davis et al. 2012; Davis, Kingsbury, and Merry 2012.

debate the criteria used to evaluate state performance.[62]

But while the definition of state competence is fraught with political struggles, there is a dominant perspective, which is Western. Since the globalization of the European society of states, state competence has been defined primarily from a Western perspective. After the Second World War, ideals of social justice typically spread from the Western core to the periphery of the international system—much like they had in the nineteenth century, when countries like Japan conformed to Western standards in an attempt to obtain recognition.[63] Similarly, the measures of economic development used by IGOs have been strongly influenced by Western ideas, such as Benthamite philosophy and a liberal market ideology.[64] As Lagos observes, the spread of mass communication in the 1950s helped diffuse information about the inequalities in standard of living between rich and poor countries. At the same time, the increasing use of labels such as "underdeveloped" or "backward" to describe poorer countries implied the existence of a single path to human development and progress. Based on this perspective, poor countries should follow the path trodden by rich ones, aspiring to become like them—that is, "developed" or "advanced."[65]

As sociological institutionalists note, contemporary state features derive from a Western cultural frame that involves elements like rationalization and individualism. Around the world, states adopt remarkably similar institutional structures, even when they face dissimilar challenges.[66] In fact, contestation itself often draws from a Western repertoire of practices and discourse. For example, even China—considered a potential challenger to U.S. hegemony—does not altogether deny the prevailing conceptions of state competence in the contemporary international system. By promoting economic growth, Chinese leaders intend to show their ability to achieve a higher standard of living for the average citizen using an alternative economic model. In addition, China does not openly question the validity of democratic principles; rather, it demonstrates a shallow commitment to them. Similarly, rather than openly refuting the idea of human rights, China defends a

[62] See Cooley and Snyder 2015; Kelley 2017; Ward 2004, 143.
[63] Dore 1975. See also Okagaki 2013; Suzuki 2005.
[64] Ward 2004, 13, 27, 44.
[65] Lagos 1963, 25-30.
[66] See Finnemore 1996; Meyer, Boli, and Thomas 1987; Meyer et al. 1997.

conception of human rights that emphasizes economic rights over political ones.[67] As this example demonstrates, even "outlier" states rely on the prevailing conceptions of state competence in the system to legitimize their authority and their policies.[68]

3.4 Status Reinforces Inequality

Finally, my argument involves a third proposition about the relationship between status and inequality. I argue that, once established, status distinctions reinforce inequality independently from material conditions, via cumulative advantage mechanisms: The higher standing a state enjoys, the more it attracts additional recognition. Based on cumulative advantage processes, a small initial advantage in status—whether acquired by merit or chance—creates subsequent advantages in status recognition that result neither from merit, nor from chance. In other words, cumulative advantage involves the dynamic of increasing returns that defines path dependence.[69] As a result, the status recognition gap between those states at the top and the bottom of an international hierarchy is bound to increase over time, independently from the qualities of these states.

Crucially, cumulative advantage encompasses purely structural effects, which result from states' positions in a social arrangement rather than from their qualities. Cumulative advantage follows the principle according to which "nothing succeeds like success"—also known as referential attachment, whereby popular actors tend to receive more ties simply by virtue of their popularity;[70] or as the "Matthew Effect," whereby the rich tend to get richer.[71] Because of cumulative advantage, status recognition is subject to nonlinear effects or emerging properties that differ from the properties of states. In the social sciences, cumulative advantage models constitute a well-established approach to explain growing or persistent inequality in social domains like academia and culture, where ac-

[67] See Allan, Vucetic, and Hopf 2018. See also Pouliot 2014, 199, 202, 206.
[68] See Reus-Smit 1999, 35.
[69] Pierson 2000. See also Jervis 1997, 146-76.
[70] Barabási and Albert 1999; Newman 2001; Albert and Barabási 2002.
[71] Merton 1968. Merton uses the term "Matthew Effect" to refer to the accumulation of recognition in scientific communities, rather than to the accumulation of wealth or material resources.

tors who already enjoy recognition tend to attract additional recognition.[72] In addition, prominent studies show that cumulative advantage influences status attainment within domestic societies.[73] In what follows, I argue that cumulative advantage processes likewise reinforce inequality in the international system, independently from the qualities of states.

In particular, three mechanisms make status self-reinforcing. First, status involves social closure, or the drawing of a boundary between the established group and outsiders. Social closure reinforces inequality because (1) it involves on a distinctive way of life, rather than separate attributes that can be more easily acquired; (2) it follows a principle of transitivity, whereby connectedness with high-status states brings status; and (3) it encourages solidarity among high-status states but undermines solidarity among low-status states. Second, consensus effects shape status recognition: the more a state receives recognition, the more others deem it worthy of recognition. As such, high-status states tend to attract additional recognition simply by virtue of their popularity. Finally, high status involves privileges that beget more status: high-status states act as standard-setters, shaping the criteria for status recognition; and as gatekeepers, shaping recognition decisions. By defining the rules of the game, high-status states enjoy considerable advantage in the process of status recognition. Next, I discuss each of these cumulative advantage mechanisms in turn.

3.4.1 Social Closure

To begin, status is self-reinforcing because status distinctions involve social closure, which reinforces inequality via two aspects. First, social closure involves *commonality*, or the sharing of common attributes. High-status actors differentiate themselves from outsiders by adopting a distinctive way of life, or a set of behaviors and practices that sets them apart from outsiders. Based on its distinctiveness, a status group justifies its exclusive access to certain privileges.[74] In international relations, for example, high status depends on a Western way of life—a gestalt that involves not only material resources but also fundamental values associated with the West, such as liberal democracy.

[72] For a review, see Smith and Faris 2015.
[73] DiMaggio and Garip 2012; Gould 2002; Podolny 2005.
[74] Weber 1978, 933. See also Elias and Scotson 1994; Merton 1972; Tilly 2005.

Myriad cases suggest that status recognition does not depend on a specific attribute, which status-seekers can acquire relatively easily. Despite its massive military capabilities, for example, Russia does not overall conform to the way of life of high-status states; as such, Russians remain dissatisfied with the recognition received by their country since the time of Peter the Great.

Because status involves a distinctive way of life, status recognition depends on an ensemble of attributes that is difficult to acquire. To effectively communicate a certain way of life and evoke the corresponding recognition, actor attributes need to go well together. To infer status, observers examine the ensemble of attributes displayed by an actor, rather than specific attributes in isolation.[75] Actors who display a coherent set of attributes indicate that they master a way of life and are therefore worthy of recognition. In contrast, actors who display an incoherent set of attributes typically come across as arrivistes, who are trying to pass as high-status actors even though they fail to master the corresponding way of life. As Bourdieu notes, attempts to achieve status via the "naive exhibitionism of 'conspicuous consumption', which seeks distinction in the crude display of ill-mastered luxury," tend to be unsuccessful.[76] Mismatched attributes send out contradictory signals about an actor's way of life and are therefore unlikely to evoke recognition.

Second, social closure involves *connectedness*, or the sharing of relational ties. High-status actors share dense relations among themselves but sparse relations with outsiders.[77] As Elias and Scotson note, members of an established group exclude outsiders from social contact with the established group and maintain restrictions on social contact via social control—for example by boosting the reputation of those members who observe the restrictions on social contact, while threatening to downgrade the reputation of those members who violate these restrictions.[78] As such, an actor's existing relations influence their propensity to receive recognition. Connectedness, especially with high-status actors, brings status. In other words, status recognition follows the principle of transi-

[75] Sociological research on status demonstrates that observers combine information to estimate status, weighing the different characteristics of an actor to produce an aggregate expectation of their competence. See Berger, Cohen, and Zelditch 1972, Ridgeway and Walker 1995, 290-94.

[76] Bourdieu 1984, 31.

[77] Weber 1978, 932. See also Lamont and Fournier 1992; Lamont 2002.

[78] Elias and Scotson 1994, xvi.

tivity, whereby two actors that have similar relational ties are likely to be connected themselves.[79] Transitivity has opposite implications for high- and low-status states. While well-connected states are likely to receive additional recognition, sparsely-connected states are not. By promoting the recognition of well-connected states while obstructing the recognition of sparsely-connected states, social closure perpetuates and accentuates inequality.

Moreover, status distinctions reinforce inequality because they encourage solidarity among high-status actors but undermine solidarity among low-status actors.[80] In a status hierarchy, actors must balance two needs: the desire for status, which is pursued by networking with high-status actors; and the desire for reciprocity, which is pursued by interacting with those actors that recognize oneself.[81] For high-status actors, both desires go hand in hand: By interacting with other high-status states, a high-status state satisfies not only the desire for status but also the desire for reciprocity. For low-status actors, however, the two desires are at odds. A low-status state must balance the desire for status, which is pursued by networking with high-status states, against the desire for reciprocity, which is pursued by interacting with other low-status states. The interests of low-status states are therefore divided between supporting their own group and trying to network with high-status states. As a result, we observe high levels of reciprocity among high-status states, whose relations are reinforced by many mutual ties, but low levels of interaction among low-status states, who cannot afford to maintain similar levels of solidarity. By promoting differential levels of solidarity based on status, social closure perpetuates and accentuates inequality.

3.4.2 Consensus Effects

In addition, status is self-reinforcing because status evaluations are interdependent. Status depends on peer attribution—that is, high-status actors are those recognized as such by their peers. But because status is difficult to ascertain, actors rely on each other's evaluations to decide how to rank

[79] See Wasserman and Faust 1994, 245. In IR, this effect is captured by the familiar notion that the friend of my friend is my friend, the enemy of my friend is my enemy, and the enemy of my enemy is my friend. See Jervis 1997, 210-52.

[80] See Berger, Anderson, and Zelditch 1972; Ridgeway 2014, 6-7; Sauder, Lynn, and Podolny 2012; Thye 2000.

[81] Gould 2002.

one another. Based on an actor's existing relationships, observers infer the actor's status, even in the absence of information about the actor's qualities or behavior.[82] Actors thus influence each other's status evaluations, often leading to the emergence of a working consensus about who ranks where in a given status hierarchy.[83] Coordinating with one another, observers evaluate status based on what "most people" think, even when they lack accurate information about the qualities of actors. Such consensus effects are mentioned in passing in the IR literature on status, though they are not explored in depth. As Singer and Small note, international status comes from a shifting consensus in the community regarding the state's rank, which makes status "perceptual in the collective sense."[84] Similarly, O'Neill describes status in terms of second-order beliefs (beliefs about beliefs) and higher-order beliefs (common beliefs) about a state's quality.[85]

Consensus effects make status self-reinforcing: the more a state receives recognition, the more others deem it worthy of recognition. As such, status recognition is not a meritocratic process. On the one hand, high-status states enjoy considerable advantage in the process of status attainment, which results from their social position rather than from their qualities. On the other hand, status mobility constitutes the exception rather than the rule. In other words, it takes more effort to gain status than to maintain it. States at the margins of the international system struggle to gain recognition, even despite changes in their qualities or the things that they have. For example, North Korea failed to achieve recognition as a great power even though it acquired nuclear weapons, traditionally considered one of the accoutrements of great-power status. If anything, the acquisition of nuclear weapons consolidated North Korea's status as a pariah state. This happened because North Korea, as a state at the margins of the international system, maintains only tenuous connections with other states—including most recently China, one of its traditional allies.

At the same time, it takes less effort to maintain status than to gain it. While states at the margins of the international system struggle to gain recognition, states at the system's core enjoy considerable advantage in maintaining their status. For example, the inclusion of France a permanent member

[82] Betancourt, Kovács, and Otner 2018.
[83] See Correll et al. 2017; Ridgeway and Erickson 2000.
[84] Singer and Small 1966, 238.
[85] O'Neill 2001, 193.

in the UN Security Council (UNSC) in 1945 mostly resulted from France's previous status as a great power, rather than from its meager material capabilities at the end of the Second World War.[86] Based on material factors alone, few would expect France to acquire the privileges it acquired in the post-war international order. And yet, France was invited to sit at the main table and help manage international relations at the end of the war. Similarly, other countries—such as Portugal, Spain, and Sweden in 1815; Italy and Japan in 1919; or China in 1945—have also punched above their material weight during constitutional moments of the contemporary international order, achieving an international standing superior to their material capabilities.[87] As these cases illustrate, a state's position in a status hierarchy shapes the conditions for its recognition: High-status states tend to attract more recognition simply by virtue of their popularity.

3.4.3 Standard-Setting and Gatekeeping

Finally, status is self-reinforcing because high-status actors enjoy privileges that beget more status: they act as standard-setters, shaping the criteria that guide status recognition, and as gatekeepers, shaping decisions to recognize other actors or exclude them.[88] High-status states typically define the rules of the game, consolidating their superior position in the international system.[89] The behavior of high-status states shapes prevailing conceptions of state competence, which are used as criteria for recognition among states. It is no coincidence that, to this day, status evaluations rely on governance ideals associated with the West. As discussed above, the globalization of the European society of states was regulated by a standard of civilization, which performed the functions of gatekeeping membership to international society and assimilating non-European peoples into European standards. Since then, Western countries have continued to shape the standards for status recognition in the international system—either informally, by leading by example; or formally, via international

[86] Heimann 2015*b*.

[87] See Buzan 2004, 62; Heimann 2015*b*, 186; Morgenthau 1948, 270; Murray 2018.

[88] Bourdieu 1984, 1993; Swartz 1997. As Bourdieu notes, the dominant actors in a field have more influence in shaping the habitus of the field.

[89] While actors differ in their ability to shape group standards and boundaries, it is important to note that these standards form at the group level—as an emerging property, or an equilibrium. See Chapter 2; Goode 1978, Ch. 2.

institutions. Even as Western countries moved away from formal practices of colonization after the Second World War, they instituted a system of intergovernmental organizations that consolidated Western conceptions of state competence as legitimate.

Nowadays, certain ideals associated with the West—such as democracy, economic liberalism, and human rights—perform a discriminatory function akin to the one performed by the standard of civilization in the nineteenth century.[90] That is, even as non-Western peoples formally acquired sovereign statehood via decolonization, they were often considered inferior for not upholding Western standards, or stigmatized.[91] As Simpson notes, even as non-Western peoples achieved formal equality in international law, they continued to lack legislative equality—as they were expected to abide by norms to which they had not freely consented, and still lacked equal representation in the constitutional bodies of the international system. Moreover, non-Western states continued to lack existential equality, since they could not fully exert the right to political independence.[92] While Western states continued to act as standard-setters and gatekeepers, shaping not only recognition decisions but also the standards of recognition in the international system, other actors faced pressures to assimilate into a Western way of life as they became sovereign states. To non-Western peoples, assimilation into a Western model has entailed a psychic cost, as the decision to "modernize" one's country requires accepting that the country falls short in important respects.[93] In addition, assimilation has entailed political costs, as non-Western states to this day remain the main targets of international monitoring and intervention.[94]

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter develops a network theory of status. I argue that status depends on states' positions in a social arrangement, rather than on the qualities of states. Therefore, relational processes—which

[90] Bowden and Seabrooke 2006; Donnelly 1998; Fidler 2000; Gong 2002.
[91] Adler-Nissen 2014; Zarakol 2011, 2014.
[92] Simpson 2004, 6-7, 25-88. See also Viola 2020, 163-219.
[93] Dore 1975, 194; see also Hagström 2015.
[94] Donnelly 2006, 147-49; Keene 2013.

cannot be reduced to the qualities of states—drive status recognition in the international system. In particular, the chapter presents three new propositions about the relationship between status and inequality among states. First, status legitimates inequality among states. Based on status distinctions, certain types of states are presumed to be better than others, and therefore deserving of exclusive privileges. To understand how hierarchies of status are made in international politics, I trace their roots back to key transformations that magnified global inequality in the nineteenth century, a foundational moment for the contemporary international order. As the European society of states became global, we observe not only an imbalance of power between European states and non-European peoples, but also the stigmatization of the latter, which served to justify their exclusion and subsequent assimilation. As such, status distinctions played a key role in the legitimation of the inequality between the West and other parts of the world.

Second, status stabilizes inequality by shaping social perceptions and behavior. By drawing a boundary between those types of states perceived as superior or inferior, status distinctions create expectations about the ability of either type to exert authority in a given situation, shaping interaction outcomes. In particular, high-status states are typically perceived as more competent than other states. In the aftermath of international political upheavals, shared understandings of state competence are updated to reflect the set of principles adopted by the winning coalition. Since the globalization of the European society of states, state competence has been defined primarily from a Western perspective. From the late eighteenth century onward, as popular will gradually replaced divine sanction as the source of legitimate state authority in Europe, the state became responsible for advancing the purposes and potentialities of individuals. During the twentieth century, moreover, the moral purpose of the state became increasingly identified with the protection of certain individual rights. Even as Western countries moved away from formal practices of colonization after the Second World War, they instituted a system of intergovernmental organizations that further consolidated Western conceptions of state competence as legitimate. As a result, fundamental values associated with the West formed a new standard of civilization.

Finally, once established, status distinctions reinforce inequality independently from material conditions: The higher standing a state enjoys, the more it tends to attract additional recognition. High-status states enjoy a cumulative advantage in status attainment, which derives from structural conditions rather than from their attributes. To begin, status distinctions encourage solidarity among high-status states but undermine solidarity among low-status states. On the one hand, social closure involves commonality (or distinction): High-status states differentiate themselves from outsiders by adopting a distinctive way of life, or a set of behaviors and practices that is difficult to mimic. On the other hand, social closure involves connectedness (or exclusion): high-status states share dense relations among themselves but sparse relations with outsiders. Therefore, sharing relational ties, especially with high-status states, brings status. In addition, consensus effects make status self-reinforcing: the more a state receives recognition, the more others deem it worthy of recognition. Therefore, it takes more effort to gain status than to maintain it. Finally, high-status states enjoy privileges that beget more status: they act as standard-setters, shaping the criteria that guide status recognition; and as gatekeepers, shaping recognition decisions. It is no coincidence that, to this day, status evaluations are based on a Western way of life—a gestalt that includes not only material resources but also fundamental values like liberal democracy.

My theoretical framework implies that, to understand why states achieve status, we need to examine the overall patterns of state relations, rather than merely ranking states based on certain attributes. To investigate the sources of international status, I thus develop in the next chapters a relational empirical strategy that is consistent with the social nature of status.

Part II

A Relational Empirical Strategy

4

Why Embassies?

How do we measure international status? Having developed the concept of status and its main dimensions in Chapter 2, I now consider the indicator level, in which the concept becomes concrete enough to guide data collection and empirical analysis.[1] In this chapter, I operationalize the systematized concept of status developed in Chapter 2, linking this concept to observations intended to capture the main ideas from the concept.[2] At the abstract level, I define status as an effective claim to social esteem that involves privileges. At the secondary or intermediate level, the proposed concept involves two necessary dimensions: recognition and hierarchy. At the indicator level, a good measure of status should therefore capture both recognition and hierarchy, the two necessary dimensions in my concept of status. More precisely, a valid measure of status should capture acts of recognition by states that create social inequalities among states.

Each of this chapter's sections deals with a different aspect of the operationalization of status. The first section begins by discussing my operationalization strategy. Because status is a quality that cannot be directly observed, I use embassy exchange data as a proxy measure of status. Based on international law, embassy exchange is a longstanding practice that signifies recognition among sovereign states and that creates social inequalities among states. Next, I discuss the operationalization criteria I use to choose this measure. Given the systematized concept of status developed in Chapter 2, a valid measure of status should be relational, behavioral, and multidimensional;

[1] Goertz 2006, 50-53.
[2] See Adcock and Collier 2001, 531.

moreover, it should cover all states, cover a longer historical period, and reduce measurement bias. Compared to other possible measures of status—those based on states' attributes, individuals' perceptions of the status of states, or states' positions in formal institutions like international treaties or intergovernmental organizations—embassy exchange data offer the most advantages given the goals of this project. While embassy exchange data reasonably meet each of my operationalization criteria, alternative measures present limitations based on two or more of the criteria. Finally, I address potential concerns associated with my proposed measure, dispelling common misconceptions about embassy exchange data and their use as a measure of status.

4.1 A Proxy Measure of Status

Because status is a quality that cannot be directly observed or measured, I use a proxy measure of international status. My point of departure is the systematized concept of status developed in Chapter 2. Recognition is the first necessary dimension in my concept: for an actor to achieve a particular status, others have to recognize it. To find a proxy measure of status recognition, I turn to international law. As Agné and colleagues note, international law "is the primary resource for identifying empirical acts of recognition" in international relations.[3] As Peterson puts it, recognition is broadly defined in international law as the "acknowledgement of the existence of an entity or situation indicating that full consequences of that existence will be respected."[4]

Under international law, three acts of recognition create status distinctions among actors, and could therefore serve as measures of status recognition: (1) the recognition of a state, (2) the establishment of diplomatic relations, and (3) the establishment of diplomatic representation.[5] On the one hand, each of these acts implies the previous one: diplomatic representation implies diplomatic relations, and diplomatic relations imply state recognition. On the other hand, each act does not imply the next one: a state may recognize another state without establishing diplomatic relations,

[3] Agné et al. 2013, 101.
[4] Peterson 1997, 1.
[5] See Brown 1936; Kelsen 1941, 605.

or may establish diplomatic relations with a state without exchanging diplomatic representations.[6] Though distinct, the three acts of recognition share key features—most importantly, their discretionary nature. Under international law, a state does not have to recognize another entity or even to justify its decision to either recognize another entity or refrain from recognizing it. Due to their voluntary character, these acts are especially informative as acts of recognition.

In particular, I choose diplomatic representation as a measure of status recognition in this project. Among the three acts of recognition in international law, diplomatic representation is the most appropriate to measure international status because it creates status distinctions among sovereign states. By contrast, the other two acts of recognition (the recognition of a state, and the establishment of diplomatic relations) create distinctions between states and non-state actors, and therefore are not as useful to examine hierarchies of status among states. It is no coincidence that quantitative studies of status typically use diplomatic representation data to measure international status. For example, multiple studies have used diplomatic exchange data to measure status so as to examine the relationship between status inconsistency and war, both in the first wave of status research in IR (during the 1960s and 1970s) and in the current wave that began at the turn of the twentieth-first century.[7] In fact, no other measure of international status has been used in observational studies in IR that employ quantitative methods.[8]

Diplomatic representation can take various forms. In the contemporary period, I am particularly interested in embassies headed by an ambassador or high commissioner, who hold the highest rank in diplomatic protocol following the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961).[9] Unlike other types of diplomatic representation, embassies headed by an ambassador unambiguously signify recognition and imply costs to the sending state.[10] Embassies headed by a chargé d'affaires—a lower-ranking diplomatic official that fills in for an ambassador—indicate deteriorat-

[6] Wouters, Duquet, and Meuwissen 2013, 511.

[7] East 1972; Renshon 2017; Volgy and Mayhall 1995; Wallace 1971.

[8] See, for example, Colgan 2014; Gartzke and Jo 2009; Jo and Gartzke 2007; Miller et al. 2015; Singer and Small 1966; Volgy et al. 2011.

[9] Heads of diplomatic representations exchanged between members of the Commonwealth are called high commissioners instead of ambassadors. Henceforth, I use the term "ambassador" to refer to both high commissioners and ambassadors.

[10] See Berridge and James 2003, 36, 55, 138, 177; Malone 2013, 123-24.

ing relations between states. In fact, recalling one's ambassador for consultations is the strongest form of diplomatic sanction short of closing an embassy or severing diplomatic relations.[11] Side accreditations—instances in which, for example, the Brazilian ambassador resident in Cambodia receives accreditation to also represent Brazil in Laos, even though there is no Brazilian embassy in Laos—serve to reduce costs, which results in only occasional bilateral interactions. Consulates perform a specific function, emitting visas to foreign visitors and providing assistance to nationals abroad. Finally, states use interest sections to maintain communication in the absence of diplomatic relations. In sum, either recognition or costs are absent in other types of diplomatic representation, which makes them less informative as an act of recognition than embassies headed by an ambassador. It is no coincidence, for example, that most bilateral visits by U.S. presidents or secretaries of state between 1965 and 2003 go to countries where the U.S. sends an embassy headed by an ambassador.[12] By contrast, the countries that lack an American ambassador receive only a small percentage of the high-level diplomatic visits from the U.S. during this period.

Importantly, an embassy headed by an ambassador refers to a bilateral act of recognition from the sending state (i) to the receiving state (j). Each embassy can only have one ambassador, who occupies the position of official representative of state i to state j. The sending state accredits the ambassador—or provides them with credentials—specifically to represent the head of state of the sending state in bilateral relations with the receiving state. As specified in Article 3, §1 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961), the functions of a diplomatic mission include: (1) representing the sending state in the receiving state; (2) protecting the interests of the sending state and its nationals in the receiving state; (3) negotiating with the government of the receiving state;

[11] States often recall their ambassador for consultations to express disapproval of the host state. For example, several European countries withdrew their ambassadors from Moscow in 2018 following the alleged poisoning by the Russian government, using a nerve agent, of a former double agent in Salisbury, England. See *The Guardian*, "EU recalls ambassador from Russia as leaders back May over Salisbury," 23 March 2018, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/mar/22/theresa-may-struggling-win-eu-support-russia-europe. And in 2021, Moscow summoned its ambassador to the U.S. for consultations to signal disapproval after the Biden administration considered imposing additional sanctions on Russia in response to the alleged Russian interference in U.S. presidential elections, the Kremlin-backed cyber espionage campaign aimed at U.S. targets that culminated in the SolarWinds hack in 2020, and the detention of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny. See *Financial Times*, "Russia recalls ambassador to US amid deteriorating relations," 18 March 2021, https://www.ft.com/content/ec5d259d-0509-4ef5-9763-dd474fe1d7e0.

[12] Renshon 2017, 133-35. See also Lebovic and Saunders 2016.

(4) ascertaining the conditions in the receiving state and reporting them to the sending state; and (5) promoting friendly relations between the sending state and the receiving state. By contrast, an ambassador lacks formal authorization to represent the sending state in relations with third states (that is, with states other than the receiving state).

Moreover, the appointment of an ambassador involves multiple procedures of high importance in diplomatic protocol—which typically include the heads of state at both the sending and the receiving states.[13] Before taking up an appointment, an ambassador usually meets with the head of state of the sending state, whom the ambassador is meant to personally represent in relations with the receiving state. Once despatched, the ambassador then presents their credentials to the receiving state, usually in a formal audience with the head of state of the receiving state. Following the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, a potential ambassador needs an *agrément* (a formal agreement by the receiving state) before they can be appointed as an ambassador to that state. Like diplomatic exchange itself, the *agrément* is a voluntary or discretionary act, as the receiving state may refuse *agrément* without justification. In sum, embassy exchange is a longstanding practice that signifies recognition and creates status distinctions among states.

4.2 Operationalization Criteria

Six criteria guide the operationalization of my concept of status in this project. Given the systematized concept of status presented in Chapter 2, a valid measure of international status should be relational, behavioral, and multidimensional; moreover, it should involve all states, cover a longer historical period, and reduce measurement bias. As I discuss next, embassy exchange data reasonably meet each of these criteria. As a proxy measure of status, these data offer important advantages when compared to other potential measures discussed below.

[13] Berridge and James 2003, 6-7.

4.2.1 A Relational, Behavioral Measure

To begin, embassy exchange data offer two important advantages. First, these data capture the relational nature of status. Status is a relational property: it emerges from state relations, rather than from their qualities. While actors use certain attributes to evaluate members in a given community, status ultimately depends on peer recognition. Accordingly, embassy exchange data reflect relations among states, rather than state attributes. Second, embassy exchange data capture the behavioral nature of status. Status has fundamental behavioral implications: it implies differential treatment to different kinds of states. Moreover, international hierarchies of status emerge from the practices of states—such as granting recognition to a state or withholding it, attaching symbolic meaning to certain state attributes, and granting privileges to states depending on their level of social esteem. As such, states' practices should be at the center of attempts to measure status.[14] According, embassy exchange data reflect acts of recognition among states, rather than merely state perceptions.

4.2.2 A Multidimensional Measure

In addition, embassy exchange data offer another important advantage: they capture the multidimensional nature of status. Embassies reflect a state's overall importance, across issue areas, to all other states in the international system, rather than a state's importance in a given issue area. Because embassies are costly, a state only sends an embassy abroad if it considers the receiving state as an important player across multiple dimensions.[15] As Singer and Small note,

> whether or not A sends a diplomatic representative to N (...) is seen as a reflection of a wide range of those external and internal considerations affecting those responsible for deciding upon each such assignment. Among these are general usage at the time, the rank sent by others, the host's preferences and customs, prior relations between sender and host, degree of interdependence between the two, domestic attitudes toward the

[14] Pouliot 2014, 192-200.

[15] Brams 1966; East 1972, 305; Nierop 1994, Ch. 4.

> host nation, anticipated importance of the host, and so on. No matter how we look at it, the decision about the rank of a diplomatic mission must reflect-and, in a subtle fashion, combine-almost all the considerations affecting the sending nation's foreign policy as well as its relations with the host nation. In a sense, no multidimensional combined index could be expected to tap, in so effective a synthesis, the factors which blend into the sum total and rank of all the missions in a given capital.[16]

When deciding to open, maintain, or close an embassy in a given foreign capital, the decision-makers of the sending state allocate scarce resources based on an estimate of the relative importance of the receiving state compared to the other states in the system. Comparisons among potential embassy destinations typically bridge across issue areas—including political, economic, security, and cultural factors to mention a few.[17] In addition, such decisions take into account considerations involving both domestic actors and foreign countries.[18] On the one hand, domestic interest groups or bureaucratic agencies may strongly support (or oppose) sending an embassy to a given state. On the other hand, influential states may pressure other states to send (or to not send) an embassy to a given state. During the Cold War, for example, the United States encouraged its diplomatic partners to exchange embassies within the capitalist bloc but refrain from sending embassies to states in the communist bloc. Moreover, the receiving state may be more or less eager to receive an embassy. As such, an embassy reflects the relative importance, across multiple dimensions, of the receiving state to the decision-makers of the sending state.

4.2.3 Embassies Cover All States Over Time

Moreover, my proposed measure of status offers two additional advantages. First, because this measure covers decades of state relations, it enables me to investigate the sources of international status over time, increasing my confidence that the results of my empirical analysis are not specific to a

[16] Singer and Small 1966, 241.

[17] Accordingly, embassies typically comprise multiple sections that deal with different issues—like, for example, political, economic and commercial, cultural, or consular affairs.

[18] Singer and Small 1966, 239-41; Small and Singer 1973, 578-82.

given historical moment. That is, this measure captures longstanding patterns in state relations that drive international recognition over time, rather than covering a specific period.

Second, this measure covers all states in the system. For both substantive and methodological reasons, my empirical analysis calls for a measure that covers as many states as possible. From a substantive standpoint, status emerges from the acts of recognition of all states, rather than from any single state or even a few states. Because status relations involve all states, rather than only a small group like the major powers, a valid measure of international status should cover all states in the system. From a methodological standpoint, relational data must be as complete as possible, so as to minimize the difference between the observed network structure and the true network structure (or the underlying pattern of relations). In general, missing data tend to limit the conclusions that can be drawn from quantitative analysis. But when it comes to relational data in particular, missing data become especially problematic.[19] Omitting even a small number of actors due to measurement error, for example, may result in significant distortions of the true network structure. For every actor that is missing, all the ties involving that actor remain unobserved, as do any patterns of ties surrounding that actor. Missing data thus result in biased estimates of network-level statistics, yielding biased inferences about the underlying patterns of relations.

Data availability sets embassy exchange data apart from other potential measures. No comprehensive data are available on other state practices that express recognition, and so could in principle be used to measure status. For example, diplomatic visits convey a measure of the importance attributed to different diplomatic partners, since high-level state representatives have scarce time and resources to visit other states. But currently, data are available only for bilateral visits originating from a few countries: China, France, Germany, Russia (or the Soviet Union), the United States, and the United Kingdom.[20] By contrast, there are no data on the visits received by these countries or the visits sent and received by all other countries. While the data available provide a measure of which countries the visitors consider important, they do not provide information about whom all other countries consider important. Although states like the U.S. or the UK exert significant influence

[19] Holland and Leinhardt 1973; Kossinets 2006; Laumann, Marsden, and Prensky 1983.

[20] Lebovic and Saunders 2016; McManus 2018; Nitsch 2007.

over other states, international hierarchies of status ultimately emerge from the acts of recognition by all states. Moreover, the partial coverage of the existing data raises additional concerns about bias. The countries for which data are available differ systematically from the countries for which there are no data, in aspects like their levels of diplomatic engagement or material capabilities. As such, it is unclear that conclusions drawn from these data could be generalized to all states in the system. Neither are comprehensive data available for other potential measures of recognition—such as "choices of language and style in diplomatic communication; (...) dressing at official visits; attention to national memorial days and monuments of international partners; invitations to international meetings and organizations."[21]

4.2.4 Reducing Bias

Finally, embassy exchange data provide one last advantage: compared to other measures, they involve minimal bias. To be sure, embassy exchange provides an imperfect measure of international status because factors external to status influence it. For example, neighboring states are more likely to exchange embassies than geographically distant states; in addition, countries that host the headquarters of an intergovernmental organization (IGO), like Belgium, tend to receive more embassies due to economies of scale for sending states. However, this does not compromise my analysis because I control statistically for these extraneous factors. By including in the analysis variables like geographic proximity and IGO hosting, I address concerns about omitted variable bias—which results from omitting from a statistical model an independent variable that correlates with both the dependent variable and an independent variable already included in the model. Because I use control variables like geographic proximity, the effects estimated for my variables of interest are net of the effects of extraneous factors like geography. While my proposed measure involves potential sources of bias, I use a systematic, transparent approach to address this issue. As a result, there is much less reason for concern about bias associated with my proposed measure than with alternative measures of status, as I discuss in more detail below.

[21] Agné et al. 2013, 100-101.

4.3 Alternative Measurement Strategies

While quantitative studies use diplomatic exchange data to measure international status, this is not the only measurement strategy possible. Besides diplomatic representation data, scholars have used three other kinds of data to measure international status: (1) comparing states based on attributes like military or economic capabilities (or relatedly, comparing states' positions in issue-specific relations, like military alliances or international trade); (2) measuring individuals' perceptions of the status of different countries; and (3) measuring states' positions in formal institutions, such as intergovernmental organizations or international treaties.

Compared to the measurement strategy I use in this project, each of these alternative strategies is more intuitive. To begin, these strategies focus on manifestations of status that are directly observable, such as status-symbolizing attributes or institutionalized status positions. In fact, these measurement strategies resemble the way we assess status in our everyday interpersonal interactions (as actors rather than researchers). People often use information about directly observable traits, like institutional affiliation, to assess the status of those with whom they interact. The reader might have heard, for example, of the common complaint among academics that some people decide with whom to interact during conferences by giving others' name tags the once-over, quickly deciding to cut an interaction short if the interlocutor hails from a less prestigious country or academic institution. Given the intuitive nature of these measurement strategies, it is not surprising that they were adopted in previous studies of status in IR. Likewise, early sociological studies of status in domestic societies tended to rely on similar strategies.[22]

Intuitive as these alternative strategies are, however, they also present important limitations given the purposes of this project. Table 4.1 summarizes the comparison among possible measures of international status based on six criteria that guided the above operationalization of my concept of status. In particular, given the systematized concept of status presented in Chapter 2, a valid measure of international status should be relational, behavioral, and multidimensional; moreover,

[22] Adams 1953; Fenchel, Monderer, and Hartley 1951; Lenski 1954. For a useful discussion of some of the limitations found in early approaches, see Blalock 1966.

Table 4.1. Comparison of Possible Strategies to Measure International Status

	Relational	*Behavioral*	*Coverage (states)*	*Coverage (time)*	*Multidi-mensional*	*Reduces bias*
Diplomatic exchange	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Actors' properties (e.g., military, economic resources)	-	-	✓	✓	-	-
Issue-specific relations (e.g, alliances, trade)	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	-
Actors' perceptions (e.g., surveys, ethnography, discourse/content analysis)	✓	-	✓*	✓*	✓	-
Formal institutions (e.g., IGOs, treaties)	✓	✓	-	✓	-	-

Note: * Possible in principle, though it would be very costly in practice.

it should cover all states, cover a longer period, and reduce bias. But while diplomatic exchange data reasonably meet each of these criteria, the other possible measures of status present limitations based on two or more of these criteria, as I discuss next.

4.3.1 Actors' Attributes

First, an intuitive approach to measure status is to compare actors based on attributes considered important for status attainment. In IR, this strategy typically involves ranking states based on military or economic capabilities. For example, Lagos assesses international status by comparing countries based on rank-dimensions like gross national product and military expenditures.[23] Following a similar approach, many scholars propose criteria to categorize certain countries as the major or great powers of a given historical era.[24] Likewise, the Correlates of War (COW) major powers data

[23] Lagos 1963.
[24] Bull 2002, 194-222; Levy 1983, 16-24; Buzan 2004, 69-72; Neumann 2008; Schweller 1993.

Table 4.2. Major Powers According to the Correlates of War Project (1816-2011)

State	Period
Austria-Hungary	1816–1918
China	1950–
France	1816–1940; 1945–
Germany	1816–1918; 1925–1945; 1991–
Italy	1860–1943
Japan	1895–1945; 1991–
Russia	1816–1917; 1922–
United Kingdom	1816–
United States	1898–

set, commonly used in quantitative studies in IR, lists the countries that count as major powers in a given historical period since the early nineteenth century, as shown in Table 4.2.[25] While the criteria used to categorize some states as major powers sometimes remain implicit, in most cases scholars list military and economic capabilities as fundamental attributes—often, necessary conditions—for the achievement of major power status.

This approach provides a useful starting point for studies of international status in two ways. First, major power denominations like the one provided in Table 4.2 summarize the judgment of experts in the field about which states we should expect to find at the top of international hierarchies of status in the past couple of centuries. As such, I rely in part on COW's classification of major powers to validate my proposed measure of status in the next chapter, confirming that those state that receive the most embassies are the same states scholars usually rank at the top in a given period. Second, I use the state attributes that IR scholars deem important for status attainment at the state level, such as military or economic capabilities, to develop hypotheses about the determinants of international status, to be tested in chapters 7 through 9.

But while this approach provides a useful starting point, it is not an appropriate strategy given my goals in this project. In particular, this approach suffers from a couple of limitations. First, because it measures status based on the properties of actors (or the things that they have) rather than based on social esteem, this approach does not capture the relational and behavioral nature of status.

[25] Correlates of War Project 2011.

One could attempt to address this limitation by measuring status based on international trade flows or military alliances, moving beyond the properties of actors to capture relations among states in a given issue area. Such an approach would yield issue-specific measures of the importance of states.[26] However, status evaluations are based on the performance of actors across multiple dimensions, rather than in a single issue area.

This leads me to a second limitation that both approaches—based on either actors' properties or issue-specific relations—share: it is not clear how researchers should combine different state attributes (or states' positions in issue-specific relations) to form an aggregate measure of status. One may compare states based, for example on their economic or military capabilities; but to come up with an overall measure of status, one would need to decide on a rule to combine different rankings. Likewise, alliances and trade flows provide important information about states' positions in the military and economic arenas respectively. But how should a researcher combine these positions to measure international status? The aggregation of rankings across issue areas would depend heavily on assumptions about the relative importance of rank-dimensions that seem hard to justify a priori, and which would likely yield biased measures of status. Waltz himself acknowledges this challenge, though he ultimately does not propose a clear strategy to combine different rank-dimensions:

> The economic, military, and other capabilities of nations cannot be sectored and separately weighed. States are not placed in the top rank because they excel in one way or another. Their rank depends on how they score on *all* of the following items: size of population and territory, resource endowment, economic capability, military strength, political stability and competence. States spend a lot of time estimating one another's capabilities, especially their abilities to do harm. States have different combinations of capabilities which are difficult to measure and compare, the more so since the weight to be assigned to different items changes with time. We should not be surprised if wrong answers are some times arrived at. Prussia startled most foreigners, and most Prus-

[26] The most widely-cited study of hierarchy in IR, for example, disaggregates hierarchy into two issue areas: security hierarchy, measured by troop deployments and alliance portfolios; and economic hierarchy, measured by exchange rate regimes and diversification in trade partners. See Lake 2009, Ch. 3.

sians, by the speed and extent of her victories over Austria in 1866 and over France in 1870. Ranking states, however, does not require predicting their success in war or in other endeavors. We need only rank them roughly by capability.[27]

This brings me to the final limitation that both attribute- and issue-specific measurement approaches share: by itself, neither approach enables the researcher to test hypotheses about the determinants of international status. Both approaches rely heavily on the researcher's assumptions about which state attributes (or issue areas) determine status attainment, but neglect to put such assumptions to the test. Well-informed as they may be, experts' evaluations of international status ultimately reflect the common sense in the discipline. As Waltz puts it, "common sense" can answer the question of counting the great powers of an era.[28] And yet, common sense often fails researchers—as it provides enough reasons to justify contradictory claims but no basis to prove any such claims wrong.[29] To be empirically tenable, both status and its determinants need to be considered as analytical categories that are separate from the experiences of observers, and therefore subject to falsification.[30] The study of status calls for an empirical strategy that moves beyond the assumptions of specialists to test hypotheses about the determinants of international status.

Because status is historically contingent, for example, scholars need to develop strategies to detect when states' positions in a status hierarchy have changed, or to detect when the conditions for status attainment themselves have changed. But as Volgy and colleagues note, there is "a remarkable degree of stability" in the experts' list of major powers since 1816 according to the COW classification, as shown in Table 4.2.[31] This suggests that specialists' perceptions about the determinants of international status may be subject to an anchoring bias. If a given state is identified as a major power for a significant period, scholars may choose as status symbols whichever qualities characterize that state at a given point. In other words, scholars may be tempted to mold the status criteria so as to fit those states perceived as major powers, instead of independently testing hypotheses about

[27] Waltz 1979, 131.
[28] Waltz 1979, 131.
[29] Watts 2011.
[30] See Brubaker and Cooper 2000; Small 1977, 26.
[31] Volgy et al. 2014, 69.

the determinants of international status. But while researchers may have strong priors about which attributes matter for status recognition, it is important to develop strategies to update these priors over time, as I propose in this project.

4.3.2 Actors' Perceptions

Another intuitive approach to measure status is to measure how individuals perceive the status of different actors. Following this approach, researchers can use either qualitative methods (such as ethnography or discourse analysis) or quantitative methods (such as surveys or content analysis) to assess individuals' perceptions of the status of different countries at a given moment. For example, Schwartzman and Mora y Araujo use survey methods to measure perceptions of the status of twenty Latin American countries among university students from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Norway.[32] Similarly, Wolf proposes using leaders' complaints about how their countries are treated to measure the lack of recognition, whereas the lack of complaints would denote recognition.[33] More broadly, one could measure status perceptions by conducting public opinion surveys, examining leaders' speeches, or comparing the portrayal of different countries in the national media or popular culture of a given country. On the one hand, this measurement strategy offers an advantage when compared to those strategies based on states' attributes or issue-specific relations: it can capture overall evaluations of an actor, not specific to a given attribute or issue area.

However, this strategy also suffers from a couple of important limitations. The first limitation involves bias. Research from different areas indicates that perceptions of a group's status depend on a person's group identification.[34] In particular, individuals' perceptions of the status of their own

[32] Schwartzman and Mora y Araujo 1966. See also Armer 1966; Shimbori et al. 1963; Shunsuke 2009.

[33] Wolf 2011, 113-114. This approach has some limitations I do not discuss in detail here. As Agné and colleagues note, this approach fails to specify directly which practices count as recognition, as it measures recognition only indirectly (based on the absence of complaints). And because it measures recognition ex post, this approach conflates observed causes and effects: it detects recognition (the cause) by proxy of the assumed effects of misrecognition (actors' complaints). Yet, not all misrecognized states complain publicly, which reduces the measure's validity. To be empirically meaningful, acts of recognition need instead to be specified ex ante, independently of their alleged effects. See Agné et al. 2013, 101.

[34] See Bottero 2005, 26-27, 75; Pettit and Lount 2011. A related finding is that a person's position in a network shapes their perceptions of the network's structure; that is, perceptions of the network itself are situated. See Fischer and Sciarini 2015; Simpson, Markovsky, and Steketee 2011; O'Connor and Gladstone 2015. While perceptions of

group—like, for example, a citizen's perception of the status of their country—tend to be inflated. Individuals often rate the status of their in-group higher than do others.[35] Moreover, individuals often emphasize as status symbols those attributes that characterize their in-group, adopting what social identity theorists call a social creativity strategy to manage the in-group's identity.[36]

Such group-serving biases are observed at both the elite and population levels. At the population level, as Schwartzman and Mora y Araujo conclude in their study, "the best predictor of perceptions of rank-positions is, after the combination of power and development a country has, the nationality of the perceiver."[37] When asked to justify their perceptions of the status of different Latin American countries in that study, survey participants gave different answers depending on their nationality. On average, Chileans (1) ranked Chile higher than did other participants; and (2) emphasized education—a dimension that favored Chile in regional comparisons—as a criterion for high status, as opposed to territory and population, two dimensions that did not favor Chile. We observe a similar bias at the elite level: as Pouliot's analysis of the debates about reforming the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) around 2010 finds, diplomatic representatives tend to highlight their own country's characteristics as criteria for UNSC reform:

> For example, in order to pursue a permanent seat Japan emphasizes the principle of "no taxation without representation," while India underlines the demographic aspect and African countries center on justice, fairness, and accountability. Meanwhile, Canada opposes new permanent seats by insisting on the value of the electoral mechanism (of nonpermanent UNSC members), Muslim countries call for more diversity on the Council, and Iceland decries the veto as an undemocratic privilege.[38]

Whether caused by deliberate self/group promotion or unconscious factors, group-serving bi-

status at the group level tend to be biased, individuals' perceptions of their own status (at the individual level) tend to be accurate. See Anderson et al. 2006; Anderson, Ames, and Gosling 2008.

[35] IR studies of status inconsistency (or misrecognition) and war at the state level highlight precisely this phenomenon. National perceptions of a country's status—or the status that people think their own country deserves—often differ from the status ascribed to that country in the broader international community, and such a disjuncture can make a country more prone to conflict.

[36] Larson and Shevchenko 2010; Tajfel 1974.

[37] Schwartzman and Mora y Araujo 1966, 236.

[38] Pouliot 2014, 199 See also Pouliot 2016, 79-84.

ases compromise our ability to draw generalizations based on studies of status perceptions conducted in a single country or even a group of countries that differ systematically from the others. Group-serving biases at the national level would be less of a problem if we could collect perception data for every country—since in the aggregate, such biases would likely cancel each other out. In practice, however, it is simply too costly to collect data on status perceptions in all countries, let alone in all countries *and* for multiple periods.

This brings me to a second limitation from this approach. Although in principle it is possible to measure perceptions by individuals from every state about all other states in the world, in practice it is too costly to do so, especially for a period long enough to allow for longitudinal analysis. For example, it would be impractical to get samples from every country of the world to fill out surveys about the status of all other countries. Likewise, using discourse analysis to examine status perceptions in all countries would be extremely time consuming, even for a single time period; and while content analysis would offer advantages in this respect, either method could cover only those texts whose language the researcher speaks. Finally, one could use ethnographic methods or interviews to recover intersubjective status perceptions among people from multiple countries.[39] This approach provides a rich snapshot of status evaluations in a given context. Nevertheless, it would not serve the purpose of this study—which is to examine status attainment in the international system historically, rather than in the present moment.

Coverage issues aside, perceptions provide a noisy measure of status for another reason: status perceptions are not the same as status itself. In particular, status differs from perceptions of status in two important ways. First, status is not merely perceptual; as I discuss above, status emerges from practices such as granting recognition, attaching esteem to attributes, and assigning privileges to certain groups. While perceptions refer to a person's attitudes toward a given actor, status has fundamental behavioral implications: it implies differential treatment to actors and groups. And as research in related fields shows, attitudes and behavior differ, even though they influence one another; in fact, attitudes and behavior influence one another precisely because they are different.[40]

[39] See Pouliot 2016.
[40] Fazio 1986; Schuman and Johnson 1976.

Status perceptions provide a noisy measure of status because they measure an actor's attitudes, which do not necessarily correspond with the actor's behavior. Compared to status perceptions, behaviors that express status recognition, such as diplomatic exchange, thus provide a more accurate and informative measure of status.

Moreover, perceptions and status differ in a second way: while perceptions are subjective, status is a social fact—a phenomenon that transcends the individual and that constrains (or enables) individual action.[41] The fact that status is intangible does not imply that it is merely subjective or even an illusion inside actors' heads.[42] Although status is constructed by the practices of states, it is still real—as real as other social constructions like money or national identity. As Pouliot notes, "As symbolic as it may be, (...) status should not be reduced to belief or to perception. Like any social artifact, status is not a curtain standing in front of some sort of external reality; it *is* social reality in itself. Of course, beliefs and perceptions matter in politics; but as an intersubjective category, status is not reducible to either."[43] This is not to say that status perceptions are irrelevant, only that they provide a noisy measure of status because they differ from status recognition itself.

4.3.3 Formal Institutions

Finally, another intuitive strategy to measure status involves measuring actors' positions in formal institutions. In IR, this strategy usually involves examining states' positions in intergovernmental organizations or international treaties. Status sometimes is consolidated into formal positions in intergovernmental organizations, such as permanent membership in the UN Security Council (UNSC) or in the Council of the League of Nations. Similarly, intergovernmental organizations in specific issue areas—such as the World Trade Organization or the International Monetary Fund—often display tiered organizational structures, differentially allocating rights and responsibilities to

[41] Durkheim 1982, 50-59.

[42] Noting the group-serving bias in status perceptions, Mercer concludes that prestige is an illusion. However, this perspective mistakes methodological (measurement) issues for conceptual ones. Subjective perceptions of status may be biased, but that does not imply that status itself is merely an illusion in actors' heads; it just means that we need to develop measurement strategies that do not rely exclusively on group-serving perceptions, as I do in this chapter. See Mercer 2017.

[43] Pouliot 2014, 196.

member states. In addition, bilateral treaties can draw in ink the relative status of the parties. In the nineteenth century, for example, the "unequal" treaties between European states and China, Japan, or Siam consolidated asymmetrical bilateral relationships, whereby Europeans established extra-territorial rights in Asian ports. Following this approach, Keene examines the system of treaties built by Britain to abolish the slave trade and finds that, while those treaties signed with European or American states emphasized reciprocity and sovereign equality, those treaties signed with African or Arab rulers typically mentioned neither principle.[44]

Formal institutions provide important insights about status because they make informal hierarchies of status visible. But in this study, I am interested in informal hierarchies of status, which permeate everyday relations among states. We know much less about informal hierarchies than about how they express themselves in formal organizations like the UNSC or the Council of the League of Nations. As a measure of informal hierarchies of status, formal institutions present a few limitations. To begin, most intergovernmental organizations and international treaties tend to be specific to a given issue area, such as security or trade. While examining issue-specific institutions provides insights about status in a specific arena, it creates the same problem discussed above. In particular, it is unclear how a researcher should aggregate states' positions across issue-specific institutions to create an unbiased measure of international status.

A couple of institutions, like the United Nations or the League of Nations, do not present this limitation because they bridge across issue areas. But because these institutions do not vary much over time, they provide little information about changes in status. Both the UN and the League of Nations were established at the end of a major war. Since the end of the Second World War, for example, we have observed important variations in the distribution of status among states—most notably, the rise of China in the last couple of decades. Yet, institutions do not capture such variations; as Pouliot notes, they reflect states' attempts to "set status in stone" or to "freeze in time a particular status configuration."[45] That is, formal institutions provide relatively static snapshots of status hierarchies at the time when an institution was created. In addition, institutions provide

[44] Keene 2007.
[45] Pouliot 2014, 193.

too coarse a measure of international status. Based on organizations like the UN or the League of Nations, for example, we can distinguish between two classes of countries: those with permanent representation in the organization's executive council, and those who lack such a position. However, this binary measure does not capture any status gradations in between.

Other institutions cover a limited number of states, limiting our ability to draw generalizations to the entire international system. For example, measures such as membership in international clubs like the Group of Seven (G7) provide information about the top of the status hierarchy. However, international hierarchies of status comprise all states in the system and cannot be reduced to those at the top. Examining only the major powers provides a partial picture of the distribution of social esteem among states. It is possible that recognition among major powers differs from recognition among different kinds of states. As such, it is unclear that one could generalize to all states the analysis of a specific group of states that shares distinctive traits and practices. The same limitations apply to states' leadership positions in international organizations. With a few exceptions like the UN, most organizations do not cover all states to begin with. In addition, organization-specific criteria or a geographic rotation principle often determine the assignment of leadership positions.[46] As such, it would be difficult to generalize from the findings. Similarly, bilateral treaties may provide information about specific dyads, but do not allow us to gauge the status of those states that did not sign a treaty. Yet, status emerges from the acts of recognition from all states, rather than from the acts of a single state or even a few states.

In sum, while alternative measures of status offer useful insights for this study, they also present important limitations given my goal—which is to measure the distribution of status among all states over a longer period. Given the purposes of this study, diplomatic exchange offers the most advantages, from both a substantive and a methodological standpoints, when compared to the other potential measures of international status: it is relational, rather than based on actors' attributes; it is behavioral, rather than reducible to actors' perceptions; it is multidimensional, rather than based on a specific state attribute or issue area; and it covers all states over an extended period, rather than

[46] See Pouliot 2016.

focusing on a specific period or group of states. Embassy exchange thus offers a more appropriate measure of status than (1) measures based on state attributes, which capture actors' properties rather than their relations; (2) measures based on actors' perceptions, which capture actors' attitudes rather than their behavior; and (3) measures based formal institutions, which cover specific issue areas or groups of states and rarely change over time.

As such, my proposed measure of status offers one final advantage: it addresses potential sources of bias associated with other measures. First, because embassy exchange captures the recognition of a state's importance across multiple dimensions, my measure avoids two sources of bias associated with those measures based on specific state attributes or issue-specific relations: it obviates the need to decide on a rule to aggregate states' positions across rank-dimensions; and it enables the researcher to test hypotheses about the determinants of status, rather than assuming a priori that certain state attributes evoke recognition. Second, because diplomatic exchange is a behavioral measure, it avoids the group-serving biases that characterize those measures based on actors' perceptions. Third, compared to measures based on states' reactions to perceived (mis)recognition, my proposed measure offers the advantage of being specified ex ante and directly observable—rather than being measured ex post, based on the expected effects of (mis)recognition. Fourth, because diplomatic exchange covers all states in the system, it avoids the potential bias associated with those measures that focus on a few states like the major powers, who differ systematically from the other states. Finally, because embassy exchange captures variations in status attribution over time, it is more dynamic than measures based on states' positions in formal institutions, which tend to remain static in the absence of critical junctures like major wars. For these reasons, I use the embassy exchange data to investigate the sources of international status in this project.

4.4 Addressing Potential Concerns

In the next chapter, I validate my proposed measure of status, drawing on multiple sources of evidence to show that embassy exchange captures both recognition and hierarchy, the two necessary dimensions in my concept of status. But before doing do, let me address in the rest of this chapter two sets of questions the reader might have at this point. First, is it possible to quantify something as intangible as international status? Should social scientists attempt to study intangible constructs like status, instead of focusing on other factors that are treated as material or objective? And related to this concern, is it possible to use quantitative methods to study intangible factors like status? Or are qualitative methods instead uniquely suitable to study intangible factors like status? Second, certain beliefs about embassy exchange might lead the reader to question its validity as a measure of status recognition. Are these beliefs accurate? Next, I discuss the two sets of questions in turn.

4.4.1 Is Status Quantifiable?

While I answer "yes" to the question above, some readers might be less sanguine about the prospects of quantifying international status. In particular, reticence toward such an endeavor usually has two sources. One the one hand, some people might think that intangible aspects like status are simply not amenable to social scientific research. The first impulse is therefore not to measure international status at all. As discussed in Chapter 1, IR scholars followed this impulse for a long period, privileging material factors over intangible ones when developing theories and choosing research questions. On the other hand, some people might think that, due to their intricate nature, intangible aspects like status cannot be quantified; rather, these aspects can only be assessed qualitatively. The second impulse is therefore to claim that status can be studied—but since it is intangible, only qualitative methods are suitable to accomplish such a task.[47]

But even though it is challenging to measure something intangible like international status, it is also important to do so. To be sure, measurement challenges may explain in part why IR scholars have long neglected the question of how states achieve status. Moreover, this study presents an additional challenge because it focuses on informal status—rather than formal status, which can be observed more directly in formal institutions like intergovernmental organizations or international treaties. And yet, the measurement of status (whether using qualitative or quantitative methods) is

[47] See Schroeder 1977; Small 1977.

also a necessary step toward understanding fundamental aspects about status. If we cannot measure status, we cannot investigate it empirically or test hypotheses about its determinants. That is, even though I acknowledge the challenges involved in quantifying status, I consider neither of the positions described above as productive from a social scientific standpoint. Either position gets the study of status entangled in epistemological debates that may be ultimately unsolvable.[48] As a result, the study of status falls through the cracks of disciplinary divides between scholars from different theoretical or methodological traditions. However, such disciplinary divides should not take precedence over the need to learn more about how countries achieve status.

There are additional reasons to question the view that intangible aspects like status cannot be studied using social scientific methods. To begin, this view is out of step with the development of social scientific research since the twentieth century. Much of contemporary political science research is dedicated precisely to the study of intangible constructs—such as democracy, partisanship, or development, to name a few. There is little reason to claim that status is inherently less amenable to social scientific research than each of these constructs, which have nonetheless received considerable attention from political scientists in the past half century. Moreover, social scientists have already developed sophisticated methods to study status empirically, as part of productive research programs that offer cumulative knowledge about status processes within domestic societies.[49] Rather than ruling out the study of status a priori, I thus draw on a rich tradition of studies in related fields to develop the empirical strategy that allows me to directly test multiple hypotheses about the sources of international status.

Likewise, there are additional reasons to question the view that only qualitative methods are suitable to studying intangible aspects like status. To begin, qualitative and quantitative methods have more in common than such a view would imply.[50] Like quantitative methods, qualitative methods involve measurement and categorization based on judgment calls made by the researcher. Classifying a given country as a major power or a middle power, for example, requires defining a set

[48] See Fearon and Wendt 2002; Monteiro and Ruby 2009.
[49] See Cheng, Tracy, and Anderson 2014; Fiske 2010; Ridgeway and Walker 1995; Ridgeway 2014 for overviews.
[50] See Brady and Collier 2010; King, Keohane, and Verba 1994; George and Bennett 2005.

of features that distinguish major or middle powers from other types of states. Similarly, classifying a given country as satisfied or not with its status requires defines a set of features or behaviors that distinguish status-satisfied states from status-dissatisfied ones.

At the same time, both qualitative and quantitative methods provide distinct advantages—which will be more or less important depending on the research question at hand—and which often complement one another. On the one hand, qualitative methods provide for a deeper knowledge about specific cases, obtained via within-case analysis that typically involves tracing causal mechanisms or searching for "smoking guns" to make causal inferences. On the other hand, quantitative methods make causal inferences via cross-case comparisons. Quantitative methods are particularly apt to uncover broader patterns in a population (or average treatment effects), rather than to explain why we observe a certain outcome in a specific case. Therefore, a researcher's choice of method should be based on an evaluation of the trade-offs involved, rather than based on a priori preferences for one kind of method or another.

While qualitative methods are productively employed to study international status, they would not be appropriate given the goal of this study—which is to map status hierarchies among all states over time, rather than to examine a specific historical period, specific interactions, or a small group of states like the great powers. Since qualitative methods enable the researcher to delve into specific cases, they would be more appropriate for studies that aim to investigate up to a few states. However, the task of measuring the status of all states (and over a longer historical period) using qualitative methods would get unwieldy very fast. Quantitative methods provide an important advantage in this context: namely, scale. By using a single indicator of international status, I can investigate broader patterns in status attainment among states over a long historical period.

To be sure, an indicator like embassy exchange condenses much information into a single measure, and may therefore be less precise in a few cases. However, this is not a fundamental problem given my goals in this project. Since I am primarily interested in uncovering broader patterns in status attribution—rather than in determining where a specific state ranks, or gauging the importance of a specific state to another state—the presence of a few outliers does not jeopardize my empirical strategy.[51] And as I show in the next chapter, a descriptive analysis of the diplomatic network allays concerns about loss of precision, revealing that states' positions in the network closely match scholars' intuitions about which states rank at the top. In addition, the descriptive analysis reveals interesting patterns about countries other than the major powers, which tend to receive much less attention in qualitative studies due to resource constraints. Therefore, the advantages provided by my proposed measure of status far outweigh the disadvantages. By offering a single index of status recognition among states, diplomatic exchange data enable me to test hypotheses, at multiple levels of analysis, about the sources of international status over a long historical period.

By using a quantitative measure of status recognition, I aim to develop the best empirical strategy possible given both the purposes of this project and the existing constraints. I do not mean to take a position in the quantitative-versus-qualitative divide, which matters less to me than answering the question of what drives status recognition among states. My position is that researchers should not rule out any research methods a priori, based simply on whether these methods are classified as qualitative or quantitative. And while my analysis involves quantitative methods, I rely extensively on qualitative methods and evidence to conceptualize status, operationalize my concepts and validate my proposed; to specify my statistical models and evaluate their results in chapters 7 through 9; and to illustrate the broader relational patterns that drive status recognition according to my argument. Rather than adopting an either/or approach, I combine the strengths of both kinds of methods to better achieve the goal of investigating how countries achieve status.

4.4.2 Misconceptions about Embassy Exchange

A second source of resistance to the use of embassy exchange data as a measure of international status involves some common misconceptions about embassy exchange.[52] Compared to other kinds of data—like, for example, those measuring states' material capabilities—diplomatic exchange data are examined much less often. As a result, scholars tend to know less about these data. But as I show

[51] See Small and Singer 1973, 579.

[52] See, for example, Mercer 2017, 138; Ward 2020, 161-62.

in the next chapter, the data do not bear such concerns. That is, a descriptive analysis of embassy exchange data dispels existing misconceptions.

First, a common misconception is that the embassy exchange simply captures the behavior of a given state, like for example a major power. If that were true, it would be simpler to just observe the behavior of that state rather than to use embassy exchange data to measure status. However, embassy exchange data reflect the acts of recognition by all states in the system. I operationalize status in network terms—assuming that high-status states are those that receive many "votes" or "nominations" from their peers.[53] That is, I assume that status is *collectively* attributed to each state, with the resulting number of embassies reflecting the overall importance of the receiving state, across multiple dimensions, to all other states in the system. Any single state, no matter how high its status or its level of diplomatic engagement, is responsible for only a limited proportion of all the potential embassies in the world. The relative impact of any single state is small even if we account for the fact that some states are disproportionately active: for example, a central state in the diplomatic network, like the United States, is responsible for no more than 4% of the 7,380 embassies that exist in 2005, as I discuss in more detail in the next chapter.

In fact, an important advantage of embassy exchange is precisely that these data enable me to overcome the individualism present in existing approaches.[54] I understand status as a social phenomenon, rather than as a matter decided at either the monadic or the dyadic levels. In line with my argument, I assume that status depends on the aggregate vote of all states in the system on the relative importance of a given state. An embassy captures the relative importance of the receiving state—compared to those states that do not receive an embassy—to the decision-makers of the sending state. By tallying the votes from all states in the system on the relative importance of the receiving state, we can therefore estimate the status of the receiving state. I treat status as an emergent property, which cannot be reduced to the intentionality of actors. Instead of using diplomatic exchange data to examine status recognition at the monadic or dyadic levels of analysis, I use the

[53] My approach is consistent with a long tradition of studies on status in the social sciences. See, for example, Bothner, Smith, and White 2010; Gould 2002; Ridgeway 1978; Smith and Faris 2015.

[54] See Ward 2020, 162.

network of embassies to investigate higher-order patterns in status recognition that are not observable when we focus on the monadic or the dyadic levels of analysis. My interest in this project is not to describe the individual decision of a given state to recognize (or not) another, but rather to detect *higher-order patterns that account for the totality of recognition relations*.

In other words, I depart from an individualistic approach in two important ways. To begin, I do not assume that status is a matter decided at the dyadic level. A state does not become a major power, for example, simply because it receives an embassy from an established major power. Because status is a social phenomenon, the status of a given state does not hinge on whether any single state, not even a major power, recognizes it. Rather, status depends on the aggregate votes from all states in the system. Neither is a state's status, on the other hand, a matter decided at the monadic (or state) level. Because status requires external recognition, a state's status rests beyond the control of its decision-makers. As discussed in the next chapter, states often try to persuade other states to send them embassies. But because embassy exchange is a discretionary act under international law, no state is compelled to establish an embassy at a given location. No matter the strategy used to influence states' decisions on whether to send an embassy to a given destination, status remains an emergent property that cannot be reduced to the intentionality of actors.

Second, another misconception is that embassies simply reflect the distribution of material capabilities among states, such that the wealthier or militarily stronger a state is for example, the more embassies it receives. If a state's position in the diplomatic network were a direct function of a specific state attribute, it would be just simpler to rank states based on that attribute rather than to use diplomatic exchange data to measure status. But as I show in the next chapter, a state's position in the diplomatic network—that is, the proportion of embassies a state receives—is not a direct function of attributes like military or economic capabilities. And even if we assumed that international status is a function of certain state attributes, despite the lack of a sound conceptual or theoretical basis for such a claim, it is not clear how we should aggregate different state attributes to measure status. Should military capabilities, for example, weigh more than economic capabilities? More broadly, what justifies the decision to weigh certain state attributes more than others?

Third, another common misconception is that countries typically send embassies everywhere. If every state sent an embassy to every state in the system, embassies would not be informative as an act of recognition. But as a descriptive analysis demonstrates in the next chapter, embassies are actually scarce: from 1970 to 2010, states send on average *only one out of the five embassies* they could send. Embassies are costly: they imply financial and personnel costs, to both developed and developing countries. Because embassies are costly, they are also scarce—and therefore informative as a measure of international recognition.

Fourth, another common misconception is that most countries receive many embassies, such that the lack of cross-country variation would render the measure moot. Because hierarchy is a necessary dimension of the concept of status, embassy exchange data would not be a valid measure of status if every state received a similar number of embassies. But in fact, the descriptive analysis in the next chapter shows that embassies are unevenly distributed across states: while a few states receive many embassies, most states receive only a few embassies. Moreover, those states that receive the most embassies closely match IR scholars' qualitative assessments about which states rank at the top of international hierarchies of status over time.

Fifth, one last misconception is that embassy exchange data are static because countries never open new embassies or close existing ones. If the data remained the same over time, they would not be very informative as a measure of international status. But as I show in the next chapter, the diplomatic network changes over time, as ties are constantly reconfigured between periods. On the one hand, states close on average 12% of the existing embassies in each period. On the other hand, states open on average 23% additional embassies relative to the previous period. As a result, the diplomatic network changes considerably during the period of analysis: from 1970 to 2010, for example, the number of states increases from 134 to 190, while the number of embassies exchanged more than doubles. This temporal variation enables me to conduct a longitudinal analysis of the network in chapters 7 through 9. In sum, embassy exchange data capture enough variation in status recognition, both across states and over time, to allow me to test hypotheses about the sources of international status over a long historical period.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter proposes a measure of international status based on the systematized concept of status developed in Chapter 2. Because status is a quality that cannot be directly observed, I use embassy exchange data as a proxy measure of status. Embassies are especially informative as a measure of recognition because embassy exchange is a discretionary or voluntary act under international law. A state does not have to send an embassy to another state, and neither does it have to justify its decision to send (or not) an embassy to another state. Embassy exchange is a voluntary act of recognition among sovereign states that reflects the relative importance of the receiving state, across multiple dimensions, to the decision-makers of the sending state.

Compared to alternative measures, embassy exchange offers important advantages. Unlike measures based on state attributes, embassy exchange effectively captures the relational nature of status. Unlike measures based on actors' perceptions of the status of states, embassy exchange effectively captures the behavioral nature of status. Unlike measures based on specific issue areas, embassy exchange effectively captures the multidimensional nature of status. Unlike measures based on states' positions in formal institutions, embassy exchange captures acts of recognition among all states over a long historical period. Because of these features, my proposed measure avoids sources of bias found in other measures. While embassy exchange data meet each of my operationalization criteria, other possible measures fail to meet one or more of the criteria.

Finally, I address in this chapter two potential concerns associated with my proposed measure. First, while some readers might be skeptical about the prospects of quantifying something intangible like status, my approach builds on extensive research in related fields. In particular, a quantitative measure of status enables me to investigate broader patterns in status attainment that would not be observable in a small number of cases. Second, while certain common misconceptions about embassy exchange create resistance toward using these data to measure status, the data do not bear such concerns, as I show in the next chapter.

5

Measurement Validation

Any choice of measure raises the question of validity: How effectively do the observations capture the concept they are supposed to measure?[1] As Adcock and Collier note, measurement validation involves the relation between the systematized concept—a specific conceptualization that involves an explicit definition—and the observations intended to measure it. That is, we assess measurement validity based on a specific conceptualization, rather than based on the constellation of possible meanings associated with a concept.[2] In Chapter 2, I addressed the conceptualization of status, moving from the background concept of status (or the various potential meanings associated with status in IR) to a systematized concept of status. In this chapter, I validate my proposed measure by examining the relation between the systematized concept of status developed in Chapter 2 and the observations intended to capture the main ideas from this concept.

In this chapter, I integrate qualitative and quantitative evidence to conduct two types of validation. The first type is *content validation*, which focuses on conceptual aspects. As Adcock and Collier put it, this type of validation asks: "does a given indicator (...) adequately capture the full content of the systematized concept?"[3] As I demonstrate below, diplomatic exchange adequately captures both recognition and hierarchy, the two necessary dimensions in my concept of status. In addition, this chapter also covers *convergent or discriminant validation*, which depends on descriptive expectations. As Adcock and Collier put it, this type of validation asks: "Are the scores (...)

[1] Adcock and Collier 2001, 529.
[2] Adcock and Collier 2001, 530-31.
[3] Adcock and Collier 2001, 538.

produced by alternative indicators (...) of a given systematized concept (...) empirically associated and thus convergent? Furthermore, do these indicators have a weaker association with indicators of a second, different systematized concept, thus discriminating this second group of indicators from the first?"[4] As I demonstrate below, states' positions in the diplomatic network closely match scholars' qualitative assessments of status. At the same time, material capabilities cannot account for much of the variation in states' positions in the diplomatic network, in line with the analytical distinction I draw between status and material resources.

In addition to the two types of validation covered in this chapter, the analysis conducted in chapters 7 through 9 provides the basis for a third kind of validation—*nomological or construct validation*, which is based on the expected causal relations involving a concept. As Adcock and Collier put it, this type of validation asks: "Is this hypothesis again confirmed when the cases are scored (...) with the proposed indicator (...) for a systematized concept (...) that is one of the variables in the hypothesis?"[5] As will become clear in chapters 7 through 9, the empirical analysis of the diplomatic network confirms the observable implications from my relational theory of status. That is, embassy exchange results from the relational processes that I expect to drive status recognition among states. The results from my analysis thus provide a nomological validation of embassy exchange data as a measure of international status.[6]

Each of this chapter's sections focuses on one aspect of the validation of my proposed measure. The first section begins by introducing my relational measure of status recognition: the network of embassies. Next, I use multiple sources of evidence to validate this measure in two steps. First, I demonstrate that the network of embassies captures recognition, the first necessary dimension in my concept of status. Moreover, the distribution of embassies differs from the distribution of material capabilities among states. Second, I demonstrate that the network also captures hierarchy, the second necessary dimension in my concept of status.

[4] Adcock and Collier 2001, 540.

[5] Adcock and Collier 2001, 542.

[6] Similarly, existing quantitative studies of status dissatisfaction and war also conduct a nomological validation of embassy exchange data as a measure of international status. In line with their hypothesis that status-dissatisfied states should be more likely to participate in wars, these studies show that states are more prone to conflict when they receive fewer embassies than they expect to receive based on their material capabilities.

5.1 The Data

IR scholars across research traditions have long noted the relationship between diplomacy and status. As Morgenthau observes,

> The relations between diplomats lend themselves naturally as instruments for a policy of prestige, for diplomats are the symbolic representatives of their respective countries. The respect shown them is really shown their countries; the respect shown by them is really shown by their countries; the insult they give or receive is really given or received by their countries. History abounds with examples illustrating these points and the importance attributed to them in international politics.[7]

Not fortuitously, quantitative studies of status typically use diplomatic representation data to measure international status. For example, multiple studies have used diplomatic exchange data to measure status so as to examine the relationship between status inconsistency and war, both in the first wave of status research in IR (during the 1960s and 1970s) and in the current wave that started at the turn of the twentieth-first century.[8] In fact, no other measure of international status has been used in observational studies in IR that employ quantitative methods.[9]

Like previous studies, I use diplomatic exchange data to measure status. But while I use the same data, I also propose an innovation. Previous studies use these data at the state level: to measure a state's status, they count the number or proportion of representations the state receives, or calculate the state's centrality in the diplomatic network. By doing so, however, they throw away important information about the structure of diplomatic relations—including who sends a representation to whom, what their previous history of relations (or lack thereof) is, and what ties they share with third parties. Without this information, it is not possible to investigate relational patterns empirically. Since my theory involves relational patterns, I am interested precisely in the structure of diplomatic

[7] Morgenthau 2006, 85.

[8] East 1972; Renshon 2017; Volgy and Mayhall 1995; Wallace 1971.

[9] See Colgan 2014; Gartzke and Jo 2009; Miller et al. 2015; Singer and Small 1966; Volgy et al. 2011.

relations. Therefore, I use relational data in this study: the network of embassies. As I explain in more detail in the next chapter, my basic unit of analysis is the entire network, rather than the state itself. In addition to using information at the unit level, my analysis relies on information about the structure of the network. This allows me to investigate empirically the observable implications of my theory, which involve the structure of the diplomatic network.

The main analysis employs data from the Diplomatic Contacts (DIPCON) Database, which cover the period from 1970 to 2010 with measurements at five-year intervals.[10] This dataset provides a list of all the country dyads that exchange embassies headed by an ambassador (or high commissioner) in a given year. Using these data, I obtain one directed unweighted network per year. In each network, the nodes are states, and state i sends a tie to state j when it has an embassy at state j headed by an ambassador.[11] The network is directed because it takes tie direction into account, distinguishing between an embassy sent from state i to state j and an embassy sent from state j to state i. Based on these data, only embassies headed by an ambassador count as ties; other types of diplomatic representation, like consulates or interest sections, do not count as ties. As discussed in the previous chapter, such a distinction is consistent with the diplomatic practices codified in the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961), which apply during the historical period covered by the data. According to diplomatic protocol, embassies headed by an ambassador unambiguously express the recognition of the receiving state; moreover, they imply costs to the sending state. When using the DIPCON data, I thus use the term "diplomatic network" to refer to the network of embassies headed by an ambassador.

The network is unweighted because it relies on a binary measure of embassy exchange: for any given dyad, either state i sends a tie to state j or it does not; likewise, either state j sends a tie to state i or it does not. I use a binary measure of embassy exchange, rather than a continuous measure that captures the number of diplomatic personnel sent to a given country, for both substantive and methodological reasons. From a substantive standpoint, I am more interested here in whether state i considers state j important enough to merit an embassy headed by an ambassador. As such, a binary

[10] Rhamey et al. 2013.

[11] Following network notation, i denotes the sending state, and j denotes the receiving state.

measure of embassy exchange is more appropriate for the purposes of this project than a continuous measure that either distinguishes among types of diplomatic representation or captures personnel size.[12] In addition, from a methodological standpoint, a binary measure avoids the bias that can result from using a continuous measure that captures personal size. As Russett and Lamb note, personnel size has decreasing marginal returns: "the difference in effect between adding one more diplomat to an existing two-[person] delegation is far greater than from adding a single [person] to an existing 50-[person] delegation."[13] Because the relationship between personnel size and the importance given to the receiving state is nonlinear, weighted measures of bilateral recognition are bound to introduce bias in the analysis.

To complement the main analysis, I employ data from the Correlates of War (COW) Diplomatic Exchange data set, which cover the period from 1817 to 2006.[14] These data measure whether each directed dyad in the international system exchanged a diplomatic representation in a given year, at roughly five year intervals. While the COW data cover a longer historical period, they are relatively less precise. Unlike the DIPCON data, the COW data do not consistently distinguish between embassies headed by an ambassador and other types of diplomatic representation. Rather, the coding rules used in this data set change over time: for the 1950-65 period, the data do not specify the kind of diplomatic representation exchanged; and for the period until 1980, the data count side accreditations as embassies, even though there is no physical diplomatic representation present in the receiving state. However, this lack of distinction is less of a problem during earlier historical periods, when the use of ambassadors was far less common than it is in contemporary diplomacy. At the same time, the COW data enable me to measure status recognition over a longer historical period, increasing my confidence that the main findings are not an artifact of the period covered in the main analysis.

[12]While the COW data set records the number of diplomatic personnel in each location (and, for some years, the level of diplomatic representation), the DIPCON data set does not.

[13]Russett and Lamb 1969, 41.

[14]Bayer 2006; Singer and Small 1966.

5.2 Embassies Capture Recognition

Recognition is the first necessary dimension in my concept of status: for an actor to achieve a particular status, others have to recognize it. As I discuss next, embassies effectively capture international recognition. Embassy exchange is a voluntary act of recognition among states that counts as a vote on the relative importance of the receiving state, across multiple dimensions, to the decision-makers of the sending state. And in fact, sending often states treat embassies as a measure of the status they confer (or not) on the receiving state. By choosing to send an embassy to state *j*, state *i* votes with its feet, revealing that it considers *j* more important than other states that do not receive an embassy from *i*; in other words, it recognizes *j*.

5.2.1 The Sending State: Voting with One's Feet

As I demonstrate next using both qualitative and quantitative evidence, we can treat an embassy as a "vote" of the sending state on the importance of the receiving state. Because embassies are expensive, states need to prioritize, establishing embassies only in those states they consider the most important. In addition, states need to periodically revise their embassy portfolios to reallocate resources from low- to high-priority areas. Accordingly, states often use embassies to communicate their position toward the receiving state—sending embassies to bolster the receiving state's legitimacy, or refraining from sending embassies to undermine the receiving state's legitimacy.

Embassies Are Costly (And Scarce)

Embassies are expensive: they imply high financial and personnel costs. The cost of maintaining a government employee abroad, for example, may run three to four times the cost of an employee at home.[15] Importantly, embassies imply high costs not only to developing countries but also to developed ones. In the decade between 2006 and 2016, for example, more than half of the developed countries that participate in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

[15] Malone 2013, 133.

Table 5.1. Basic Network Statistics

	1970	*1975*	*1980*	*1985*	*1990*	*1995*	*2000*	*2005*	*2010*
Nodes	134	148	157	162	164	183	187	188	190
Isolates	1	9	2	1	1	0	0	1	0
Ties	3,655	4,567	5,314	5,597	5,871	6,165	6,620	7,380	8,272
Density*	0.20	0.21	0.22	0.21	0.22	0.18	0.19	0.21	0.23
Symm. dyads†	0.88	0.89	0.91	0.91	0.90	0.91	0.91	0.91	0.92
Clustering‡	0.52	0.55	0.56	0.54	0.56	0.52	0.52	0.54	0.55

Notes: *Measures the proportion of existing to potential ties.
†Measures the proportion of symmetric or requited dyads, which include both mutual dyads (embassies sent by both states) and null dyads (no embassies exchanged).
‡The global clustering coefficient measures the proportion of closed triads to all network triads.

(OECD) had to reduce their diplomatic footprint due to shrinking budgets.[16]

Accordingly, a descriptive analysis of the diplomatic network shows that ties (or embassies) are scarce: from 1970 to 2010, states send on average *only one out of the five embassies* they could send. That is, only 20% of all potential embassies exist. In fact, as Figure 5.1 shows, the density of the diplomatic network—or the proportion of existing to potential embassies—remains stable over time, even though the number of states in the system increases from 134 to 190 in the 1970-2010 period. Most states engage in embassy exchange selectively, rather than casting their net broadly. The data thus confirm the notion that embassies are costly, and therefore informative as a measure of international recognition, rather than mere cheap talk.

Countries Periodically Revise Their Embassy Portfolios

Because embassies are expensive, states cannot establish an embassy in every other state in the world; rather, they must prioritize. As Small and Singer note, every country needs to periodically reassess how important it is to send an embassy to each state in the system. Since each state has limited resources at its disposal, such decisions involve trade-offs: allocating resources to a given diplomatic tie implies sacrificing resources that could be allocated to another potential tie.[17] In fact, states

[16]Oliver 2016.
[17]Small and Singer 1973, 582.

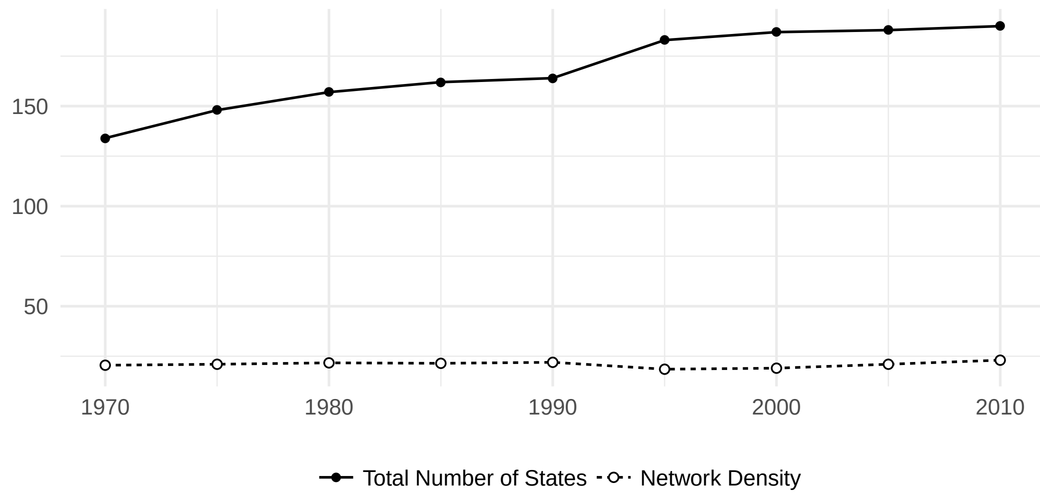


Figure 5.1. Network Density vs Total Number of States in the Network
Note: Network density is the proportion of existing to potential embassies in the network.

periodically revise their embassy portfolios to reallocate resources from low- to high-priority areas. As Britain's Foreign and Commonwealth Office had to shave off its annual budget in the 2010s, for example, "the agency's leaner profile (...) required it to prioritize and shift resources from its largest European posts, as well as dwindling priorities in Afghanistan and Iraq, to address new crises in Ukraine and West Africa."[18] Similarly, as the Brazilian government faced increasing budgetary constraints during the Bolsonaro administration, it decided to close the Brazilian embassies in seven countries in Africa and the Caribbean, so as to redirect its resources to existing missions considered more important and that needed more funds.[19]

In fact, a descriptive analysis of the diplomatic network demonstrates that ties are constantly reconfigured between periods, as states reallocate embassies from low- to high-priority areas. In a five-year interval, states close on average 12% of the existing embassies, as Table 5.2 shows. On the other hand, states create many new embassies as time goes by: in a five-year interval, states open on

[18] Oliver 2016.

[19] See *UOL Notícias*, "Governo Bolsonaro fecha embaixadas na África e no Caribe criadas por Lula," 14 May 2020, https://noticias.uol.com.br/politica/ultimas-noticias/2020/05/14/bolsonaro-ernesto-araujo-fecha-embaixadas-africa-caribe.htm; and *BBC Brasil*, " 'Não adianta ter embaixada sem água e telefone', diz Ricupero," 21 May 2016, https://www.bbc.com/portuguese/brasil-36347502.

Table 5.2. Embassies Opened and Closed Relative to the Previous Period

	1975	*1980*	*1985*	*1990*	*1995*	*2000*	*2005*	*2010*
				Embassies opened				
Count	1,435	1,317	890	781	1,564	1,042	1,324	1,463
Percent	39	29	17	14	27	17	20	20
				Embassies closed				
Count	523	570	607	507	1,270	587	564	571
Percent	14	12	11	9	22	10	9	8

average 23% more new embassies. As a result, the diplomatic network changes considerably during the period of analysis, reflecting changes in states' priorities over time.

Countries Use Embassies to Communicate Their Position

States often use embassies as a form of expression, or a way to officially communicate their position toward the receiving state. Embassies play an important symbolic role, which may even take precedence over strategic interests or functional reasons.[20] On the one hand, states may send embassies to bolster the legitimacy of the receiving state. For example, during the last wave of decolonization starting in 1945, many states opened embassies in the newly independent states to express solidarity, rather than because a previous relationship existed; such embassies would eventually specialize in providing foreign aid to the receiving state.[21] Likewise, as the first country in the Americas to win independence from its European colonizer, the U.S. sought to legitimize the newly-independent states in South America as independence movements swept the continent in the 1820s and 1830s, establishing diplomatic representations in many of the new states.[22] As such, the U.S. was the first country, for example, to recognize Brazil as an independent country in 1824, establishing a U.S. legation in Rio de Janeiro (then Brazil's capital) in the following year.[23]

[20] See Kinne 2014, 248-249; MacRae 1989.
[21] Malone 2013, 124-25.
[22] Small and Singer 1973, 581-82.
[23] See Office of the Historian, U.S. Department of State, "A Guide to the United States' History of Recognition, Diplomatic, and Consular Relations, by Country, since 1776: Brazil," https://history.state.gov/countries/brazil.

Similarly, most observers interpreted the Trump administration's announcement in 2017 that it would move the American embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem as a signal that the U.S. would favor Israel in the dispute with the Palestinians, by recognizing the Israeli annexation of east Jerusalem following the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. The embassy's move in 2018 exacerbated tensions with Palestinian leaders and Arab League member states, sparking violent protests in Gaza that culminated in the death of nearly sixty Palestinians and elicited international condemnation; by contrast, then Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu celebrated the event with a reception—which most European ambassadors to Tel Aviv skipped, likely to avoid involvement in the controversy.[24] Only three other countries would open embassies in Jerusalem since then: Guatemala, who followed the Washington's lead in 2018, Kosovo, who opened an embassy in Jerusalem after Israel recognized it as a sovereign state in 2021, and Honduras, who received an Israeli trade and cooperation office in Tegucigalpa in 2021.[25]

On the other hand, states may close embassies (or refrain from opening them) to undermine the legitimacy of the receiving state. For example, many countries imposed diplomatic sanctions on South Africa to express their condemnation of the apartheid policy from the country's independence in 1948 until the end of segregation in 1994.[26] As part of a concerted effort to isolate South Africa diplomatically and pressure it to respect human rights, most countries refused to establish or maintain embassies in Pretoria, or even to maintain bilateral diplomatic relations, during that period. South Africa's diplomatic isolation changed little even as Prime Minister John Vorster (1968-1977) pursued a policy of engagement to improve the country's status and security.[27] During the Vorster administration, Pretoria only secured recognition in the form of diplomatic rela-

[24] See *The Wall Street Journal*, "U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem Opens to a Fraught Climate," 13 May 2018, https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-embassy-in-jerusalem-opens-to-a-fraught-climate-1526237356.

[25] Paraguay reallocated its embassy to Jerusalem in 2018 but moved it back to Tel Aviv a few months later. See *Politico*, "Following U.S. lead, Guatemala moves embassy to Jerusalem," 16 May 2018, https://www.politico.com/story/2018/05/16/guatemala-embassy-jerusalem-590959; *The Guardian*, "Kosovo opens embassy in Jerusalem after Israel recognises its independence," 14 March 2021, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/mar/14/kosovo-opens-embassy-in-jerusalem-after-israel-recognises-its-independence; and *The Associated Press*, "Honduras opens embassy in Jerusalem, 4th country to do so," 24 June 2021, https://apnews.com/article/donald-trump-jerusalem-honduras-middle-east-religion-49d8f0a908d2a0bf16830071e2c6f5f0.

[26] Christopher 1994.

[27] Barber and Barratt 1990.

tions (if temporarily) from a handful of Latin American countries ruled by military dictatorships. Moreover, only countries like Taiwan and Malawi maintained embassies in Pretoria, in exchange for recognition and economic aid respectively. By contrast, South Africa's international standing would improve quickly upon Nelson Mandela's inauguration as president in 1994, when Pretoria received more embassies than its nascent democratic government could reciprocate.[28]

Though symbolic, diplomatic sanctions are not merely a weapon of the weak; in fact, major powers are among those who often use embassies to express their position toward the receiving state. Since the Second World War, for example, the U.S. has frequently used diplomatic sanctions as a means to express disapproval of the receiving state or to pressure the receiving state to change its behavior in areas like terrorism, nuclear proliferation, or democratic stability.[29] During this period, Washington closed its embassies twenty-nine times—in host countries like Afghanistan, Iran, North Korea, and Sudan—even when the absence of diplomatic communication could hinder its ability to use other forms of coercion in its interactions with the receiving country.[30]

Not only do major powers express their position toward the receiving state by sending an embassy (or not), but they also attempt to persuade other states to follow suit. In the 1820s and 1830s, for example, while the U.S. sought to legitimize the newly-independent South American countries, the monarchist regimes forming the Holy Alliance (Austria, Prussia, and Russia) strongly opposed extending recognition to the new states; facing pressure from both sides, most European states ultimately delayed recognition until after the revolutions of 1848.[31] On the other hand, the U.S. successfully pressured other states to withhold recognition from the Soviet regime in Russia in the 1920s and 1930s and from the communist regime in the People's Republic of China (PRC) in the 1950s and 1960s. As a result, most states outside of the Communist bloc withheld recognition from Eastern bloc states during the early years of the Cold War. But as the Non-Aligned Movement emerged in the 1950s, many developing countries started to establish embassies across the Berlin Wall as a

[28] Christopher 1994.
[29] Maller 2011, 63.
[30] Maller 2011, 98.
[31] Small and Singer 1973, 581-82.

way to proclaim their independence from US influence.[32]

5.2.2 A Multidimensional Measure

Compared to other potential measures of international status, the diplomatic network offers an important advantage: it is multidimensional, rather than reflecting a state's importance based on a single attribute or issue area. Unlike alliance or trade relations, for example, diplomatic ties cannot be reduced to a specific issue area. To be sure, some correlation between a state's attributes and its position in the diplomatic network is to be expected. As I discuss in Chapter 3, decision-makers rely on status symbols, such as military or economic capabilities, to infer the status of other states—itself a latent, unobservable quality. Based on status evaluations, decision-makers then decide which countries are important enough to merit an embassy. Nevertheless, status evaluations are based on multiple dimensions, including relational patterns, rather than being a direct function of the receiving state's economic or military capabilities. As such, a valid measure of international status should not perfectly overlap with any specific attribute of the receiving state.

And indeed, a descriptive analysis reveals that a state's position in the diplomatic network—or the proportion of embassies a state receives—is not a direct function of attributes like military or economic capabilities. To begin, Figure 5.2 shows the relationship between military capability—measured by the log-transformed CINC score and military spending respectively—and the proportion of embassies a state receives, or the state's normalized in-degree centrality (d) in the network of embassies.[33] We can see that, even though diplomatic centrality and military capability correlate, military capability cannot explain much of the variance in the proportion of embassies received, especially as military capability increases. Above the lines in each subfigure, states like France ($d = 142$), Egypt ($d = 119$), or Italy ($d = 119$) punch above their military weight, receiving more embassies than their military capabilities would warrant. Conversely, below the lines in each subfigure, states like Myanmar ($d = 25$), North Korea ($d = 24$), or Taiwan ($d = 20$) punch below

[32] Newnham 2000, 262.
[33] Rhamey et al. 2013; Singer 1988.

their weight, receiving fewer embassies than their military capabilities would warrant. That is, independently of the measure of military capability used, military capability cannot explain much of the variance in the recognition that a state receives from other states.

If a country's international standing is not a direct function of its military capabilities on the one hand, neither is it a direct function of its economic capabilities on the other. Figure 5.3 shows the relationship between economic capability—measured by the log-transformed GDP and per capita GDP respectively—and the proportion of embassies a state receives, or the state's normalized in-degree centrality (d) in the network of embassies.[34] We can see that, even though diplomatic centrality and economic capability correlate, economic capability cannot explain much of the variance in the proportion of embassies received, especially as economic capability increases. Above the lines in each subfigure, states like Canada ($d = 125$), South Africa ($d = 98$), or Sweden ($d = 90$) punch above their economic weight, receiving more embassies than their economic capabilities would warrant. Conversely, below the lines in each subfigure, states like Myanmar ($d = 25$), Bielorussia ($d = 24$), or Taiwan ($d = 20$) punch below their weight. Like military capability, economic capability cannot explain much of the variance in the recognition a state receives from other states, regardless of the measure of economic capability used.[35]

This feature makes the network of embassies especially apt to measure international status. Using a single measure, researchers can capture the overall importance of the receiving state to all other states in the system. Because this measure is multidimensional, it obviates the need to decide a priori on a rule to aggregate states' rankings across dimensions. It is up to the decision-makers from all states, rather than the researcher herself, to decide which rank-dimensions matter for status recognition. As such, this measure enables researchers to test hypotheses about the determinants of international status, rather than assuming a priori that certain attributes evoke recognition. Many factors may shape international status; which factors become relevant for recognition in a given context is a matter of empirical investigation.

[34] Gleditsch 2002*a*; Rhamey et al. 2013.

[35] See also Renshon 2017, 135-40; Volgy et al. 2011, 14-15.

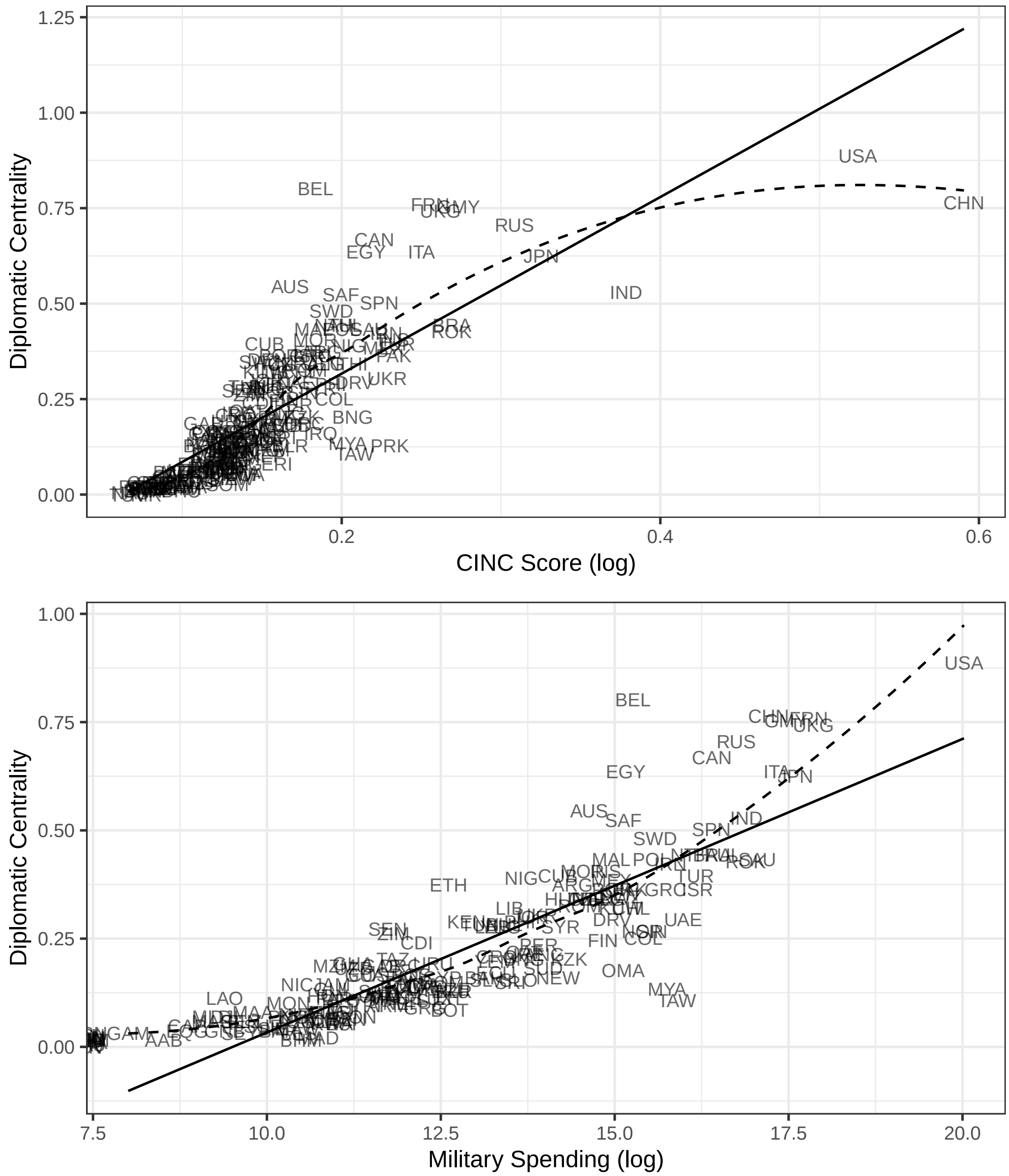


Figure 5.2. Military Capability vs. Diplomatic Centrality (2005).
Note: Military capability measured by the log-transformed CINC Score and the log-transformed military spending respectively. Diplomatic centrality measured by the normalized in-degree centrality (number of embassies received) in the network of embassies, ranging from 0 to 1. Continuous and dashed lines show the linear and LOESS fits respectively.

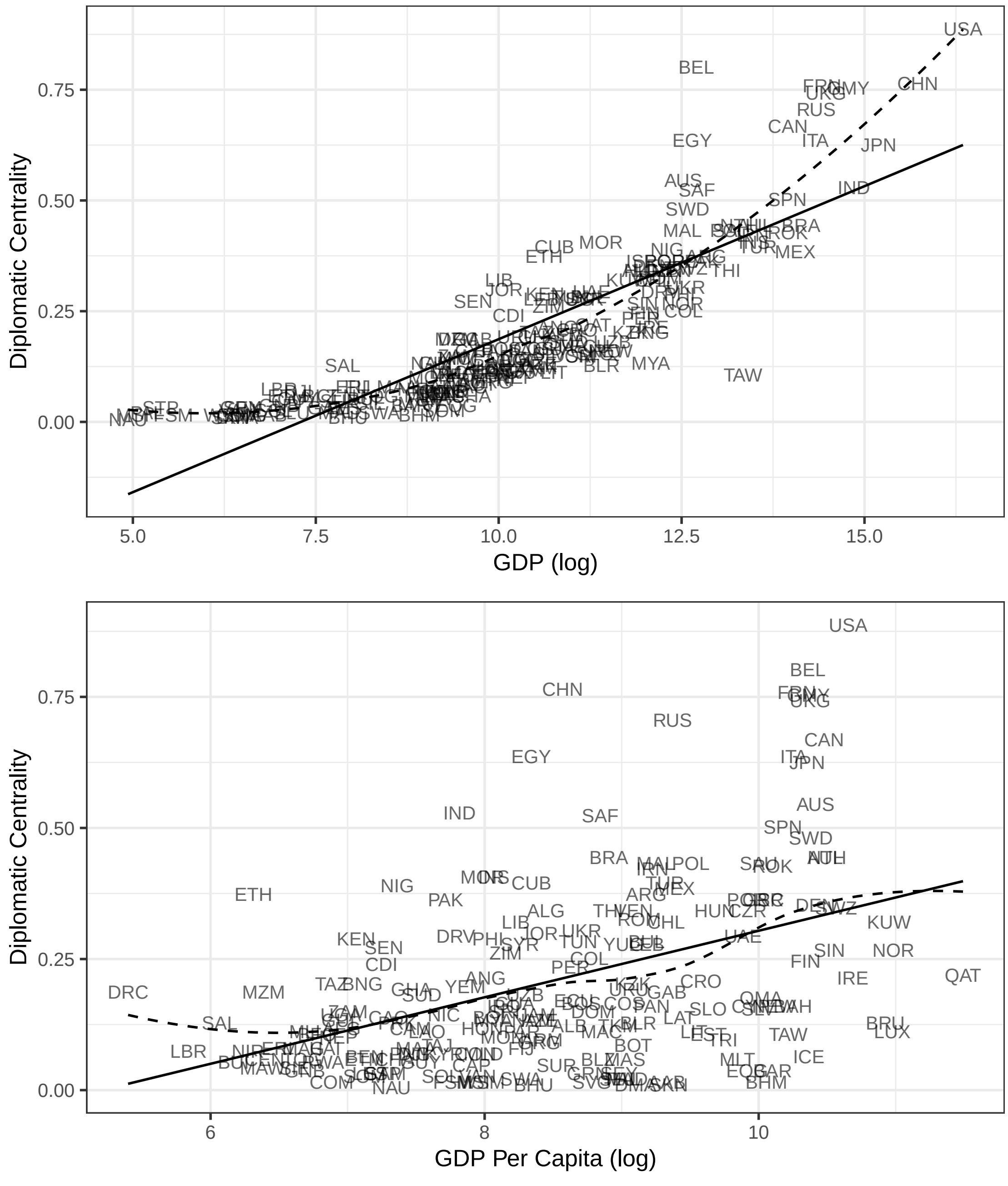


Figure 5.3. Economic Capability vs. Diplomatic Centrality (2005).
Note: Economic capability measured by the log-transformed GDP and the log-transformed per-capita GDP respectively. Diplomatic centrality measured by the normalized in-degree centrality (number of embassies received) in the network of embassies, ranging from 0 to 1. Continuous and dashed lines show the linear and LOESS fits respectively.

5.3 Embassies Capture Hierarchy

Besides recognition, hierarchy is a necessary dimension in my concept of status: depending on their level of social esteem, actors become entitled to certain privileges. As I discuss next, embassies not only capture recognition, the first necessary dimension in my concept of status, but they also capture hierarchy, the second necessary dimension. If sending states treat embassies as a measure of the status they confer (or not) on the receiving state, receiving states likewise treat embassies as a measure of the status attributed to the hosting state. Embassy exchange confers legitimacy on the receiving state; it is no coincidence that states often try to influence each others' decisions to recognize (or not) a potential receiving state. Not only are embassies unevenly distributed across states, but their distribution closely matches scholars' assessments about which states rank at the top. Importantly, the diplomatic network results from the acts of recognition by all states, rather than being reducible to the behavior of any single state.

5.3.1 The Receiving State: Gaining Legitimacy

Embassies provide a measure of the status of the receiving state among its peers. Hosting embassies is a key element of what makes a sovereign state a legitimate member of international society, entitled to the corresponding rights and obligations. The more embassies a state receives, the more legitimacy it enjoys among its peers. Such legitimacy has intrinsic value to a country's nationals, who derive esteem from their national identity.[36] In addition, legitimacy increases a country's ability to enter into legal contracts and to pursue its interests via cooperation with other actors on economic and military matters for example. On the one hand, a state that receives many embassies, like the U.S., enjoys high status—and has the representatives from the sending states competing for the attention of its decision-makers.[37] On the other hand, a state that receives almost no embassies, like apartheid-era South Africa, has the status of a pariah state, enjoying limited ability to interact with

[36] See Tajfel 1974.
[37] Henrikson 2007, 62-63; Shaw 2007.

representatives from other countries and advance its foreign policy interests. As Christopher notes, a state's refusal to recognize the legitimacy of another state via embassy exchange is "the symbolically most severe form of sanctions that can be adopted in peacetime."[38] As such, we can treat the number of embassies received by a state as a measure of its international standing.

Given the symbolic value attributed to embassies, it is not surprising that states are eager to receive embassies from other states. As Rana notes, "the diplomatic corps in each capital symbolizes the international community and confirms the host state's membership of it."[39] In fact, embassy exchange constitutes one of the first practices adopted by newly-established states, along with signing landmark treaties such as the UN Charter and the Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT). Newly-established states seek the legitimacy afforded not only by establishing diplomatic relations with other states, but also by receiving embassies from as wide a group of states as possible. As Kosovo seeks broader international recognition as a sovereign state, for example, it has actively pursued diplomatic recognition by individual states.[40] As part of Kosovo's bid for recognition, Pristina has established over thirty embassies in capitals around the world—securing embassies in return from more than twenty countries, including the U.S., the UK, Germany, and Japan. As the example suggests, one of the strategies states adopt to increase the level of recognition they receive from other states is to send embassies abroad, in hopes of receiving embassies in return.

In fact, some countries compete fiercely for diplomatic recognition, using every foreign policy tool at their disposal as they seek international legitimacy. For example, in some of the disputes between countries divided during the twentieth century—such as East and West Germany, the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Taiwan, and North and South Korea—the countries involved in each dispute have sought to induce other countries to recognize it rather than its rival.[41] Following the One China principle—a bedrock of Chinese foreign policy, according to which Taiwan is an inalienable part of mainland China—Beijing has refused since 1949 to establish diplomatic relations with any country that recognizes Taiwan. As such, countries that send embassies to Taipei

[38] Christopher 1994, 439.
[39] Rana 2007, 126. See also Bull 2002, 166, 176.
[40] Newman and Visoka 2018.
[41] Metzler 1996; Newnham 2000.

do not receive an embassy from Beijing. To counter Beijing's efforts, Taiwan started to leverage its economic success in the 1980s, offering technical and foreign aid to those countries that established embassies in Taipei.[42] As a result, Beijing and Taipei engaged in a direct competition for diplomatic recognition, especially from countries in Latin America and the South Pacific.[43] Beijing has largely succeeded in isolating Taipei diplomatically over time, especially since UN Resolution 2758 recognized the People's Republic of China as the only legitimate representative of China in 1971 (with U.S. support) and the U.S. ended diplomatic relations with Taiwan in 1979, replacing formal ties with the establishment of the American Institute on Taiwan and the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Washington. Today, only small or micro-states maintain embassies in Taipei, mostly as retribution for the technical and foreign aid they receive from Taiwan.[44]

Similarly, in the 1950s and 1960s, West Germany adopted the Hallstein doctrine, whereby it considered West Germany to be the only legitimate German government.[45] As such, West Germany severed diplomatic ties with any countries that established diplomatic relations with East Germany, like for example Yugoslavia in 1957 and Cuba in 1963. To help enforce the Hallstein doctrine, Bonn leveraged its superior economic capabilities, providing for example more than 200 million Deutsche Mark (DM) in aid to Indonesia, a leader of the Non-Aligned Movement; and more than 60 million DM in aid to Algeria, then a newly-independent state. Like Taiwan and West Germany, South Korea engaged in diplomatic competition with its rival during the twentieth century. In the early 1960s, Seoul started to build up its ties with Western-leaning states, opening thirty embassies abroad in 1962 alone.[46] Adopting its own version of the Hallstein doctrine, South Korea severed diplomatic ties with Congo (Brazzaville) and Mauritania in 1964, after these countries recognized North Korea.[47] That same year, Seoul started its foreign aid program by sending medical aid to Uganda as retribution for Kampala's diplomatic recognition.[48] South Korea ramped up its aid program in the

[42] Gu 1995.
[43] Atkinson 2010; Erikson and Chen 2007; Rich 2009.
[44] See Long and Urdinez 2021.
[45] Newnham 2000, 263-64.
[46] Gills 1996, 162.
[47] Gills 1996, 105.
[48] Gills 1996, 163.

1970s, reaching across the Berlin Wall to countries like Sudan, Libya, and Iraq.[49] By the 1990s, Seoul had largely succeeded in its efforts to isolate Pyongyang diplomatically, especially after Russia and China—the two states that had provided ample support to North Korea in the Cold-War era—established diplomatic relations with South Korea in 1990 and 1992 respectively.

Another example illustrates the symbolic meaning that receiving states associate with embassy exchange. Immediately after Israel was recognized as a sovereign state in 1948, Israeli leaders began to pressure other countries to establish diplomatic missions in Jerusalem, rather than Tel Aviv, in an effort to legitimate Israel's claim over the disputed city as its capital.[50] Given the symbolic importance Israel attributed to the issue, Israeli leaders invested considerable efforts in this diplomatic initiative, offering material incentives to countries that moved their embassies to Jerusalem. From 1948 to 2018, successive U.S. administrations resisted Israeli pressure, as they recognized the symbolic message such a move would convey about Washington's position toward the Israeli-Palestinian dispute and did not wish to challenge the UN's authority on the matter. The U.S. not only refused to move its own embassy to Jerusalem, but also pressured other countries to follow its lead. During this period, the only countries to accede to Israel's requests were Latin American countries willing to assert their independence from U.S. influence and newly-independent African countries that received technical aid from Israel. But in 1980—as Israel passed a new law establishing Jerusalem as its capital, making official its territorial acquisitions during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war—all embassies left Jerusalem in response; only two of these embassies (from Guatemala and El Salvador) would return a few years later. As discussed below, while the Trump administration reverted the American position on this issue in 2018, only a handful of states have followed Washington's lead in moving their embassies in Israel to Jerusalem since then.

As myriad examples demonstrate, states treat embassies as a measure of the receiving state's international standing. As such, a state seeking international legitimacy invests time and resources into persuading other states to establish or maintain embassies in its capital. In addition, states try to influence one another's decisions to recognize (or not) a given state, investing time and re-

[49] Gills 1996, 216-217; Gu 1995, 182.
[50] Heimann 2015*a*.

sources into persuading other states to send embassies to states they consider legitimate; or to not send embassies to states they consider illegitimate for any reason. International status is therefore collectively attributed to each state, with the resulting number of embassies reflecting the overall importance of each receiving state to all other states in the system. As Small and Singer put it, we can therefore treat the decisions from all states on whether to send an embassy to a given foreign capital as "a slowly changing and ongoing plebiscite among all the system's members" on the relative importance of the receiving state across multiple dimensions.[51]

5.3.2 Embassies Are Unequally Distributed

In fact, a descriptive analysis of the diplomatic network shows that embassies are unevenly distributed across states: while a few states receive many embassies, most states receive only a few embassies. As Figure 5.4 shows, the distribution of in-degree (the number of embassies received) is right skewed.[52] In 2005, for example, the number of embassies received ranges from 0 (Tuvalu) to 166 (United States), but the median state receives only 28 embassies—like, for example, the Dominican Republic, Zambia, and Sri Lanka. The uneven distribution of embassies among states suggests inequality, as one would expect of a valid measure of international status.

Not only are embassies unevenly distributed across states, but their distribution matches qualitative assessments among IR scholars about which states rank at the top of international hierarchies of status. That is, the states that host the most embassies tend to be those categorized as high-status states. Figure 5.5 shows the diplomatic network in 2005, with nodes representing states and lines representing embassies. Node size is proportional to in-degree, d (the number of embassies received), such that larger nodes at the center host the most embassies. Figure 5.5 shows some intuitive patterns. For example, researchers recognize as high-status states some of the states located

[51] Small and Singer 1973, 582-83.

[52] Table A.1 compares the distributions of normalized centrality measures (degree, closeness, betweenness, and eigenvector centrality) for the 2005 network. As the table shows, all centrality distributions are right skewed: few states have high centrality scores, while most states have low centrality scores. In addition, Table A.3 shows that the distribution of out-degree (embassies sent) is likewise right skewed. However, power law tests shown in Table A.4 indicate that neither the in-degree distribution nor the out-degree distribution follows a power law.

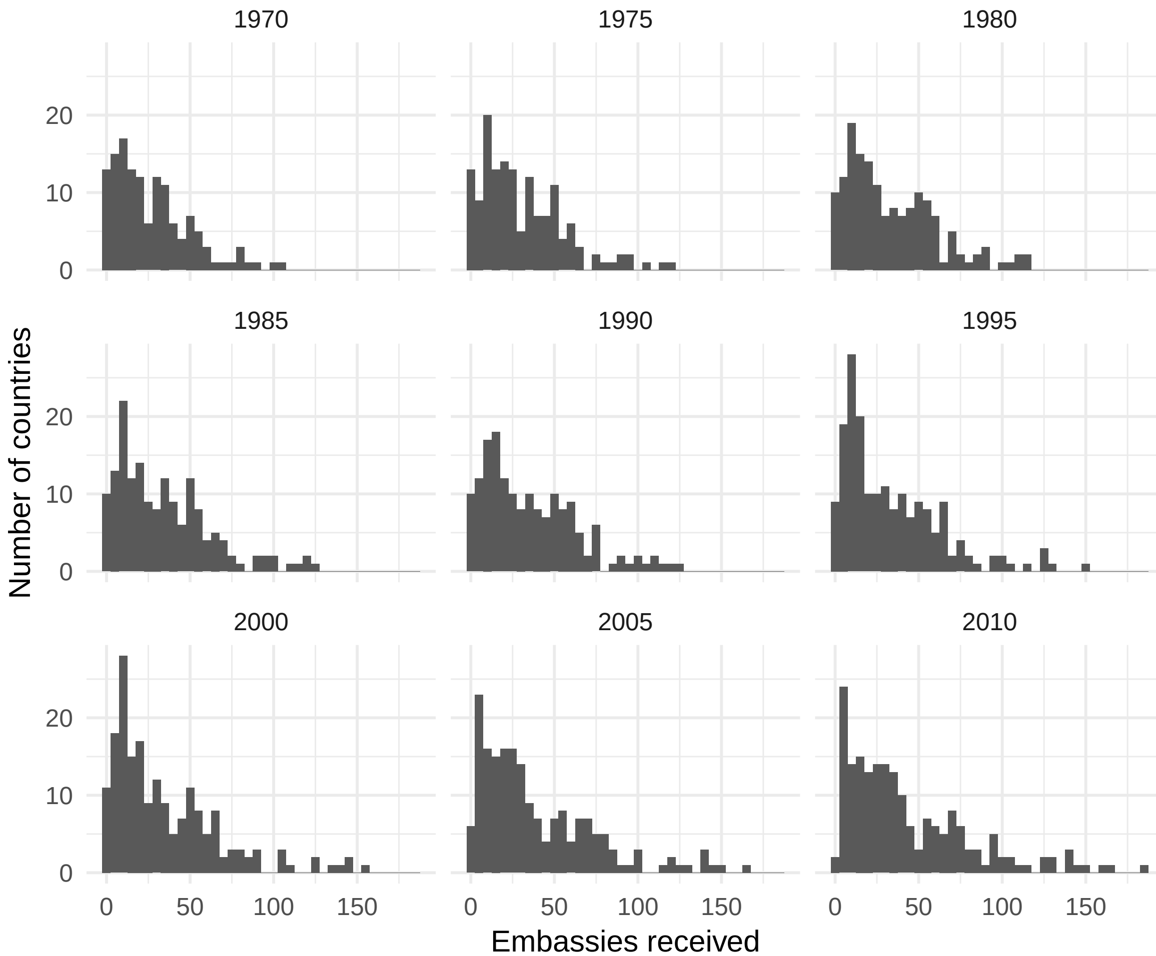


Figure 5.4. Distribution of In-Degree (Embassies Received)

at the network center, such as the United States ($d = 166$), Germany ($d = 141$), and the United Kingdom ($d = 139$). Likewise, major powers cluster at the top in the other years. Table 5.3 shows the top ten countries by number of embassies received between 1970 and 2010. Shaded cells in the table indicate countries designated as major powers by the COW project for the same period. COW designates nine countries as major powers for at least some period between 1816 and 2011: Austria-Hungary, China, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. As Table 5.3 shows, all of the COW major powers consistently rank among the top ten countries by number of embassies received—with the exception of Austria-Hungary, which no longer exists as a country by 1970 and is therefore no longer in the diplomatic network.

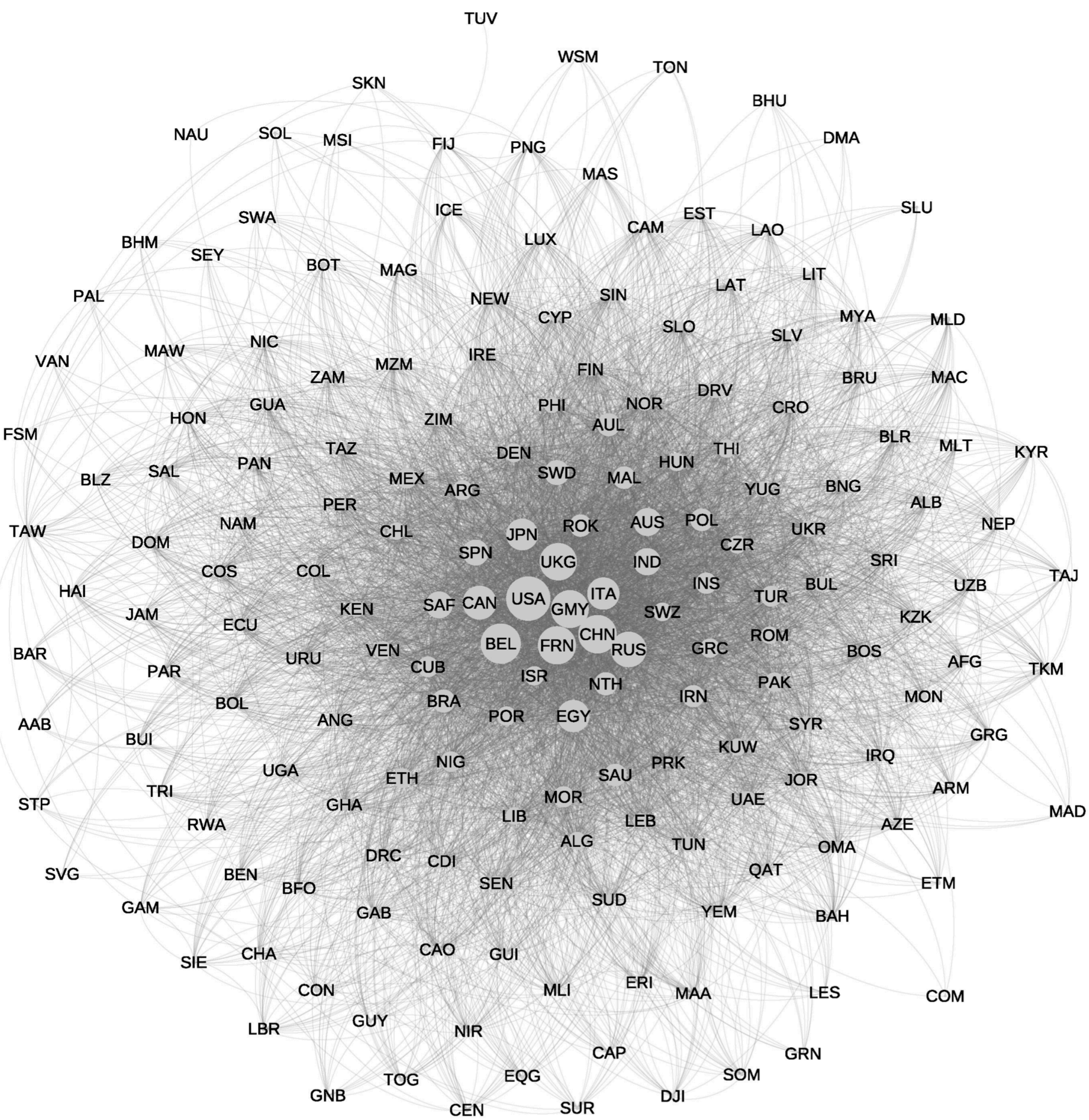


Figure 5.5. The Diplomatic Network in 2005
Note: Nodes represent states, and lines represent embassies. Node size proportional to the number of embassies received.

In fact, states' trajectories over time are similar in the diplomatic ranking and the COW major power designation. The states listed as major powers by COW for the longest periods—France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States—rank consistently among the top ten states by number of embassies received between 1970 and 2010. In addition, countries that lose or gain

Table 5.3. Top Ten Countries by Number of Embassies Received (1970-2010)

1970 Country	*d*	1975 Country	*d*	1980 Country	*d*	1985 Country	*d*	1990 Country	*d*
USA	103	USA	119	FRN	115	USA	127	USA	127
FRN	100	UKG	114	UKG	114	BEL	121	FRN	118
GFR	90	FRN	103	USA	112	UKG	119	GFR	115
ITA	85	ITA	95	GFR	112	FRN	116	BEL	111
RUS	79	GFR	94	BEL	107	GFR	112	UKG	110
EGY	79	EGY	90	RUS	100	RUS	102	RUS	106
UKG	78	BEL	89	ITA	92	CHN	98	CHN	101
BEL	75	RUS	86	JPN	91	CAN	94	ITA	100
JPN	71	JPN	81	CAN	89	ITA	94	JPN	97
IND	66	IND	74	CHN	86	JPN	92	EGY	90

1995 Country	*d*	2000 Country	*d*	2005 Country	*d*	2010 Country	*d*
USA	151	USA	156	USA	166	USA	184
RUS	131	FRN	144	BEL	150	BEL	163
BEL	127	BEL	143	CHN	143	CHN	158
FRN	126	GMY	138	FRN	142	UKG	152
UKG	123	UKG	136	GMY	141	FRN	147
GMY	114	CHN	124	UKG	139	GMY	140
CHN	107	RUS	123	RUS	132	IND	140
ITA	100	ITA	111	CAN	125	RUS	139
JPN	99	EGY	107	ITA	119	CAN	130
CAN	97	JPN	107	EGY	119	JPN	128

Note: *d* denotes in-degree (number of embassies received). Shaded cells indicate countries designated as major powers by the COW Project at least once since 1816. GFR denotes the German Federal Republic, while GMY denotes unified Germany.

their major power designation accordingly lose or gain positions in the diplomatic ranking over time. Italy, which loses its major power designation in 1943, gradually falls in the diplomatic raking until it no longer belongs among the top ten in 2010. China, the last country to receive a major power designation since 1950, is not among the top ten in the diplomatic ranking until 1980, but since then gradually rises in the diplomatic ranking to occupy the third position in 2010. That is, the longitudinal picture of the diplomatic network closely matches specialists' perceptions about which states rank at the top. The relative stability of states' network positions over time suggests path dependence, as one would expect of a valid measure of international status.

To be sure, a valid measure of international status should have a "sticky" quality. As discussed in Chapter 3, status is self-reinforcing. High-status states enjoy considerable advantage in status relations, as they tend to shape the rules of the game and usually distinguish themselves from the other actors by forming dense relations among themselves and adopting distinctive status symbols. Moreover, status evaluations are interdependent. As such, we should expect the distribution of embassies to remain relatively stable over time. And in fact, embassies tend to remain open once they are established. On average, most of the existing embassies in a given period (88%) continue to exist in the following period, as Table 5.2 shows.

5.3.3 More than The Great Powers

While major power designations help validate the diplomatic network as a measure of international status, the network offers an important advantage with respect to approaches that focus exclusively on the great powers: it measures the status of all states in the system, rather than just the status of those states at the top.[53] Because the network covers all states, it provides additional information about status that alternative measures miss. While Figure 5.5 confirms prevailing intuitions about which states rank at the top, it reveals some intriguing cases that remain unexplored. For example, Italy ($d = 119$) occupies a central position in the network, even though its time as a major power passed decades ago. In addition, Brazil ($d = 83$) and Cuba ($d = 74$), despite their vastly different levels of material capabilities, receive almost the same number of embassies. These patterns suggest that there is more to international status than an analysis of the major powers alone could reveal. By using the network to measure status, my analysis relies on information about all states—which increases my confidence in the generalizability of the results.

An important advantage of using the network to measure status is precisely that the analysis does not depend on the behavior of any single state, or even on the behavior of a small group of

[53] As Table 5.1 shows, the network has only a small number of isolates—states that do not send or receive any embassies—each year. And as I discuss in Chapter 8, isolates exist only temporarily. States typically lack embassies for a short period, immediately after their creation. As such, the lack of embassy exchange likely results from a lag between the formal recognition of a state as sovereign and the physical establishment of embassies to/from that state.

states like the major powers. Rather, the network measures the aggregate "votes" of all states in the system on the importance of all other states. Any single state—no matter how high its level of diplomatic engagement—is responsible for only a limited proportion of all potential embassies in the network. For example, a network with 188 states, like the 2005 network, could potentially have 188 x 187 = 35,156 embassies. Yet, any single state in this network could send or receive at most 187 embassies. By construction, even if a given state sent and received embassies to/from all other states, it would only be responsible at most for 1% of all potential ties in the network (or 374 out of the 35,156 potential embassies). The relative impact of any single state is small even if we account for the fact that some states are disproportionately active. For example, in 2005 the U.S. sends 150 embassies and receives 166 embassies, being responsible for 4% of the 7,380 ties that exist that year. By using an aggregate measure of status, I thus avoid making generalizations about all states based on the behavior of any single state. As shown above, the U.S. is an atypical case, as it consistently ranks at the top in terms of both embassies sent and received each year; that is, its level of diplomatic engagement does not necessarily reflect the overall patterns in the network.

Importantly, this feature of the network is consistent with my argument that status emerges from the acts of recognition of all states, rather than the act of any single state. The case of Cuba illustrates this point. If the U.S. alone determined Cuba's standing, Cuba would receive little recognition from other states. In the decades since Fidel Castro took power in 1959, successive U.S. administrations have implemented policies aimed at isolating Cuba. Washington closed its embassy in Havana in 1961, after cutting diplomatic ties with Cuba, and does not send an ambassador to Havana since then.[54] In 1977, each country opened an interests section in the other country's capital to maintain communication in the absence of diplomatic relations. And in 2015, as both countries reopened their respective embassies, Washington accredited a chargé d'affaires—a lower-ranking diplomatic official that fills in for an ambassador—to lead the American embassy in Havana, rather than an ambassador, which indicates suboptimal relations between the two states.[55] In addition, successive

[54] See Office of the Historian, U.S. Department of State, "Chiefs of Mission for Cuba," https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/people/chiefsofmission/cuba, accessed 28 July 2021.

[55] In 2017, the U.S. withdrew all nonessential personnel from its embassy in Havana and expelled Cuban diplomats from the U.S. after the American embassy staff in Havana experienced health problems

U.S. administrations attempted to bestow upon Cuba a series of negative labels—from state sponsoring terrorism (from the Reagan to the Obama administrations, and then again in the Trump administration) to "rogue state" (during the Clinton administration) and a member of the "Troika of Tyranny" (during the Trump administration). No other country has been the target of American economic sanctions as severe and longstanding as those imposed on Cuba.[56]

Yet, despite U.S. efforts to isolate Cuba diplomatically, most countries do not follow Washington's lead in their relations with Cuba. As Figure 5.5 shows, Cuba ($d = 74$) receives in 2005 a similar number of embassies as Brazil ($d = 83$)—a relatively high number for a country of its size. In fact, some studies indicate that Cuba's relatively high level of recognition may be due in part to its opposition to the United States. As Feinsilver noted in 1989,

> Demography and Soviet aid can partially elucidate how Cuba is able to sustain its activist stance [in foreign policy]. But the reasons why Cuba plays such a major role with relative success can be more easily understood by considering the power of symbolism. Cuba's success has resulted partly from the vehement opposition of the United States. The failure of U.S. policy to overthrow the Castro government or to force changes in domestic or foreign policy has cast Cuba as a David confronting the Goliath of the North. This role, in turn, has helped convert this otherwise small, insignificant island nation into a major Third World power.[57]

As influential as a country like the U.S. is, no single country can determine the status of another country. In fact, some attempts by major powers to influence overall relations with a given state may backfire, as illustrated by the Cuban case. By subjecting Havana to different forms of sanctions, Washington likely helped consolidate Cuba's status as a David confronting the American Goliath. This case is thus consistent with my argument. As I discuss in Chapter 3, status emerges from the

attributed to a possible foreign attack in 2016 using an unknown energy source. See *The New York Times*, "Illnesses at U.S. Embassy in Havana Prompt Evacuation of More Diplomats," 29 September 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/29/us/politics/us-embassy-cuba-attacks.html.

[56] Morgan, Bapat, and Kobayashi 2014.

[57] Feinsilver 1989, 2-3. See also Pérez Jr. 2012.

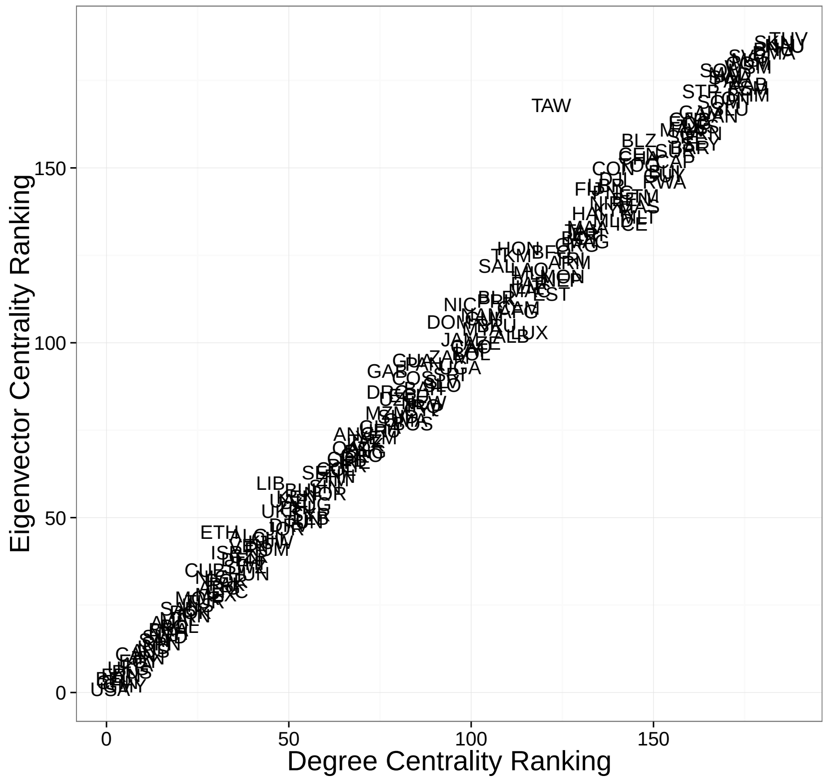


Figure 5.6. Degree and Eigenvector Centrality Rankings (2005)

acts of recognition of all states—or from the "votes" of all states in the diplomatic network—rather than being a matter determined strictly at the bilateral level.

Now, some readers may have the concern that my proposed measure has limited validity because it assigns the same weight to the acts of recognition by all states, regardless of the sending state's centrality in the diplomatic network. That is, I assume that an embassy sent by Canada ($d = 125$) counts about the same as an embassy sent by Nicaragua ($d = 27$) or Senegal ($d = 51$) as a vote on the relative importance of the receiving state. To deal with this concern, the reader may suggest weighting embassies differently depending on the centrality of the sending state.

However, a descriptive analysis of the network allays this concern. We can assess if weighing ties by the importance of the sending state would yield a different network configuration by comparing two different measures of an actor's importance in a network: degree centrality, which measures the number of ties a node receives; and eigenvector centrality, which measures the extent to which a node receives ties from central nodes in the network. If the acts of recognition from central states differ significantly from those from the other states, the measures of degree and eigenvector centrality will differ, therefore yielding different state rankings. But in the case of the diplomatic network, degree and eigenvector centrality are very similar. To begin, degree and eigenvector centrality scores are highly correlated (0.97).[58] That is, the states that receive the most embassies also tend to receive embassies from central states.

In addition, states' rankings based on degree and eigenvector centrality are likewise highly correlated (0.95). That is, the states recognized by central states tend to be the same states recognized by all states. Figure 5.6 compares the rankings of all states based on each centrality measure. As the figure shows, the only case in which the measures somewhat differ is Taiwan—a state that, due to Beijing's diplomatic pressure, tends to receive more embassies from states that are more central in the network, who are important enough to afford contradicting Beijing's designs. But with the exception of Taiwan, degree and eigenvector centrality yield highly similar state rankings. That is, weighing ties by the importance of the sending state does not provide more information about the structure of the network than a simple count of ties already provides.[59] Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that network ties count about the same (as a vote on the relative importance of the receiving state) regardless of the centrality of the sending state.[60]

[58] Table A.2 shows the correlations between the measures of node centrality most commonly used in network analysis: degree, betweenness, closeness, and eigenvector centrality. All centrality measures are positively correlated in the network: the more important a node is along one of these measures, the more important it is along the others. In fact, the correlation between degree and eigenvector centrality is the highest of all pairs. On centrality, see Bonacich 1972, 1987; Freeman 1978.

[59] Neither do outward ties (embassies sent) provide additional information about node importance in the diplomatic network. In some cases, outward ties may contain additional information about the importance of nodes that inward ties do not convey; while some actors may send ties only to the most important actors, others may cast the net wider, sending ties to less popular actors. But as Figure A.1 shows, hub and authority scores in the diplomatic network are highly correlated (0.96)—which indicates that good hubs (states that send many outgoing ties to authorities) also tend to be good authorities (or receive many incoming ties from hubs). Moreover, hub scores correlate highly with out-degree (0.97), while authority scores highly correlate with in-degree (0.97). On hub and authority scores, see Fowler and Jeon 2008.

[60] Other studies reach the same conclusion using slightly different methods. See Singer and Small 1966, 264-76; Small and Singer 1973, 587.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter validates my proposed measure of status by examining the relation between the systematized concept of status developed in Chapter 2 and the observations intended to measure this concept. Leveraging multiple sources of evidence, I demonstrate on the one hand that embassies are not a direct function of states' material capabilities, in line with the analytical distinction I draw between status and material resources. On the other hand, embassy exchange adequately captures both of the necessary dimensions in my concept of status.

To begin, embassies capture recognition, the first necessary dimension in my concept of status. Embassy exchange is a voluntary act of recognition among states that counts as a vote on the relative importance of the receiving state, across multiple dimensions, to the decision-makers of the sending state. As myriad examples demonstrate, sending states treat embassies as a measure of the status they confer (or not) on the receiving state. States often use embassies to express their position toward the receiving state, sending embassies to countries they consider legitimate and refraining from sending embassies to states they consider illegitimate. Embassies are especially informative as a measure of international recognition because they are costly—and therefore scarce. States can only send embassies to those states they consider the most important. And in fact, states periodically revise their embassy portfolios to reallocate resources from low- to high-priority areas. By choosing to send an embassy to state j, state i thus reveals that it considers j more important than other states that do not receive an embassy from i.

In addition, embassies also capture hierarchy, the second necessary dimension in my concept of status. Not only do embassies refer to a voluntary act of recognition that confers legitimacy on the receiving state, but they are also unequally distributed among states. Moreover, the distribution of embassies closely matches scholars' qualitative assessments about which states rank at the top of the international hierarchy of status during a given historical period. As myriad examples demonstrate, states treat embassies as a measure of the status conferred on the receiving state. On the one hand, host states invest time and resources into persuading other states to establish or maintain embassies in their capitals. On the other hand, states often try to influence one another's decisions to recognize or not a given state. The network of embassies thus emerges from the acts of recognition of all states, rather than from the behavior of a single state. Like status itself, the distribution of embassies is an emergent property that cannot be reduced to the intentionality of actors. Having validated my proposed measure in this chapter, in the next chapter I introduce the empirical strategy that I use to investigate the sources of international status in the rest of the book.

6

Why Social Network Analysis?

This book addresses a new and noteworthy question: how do countries achieve status? While existing studies show that status motivates state behavior, we still understand little about the sources of international status. Scholars traditionally assume that status is a function of state attributes like economic or military capabilities, but do not put this assumption to the test. Because the conventional approach in IR assumes that certain state attributes evoke international recognition, it provides incomplete accounts of status, while potentially exaggerating the importance of certain state attributes for status recognition within the international system. Empirically, the conventional approach relies on restrictive assumptions about which state attributes determine status, typically emphasizing military and economic capabilities to the detriment of other factors. Yet, by choosing certain state attributes a priori, scholars cannot assess whether these attributes actually drive status attainment. So how can we know if decision-makers value the same attributes scholars consider important for status recognition—or if state attributes determine status to begin with?

In this project, I address precisely this question. My aim is to uncover the factors, including higher-order patterns, that drive status recognition among states. To accomplish this goal, I develop in this chapter an empirical strategy that involves two crucial departures from previous research. First, I treat status recognition as a matter of empirical investigation. Instead of taking actors' claims to status at face value—for example by assuming that status depends on the possession of certain qualities, such as military capabilities—I assess the validity of these claims using social scientific methods. Moving beyond commonsense assumptions, I investigate empirically the processes that shape recognition in the international system. Second, I adopt a consistently relational approach to the study of status: I use a relational empirical strategy in the service of my relational theory of status. Instead of treating status as a property of individual states, I leverage social network analysis to investigate the underlying relational patterns that drive status recognition among states. By deploying an appropriate set of analytical and methodological tools, this study adequately grasps the distinctive feature of status: its social nature. This approach enables me detect the high-order patterns that drive recognition in the international system.

Each of this chapter's sections deals with a different aspect of my empirical strategy. In the first section, I discuss why network analysis tools are ideally suited to investigate the sources of international status in the remainder of this book. Social network analysis involves a set of premises that closely match my theoretical framework: (1) it assumes that the social structure emerges not only from the distribution of attributes among actors, but also from the underlying patterns of relations among actors; (2) it enables me to treat the social structure itself as an object of substantive interest; and (3) it allows me to assess the observable implications from my theory at multiple levels of analysis, thus increasing my confidence in the results. In the second section, I derive observable implications from my theory of status for diplomatic recognition among states. My hypotheses involve two kinds of relational processes. First, I expect diplomatic recognition to result from network effects or structural dependencies, whereby the structure of relations itself influences recognition independently from state attributes. Second, I expect diplomatic recognition to result from relational processes that involve state attributes. Finally, the last section concludes with a plan of the empirical analysis to be conducted in chapters 7 through 9.

6.1 A Network Approach to Status

Although status is a relational concept, previous research does not study it relationally. Existing studies typically adopt an individualistic approach from both a theoretical and an empirical standpoints, treating status as a property of states. From a theoretical standpoint, these studies assume that status is a function of a state's attributes, especially its military and economic capabilities. Based on the conventional approach, states are sorted into social positions—such as great or emerging power—based on their qualities or the things that they have. However, this approach derives social outcomes (status inequalities) from the properties of actors, while neglecting to specify the causal mechanisms whereby state attributes are ultimately converted into status. As a result, it ignores the relational processes that shape recognition in the international system.

Empirically, this approach measures status at the state level, ranking states based on their attributes. Many studies measure status by ranking states based on certain characteristics chosen a priori, especially their economic or military capabilities. Another common approach measures status based on the proportion of diplomatic representations received. However, diplomatic exchange is a type of social relation, subject to the same relational processes that shape other kinds of social relations. By treating diplomatic exchange like a state attribute, researchers discard important information about the structure of diplomatic relations—including who sends a diplomatic representation to whom, what their previous history of relations (or lack thereof) is, and what ties they share with third parties. And without this information, it is not possible to examine empirically the relational processes that drive status recognition among states.

By contrast, I adopt in this project a consistently relational approach, from both a theoretical and an empirical standpoints. To begin, I develop in Chapter 3 a network theory of status: I argue that status depends on states' positions in a social arrangement, rather than on the qualities of states.[1] In particular, I argue that the structure of state relations itself shapes the conditions for status attainment in the international system. Because status distinctions involve social closure, a state's existing relations influence its ability to achieve status. And because status reinforces inequality independently of material conditions, it involves cumulative advantage: those states that already enjoy high status are more likely to receive additional recognition. In addition, I argue that state attributes matter for status recognition because of their symbolic value, which depends on the social context. My theoretical framework implies a switch from a substantialist perspective to a relational

[1] See Borgatti and Halgin 2011.

one—as I take as units of inquiry not self-subsistent or preformed entities (substances), but rather unfolding, dynamic relations whose changing meaning affects the very identity of actors.[2] In my argument, relations come before states: status emerges from the way state relations are configured over time, rather than from the internal attributes of states.[3] That is, status emerges from relational processes that take place among, rather than inside, states.

Empirically, my argument implies that the study of status requires examining *the configuration of state relations*, rather than merely ranking states based on their attributes. In line with my theoretical framework, I develop in this chapter an empirical strategy that is consistent with the social nature of status. Because status depends on recognition, I examine empirically the factors that produce such recognition. Since embassies express recognition among sovereign states, I use embassy exchange data as a proxy measure of status recognition. But instead of collapsing these data to the state level, by counting the proportion of embassies received by each state, I preserve the relational structure of the data. My analysis incorporates information about the structure of diplomatic relations that previous studies discard. Using this information, I assess the observable implications of my theory, which involve relational patterns that cannot be reduced to the qualities of states. In the remainder of this book, I use social network analysis tools to investigate the sources of international status, integrating a relational theory with a relational methodology.[4]

Social network analysis is ideally suited to examine relational phenomena like status; in fact, sociologists use it extensively to study status within domestic societies.[5] In particular, social network analysis is ideally suited to investigate the observable implications from my theory of status because it proceeds from a set of premises that closely match my theoretical framework. As Emirbayer and Goodwin note, social network analysis starts with the anticategorical imperative—or the rejection of any attempts to account for social processes based exclusively on the categorical attributes of actors.[6] In social network analysis, the social structure emerges not only from the distribution of attributes

[2] See Emirbayer 1997, 282-91.
[3] See Jackson and Nexon 1999, 304-7.
[4] See Goddard 2009; Hafner-Burton, Kahler, and Montgomery 2009, 584-85.
[5] See Blau 1977; Bourdieu 1984; Gould 2002; Lin 1999; Lynn, Podolny, and Tao 2009; Podolny 2005.
[6] Emirbayer and Goodwin 1994, 1414.

among actors, but also from the dynamics of interaction—or the underlying patterns of relations among actors.[7] Key to network theory is the notion that the structure matters; that is, the patterns of relationships among actors affect outcomes of interest.[8] As such, network analysts typically assume that the patterns of relations within a system differentially constrain and enable actors.[9] Network analytic approaches in IR, for example, contend that actors derive power from their positions in social relations, rather than directly from their attributes.[10]

Using social network analysis, I examine how the structure of state relations itself shapes the conditions for status attainment in the international system. A network analytic approach enables me to detect relational patterns in status recognition that previous studies mention but do not examine empirically. While the conventional approach to status in IR acknowledges the social nature of status, it does not explore this aspect in depth. Likewise, early studies of diplomatic representations noted the relational nature of this practice,[11] but lacked the tools to investigate empirically the relational effects that drive diplomatic recognition. Fortunately, computational advances in recent decades have allowed for the development of tools that can be used to detect higher-order patterns in relational data with increasing precision and efficiency. These tools enable me to treat the network structure itself as an object of substantive interest—and thereby to uncover relational patterns in diplomatic recognition that are not observable using conventional methods, which focus on the monadic or dyadic levels of analysis while assuming that outcome observations are independent and identically distributed.[12] Using social network analysis, I directly test hypotheses about the relational patterns I expect to drive status recognition among states.

Finally, social network analysis provides another important advantage: it bridges the micro-macro gap that often troubles social analysis.[13] To begin, social network analysis rejects methodological individualism because it starts with the premise that complex social systems such as inter-

[7] Goodreau, Kitts, and Morris 2009, 103; Mische 2011.
[8] Borgatti et al. 2009, 893-94.
[9] Emirbayer and Goodwin 1994, 1418.
[10] Hafner-Burton, Kahler, and Montgomery 2009, 570-74; Kahler 2009, 11-16.
[11] Alger and Brams 1967; Brams 1969; Russett and Lamb 1969.
[12] See Cranmer and Desmarais 2016; Dorff and Ward 2013.
[13] Emirbayer and Goodwin 1994, 1416-1418.

national relations exhibit emergent properties that do not result from the intentions of actors. In addition, social network analysis provides a coherent framework that allows researchers to consider multiple levels of analysis simultaneously, rather than treating each level of analysis as separate or autonomous. This feature is especially advantageous to investigate status processes, which involve multiple levels of analysis.[14] While acts of recognition take place at the dyadic level, for example, processes of social closure involve groups of states. As such, examining different levels of a network may reveal structure that is not apparent when we consider each level of analysis separately. As existing studies show, networks often have properties at one level that differ from their properties at another level.[15] By integrating different levels of analysis, we can get a better understanding of the social system represented by a network. To investigate the sources of international status, I thus explore the topology of the diplomatic network at multiple levels. This approach increases my confidence that the observed network patterns reflect the underlying relational processes that I expect to shape status recognition in the international system.

6.2 Observable Implications

In Chapter 3, I develop a network theory of international status. I argue that status depends on a state's position in a social arrangement, rather than directly on its attributes. The fundamental causal mechanisms behind status inequality operate in the domain of state relations, rather than inside states. As such, systematic social processes—which cannot be reduced to the qualities of states—drive status recognition in the international system. In particular, three mechanisms make status self-reinforcing. First, status involves social closure, or the drawing of a boundary between the established group and outsiders. High-status actors differentiate themselves from outsiders by adopting a distinctive way of life, and by establishing dense relations among themselves but sparse relations with outsiders. Second, consensus effects shape status recognition: the more a state receives recognition, the more others deem it worthy of recognition. As such, high-status states tend

[14] Ridgeway 2014, 2.
[15] Granovetter 1973; Newman 2006*b*.

to attract additional recognition simply by virtue of their popularity. Third, high status involves privileges that beget more status: high-status states act as standard-setters, shaping the criteria for status recognition; and as gatekeepers, shaping recognition decisions.

In what follows, I derive observable implications from my argument for diplomatic recognition in the international system. My theoretical framework offers two types of testable implications. On the one hand, my argument provides observable implications that involve network effects, whereby the structure of relations itself influences recognition independently of state properties. This kind of effect is purely structural: it emerges from the way state relations are configured—or from the structure of state relations—rather than from the qualities of states.[16] On the other hand, my argument provides observable implications that involve state attributes. But while these observable implications involve state attributes, they do so in the context of state relations. State attributes play a secondary role in the process of status recognition: they impact recognition because of their symbolic value, which depends on the social context. The relevance of a given attribute for status recognition is socially defined: A given state attribute matters for status recognition because of its symbolic (or socially-ascribed) meaning, rather than because of its intrinsic properties.[17] Next, I present the observable implications from my relational framework.

6.2.1 Social Closure

To begin, I argue that status is self-reinforcing because it involves social closure, or the drawing of a boundary between the established group and outsiders. Social closure reinforces inequality via two aspects. First, social closure involves connectedness, or the sharing of relational ties: High-status actors share dense relations among themselves but sparse relations with outsiders. Second, social closure involves commonality, or the sharing of common attributes: High-status actors differentiate themselves from outsiders by adopting a distinctive way of life. As I discuss next, each of these aspects entails a set of implications for diplomatic recognition in the international system.

[16] See Jackson and Nexon 1999, 304-7.

[17] Mark, Smith-Lovin, and Ridgeway 2009; Ridgeway 1991; Ridgeway and Correll 2006.

Connectedness (or Exclusion)

On the one hand, because social closure involves connectedness, a state's existing relations influence its propensity to receive recognition. Status distinctions reinforce inequality because they follow a principle of transitivity: Sharing relational ties, especially with well-connected states, brings status. Moreover, status distinctions encourage solidarity among high-status states but undermine solidarity among low-status states, whose interests are divided between supporting their own group and trying to network with high-status states. As such, the structure of state relations itself shapes the conditions for status attainment in the international system. High-status states enjoy considerable advantage in the process of status recognition: While well-connected states tend to attract additional recognition, sparsely-connected states do not.

Connectedness entails a set of effects that are purely structural, as they emerge from the configuration of state relations. To begin, connectedness has observable implications for the formation of ties in the diplomatic network. Because status involves social closure, a state's existing relations influence its propensity to be recognized. In particular, I expect states to be more likely to recognize states that reciprocate recognition or states with whom they share diplomatic partners. As such, two states that have similar diplomatic ties are likely to be connected themselves. In addition, connectedness has observable implications at the structural level of the network. When examining diplomatic relations, I expect to find a densely-connected group of high-status states at the center and a sparsely-connected group of low-status states at the margins. In other words, the diplomatic network should have a core-periphery structure—in which central actors are very likely to share ties, and peripheral actors are more likely to connect to central actors than to other actors in the periphery.[18] States should thus be divided into two groups: (1) a well-connected core, where states favor within-core ties over ties with states in the periphery; and (2) a loosely-connected periphery, where states favor ties with states in the core over ties with other states in the periphery. That is, the core should be the preferred destination for embassies, regardless of whether the sending state belongs in the core or the periphery of the diplomatic network.

[18] Borgatti and Everett 1999, 377-78.

While the use of the terms "core" and "periphery" is not new in the study of international relations, my use of these terms differs from previous research in that I consider the core/periphery boundary to emerge from state relations, rather than from the properties of states. Some scholars treat the core/periphery distinction as resulting from differences in states' material attributes, such as economic and military capabilities.[19] Similarly, world-systems theorists privilege economic relations over other issue areas, treating core and periphery as distinct locations in a division of labor based on unequal economic exchange.[20] By contrast, I do not assume that a state's attributes (or its relations in a specific issue area) determine its position in the core or the periphery of the diplomatic network. Rather, I posit that a core-periphery structure emerges from a set of relational patterns, whereby a state's existing relations influence its ability to attain recognition in the international system. At the same time, my argument coincides with previous approaches in that I use the terms "core" and "periphery" to refer to an unequal, centralized system that contributes to its own maintenance through positive feedback mechanisms.

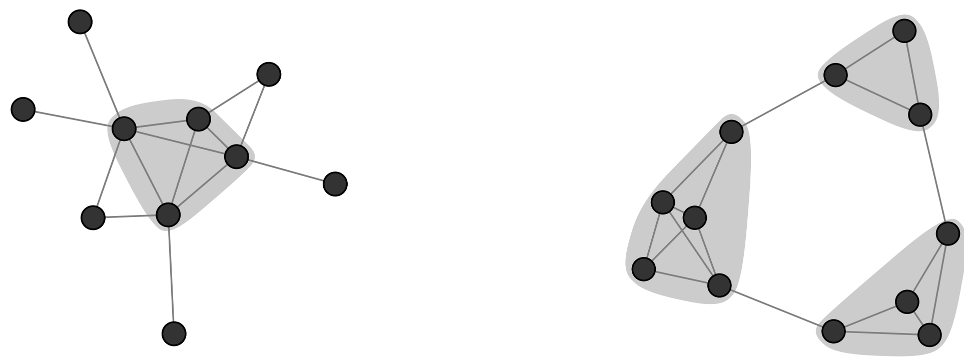
In particular, I expect the diplomatic network to exhibit a core-periphery structure, rather than a community structure. In a core-periphery structure, actors can be partitioned into two classes: a well-connected core, and a loosely-connected periphery. The partition of actors into core and periphery produces a structure like the one sketched in Figure 6.1a. In a community structure, by contrast, actors can be partitioned into multiple subgroups that share dense within-group ties but sparse ties across communities.[21] The partition of actors into communities produces a structure like the one sketched in Figure 6.1b. As Borgatti and Everett note, the two types of network structure are, by definition, mutually exclusive. A core-periphery structure is antithetical to a community structure because it implies that nodes can only belong to the core or the periphery.[22] That is, while networks with a community structure can be partitioned into multiple subgroups, networks with a core-periphery structure can only be divided into core and periphery. Compared to a commu-

[19] See Buzan and Lawson 2015, 9; Galtung 1971; Goldgeier and McFaul 1992, fn. 7.

[20] See Cardoso and Enzo 1979; Wallerstein 1984.

[21] Newman 2004. In network analysis, a community is a set of actors who share many ties among themselves and fewer ties with actors from other communities.

[22] Borgatti and Everett 1999, 376, 391.



(a) Core-Periphery Structure **(b)** Community Structure

Figure 6.1. Core-Periphery versus Community Structure: Example Networks

nity structure, a core-periphery structure thus involves a more centralized organization of network ties. While a community structure involves multiple subgroups of states, a core-periphery structure implies that the entire network is centered around a single subgroup—the core.[23]

Commonality (or Distinction)

Besides connectedness, social closure involves commonality: High-status actors differentiate themselves from outsiders by adopting a distinctive way of life. Commonality entails a set of observable implications that involve state attributes. But importantly, state attributes play an indirect role in status attainment: they communicate a latent quality—state competence—that is socially defined. Observers gauge status by evaluating how well a given state fits prevailing conceptions of state competence, which involves a distinctive way of life associated with the West. To begin, commonality has an observable implication for the formation of diplomatic ties. I expect states to recognize those states that are similar to them, rather than the states with the largest portfolio of a given attribute. That is, similarity in both fundamental values and material resources should foster recognition. Contrary to what conventional explanations argue, I do not expect states to recognize those states with the most resources; rather, similar states should share denser relations.

[23] Another feature of core-periphery structures is that high-degree actors—those with many connections—are connected to each other. This feature is not necessarily present in community structures.

In addition, commonality has two observable implications at the structural level of the diplomatic network. First, states in the core of the diplomatic network should share similar attributes, which states in the periphery lack. That is, the same attributes should be relevant for status recognition in the entire network. When examining diplomatic relations, I expect find a densely-connected core, bound together by common attributes associated with the West, and a loosely-connected periphery. Second, commonality implies that, to evoke recognition, states attributes need to go well together. To infer status, observers examine the ensemble of attributes displayed by an actor, rather than separate attributes. Actors who display a coherent set of attributes indicate that they master a way of life and are therefore worthy of recognition. In contrast, actors who display an incoherent set of attributes typically come across as arrivistes, who are trying to pass as high-status actors even though they fail to master the corresponding way of life. Mismatched attributes send out contradictory signals about an actor's way of life and are therefore unlikely to evoke recognition. Therefore, I expect that membership in the core of the diplomatic network should depend on a Western way of life that involves both material resources and fundamental values. In other words, fundamental values should moderate the impact of material resources on core membership.

6.2.2 Consensus Effects

Besides social closure, a second mechanism makes status self-reinforcing. Status depends on peer attribution, as high-status states are those recognized as such by their peers. But because status is difficult to ascertain, actors rely on each other's evaluations to decide how to rank others. Actors influence each other's status evaluations, often leading to the emergence of a working consensus about who ranks where in a given status hierarchy. Such consensus effects make status self-reinforcing: the more a state receives recognition, the more others deem it worthy of recognition. As such, status recognition is not a meritocracy. A state's position in a status hierarchy shapes the conditions for its recognition: High-status states tend to attract more recognition simply by virtue of their popularity. At the same time, status mobility constitutes the exception rather than the rule. While states at the margins of the international system struggle to gain recognition, states at the system's core enjoy considerable advantage in maintaining their status.

Consensus effects are purely structural effects, which emerge from the configuration of state relations. High-status states enjoy considerable advantage in the status recognition process, which results from their social position rather than from their qualities. To begin, consensus effects have an observable implication for the formation of ties in the diplomatic network. I expect high-status states to receive more recognition simply because of their position in diplomatic relations, rather than because of their attributes. That is, those states that already host many embassies should be more likely to receive additional embassies. In addition, consensus effects have two observable implications at the structural level of the diplomatic network. First, I expect the size of the network's core to remain stable over time. That is, the core's boundary should not be very permeable. Over time, we should observe little mobility from the network's periphery to its core. Second, the composition of the network's core should also remain stable over time. The core should be an exclusive club, which only a minority of states can access. But once a state reaches the core, it tends to remain there. Overall, there should thus be a high persistence over time in states' positions either in the core or the periphery of the diplomatic network.

6.2.3 Standard-Setting and Gatekeeping

Finally, a third mechanism makes status self-reinforcing. High status involves privileges that beget more status: High-status states act as standard-setters, shaping the criteria for status recognition; and as gatekeepers, shaping recognition decisions. By defining the rules of the game, high-status states enjoy considerable advantage in the process of status recognition. It is no coincidence that, to this day, status evaluations rely on governance ideals associated with the West. The globalization of the European society of states was regulated by a Western standard of civilization, which performed the functions of gatekeeping membership to international society and assimilating non-European peoples into European standards. As a result, predominant conceptions of state competence nowadays involve not only the ability to fend for oneself under anarchy, but also a Western standard of civilization. Because status involves a distinctive way of life, status recognition depends on an ensemble of attributes that is difficult to acquire—that is, on a Western way of life that includes not only material resources but also fundamental values like liberal democracy.

In my argument, state attributes play a secondary role in the process of status attainment. The relevance of state attributes for status recognition is socially defined, rather than intrinsic to a given attribute. In particular, state attributes impact recognition because of their symbolic value, which depends on the social context. For a given attribute to symbolize status, actors need to share the belief that it represents status. To explain why certain state attributes matter for status recognition, we need to understand how prevailing conceptions of state competence form (and change) in the international system. On the one hand, it matters what the high-status states say and do. High-status states typically act like standard-setters, shaping the criteria for status recognition in a given era; and as gatekeepers, shaping recognition decisions. On the other hand, it also matters how the international system as whole responds to these actions, either by granting them legitimacy or by denouncing them as illegitimate. Against expectations from the conventional approach, state attributes thus impact recognition because of their symbolic meaning—rather than because of their functional value, or the extent to which they enable a state to coerce other states.

6.3 Empirical Analysis Plan

In sum, my theoretical framework provides multiple observable implications for diplomatic recognition in the international system. Table 6.1 summarizes the observable implications from my network theory of status, which cover two levels of analysis: the formation of diplomatic ties between states, and the structural level of the diplomatic network. In chapters 7 through 9, I assess these observable implications using network analysis tools. Next, I discuss in more detail the plan for the empirical analysis to be conducted in the next chapters.

Table 6.1. A Network Theory of Status: Observable Implications

	Tie formation level	*Structural level*
Connectedness	• States should be more likely to recognize states that reciprocate recognition or states with whom they share diplomatic partners.	• The diplomatic network should have a core-periphery structure; • The size of the network's core should remain stable over time.
Commonality	• States should recognize those states that have similar fundamental values and material resources as them.	• States in the network's core should have similar attributes, which states in the periphery lack; • Fundamental values should moderate the impact of material resources on core membership.
Consensus effects	• States that already host many embassies should be more likely to receive additional embassies.	• The composition of the network's core should remain stable over time.
Standard-setting and gatekeeping	• Under the nonproliferation regime, nuclear weapons states should *not* be more likely to exchange embassies among themselves.	• Under the nonproliferation regime, a state should *not* receive more embassies once it acquires nuclear weapons.

6.3.1 Tie Formation in the Diplomatic Network

In Chapter 7, I evaluate the observable implications from my theory for the formation of ties in the diplomatic network. The first two implications involve purely structural effects, which emerge from the way diplomatic relations are configured. To begin, I argue that consensus effects shape status: the more a state receives recognition, the more others deem it worthy of recognition. Therefore, high-status states should receive more recognition simply because of their position in diplomatic relations, rather than because of their attributes. That is, *those states that already host many embassies should be more likely to receive additional embassies*. In addition, I argue that status distinctions involve social closure. This argument has two observable implications. First, social closure involves connectedness: high-status states share dense relations among themselves but only sparse relations with outsiders. Therefore, a state's existing relations should influence its propensity to receive recognition. In particular, *states should be more likely to recognize states that reciprocate* *recognition or states with whom they share diplomatic partners*. Second, social closure involves commonality: high-status states differentiate themselves by adopting a distinctive way of life. Therefore, *states should recognize those states that have similar fundamental values and material resources as them*, rather than the states with the largest portfolio of a given attribute. As such, the relevance of a given state attribute for status recognition is socially defined: It is attribute similarity, rather than the possession of attributes per se, that fosters recognition among states.

To model tie formation in the diplomatic network, I use the most well established method for statistical inference with networks: the exponential random graph model (ERGM).[24] In particular, since I examine a longitudinal series of diplomatic networks, I use a longitudinal extension of the ERGM—the Temporal ERGM or TERGM—that allows me account for the persistence of network ties over time.[25] This model has a set of properties that fit very well with my purposes. Most importantly, the assumptions underlying the ERGM closely match my relational theory of status. The ERGM allows me to assess the possibility that the diplomatic network emerges not only from the properties of states but also from structural or network effects, whereby the network structure itself influences the establishment of ties. In line with my theory of status, the ERGM provides a way of assessing the influence of not only state attributes but also network structure on the formation of diplomatic ties. At the same time, the ERGM also enables me to test hypotheses derived from the conventional approach, which treat status as a function of state attributes. Finally, the ERGM provides another important advantage: it avoids the bias that likely results when we use conventional regression models to examine relational data like diplomatic exchange.[26] Unlike conventional regression models, the ERGM does not rely on the assumption that outcome observations are independent and identically distributed.

[24] Holland and Leinhardt 1981; Wasserman and Pattison 1996.
[25] Desmarais and Cranmer 2012; Hanneke, Fu, and Xing 2010; Robins and Pattison 2001.
[26] Cranmer, Desmarais, and Menninga 2012, 282-83; Cranmer and Desmarais 2016, 358-61.

6.3.2 The Structural Level of the Diplomatic Network

In Chapter 8, I evaluate five observable implications from my argument at the structural level of the diplomatic network. To begin, I argue that social closure shapes status recognition. Connectedness is the first aspect of social closure: high-status states share dense relations among themselves but sparse relations with outsiders. This leads me to the first hypothesis investigated in Chapter 8: *the diplomatic network should have a core-periphery structure rather than a community structure.* In a core-periphery structure, states are divided into two groups: (1) a well-connected core, where states favor within-core ties over ties with states in the periphery; and (2) a loosely-connected periphery, where states favor ties with states in the core over within-periphery ties. In a community structure, by contrast, states are divided into multiple communities with dense within-community ties but sparse cross-community ties. Compared to a community structure, a core-periphery structure involves a more centralized organization of network ties.

In addition, I evaluate two observable implications about the core of the diplomatic network. Because social closure involves connectedness, a state's existing relations influence its propensity to receive recognition. This leads me to the second hypothesis investigated in Chapter 8: *the size of the diplomatic network's core should remain stable over time.* In other words, there should be little mobility over time from the network's periphery to its core. In addition, I argue that consensus effects shape status: the more a state receives recognition, the more others deem it worthy of recognition. As such, high-status states should receive more recognition simply because of their social position. This leads me to the third hypothesis investigated in Chapter 8: *the composition of the diplomatic network's core should remain stable over time.* Once a state reaches the core, it tends to remain there. Taken together, these hypotheses imply that there should be a high persistence over time in states' positions either in the core or the periphery of the diplomatic network.

Finally, I evaluate two observable implications that involve state attributes. Social closure involves commonality: high-status states differentiate themselves by adopting a distinctive way of life. This leads me to the fourth hypothesis investigated in Chapter 8: *states in the core of the diplomatic* *network should have similar attributes, which states in the periphery lack.* As such, the relevance of a given attribute for status recognition is socially defined: It is attribute similarity, rather than the possession of attributes per se, that fosters recognition among states. Moreover, state attributes serve to communicate a state's latent quality—state competence—that is socially defined. Predominant conceptions of state competence involve a Western way of life that includes not only material resources but also fundamental values like liberal democracy. To evoke recognition, attributes thus need to go well together. This leads me to the fifth hypothesis investigated in Chapter 8: *core membership should depend on both material resources and fundamental values.* That is, fundamental values should moderate the impact of material resources on core membership.

To evaluate these observable implications, I leverage social network analysis as well as statistical analysis. To begin, I probe the structure of the diplomatic network using core-periphery models, which enable me to measure the extent to which diplomatic ties exhibit a core-periphery structure. Next, I use a Boolean logit approach, which enables me to model binary outcomes as a function of interactions of latent variables, to examine whether membership in the core of the diplomatic network depends on a Western way of life—a gestalt that involves not only material resources but also fundamental values associated with the West. Finally, as a robustness check, I use community detection tools to assess if the diplomatic network can be meaningfully divided instead into multiple subgroups that may value different status symbols.

6.3.3 The Symbolic Meaning of State Attributes

In Chapter 9, I assess more directly why state attributes matter for status recognition. To that end, I examine the relationship between nuclear weapons—a state attribute typically associated with status—and status recognition. I choose the case of nuclear weapons for two reasons. First, this case remains relatively unexplored. Even though the relationship between nuclear weapons and status recognition is commonly assumed, it is rarely examined empirically. Second, this case involves opposite expectations based, respectively, on my argument and the conventional approach to status in IR. Highly destructive and relatively scarce, nuclear weapons seem like the quintessential status symbol based on the conventional approach. Based on this approach, nuclear weapons states should achieve a higher standing than non-nuclear weapons states. By contrast, I argue that state attributes impact recognition because of their symbolic value, which depends on the social context. For two reasons, I do not expect nuclear weapons to confer status on the states that acquired them after 1970. First, the nonproliferation regime proscribed the acquisition of nuclear weapons, turning it into a sign of deviant behavior. Second, while status recognition depends on a Western way of life that involves fundamental values like liberal democracy, those states that acquired nuclear weapons despite the nonproliferation regime do not adopt such values.

Because existing explanations involve observable implications at two levels of analysis, I conduct my analysis in two parts. First, I assess whether nuclearization increases the international recognition a state receives. Based on the conventional approach, nuclear weapons states should receive more embassies than non-nuclear weapons states. By contrast, my argument leads to the following observable implication: *a state should not receive more embassies once it acquires nuclear weapons.* To adjudicate between these hypotheses, I use the synthetic control method, which provides a systematic way to establish counterfactuals in observational studies that rely on small samples. In particular, this method enables me to compare the number of embassies received by countries that acquired nuclear weapons to the number of embassies received by otherwise similar countries that did not acquire nuclear weapons—providing a systematic way of answering the question: Had a country refrained from acquiring nuclear weapons, would it have received fewer or more embassies than it in fact received? Second, I examine whether nuclearization evokes recognition, more specifically, from the existing nuclear weapons states. If nuclear weapons symbolize status, states with a similar weapons portfolio should be more likely to recognize one another. But since nuclear weapons carry a negative symbolic meaning under the nonproliferation regime, my argument leads to the following observable implication: *nuclear weapons states should not be more likely to exchange embassies among themselves.* To assess this observable implication, I examine the history of ties among nuclear weapons states using network analysis.

Part III

Results and Implications

7

A Network Model of Diplomatic Status

In this chapter, I evaluate the observable implications of my relational theory of status for the formation of ties in the diplomatic network. I argue that status depends on a state's position in a social arrangement, rather than directly on its attributes. As such, systematic social processes—which cannot be reduced to the qualities of states—drive status recognition in the international system. In particular, I derive three observable implications from my theory of status for the formation of ties in the diplomatic network. First, I argue that consensus effects drive status recognition: the more a state receives recognition, the more others deem it worthy of recognition. As such, high-status states enjoy considerable advantage in status recognition. This leads me to the first hypothesis investigated in this chapter: *high-status states should receive more recognition simply because of their position in diplomatic relations, rather than because of their attributes*. In other words, popularity itself brings status. Importantly, this effect is purely structural: it emerges from the way diplomatic relations are configured, rather than from the characteristics of states.

In addition, I argue that social closure shapes status recognition among states. Social closure has two observable implications for the formation of diplomatic ties. To begin, high-status states share dense relations among themselves but sparse relations with outsiders. This leads me to the second hypothesis investigated in this chapter: connectedness, especially with high-status states, bring status. In other words, *a state's existing relations should influence its ability to achieve status*. Again, this effect is purely structural: it emerges from the way state relations are configured, rather than from the characteristics of states. Moreover, social closure involves a second observable implication: high-status states differentiate themselves from outsiders by adopting a distinctive way of life. This leads me to the third hypothesis investigated in this chapter: similarity fosters status recognition. That is, contrary to what conventional explanations argue, states do not necessarily recognize those states with the most resources. Rather, *states should recognize those states that have similar fundamental values and material resources as them*. Importantly, while this observable implication involves state attributes, it does so in the context of state relations. The relevance of a given attribute for status recognition is socially defined: state attributes matter because of their symbolic (rather than intrinsic) value.

This chapter is divided into four sections. The first section begins by introducing the method I use to investigate tie formation in the diplomatic network—the temporal exponential random graph model (TERGM). The TERGm provides important advantages given the purposes of this project: In line with my theory of status, the TERGM enables me to directly test hypotheses involving not only state attributes but also network effects, whereby the network structure itself influences the formation of ties. Next, the second section presents the results from the main analysis. Finally, the chapter's last section concludes with a discussion of the results.

7.1 The Exponential Random Graph Model

The empirical analysis in this chapter aims to investigate the formation of ties in the diplomatic network: why are embassies established in certain states but not others? To model the formation of ties in the diplomatic network, I use the most well established method for statistical inference with networks: the exponential random graph model (ERGM).[1] The ERGM estimates the probability of observing a given network among all of the possible permutations of the network. In other words, the ERGM estimates, given our model, how likely we are to observe the network that we observe among all the possible networks that we could have observed. The ERGM relies on simulation-based

[1] Holland and Leinhardt 1981; Wasserman and Pattison 1996.

inference, in which the counterfactuals are given by the other possible network configurations that could have been observed, rather than on sample-based inference, in which we draw inferences about a population based on a sample drawn from that population (as in conventional regression models). In my case, I observe the entire population—the set of states and embassies that exist each year—rather than only a sample taken from the target population.

I choose this approach because the ERGM has a set of properties that fit very well with my purposes. To begin, the assumptions underlying the ERGM closely match my relational theory of status. In particular, the ERGM allows researchers to assess the possibility that a network emerges not only from the properties of actors but also from structural or network effects, whereby the network structure itself influences the establishment of ties. The theoretical framework developed in Chapter 3 anticipates that status results a set of relational processes, including consensus effects and social closure, rather than directly from the distribution of attributes among states. Empirically, my relational theory of status implies that ties in the diplomatic network should depend not only on the characteristics of states (in particular, attribute similarity among states) but also on structural dependencies (the existing configuration of ties among states).

An empirical model seeking to test the observable implications from my theory should be able to incorporate both network effects and state attributes. But because conventional regression models assume the independence of outcome observations, they exclude network effects by construction. Accordingly, prior research on status attainment does not examine structural dependencies empirically, even though it acknowledges their importance, because it uses a conventional regression framework.[2] And while other approaches to statistical inference in network analysis—such as the latent space model (LSM) or the quadratic assignment procedure (QAP)—take outcome interdependence into account, these approaches do not allow researchers to directly evaluate hypotheses that involve structural dependencies. As Desmarais and Cranmer observe, these other approaches treat outcome interdependence as a nuisance rather than as an object of substantive interest.[3] By

[2]See Miller et al. 2015, 786-87.

[3]Desmarais and Cranmer 2017. A different approach to statistical inference with networks, the temporal network autocorrelation model (TNAM), allows researchers to estimate the effect of structural dependencies on actor attributes rather than on tie formation. But since I want to estimate the effect of structural dependencies on tie

contrast, the ERGM offers an important advantage in this context: it allows me to directly specify the relational patterns that I want to investigate empirically. In line with my relational theory of status, the ERGM provides a way of assessing the influence of not only state attributes but also of network structure on the formation of ties in the diplomatic network. At the same time, the ERGM also enables me to test hypotheses derived from the conventional approach to status, according to which status is a function of state attributes.

In addition, the ERGM provides an important advantage when compared to alternative approaches: it avoids the bias that likely results when we use conventional regression models to examine relational data like diplomatic exchange.[4] Conventional regression models rely on the assumption that outcome observations are independent and identically distributed. When this core assumption is violated, conventional regressions produce biased estimates. Yet, such an assumption is unlikely to hold when it comes to relational data like the diplomatic network, in which outcome observations—that is, network ties—are bound to be interdependent. As discussed in Chapter 6, states' decisions on whether to send an embassy to a given state depend on what other states do; in fact, states often try to persuade one another to send embassies to a given state or to refrain from doing so. Because diplomatic ties influence one another, the use of conventional regression models to examine embassy exchange would likely yield biased estimates. The ERGM offers an important advantage in this context: unlike conventional regression models, it does not rely on the assumption that outcome observations are independent and identically distributed.[5] Instead of treating relational data as a collection of independent dyadic observations, the ERGM treats the network itself as a single multivariate observation.[6] Using simulation-based inference, the ERGM estimates the likelihood of observing a given network among all the possible permutations of that network that could have been observed.

formation, this approach would not be appropriate here. See Hays, Kachi, and Franzese 2010.

[4] Cranmer, Desmarais, and Menninga 2012, 282-83; Cranmer and Desmarais 2016, 358-61.

[5] The ERGM only involves two basic assumptions also present in conventional regression models: that the average relationships in a dataset are representative of the population; and that the empirical model is completely and correctly specified. See Cranmer and Desmarais 2011, 70. An alternative approach to the ERGM, the Stochastic Actor Oriented Model (SAOM), involves additional assumptions unlikely to hold in diplomatic exchange data, such as the assumption that ties change one at a time. See Snijders, van de Bunt, and Steglich 2010.

[6] Cranmer and Desmarais 2011, 67-69.

Finally, since embassies tend to remain open once established, I use a longitudinal extension of the ERGM—the Temporal ERGM or TERGM—that allows me account for the persistence of network ties over time.[7] Specifically, I estimate temporal exponential random graph models for a time series of networks at five-year intervals.

7.1.1 Dependent Variable

The analysis relies on the Diplomatic Contacts (DIPCON) Database, which covers the period from 1970 to 2010.[8] Using these data, I obtain a directed unweighted network in which the nodes are states, and state i sends a tie to state j when it establishes an embassy at state j headed by an ambassador or high commissioner.[9] In this network, only embassies headed by an ambassador or high commissioner count as ties.[10] Because of covariate availability, the main analysis uses data from 1995 to 2005. In addition, robustness checks include data from 1970 to 2005 to ensure that the results from the main analysis are not specific to the 1995-2005 period.

7.1.2 Model Specification

Given my network theory of status, I expect ties in the diplomatic network to result from two types of effects: (1) network effects or structural dependencies, whereby the network structure itself (or the existing configuration of ties) shapes status recognition independently from state attributes; and (2) homophily (or similarity) effects, whereby those states that share similar status-symbolizing attributes are more likely to recognize one another. To assess the observable implications from my argument, my empirical model thus incorporates specific network effects, as well as dyadic state attributes that capture the degree of similarity between states. In addition, I include in the analysis monadic state attributes, so as to assess conventional explanations of status based on state attributes,

[7] Desmarais and Cranmer 2012; Hanneke, Fu, and Xing 2010; Robins and Pattison 2001. This extension offers the additional advantage of improving computational tractability, since it relies on a bootstrapped pseudo-maximum likelihood algorithm.

[8] Rhamey et al. 2013.

[9] Following network notation, i denotes the sending state, and j denotes the receiving state.

[10] As I explain in Chapter 6, embassies headed by an ambassador or high commissioner unambiguously express the recognition of state j by the decision-makers of state i.

as well as a set of control variables.

Network Effects

Based on my theoretical framework, I expect three network effects to drive tie formation in the diplomatic network. Each of these effects captures how the network structure itself drives the formation of diplomatic ties, independently from state attributes like material resources or fundamental values. To begin, I argue that consensus effects drive status recognition: the more a state receives recognition, the more others deem it worthy of recognition. Therefore, I expect to observe a popularity effect in the diplomatic network: the more embassies a state already hosts, the more it should attract additional embassies. To assess this effect, the *Popularity* term counts the number of distinct 2-instars in the network, where a 2-instar is defined as a node i and two incoming ties (j, i) and (k, i). I expect to find a positive coefficient for the *Popularity* term, which would indicate that states with more embassies are more likely to receive additional embassies.

Moreover, I argue that social closure shapes status recognition. Social closure involves two dimensions: connectedness (the sharing of relational ties) and commonality (the sharing of common attributes). The first dimension of social closure thus involves the structure of relations: high-status actors share dense relations among themselves but sparse relations with outsiders. That is, a state's existing relations affect the state's tendency to receive recognition. Therefore, I expect to observe two additional network effects in the diplomatic network.The first effect is reciprocity: states should be more likely to send embassies to those states that send embassies in return. This effect captures the social nature of recognition. While reciprocal recognition is mutually gratifying, asymmetric recognition is inherently unstable because it tends to be costly and ultimately worthless.[11] In fact, as Berridge notes, a refusal to reciprocate an embassy denotes "a marked sense of material or moral superiority (or both) on the part of the receiving state," which compromises bilateral relations.[12] To assess this effect, the *Reciprocity* term counts the number of dyads for which mutual ties exist. I expect to find a positive coefficient for the *Reciprocity* term, which would indicate that states prefer

[11] Wendt 2003, 512-14.
[12] Berridge and James 2003, 82.

to send embassies to states that send embassies in return.

The second network effect derived from social closure is transitivity: states should be more likely to establish embassies where their diplomatic partners send embassies. That is, the more diplomatic partners any two states share, the higher their tendency to exchange embassies. This effect captures the notion that connectedness, especially with high-status actors, brings status. Although recognition is a discretionary act, states routinely coordinate acts of recognition to ensure legitimacy, as discussed in Chapter 4. Moreover, high-status states occupy a central position in status relations, which makes them particularly influential in determining who gets recognition. For example, Western states with close ties to the United States rarely recognize Palestine as a state, while states with ties to China rarely recognize Taiwan.[13] To assess this effect, the *Transitivity* term counts the number of closed triads—any set of ties (i, j) and (j, k) for which either (k, i) or (i, k) also exist. I expect to find a positive coefficient for the *Transitivity* term, which would indicate that states are more likely to exchange embassies the more diplomatic partners they share.

Homophily Effects (Similarity)

Besides network effects, social closure involves a second dimension: commonality, or the sharing of common attributes. Status groups differentiate themselves by adopting distinctive values and consuming distinctive goods. Therefore, I expect states to recognize states with similar values and resources—rather than the states with the most resources, as traditional approaches argue. Homophily effects shape tie formation: similar states should be more likely to exchange embassies. To test this claim, I specify the state attributes considered in the status literature as dyadic attributes, measuring the absolute difference between states in every dyad. The more two states differ based on attributes such as military capability or democracy, the smaller their propensity to exchange embassies. As such, I expect to find negative coefficients for the homophily effects.

To measure similarity, I use the state attributes considered in the status literature, which include

[13] *BBC News*. "Sweden to recognise Palestinian state." October 3, 2014. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-29479418. For additional examples, see Chapter 4.

Table 7.1. Status Attributes in the IR Literature

Nature	*Type*	*Author*
Material resources	Economic capability	Gilpin (1981) Larson and Shevchenko (2003, 2010) Larson, Paul, and Wohlforth (2014) Luard (1976) Neumann (2008, 2014) Schweller (1999) Wohlforth (2009)
	Military capability*	Gilpin (1981) Larson and Shevchenko (2003, 2010) Larson, Paul, and Wohlforth (2014) Luard (1976) Neumann (2008, 2014) Schweller (1999) Thompson (2014) Wohlforth (2009)
	Technological capability	Larson and Shevchenko (2003, 2010) Luard (1976) Schweller (1999) Wohlforth (2009)
	Nuclear weapons	Art (1980) Gilpin (1981) O'Neill (2006)
Fundamental values	Political system or ideology	Larson and Shevchenko (2003, 2010) Larson, Paul, and Wohlforth (2014) Luard (1976) Neumann (2008, 2014) Schweller (1999)
	Culture or civilization†	Larson and Shevchenko (2003, 2010) Larson, Paul, and Wohlforth (2014) Luard (1976) Neumann (2014) Schweller (1999)
	Moral superiority	Larson and Shevchenko (2003, 2010) Neumann (2008)

*We can include in this category territory and population (Larson, Paul, and Wohlforth, 2014; Luard, 1976; Schweller, 1999).
†We can include in this category religion and education (Larson and Shevchenko, 2003, 2010; Luard, 1976; Schweller, 1999).

both material resources and fundamental values (see Table 7.1).[14] I measure homophily as the absolute difference between any two states along each attribute. Material resources include wealth, military capability, and nuclear weapons. In particular, I use three variables to assess the effects of material resources: *GDP per capita* measures the log-transformed real GDP per capita in 2005 US dollars; *Military Spending* measures the log-transformed military expenditure in current US dollars; and *Nuclear Weapons* indicates whether a state has nuclear weapons and an ongoing nuclear program.[15] When it comes to values, previous studies consider regime type, as well as more abstract notions such as civilization and moral superiority, to affect status. In addition, IR scholars argue that, besides democracy, the standard of civilization today includes capitalism and human rights.[16] Therefore, I estimate the effects of the three fundamental values on recognition: democracy, human rights, and economic liberalism. Specifically, I use three variables: the modified Polity IV score measures *Democracy*[17]; the Political Terror Scale based on U.S. State Department reports measures *Human Rights*[18]; and the Index of Economic Freedom measures *Economic Freedom*.[19] As Table 7.2 shows, most of these state attributes are positively correlated—except for *Nuclear Weapons*, which correlates negatively with all fundamental values.

The Conventional Approach

While I expect states to recognize states with similar values and resources, conventional explanations based on state attributes expect a state to achieve higher status the higher its share of status-symbolizing attributes. For example, the more economic or military capabilities a state has, the higher standing it should achieve. According to this approach, states with higher levels of attributes such as wealth or military capability should attract more embassies. To assess conventional explanations, I specify status attributes at the state (or monadic) level, by measuring how much each state

[14] See Appendix A for a more detailed description of the data.
[15] See, respectively, Gleditsch 2002*a*; Singer 1988; Singh and Way 2004.
[16] Buzan 2014, Neumann 2014, 111.
[17] Gleditsch and Ward 1997.
[18] Gibney et al. 2015. To facilitate interpretation, I inverted the scale so that higher levels indicate a better human rights record.
[19] Heritage Foundation 2015.

Table 7.2. Pairwise Correlations for State Attributes (2000)

	GDP/ capita*	Military Spending*	Nuclear Weapons	Demo-cracy	Human Rights	Econ Freedom	IGO HQ
GDP/capita*	-	0.54	0.05	0.35	0.57	0.56	0.13
Mil Spending*	0.54	-	0.37	0.05	-0.00	0.18	0.31
Nuc Weapons	0.05	0.37	-	-0.03	-0.23	-0.13	0.06
Democracy	0.35	0.05	-0.03	-	0.50	0.54	0.27
Human Rights	0.57	-0.00	-0.23	0.50	-	0.60	0.06
Econ Freedom	0.56	0.18	-0.13	0.54	0.60	-	0.17
IGO HQ	0.13	0.31	0.06	0.27	0.06	0.17	-

*Log-transformed.

has of that attribute. I use the same set of attributes described above, which includes both material resources and fundamental values.

Control Variables

I control for other factors that may influence the establishment of embassies, both at the dyadic and monadic levels.[20] *Alliance* records whether i and j share an alliance, and *Trade* measures the log-transformed total trade between i and j in 2000 US dollars.[21] To control for geographical proximity, *Contiguity* measures whether i and j share a river, land, or maritime border (up to 24 nmi); and *Same Region* measures whether i and j are in the same geographical sub-region.[22] Since states that host IGO headquarters attract more embassies due to economies of scale for sending states, *IGO Headquarters*$_j$ records whether j hosts IGO headquarters.[23]Since richer states have more resources to send embassies abroad, *GDP per capita*$_i$ controls for the sending state's wealth.

In addition, I use a *Tie Stability* term to control for the persistence of embassies over time. This term acts like a lag of the dependent variable in a time series model, conditioning effects on the previous year. Because I include this term in the model, the effects observed are net of past network

[20] See Kinne 2014; Neumayer 2008.
[21] See, respectively, Leeds et al. 2002; Barbieri, Keshk, and Pollins 2009.
[22] See, respectively, Stinnett et al. 2002; "Standard Country or Area Codes for Statistical Use," accessed February 20, 2015, http://unstats.un.org/unsd/methods/m49/m49regin.htm.
[23] Rohn 1997.

Table 7.3. Model Specification Summary

Approach	*Effect Type*	*Variable*	*Expectation*
Relational approach (relations → status)	Network effects	Popularity Reciprocity Transitivity	+
	Homophily effects (dyadic)	Democracy Human rights Economic liberalism Wealth Military capability Nuclear weapons	−
Conventional approach (attributes → status)	State attributes (monadic)	Democracy Human rights Economic liberalism Wealth Military capability Nuclear weapons	+

structure. Finally, I use a *Sociality* term to control for the possibility that states that already send many embassies are more likely to send additional embassies due to increasing returns to scale. Since the act of opening embassies has high fixed costs in bureaucratic terms, the marginal cost of opening an additional embassy should decrease as the overall number of embassies increases. To account for this, the *Sociality* term counts the number of distinct 2-outstars in the network, where a 2-outstar is a node i and two outgoing ties (i, j) and (i, k).

Model Summary

To recap, Table 7.3 compares the empirical expectations from my relational theory of status with the expectations from the conventional approach to international status. I use temporal exponential random graph models (TERGM) to estimate the probability of tie formation in the diplomatic network over time as a function of both network structure (network effects) and attribute similarity (homophily effects). Specifically, I expect three network effects to drive embassy exchange: popularity, reciprocity, and transitivity. The coefficient for each of these effects should be positive.

Moreover, I expect to observe homophily effects in the diplomatic network: the more similar any two states are based on material resources or fundamental values, the higher their propensity to exchange embassies. As such, I expect to observe negative coefficients for the homophily effects involving material resources and fundamental values. In contrast, the conventional approach treats status as a function of state attributes: the richer or more democratic a state is, for example, the higher standing it should achieve. According to the conventional approach, then, state attributes should correlate positively with the establishment of embassies.

7.2 Results

Figure 7.1 presents the estimated parameters, which we can interpret either at the network or the dyad levels.[24] At the network level, we can use the parameters to estimate the impact of changes in specific network configurations—such as an increase in the number of reciprocal dyads or in the level of a state attribute—on the predicted probability of observing a given network. At the dyad level, we can use parameters to estimate the impact of changes in specific network configurations on the odds of observing a tie between *i* and *j*. Because the dyadic level of interpretation closely resembles how we interpret estimates from logistic regression, it is more intuitive than the network level of interpretation. Therefore, I interpret the results at the dyadic level, or in terms of the odds of observing a diplomatic tie between two states.

Because the variables have different scales, Figure 7.1 does not provide information about the size of the effects, which I discuss below. First, let us consider the direction and statistical significance of the coefficients. Filled circles in Figure 7.1 denote statistically significant coefficient estimates, while empty circles denote insignificant estimates. I divide the variables into categories that reflect either my relational model of status, which involves network effects and homophily, or conventional explanations based on state attributes.

[24] Cranmer and Desmarais 2011, 71-73.

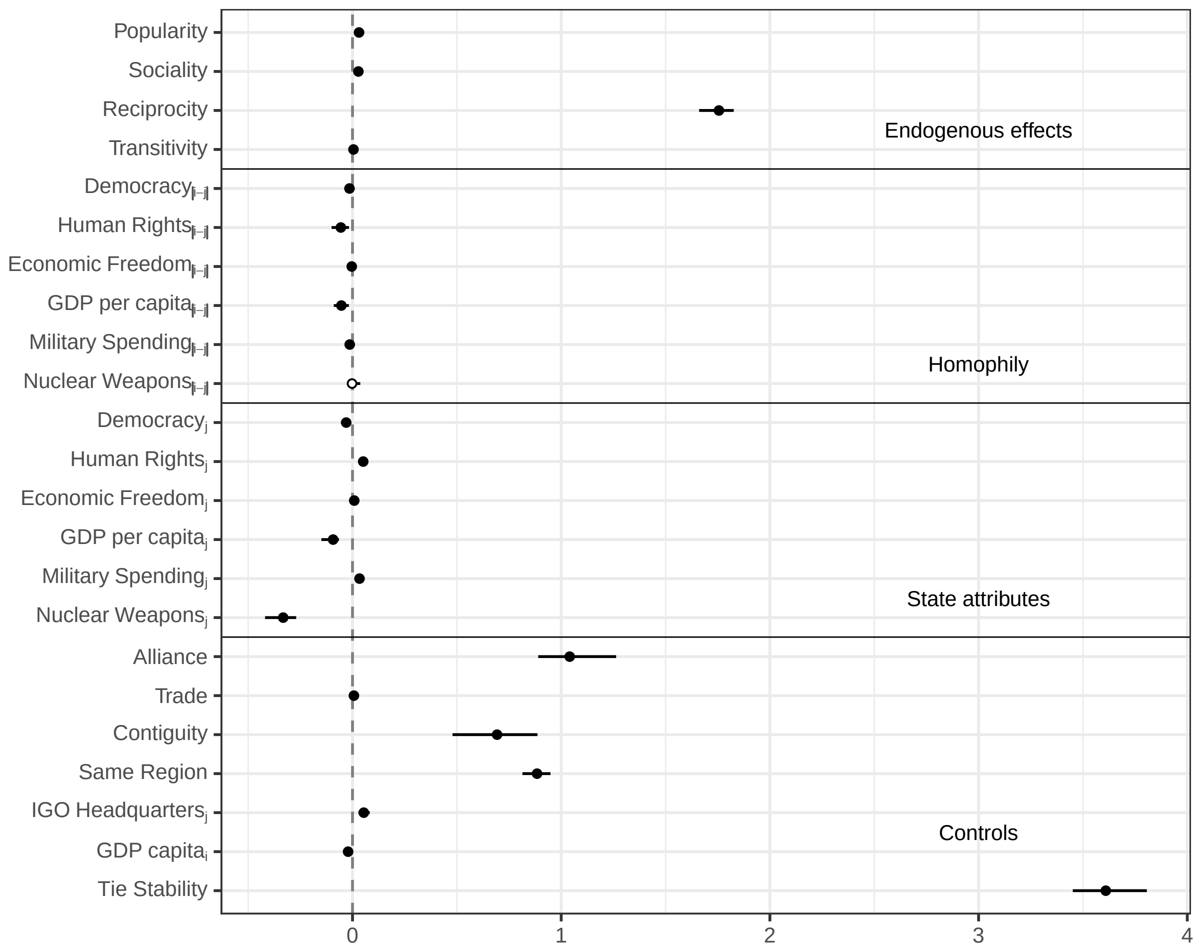


Figure 7.1. TERGM of Diplomatic Ties for 1995-2005.
Notes: $N_{1995} = 123$ and $N_{2005} = 132$. Bars denote 95% confidence intervals based on 1,000 bootstrap replications. Filled circles indicate statistically significant coefficient estimates, and empty circles indicate insignificant estimates. Following network notation, *i* denotes the sending state and *j* denotes the receiving state.

Mixed Support for The Conventional Approach

Conventional explanations argue that status is proportional to a state's share of certain attributes: for example, the richer or militarily stronger a state is, the higher its tendency to receive an embassy. Based on these explanations, we should expect to find positive coefficients for state attributes, which would indicate that state attributes determine status. However, the impact of attributes on the establishment of embassies is mixed: we find positive signs for half of the coefficients, but a negative sign for the other half. Although previous research prioritizes material resource as status attributes, among material resources only military capability has a positive effect on tie formation. Against expectations from previous research that state attributes should bring recognition, attributes only sometimes increase the odds of receiving an embassy.

Strong Support for The Relational Approach

I derive two expectations from my relational model of status involving network effects. First, I argue that consensus effects drive status recognition: the more a state receives recognition, the more others deem it worthy of recognition. Therefore, I expect to find a positive coefficient for popularity. This is what we observe: states that already host many embassies tend to attract additional embassies. Second, I argue that social closure—through the formation of tightly-knit groups that sparingly interact with outsiders—shapes status relations. Therefore, I expect to find positive coefficients for reciprocity and transitivity. The analysis supports this expectation: states are more likely to send embassies to states that send embassies in return; in addition, states are more likely to exchange embassies the more diplomatic partners they share. Together, these effects indicate that a state's existing relations affect its propensity to receive recognition.

I derive one expectation from my relational model of status involving state attributes. Social closure implies that status groups differentiate themselves from outsiders by adopting distinctive values and consuming distinctive goods. Therefore, I expect to observe homophily effects in the diplomatic network: similar states should be more likely to recognize each other. Accordingly, I expect to find negative coefficients for the variables that measure differences between states. This is what we observe: two states are less likely to exchange embassies the more different they are. That is, similar states are more likely to recognize each other. I find homophily effects for all state attributes except nuclear weapons. These results indicate that status is not just a matter of being rich or democratic. Rather, status is relational: similarity begets recognition.

Compared to conventional explanations that begin and end with state attributes, the relational model performs much better in explaining the establishment of embassies. As expected, relational dynamics influence tie formation in the diplomatic network. States recognize similar states, rather than the states with the highest levels of attributes. Moreover, a state's existing relations affect the state's ability to achieve recognition. Importantly, the observed network effects are purely structural dynamics that come from the structure of the network itself, rather than from state attributes. Since the analysis controls for factors such as geographical proximity and the wealth of the sending state, these factors cannot account for the observed structural dependencies.

Finally, most of the controls have statistically significant effects in the direction suggested by previous studies. On the one hand, states that send many embassies are more likely to send additional embassies (sociality effect). In addition, states are more likely to exchange embassies if they share an alliance, trade more, share a border, or belong in the same geographic region. States that host IGO headquarters attract more embassies. On the other hand, richer states are less likely to send embassies. The positive tie stability effect indicates that embassies tend to persist over time.

7.2.1 Size of the Effects

Figure 7.1 shows log odds ratios, which we can exponentiate to obtain odds ratios for ease of interpretation. In particular, to assess the size of the effects, one can compute the odds ratio associated with a one-standard deviation change around the mean for each variable. To begin with the popularity effect, a one-standard deviation around the mean number of embassies received in 2000 increases the odds of receiving an additional embassy by a factor of 2.40. For example, Cuba, who hosts 51 embassies, is 2.40 times more likely to receive an additional embassy than Bolivia, who hosts 23 embassies. When it comes to the reciprocity effect, a tie is 5.79 times more likely to exist if it is mutual. That is, an embassy is almost six times more likely to exist if both states in a dyad exchange embassies. Finally, when it comes to the transitivity effect, a tie is 1.005 times more likely if it closes one additional triangle in the network. For example, Hungary is 1.14 times more likely to send a tie to Libya, which would close 36 triangles, than to Chad, which would close only nine triangles. Taken together, these results demonstrate that strong network effects or structural dependencies shape tie formation in the diplomatic network.

To assess the size of those effects involving state attributes, Table 7.4 shows the effect of a typical change in each variable on the odds that an embassy will be established. The table tells us two things that conventional approaches to status cannot explain. First, attribute similarity has a substantively significant impact on the establishment of embassies, as similar states are more likely to recognize each other. Even though conventional approaches treat status as a function of state attributes, the importance of attributes is socially defined: attribute similarity, rather than the possession of attributes per se, drives tie formation in the diplomatic network. Second, while conventional approaches emphasize material resources as status symbols, the effect of fundamental values on the establishment of embassies is substantively significant. For both homophily and monadic effects, fundamental values have a large (and mostly positive) impact on the odds of observing an embassy. That is, states are more likely to send embassies to those states with similar levels of fundamental values as the sending state; and states with higher human rights or economic liberalism scores tend to attract more embassies. Contrary to approaches that prioritize material resources as status attributes, fundamental values matter for international recognition.

7.2.2 Model Fit and Robustness Checks

To assess model fit, I conduct goodness of fit tests and degeneracy checks, whose results are shown in Appendix A. Both diagnostic tests indicate that the model fits the data very well. As Figure A.2 shows, the statistical model provides a good fit, accurately recovering the underlying structure of the diplomatic network. And as Table A.7 shows, the empirical model is not degenerate; for all model terms and for both periods of analysis, the sample statistics cannot be statistically distinguished from the observed statistics.

To assess the robustness of the results, I employ alternative model specifications, whose results are shown in Appendix A. To begin, I estimate two models without network effects—equivalent to logit models—including either only monadic (or state) attributes, or both monadic and dyadic attributes (Table A.8).[25] In addition, I estimate models with alternative measures for wealth and

[25] See Cranmer and Desmarais 2011, 79.

Table 7.4. Change in Odds of Tie from Typical Change in Variable

Homophily effects	
Democracy	9%
Human rights	11%
Economic liberalism	4%
GDP/capita	6%
Military spending	2%
Nuclear weapons	-
State attributes	
Democracy	-18%
Human rights	12%
Economic liberalism	10%
GDP/capita	-11%
Military spending	7%
Nuclear weapons	-28%

Notes: One-standard deviation for continuous variables and the interquartile range for discrete ones.

military capability—such as GDP, population, and the CINC Score (Table A.10). To account for possible high collinearity among the fundamental values variables, I estimate baseline models for each of the variables, including one of the variables but excluding the other two. These models offer the added advantage of covering longer periods starting in 1970. Since the total number of embassies in the world more than doubled between 1970 and 2005, the models capture longer-term dynamics. Therefore, they address the potential concern that factors that precede the period of estimation may affect the main model's results. As shown in Table A.9, the results are robust to these changes in specification. This indicates that potentially omitted longer-term dynamics do not drive the results, and that the findings are not specific to the 1995-2005 period.

The comparison of results across model specifications attests to the robustness of the main findings, indicating that these results reflect the underlying data generating process, rather than being an artifact of model specification. In particular, I consistently observe three main patterns across model specifications. First, regardless of specification, I find consistently significant and positive coefficients for all network effects—popularity, reciprocity, and transitivity. Second, I find homophily effects for both fundamental values and material resources; but while the homophily effects for fundamental values are robust across specifications, the homophily effects for material resources are somewhat sensitive to model specification. Third, across specifications, the possession of attributes only sometimes increase a state's odds of receiving an embassy, against expectations from the conventional approach. And importantly, the negative effects of wealth and nuclear weapons on diplomatic recognition are robust to model specification. Having nuclear weapons or more wealth consistently reduces a state's odds of receiving an embassy across models, which indicates that the results are not an artifact of model specification.

7.3 Conclusion

This chapter examines the implications of my argument for the formation of diplomatic ties. Leveraging network analysis, which enables me to test hypotheses involving relational patterns, I investigate why states send embassies to certain destinations and not others. The empirical results demonstrate the analytical leverage provided by my relational theory of status. Compared to conventional approaches based on state attributes, my relational model performs much better in theorizing the underlying dynamics of the diplomatic network. The analysis shows that status results from systematic social processes that cannot be reduced to the attributes of states. The empirical results indicate that status recognition depends on a state's position in a social arrangement, rather than directly on its attributes. And importantly, conventional approaches—those based on state attributes—cannot account for the main findings, which involve both network effects (or structural dependencies) and homophily (or similarity) effects. That is, a relational perspective reveals important patterns in status recognition that an individualist perspective cannot accommodate.

In particular, this chapter offers three new findings about the sources of international status. First, status results from a set of network effects, whereby the configuration of ties among states shapes recognition independently of state attributes. To begin, consensus effects drive status recognition: the more a state receives recognition, the more it attracts additional recognition. More broadly, a state's existing relations affect its ability to achieve status: states prove more likely to recognize states that recognize them in return or that share diplomatic partners with them. As such, self-reinforcing dynamics and social closure drive status recognition among states. These relational processes account for some puzzling cases from a conventional standpoint.[26] On the one hand, states at the margins of the international system struggle to earn recognition, even despite changes in their qualities. Despite acquiring nuclear weapons, for example, North Korea did not become a great power because it maintains only tenuous connections with other states—including most recently China, one of its traditional allies. Similarly, Taiwan receives less recognition than its material capabilities would warrant because, as the object of an intense diplomatic isolation campaign conducted by China, it maintains only sparse connections with other states. On the other hand, states at the core of the international system enjoy considerable advantage in gaining recognition. Even though its time as a major power passed long ago, Italy enjoys more recognition than its material capabilities would warrant because it maintains strong connections with other central states. Similarly, Egypt occupies a more central position in the diplomatic network than we would expect based on its material capabilities. Recognized by other states as a leader in the Non-Aligned Movement and as a hub at the crossroads of the Middle East and North Africa, Egypt obtains status from its relations with other states, rather than from its material capabilities.

Second, against expectations from the conventional approach, it is attribute similarity—rather than the possession of attributes per se—that drives status recognition. States recognize those states similar to them, rather than those states with the largest amount of attributes. In other words, the relevance of a given attribute for status recognition is socially defined: it depends on whether others states share the same attribute, rather than on the intrinsic value of a given attribute. And finally, although traditional approaches emphasize material resources as symbols of international status, I show that fundamental values like democracy also matter for status recognition. States recognize those states that have similar fundamental values and material resources as them. Each of these

[26] See Figure 5.2 and Figure 5.3.

findings brings with it important implications, which I discuss in Chapter 10. But before that, the next chapter complements the analysis conducted here by examining the observable implications of my relational theory of status at the structural level of the diplomatic network.

8

The Core-Periphery Structure of the Diplomatic Network

In this chapter, I evaluate the observable implications of my relational theory of status at the structural level of the diplomatic network. I argue that status depends on a state's position in a social arrangement. As such, systematic social processes—which cannot be reduced to state attributes—drive status recognition. In particular, I derive five observable implications from my theory at the structural level of the diplomatic network. To begin, I argue that social closure shapes status recognition. Connectedness is the first aspect of social closure: high-status states share dense relations among themselves but sparse relations with outsiders. This leads me to the first hypothesis investigated in this chapter: *the diplomatic network should have a core-periphery structure rather than a community structure.* In a core-periphery structure, states are divided into two groups: (1) a well-connected core, where states favor within-core ties over ties with states in the periphery; and (2) a loosely-connected periphery, where states favor ties with states in the core over within-periphery ties. In a community structure, by contrast, states are divided into multiple communities with dense within-community ties but sparse cross-community ties. Compared to a community structure, a core-periphery structure involves a more centralized organization of network ties.

In addition, I evaluate two observable implications about the core of the diplomatic network. I argue that, because social closure involves a distinction between the established and outsiders, it implies exclusion. This leads me to the second hypothesis investigated in this chapter: *the size of the diplomatic network's core should remain stable over time.* In other words, there should be little mobility from the network's periphery to the core. In addition, I argue that consensus effects drive status recognition: the more a state receives recognition, the more others deem it worthy of recognition. As such, high-status states should receive more recognition simply because of their position in the social structure. This leads me to the third hypothesis: *the composition of the diplomatic network's core should remain stable over time.* Once a state reaches the core, it tends to remain there. Taken together, these hypotheses imply that there should be a high persistence over time in states' positions either in the core or the periphery of the diplomatic network.

Finally, I evaluate two observable implications that involve state attributes. Social closure involves a second aspect: high-status states differentiate themselves by adopting distinctive values and consuming distinctive goods. This leads me to the fourth hypothesis: *states in the core of the diplomatic network should have similar attributes, which states in the periphery lack.* That is, the same attributes should be relevant for status recognition in the entire network. But importantly, attributes play an indirect role in status attainment: they communicate a state's latent quality—the extent to which it conforms to prevailing conceptions of state competence. To evoke recognition, attributes need to go well together. In particular, predominant conceptions of state competence involve a Western way of life that involves not only material resources but also fundamental values like liberal democracy. This leads me to the fifth hypothesis: *core membership should depend on both material resources and fundamental values.* That is, fundamental values should moderate the impact of material resources on core membership. While these observable implications involve state attributes, they do so in the context of state relations. The relevance of a given attribute for status recognition is socially defined, rather than intrinsic to that attribute.

The chapter is divided into five sections. The first section uses network analysis to assess if the diplomatic network has a core-periphery structure. Next, the second section examines the size and composition the network's core. Using statistical analysis, the third section then examines the relationship between state attributes and core membership. As a robustness check, the fourth section assesses if the network can be divided instead into multiple communities that may value different symbols. The last section concludes with a summary of the results.

8.1 A Strong Core-Periphery Structure

According to the first hypothesis, the diplomatic network should have a core-periphery structure, whereby states can be divided into a well-connected core and a loosely-connected periphery. To evaluate this hypothesis, I begin by conducting a connectivity analysis to assess if the diplomatic network shows signs of cohesion, consistent with a core-periphery structure; or signs of fragmentation, consistent with a community structure. Next, I use core-periphery models to assess more directly if the network has a core-periphery structure.

8.1.1 A Well-Connected Network

A descriptive analysis indicates that the diplomatic network is well connected, rather than fragmented into distinct communities of states that may value different status symbols. To begin, the network has only a small number of isolates—states that do not send or receive any embassies in a given year—as shown in Table 8.1. Moreover, isolates exist only temporarily, likely because there is a lag between state creation and the establishment of physical embassies in and from that state. The numbers between parentheses in Table 8.1 show the year when each state became a UN member, which typically marks the international recognition of a sovereign state in the contemporary international system. Nearly all isolates lack embassies for only one period, which coincides with the state's accession to the UN; after one or at most two periods, all isolates send or receive at least one embassy from another state. The presence of isolates thus results from bureaucratic factors, rather than reflecting meaningful divisions in the network.

In addition, information or resources can flow through the network very easily. For any two states *i* and *j* that belong in the giant component—the largest connected component in the network, equivalent to the entire network minus isolates—there is at least one directed path in the network from *i* to *j*.[1] That is, if we start at a random node, we can easily reach the other nodes in the network

[1] Wasserman and Faust 1994, 133. In technical terms, the network's giant component is weakly connected. In a strongly connected component, for any two nodes *i* and *j*, there is a directed path not only from *i* to *j* but also from *j* to *i*.

Table 8.1. Isolates in the Diplomatic Network

Year	*Country*
1970	Bhutan (1971)
1975	Angola (1976), Bhutan (1971), Comoros (1975), Maldives (1965), Mozambique (1975), Papua New Guinea (1975), Vietnam (1977), Zimbabwe (1980)
1980	St. Lucia (1979), St. Vincent and the Grenadines (1980)
1985	Namibia (1990)
1990	Federated States of Micronesia (1991)
1995	-
2000	-
2005	Kiribati (1999)
2010	-

Note: Years between parentheses indicate when country became a UN member.

by moving through the existing ties. In particular, the network exhibits a small-world property—whereby it only takes a small number of steps to go from any nodes i and j, even if these nodes themselves do not share a tie.[2] The network statistics shown in Table 8.2 suggest a small-world property.[3] First, the shortest paths between any two states—the smallest distance we need to travel to go from i to j—are on average 1.83. That is, for any states i and j, i can reach j in a small number of steps through the network, even when i and j do not share a tie. Second, the network diameter—the longest shortest path between any two states—is on average 3.89. That is, the longest distance between any states i and j is on average only four ties. Third, the proportion of closed triads to all network triads (both open and closed) is on average 54%. That is, for any three nodes i, j, and k, if the ties (i, j) and (i, k) exist, a (j, k) tie also exists most of the time.

Finally, the diplomatic network is quite resilient. As Table 8.3 shows, there is a small number of articulation points—single nodes whose removal would transform the giant component into an unconnected component—in the diplomatic network. If we randomly removed a node from the network, it is not very likely that new isolates would appear. Moreover, removing the articulation points would create only a small number of isolates, most of which are Small Island Developing

[2] See Granovetter 1973; Milgram 1967.
[3] See Newman 2001; Watts and Strogatz 1998.

Table 8.2. Small World Property in the Diplomatic Network

	1970	*1975*	*1980*	*1985*	*1990*	*1995*	*2000*	*2005*	*2010*
Avg. path length*	1.84	1.77	1.83	1.82	1.84	1.87	1.88	1.83	1.80
Diameter†	4	3	4	3	4	4	5	4	4
Clustering‡	0.52	0.55	0.56	0.54	0.56	0.52	0.52	0.54	0.55
Nodes	134	148	157	162	164	183	187	188	190

Notes: *Measures the smallest distance between any two states in the network.
†Measures the longest shortest path between any two states in the network.
‡The global clustering coefficient gives the proportion of closed triads to all network triads.

Table 8.3. Articulation Points in the Diplomatic Network

Year	*Articulation Point*	*Potential Isolates*
1970	New Zealand, UK	Gambia, Samoa
1975	-	-
1980	India, Portugal, UK	Brunei, Maldives, Sao Tome and Principe
1985	Canada	St. Kitts and Nevis
1990	Venezuela, Russia, US	Dominica, Namibia, Marshall Islands
1995	-	-
2000	Fiji	Tuvalu
2005	Fiji	Tuvalu
2010	-	-

Notes: Articulation points are nodes whose removal would make the network unconnected. Potential isolates are those that would become isolates were the articulation points to be removed.

States (SIDS) such as the Maldives or Tuvalu. In sum, the connectivity analysis provides initial evidence that the diplomatic network forms a fairly cohesive group—consistent with a core-periphery structure, rather than with a more fragmented community structure.

8.1.2 Modeling Core-Periphery Structure

To assess if the diplomatic network has a core-periphery structure, I employ the method most commonly used in network analysis.[4] Specifically designed to detect core-periphery structure in net-

[4] Borgatti and Everett 1999, 377-93. See Rombach et al. 2014 for a review of methods to detect core-periphery structure.

works, this method closely matches the formal definition of core-periphery structure.[5] It comprises two models: (1) the discrete model assumes that each actor in the network belongs either to the core or the periphery, such that the network can be divided into two discrete classes of actors: a well-connected core, and a loosely-connected periphery; (2) the continuous model ranks all actors according to a continuous measure of "coreness"—the property of belonging to the core. The main analysis uses the discrete model, which takes tie direction into account, while supplementary analyses use the continuous model.[6]

To begin, I estimate a discrete core-periphery model of the diplomatic network for each period from 1970 to 2010.[7] To partition actors into core or periphery, the discrete model uses a genetic algorithm that maximizes the Pearson correlation coefficient between the observed network structure and an ideal core-periphery structure—in which core actors share ties among themselves, and periphery actors do not share ties with one another.[8] Following this approach, a network has a core-periphery structure to the extent that we observe a high correlation between the observed network structure and the ideal core-periphery structure. Correlation values range from 0 to 1: while a correlation of 1 indicates an ideal core-periphery structure, a correlation of 0 denotes the absence of a core-periphery structure. To assess the robustness of the partitions detected, I run the algorithm multiple times from different starting configurations. For every year, the results are the same across estimations—that is, the same states appear in the core. As a robustness check, I also analyze the network using the continuous model. The results are similar regardless of the model used: As Table A.13 shows, the proportion of core states according to both models is very similar for all years, indicating a clear split of states into either the core or the periphery.

[5]The notion that the world can be divided into core and periphery has a long tradition in the discipline. See Galtung 1971; Goldgeier and McFaul 1992; Wallerstein 1974. However, IR scholars rarely investigate this notion empirically. Most empirical studies of core-periphery structure in international relations are conducted by sociologists and typically examine commodity trade flows. See Snyder and Kick 1979; Steiber 1979; Nemeth and Smith 1985; Smith and White 1992; Mahutga 2006. These studies use blockmodeling techniques based on structural or regular equivalence to detect core-periphery structure. However, these techniques impose restrictive assumptions on the data that deviate from the formal definition of core-periphery structure. See Borgatti, Everett, and Johnson 2013, 225. As such, they are no longer used to detect core-periphery structure in network analysis.

[6]Borgatti, Everett, and Johnson 2013, 229. In the diplomatic network, ties are directed: an embassy can be sent from state *i* to state *j*, or from state *j* to state *i*.

[7]I use UCINET to detect the core-periphery partitions. See Borgatti, Everett, and Freeman 2002.

[8]Borgatti and Everett 1999, 381-83.

Table 8.4. Core-Periphery Structure in the Diplomatic Network (1970-2010)

	1970	*1975*	*1980*	*1985*	*1990*	*1995*	*2000*	*2005*	*2010*
Core-periphery fit									
Correlation	0.70	0.72	0.72	0.74	0.74	0.73	0.77	0.78	0.78
Density of ties									
Core-core	0.72	0.77	0.72	0.77	0.74	0.71	0.78	0.82	0.81
Core-periphery	0.21	0.27	0.20	0.24	0.22	0.19	0.22	0.24	0.24
Periphery-core	0.22	0.25	0.19	0.20	0.19	0.18	0.21	0.24	0.27
Periphery-periphery	0.05	0.06	0.04	0.05	0.04	0.03	0.04	0.04	0.04

Note: Results from discrete models using correlation (CORR) as the fitness function in UCINET.

Results (1970-2010)

Results strongly indicate that the diplomatic network has a core-periphery structure. As Table 8.4 shows, the correlation between the observed network structure and the ideal core-periphery structure is high for all years, ranging from 0.70 to 0.78. Tie distribution closely matches the definition of core-periphery structure. First, states in the core are very likely to exchange embassies: On average, 76% of the potential ties within the core exist. Second, states in the core are less likely to send embassies to the periphery: Only 23% of the potential core-to-periphery ties exist. Third, states in the periphery are more likely to send embassies to states in the core than to other states in the periphery: While 22% of the potential periphery-to-core ties exist, only 4% of the potential within-periphery ties exist. In sum, the network is highly centralized: the core is the preferred embassy destination for all sending states, regardless of their position in the network's core or periphery.

Indeed, the structure of the diplomatic network becomes more similar to a core-periphery structure over time, in line with my argument that status is self-reinforcing. As shown in Table 8.4, the correlation between the observed networks and the ideal core-periphery structure gradually increases from 0.70 to 0.78 between 1970 and 2010. During this period, states in the core become more densely connected over time: the density of within-core ties—that is, the proportion of existing to potential embassies between any two states in the core—increases from 0.72 to 0.81. By contrast, connections between states in the periphery remain stable (and sparse) throughout the

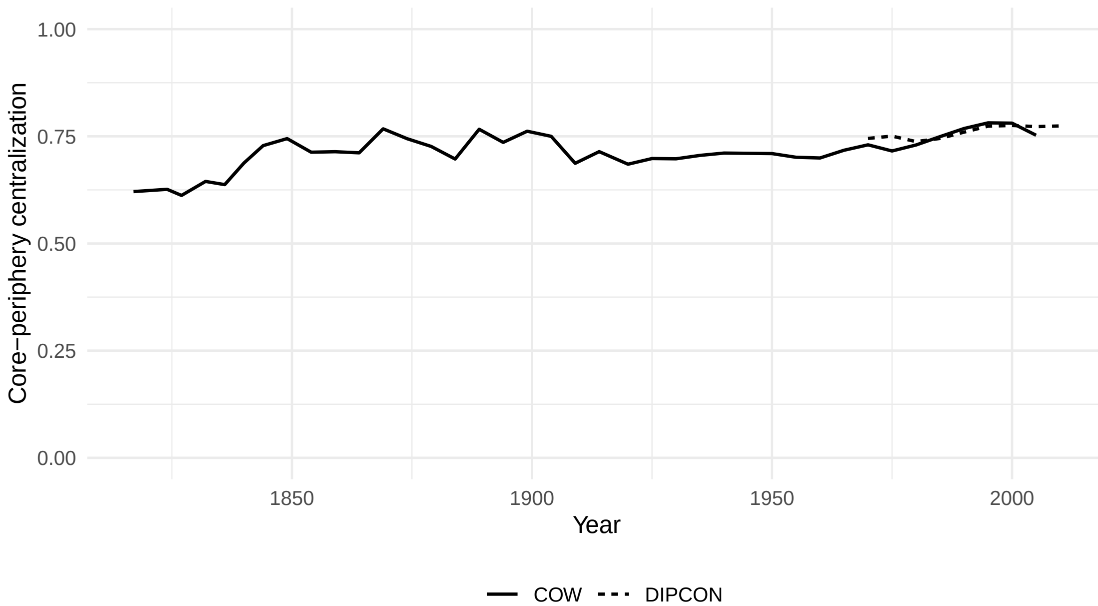


Figure 8.1. Core-Periphery Structure in the Diplomatic Network (1817-2010)
Notes: Core-periphery centralization score measures how similar a network is to a perfect core-periphery structure.

period of analysis. These patterns reflect the principle of cumulative advantage: the more densely connected a state is, the more it tends to receive additional ties.

Results (1817-2010)

I replicate these results using the Correlates of War (COW) Diplomatic Exchange dataset, which covers the period from 1817 to 2005. For this long-run analysis, I use a similar method for core-periphery analysis that measures the core-periphery centralization score for each network—that is, how similar a network is to a perfect core-periphery structure.[9] As Figure 8.1 shows, the network of diplomatic representations has a high core-periphery centralization score, which ranges from 0.61 in 1817 to 0.78 in 1995. In addition, the network's centralization score gradually increases over time, indicating that highly-connected states become more densely connected while sparsely-connected states do not. Importantly, the centralization scores detected using both datasets are very similar, increasing my confidence that the results are not specific to the 1970-2010 period. In sum, the

[9] Rossa, Dercole, and Piccardi 2013.

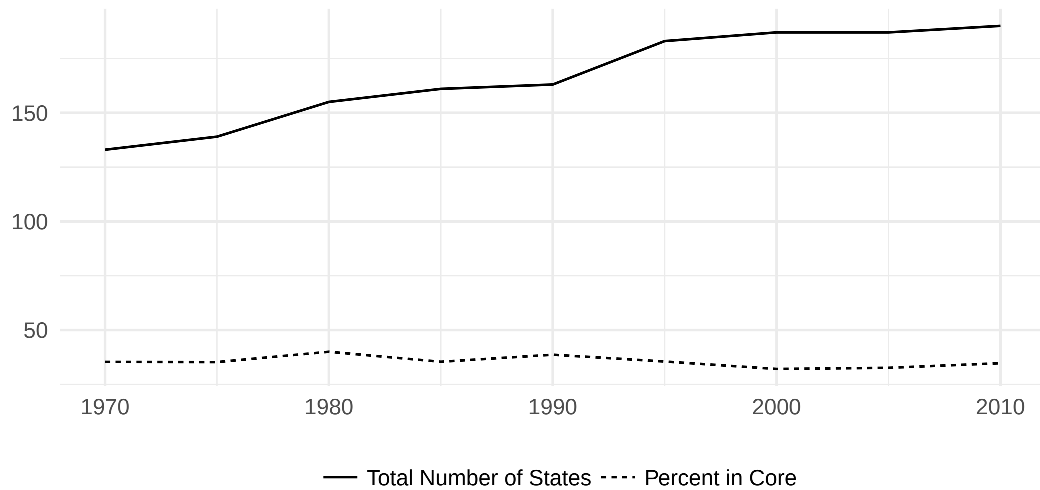


Figure 8.2. A Stable Core Size: Core Size vs Number of States in the Network

analysis demonstrates that diplomatic relations have a strong (and sel-reinforcing) core-periphery structure since the early nineteenth century.

8.2 A Stable Core

Next, I evaluate two observable implications about the core of the diplomatic network. Both hypotheses posit that certain characteristics of the network's core should remain stable over time. According to the second hypothesis, the size of the core should remain stable over time. According to the third hypothesis, the composition of the core should remain stable over time.

As expected, a descriptive analysis reveals that there is little mobility between the core and the periphery of the diplomatic network over time. While states in the core tend to remain there, states in the periphery rarely move to the network's core. In line with the second hypothesis, the proportion of states in the core remains stable, even despite the considerable expansion in the number of sovereign states since the last wave of decolonization in the 1970s. As Figure 8.2 shows, on average only 36% of all states belong in the core of the diplomatic network, even though the number of states in the network increases from 134 to 190 during the period from 1970 to 2010. That is, even as the

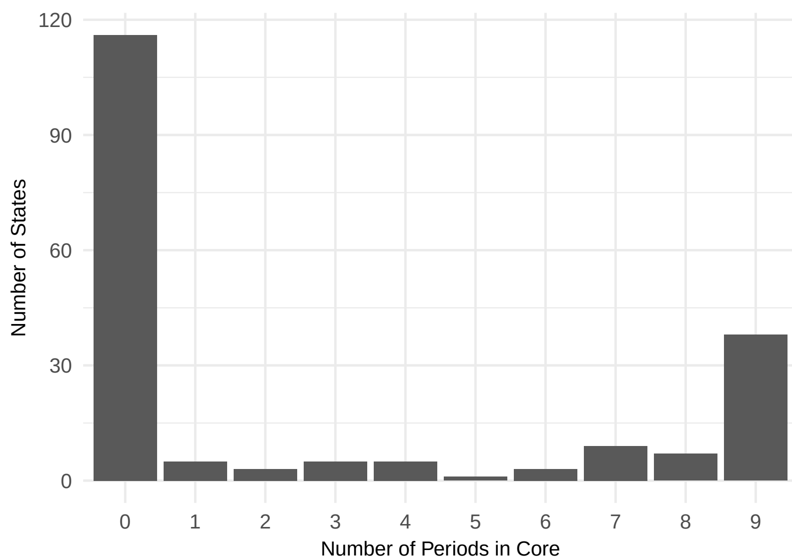


Figure 8.3. Core Membership Stability: Frequency of Core Membership
Note: Numbers on the *x*-axis denote number of periods between 1970-2010, at five-year intervals.

network becomes larger with the addition of new states, the core remains an exclusive group, which only a minority of states can join.

In addition, in line with the third hypothesis, states largely maintain their positions in the core or the periphery of the network—even as network ties are constantly reconfigured between periods. Figure 8.3 shows the frequency of core membership from 1970 to 2010. As the figure shows, most states (80%) keep the same position either in the core or the periphery during the entire period. On the one hand, 60% of all states never belong in the core. On the other hand, a minority of states (20%) belong in the core for the entire period. These states account for a large proportion (from 60% to 80%) of all core members in a given year—which suggests that once a state reaches the core, it tends to remain there. Finally, a small proportion of states (20%) appear in the core at least once during the period of analysis. Figure 8.4 shows their membership history, with states ordered by frequency of core membership. A few states are upwardly mobile over time: China, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Tunisia appear in the periphery during the first period but move to the core thereafter. Similarly, states like Cuba and South Korea move to the core after a couple of periods. However, this happens rarely: only 5% of all states are upwardly mobile over time.

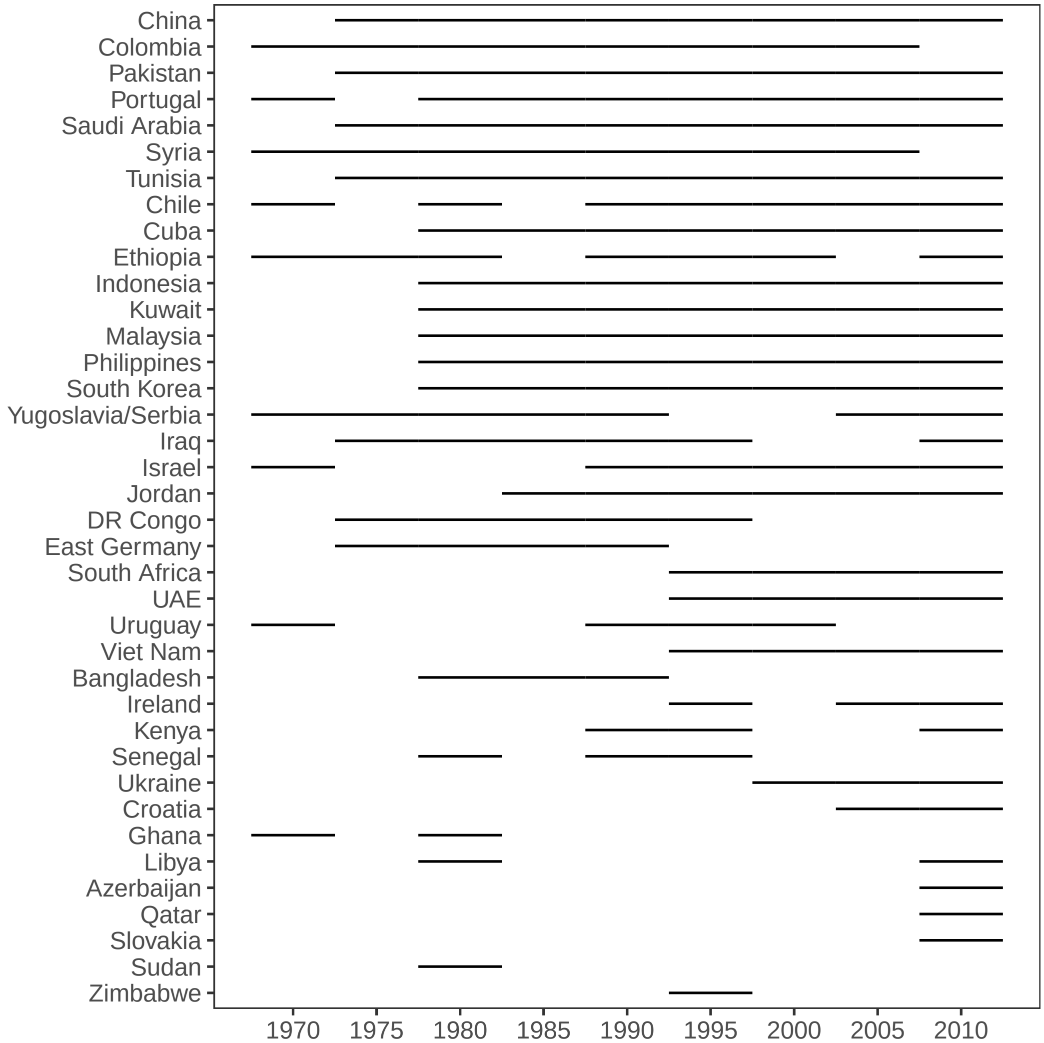


Figure 8.4. States Sometimes in the Diplomatic Network's Core
Notes: Line indicates years in which state appears in the core. States ordered by frequency of core membership.

8.2.1 A Western Core

One final pattern emerges when we examine the composition of the network's core over time: While states in the periphery tend to be non-Western, states in the core are usually Western or Western-aligned. Table 8.5 shows the thirty-eight states that always belong in the core of the diplomatic network from 1970 to 2010, ordered by average coreness (the property of belonging to the core) based on a continuous core-periphery model. These states correspond to a large proportion (from

Table 8.5. States Always in the Diplomatic Network's Core (1970-2010)

France	Netherlands	Romania	Bulgaria
United States	Spain	Denmark	Iran
United Kingdom	Canada	Greece	Czech Republic/ Czechoslovakia
Germany/GFR	Brazil	Hungary	
Italy	Switzerland	Mexico	Morocco
Russia/USSR	Sweden	Australia	Nigeria
Japan	Turkey	Algeria	Lebanon
Egypt	Austria	Venezuela	Thailand
Belgium	Argentina	Norway	Peru
India	Poland	Finland	

Note: States ordered by average coreness (the property of belonging to the core) in 1970-2010, using a continuous core-periphery model.

60% to 80%) of all states in the core of the diplomatic network in any given year. As shown in Table 8.5, fourteen of the thirty-eight states are located in Western Europe, seven are located in Eastern Europe, and four are either located in North America or Anglo-Saxon (Australia). The same pattern emerges when we consider the distribution of states into core and periphery in a given year. As Figure 8.5 shows, core states in 2005 are concentrated in Europe and North America; in addition, they include Australia and Western-aligned states like Japan and Brazil.

And importantly, these results reflect longstanding patterns in the international system. Using the Correlates of War (COW) Diplomatic Exchange data for the 1817-2005 period, I replicate the results from the main analysis. Figure 8.6 shows the top ten political units by coreness from 1817 to 2005. Dark tiles in the figure indicate the years in which a political unit appears in the top ten by coreness, and units are ordered by frequency of top ten appearances. As Figure 8.6 shows, Western states are disproportionately represented at the top. Out of the fifteen units that most frequently appear in the top ten by coreness since 1817, ten are located in Western Europe, two in North America (the United States and Canada), and two are Western-aligned states (Brazil and Japan). In other words, we observe the same pattern going back to the early nineteen century: those in the core of diplomatic relations tend to be Western or Western-aligned states that share dense ties among themselves, while those in the periphery are usually non-Western states.

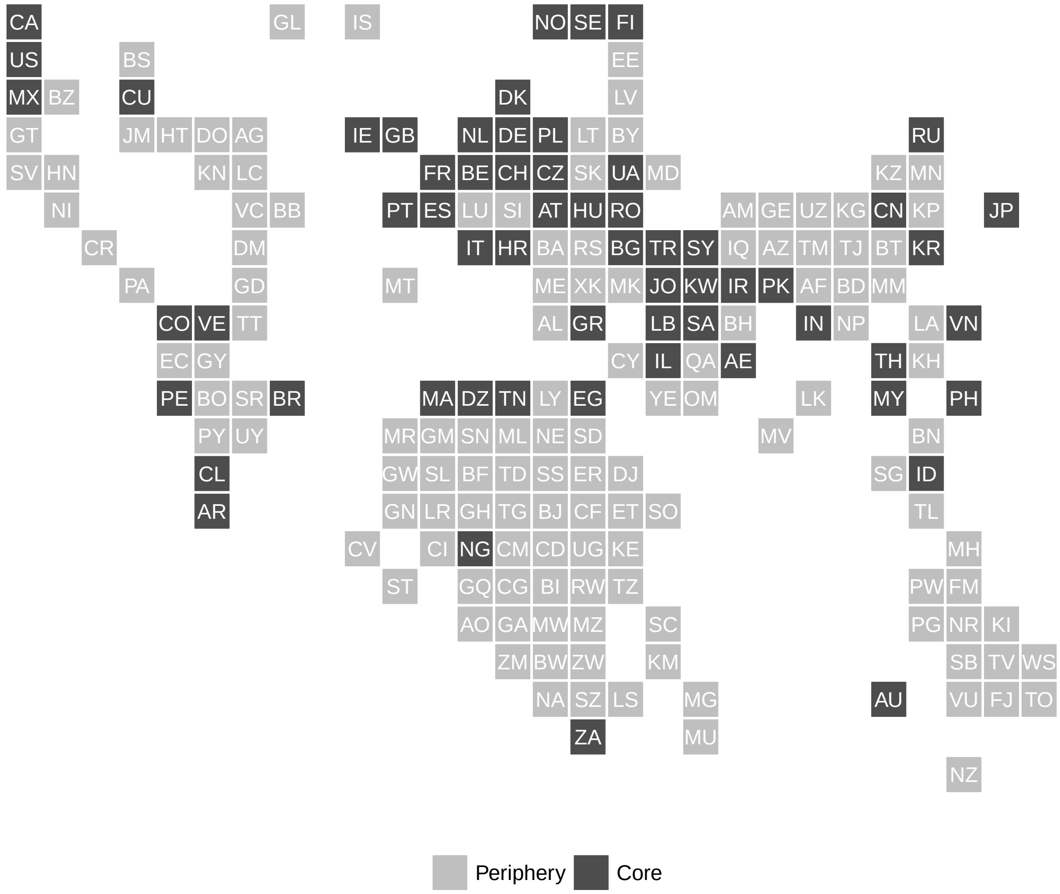


Figure 8.5. Core and Periphery (2005)
Notes: Results based on a discrete core-periphery model using the Diplomatic Contacts (DIPCON) dataset.

In sum, Western or Western-aligned states make up the core of the diplomatic network since the early nineteenth century. As the analysis shows so far, diplomatic relations form a strongly hierarchical network centered firmly on the West. Despite significant changes in international relations since the early nineteenth century—from decolonization to legalization and increased international cooperation—diplomatic relations remain strongly hierarchical. And as I show next, admission into the core requires assimilation via the adoption of a Western way of life.

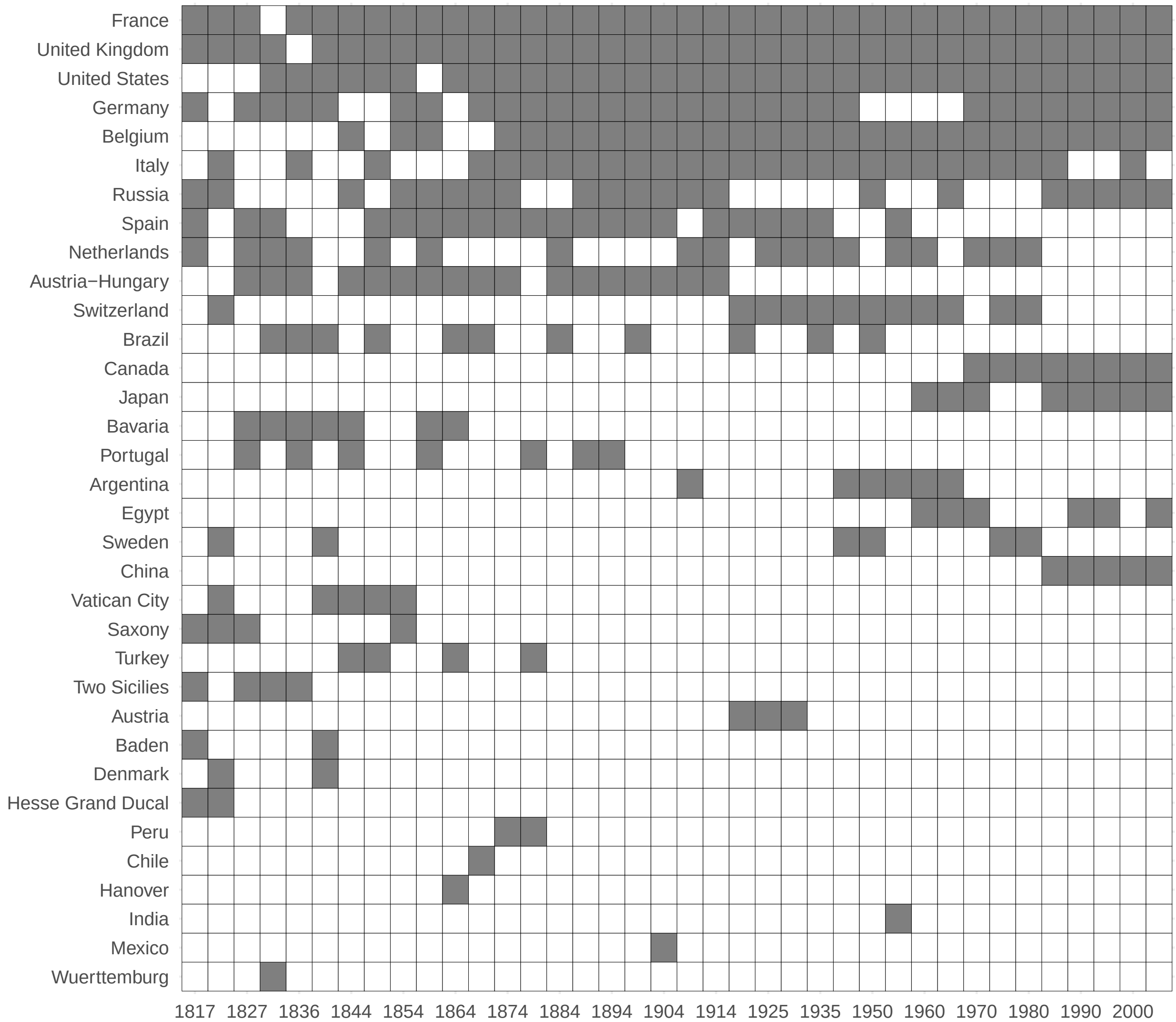


Figure 8.6. Top Ten Political Units by Coreness (1817-2005)
Notes: Dark tiles indicate years in which a political unit appears in the top ten using Correlates of War (COW) Diplomatic Exchange data. Units ordered by frequency of top ten appearances.

8.3 A Western Way of Life

Next, I evaluate two observable implications from my argument that involve state attributes. According to the fourth hypothesis, states in the core of the diplomatic network should have similar attributes, which states in the periphery lack. At the same time, the fifth hypothesis posits that core membership should depend on both material resources and fundamental values, rather than on either type of attribute separately. In other words, high status depends on a Western way of life—a gestalt that involves not only material resources but also fundamental values associated with the West. To assess both hypotheses, I use the same state attributes used Chapter 7, which are traditionally considered in the literature as symbols of international status.[10]

8.3.1 Descriptive Analysis

To begin, a descriptive analysis suggests that, as expected, states in the core of the diplomatic network systematically differ from states in the network's periphery. Figure 8.7 shows the difference in median attributes between states in the core and the periphery in 2010. As the figure shows, states in the core of the diplomatic network are richer (both overall and per capita), militarily stronger, more democratic, and more economically free than states in the periphery. The difference in median attributes for the core and the periphery is significant for all attributes, except human rights. This provides initial support to my fourth hypothesis, according to which states in the core share a set of attributes that states in the periphery lack.

In addition, a descriptive analysis suggests that, as expected, fundamental values moderate the effect of material resources on core membership. To examine the interaction between material resources and fundamental values, I use factor analysis to extract common factors for each kind of variable. While I expect core membership to depend on both material resources and fundamental values, each of these factors is latent or unobserved. Using factor analysis, I extract the maximum common variance among the variables of each kind to create a common score. On the one hand, the fundamental values factor includes democracy, economic liberalism, and human rights. On the other hand, the material resources factor includes GDP, per capita GDP, and military spending. I exclude nuclear weapons from the material resources factor because the inclusion of this variable reduces the amount of variance the factor can capture in the material resources variables. Figure 8.8 plots the first main factors for material resources and fundamental values respectively, with the lines denoting the median factors for each kind of variable.

[10] See Appendix A for more detailed description of the data.

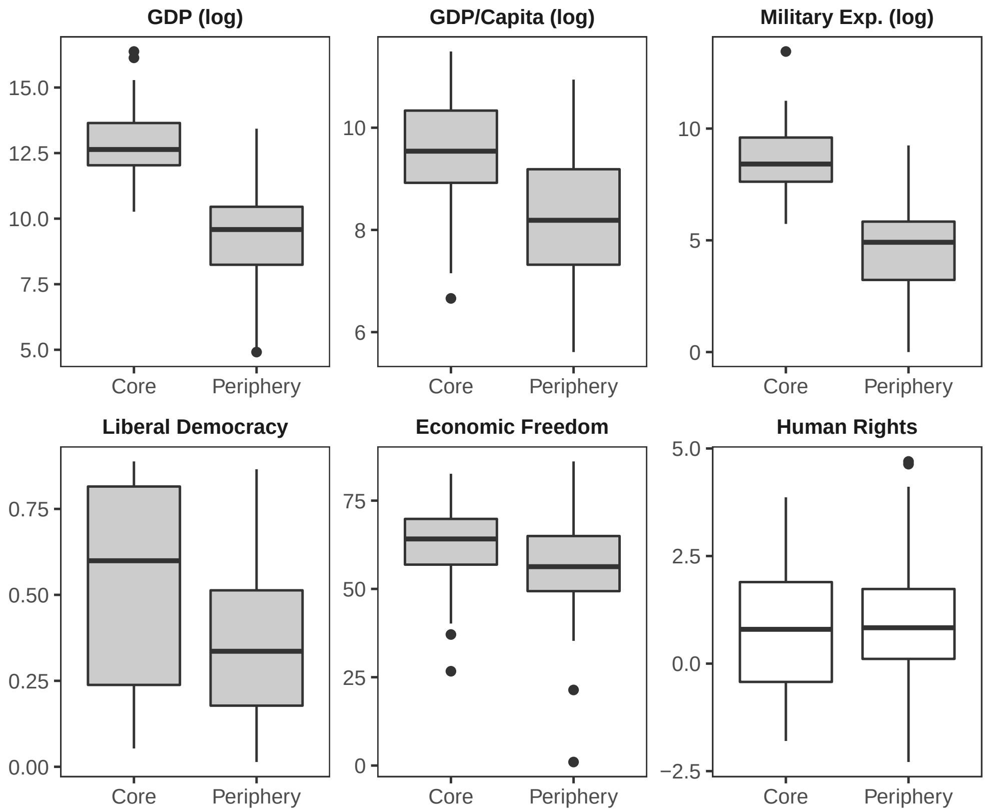


Figure 8.7. Core and Periphery: Difference in Median State Attributes (2010)
Note: Shaded boxplots denote statistical significance at the 5% level for a two-tailed Mann–Whitney U test.

Figure 8.8 illustrates well the expected interactive effect of material resources and fundamental values on core membership. The probability of core membership is highest when states have high levels of both material resources and fundamental values: Out of the 38 states that consistently belong in the core from 1970 to 2010, 27 states (71%) are located in the upper right quadrant of Figure 8.8. In this quadrant, we find Western and Western-aligned states—such as the United States, Germany, and Japan—that have high levels of both material resources and fundamental values. On the other hand, the probability of core membership is reduced for states that have high levels of material resources but low levels of fundamental values. The remaining 11 states that consistently belong in the core from 1970 to 2010 (29%) are located in the upper left quadrant of Figure 8.8. In this quadrant, we find non-Western states—such as Russia, Egypt, and India—that have high levels of material resources but low levels of fundamental values.

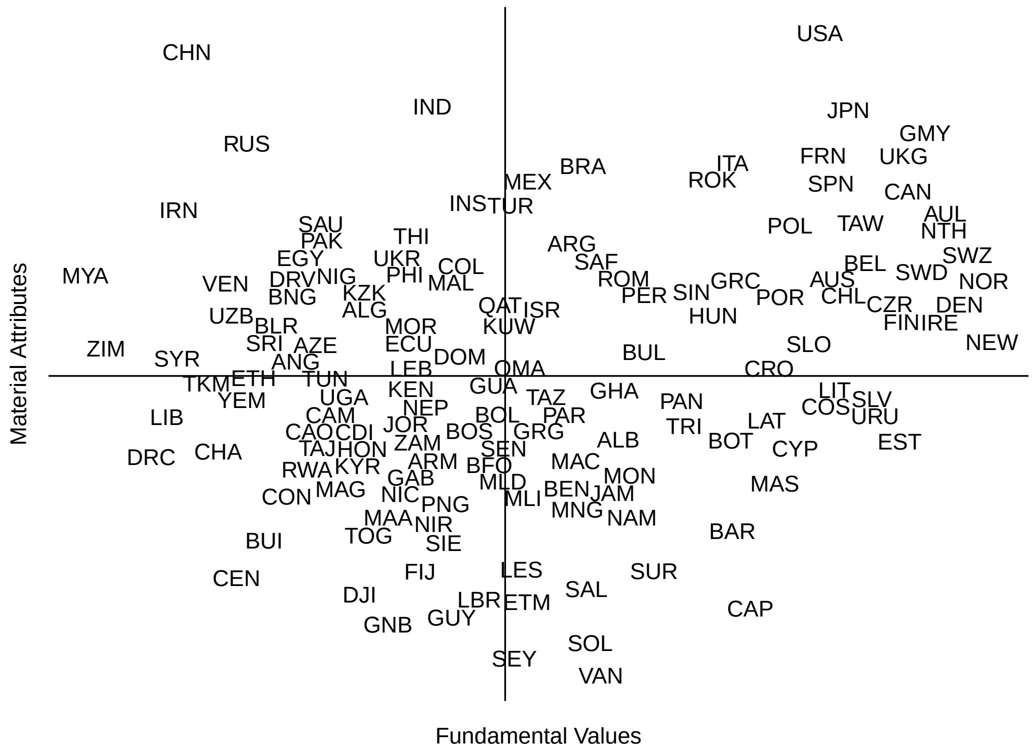


Figure 8.8. Factor Analysis: Material vs Ideational Attributes (2010)
Note: Lines denote median values for factors obtained using factor analysis. The material attributes factor excludes nuclear weapons.

8.3.2 Boolean Logit Analysis

To examine why states belong in the core of the diplomatic network, I use a conjunctural Boolean logit model.[11] The Boolean statistical approach is designed to model binary outcomes as a function of interactions of latent variables that can be described using a logical "and" or "or." In my case, my fifth hypothesis posits that membership in the core of the diplomatic network should depend on both material resources *and* fundamental values, rather than on each type of attribute separately. I expect core membership to become increasingly likely in the presence of both factors, rather than in the presence of either factor alone. In addition, each of these factors is latent or unobserved, but measured using observed covariates like military spending or an economic liberalism score.

[11] Braumoeller 2003, 2004.

Accordingly, a conjunctural Boolean logit model effectively captures the interactive nature of my fifth hypothesis: it enables me to assess if membership in the core of the diplomatic network depends on both types of variables—material resources and fundamental values—rather than on each type of variable separately. This model groups each type of variable into a different path, while relaxing the assumption that they are equiprobable. In particular, it assesses core membership as a function of two sets of fitted values: a material resources score, and a fundamental values score. The equation of interest thus resembles

$$Pr(\text{core membership} = 1) = Pr(\text{material resources}) \times Pr(\text{fundamental values})$$

In Boolean logit form, this equation corresponds to

$$Pr(y_i = 1|\alpha, \beta, x_i) = \Lambda(\alpha_1 + \beta_1 x_{i1}) \times \Lambda(\alpha_2 + \beta_2 x_{i2}),$$

where $\Lambda(X\beta) = \frac{1}{1+e^{-(X\beta)}}$, α_i denotes the constant, X_i denotes the independent variable (core membership), β_i denotes the parameter of the independent variable, and the i subscript denotes different paths—either material resources or fundamental values.

Compared to standard logistic regression models, a Boolean logit approach offers two important advantages given the purposes of my analysis. Using this approach, I can directly specify the interaction between two kinds of factors—material resources and fundamental values—to model membership in the core of the diplomatic network. By contrast, standard logistic regression models cannot adequately capture complex causation processes such as the one posited here, since these models assume that independent variables have an additive effect.[12] In addition, a Boolean logit approach offers a second advantage: it provides easily interpretable results. While in principle it is possible to represent the Boolean logit functional form as a simple logit with multiplicative interaction terms, this specification would render the results very difficult to interpret given the combinatorial nature of my hypothesis.[13] Using a Boolean logit approach, by contrast, I can easily interpret the results in two stages: (1) by assessing the effect of each kind of variable on core membership, in

[12]See Braumoeller 2003, 212, 223.
[13]See Braumoeller 2004.

line with my fourth hypothesis; and (2) by examining the products of the two scores to model core membership interactively, in line with my fifth hypothesis. Given these advantages, I use a Boolean logit approach to evaluate both of the hypotheses that involve state attributes.

I estimate a series of Boolean logistical regression models that treat core membership in the diplomatic network as a function of both fundamental values and material resources. Besides the full model with all variables (Model 4), I also estimate models that include each of the fundamental value variables separately to account for possible collinearity. Model 1 includes *Democracy*, while Model 2 includes *Economic Freedom*, and Model 3 includes *Human Rights*. As Table 8.6 shows, the coefficient signs are consistent across models for all variables except *Nuclear Weapons*. In addition, results from the full model show wider confidence intervals, possibly due to collinearity among the fundamental values variables. Rather than discussing the results from each model separately, I group them together to better examine (1) the robustness of the results and (2) the relative contribution of fundamental values and material resources to core membership.

To begin, the results provide support to my fourth hypothesis, according to which states in the core of the diplomatic network share a set of status attributes that states in the periphery lack. As expected, the same state attributes are relevant for status recognition in the entire network. On the one hand, fundamental values mostly have a positive contribution to core membership. For all models, fundamental value variables are positively associated with membership in the core of the diplomatic network. Moreover, the coefficients for *Economic Freedom* reach statistical significance in both models, while the coefficient for *Democracy* reaches statistical significance in the first model. On the other hand, material resources mostly have a positive contribution to core membership. Higher levels of GDP or military spending are positively associated with membership in the core of the diplomatic network: for all models, the coefficients for *Military Spending* and *GDP* are positive and statistically significant. However, higher levels of per capita GDP are negatively associated with core membership: the coefficients for *GDP/capita* are consistently negative and statistically significant across models. Finally, the effect of nuclear weapons on core membership is less clear, as the coefficient signs flip depending on the model specification used.

Table 8.6. Boolean Logit Models of Core Membership

	Dependent variable			
	Probability of Core Membership			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Fundamental Values				
Democracy	3.97*			406.87
	(2.48, 7.15)			(-226.48, 8758.00)
Econ. Freedom		0.23*		16.75*
		(0.06, 81.24)		(0.03, 185.13)
Human Rights			2.30	418.20
			(-1.91, 185.15)	(-0.08, 4751.10)
Constant	1.11*	-7.49*	6.34*	-63.83
	(0.50, 1.97)	(-2243.43, -0.98)	(2.49, 513.06)	(-2029.51, 1141.46)
Material Resources				
Mil. Spending	0.86*	0.90*	0.64*	0.86*
	(0.58, 1.18)	(0.46, 1.96)	(0.41, 0.92)	(0.40, 1.45)
GDP	1.49*	1.18*	1.37*	1.09*
	(1.13, 1.89)	(0.63, 2.01)	(1.09, 1.77)	(0.62, 1.68)
GDP/Capita	-0.46*	-0.38*	-0.38*	-0.33*
	(-0.77, -0.18)	(-1.04, 0.00)	(-0.68, -0.13)	(-0.72, -0.01)
Nuclear Weapons	-2.54*	17.63*	-1.77*	764.48*
	(-3.98, -1.05)	(7.51, 2548.54)	(-3.07, -0.38)	(15.66, 12218.03)
Constant	-17.32*	-16.11*	-15.75*	-15.25*
	(-20.47, -14.71)	(-23.24, -12.07)	(-18.73, -13.44)	(-20.37, -11.83)
Observations	1284	565	1409	536

Note: 95% confidence intervals from 1,000 bootstrap samples.
*Statistically significant at the 5% level.

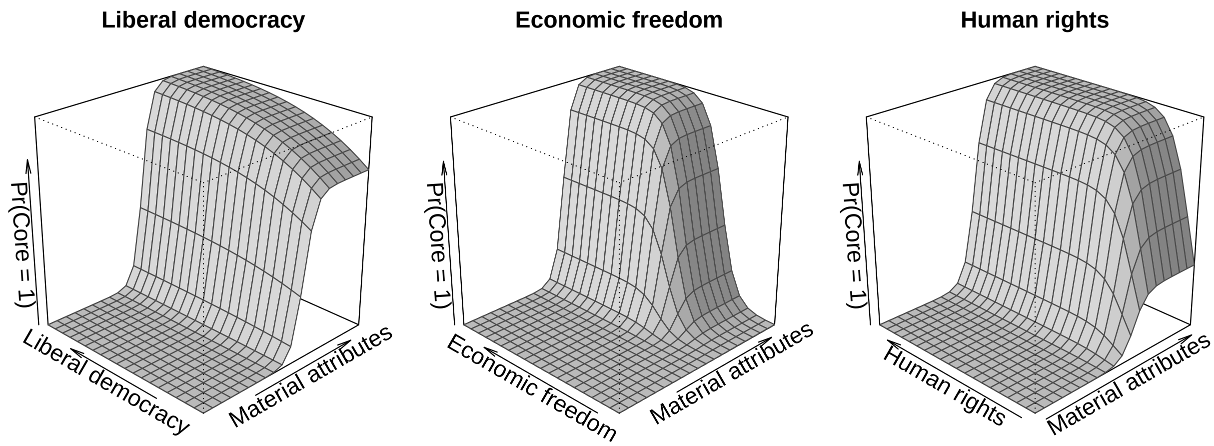


Figure 8.9. Predicted Probability of Core Membership (Models 1-3)
Note: Predicted values represent an upper bound on the value of the outcome variable.

In addition, results provide support to my fifth hypothesis, according to which fundamental values should moderate the impact of material resources on core membership. To assess the interaction between material resources and fundamental values, Figure 8.9 plots the fitted values for each type of variable, calculated based on the coefficient estimates from Models 1 to 3, against the probability of core membership. The wire-frame plot illustrates the joint impact of material resources and fundamental values on core membership: As the material resources score (on the z-axis) increases, so does the probability of core membership. The curvature of the plot's surface shows the extent to which fundamental values moderate the impact of material resources: The probability of core membership is highest when both material resources and fundamental values scores are high (the back-right vertices in Figure 8.9). By contrast, when the material resources score is high but the fundamental values score is low, the probability of core membership is somewhat reduced (the front-right vertices in Figure 8.9). This interaction effect is particularly strong for economic liberalism: States with low *Economic Freedom* are unlikely to belong in the core of the diplomatic network, regardless of their level of material resources. In sum, compared to states that score highly on both types of attributes, states with a high material resources score but a low fundamental values score are less likely to belong in the network's core.

8.4 A Weak Community Structure

According to my first hypothesis, the diplomatic network should have a core-periphery structure rather than a community structure. As discussed in Chapter 6, the two possibilities are mutually exclusive. In a core-periphery structure, states are divided into two groups: a well-connected core, and a sparsely-connected periphery. The core is the preferred destination for sending embassies, regardless of whether the sending state belongs in the core or the periphery of the diplomatic network. In a community structure, by contrast, states can be divided into multiple communities with dense within-community ties and sparse cross-community ties. Moreover, different communities may value different attributes as symbols of international status. Compared to a core-periphery structure, a community structure thus involves a more decentralized organization of network ties. So far, the empirical analysis in this chapter demonstrates that the diplomatic network has a strong core-periphery structure since the early nineteenth century. As a robustness check, I investigate next if the diplomatic network has a community structure.

8.4.1 Community Detection Approach

To detect communities in the diplomatic network, I use a modularity maximization approach—the preferred approach to community detection in network analysis.[14] Compared to other potential approaches, the modularity maximization approach offers an important advantage: it provides a standard to evaluate the quality of the network partitions detected, captured by the measure of modularity. While in principle many networks can be partitioned into communities, we want to know whether a network has a *meaningful* community structure.[15] A community is a set of actors that

[14]See Newman and Girvan 2004; Danon et al. 2005; Porter, Onnela, and Mucha 2009; Fortunato 2010 for reviews. This approach is more accurate than the methods used in early studies of community structure in diplomatic networks—such as hierarchical decomposition, direct factor analysis, and relocation clustering. See Brams 1966; Russett and Lamb 1969; Nierop 1994. Because other approaches to community detection fail to maximize modularity, they often produce suboptimal network partitions. See Reichardt and Bornholdt 2006, 016110-016115. For a detailed comparison between early sociological approaches and more recent community detection approaches, see Newman and Girvan 2004.

[15]Newman 2006*a*, 8578.

share many ties among themselves and fewer ties with actors from other groups. As such, a network has a meaningful community structure to the extent that there are fewer ties between communities than we would expect *based on random chance*. We can formalize this notion with the measure of modularity, Q—the observed number of ties within groups minus the expected number of ties within groups in a network with the same partition but randomly placed ties.[16] By construction, high values of modularity indicate strong community structures. Modularity scores range from -1 to 1, with positive values suggesting the existence of community structure. While $Q = 0$ indicates that the number of ties within communities is not greater than expected by random chance, values approaching $Q = 1$ indicate strong community structure.[17]

As a first step, I use four commonly-used modularity maximization methods to detect communities in a network: the fast greedy, leading eigenvector, Louvain (or multi-level modularity optimization), and spin-glass methods.[18] Because many modularity maximization methods exist, the recommended approach in network analysis is to compare results obtained using different methods.[19] Given the immense number of possible partitions that exist even for small networks, precise solutions to the modularity maximization problem are computationally intractable; as such, several algorithms aim to find reasonably good network partitions in a reasonable time frame.[20] Because there may be more than one optimal solution for each method depending on the starting point used, I run each procedure ten times from different starting points.

Based on these initial results, I use the Louvain method to measure community structure in the diplomatic network. Table 8.7 shows the number of communities and modularity scores obtained in more than half of ten iterations for each method and year. As shown by the shaded areas in Table 8.7, the Louvain and spin-glass approaches consistently have the highest modularity scores for each year. The Louvain method is preferable because yields consistent results across runs in terms of the

[16] Newman 2006*a*, 8578; Newman 2004, 026113-026117.

[17] In practice, modularity usually ranges from 0.3 to 0.7, and values higher than 0.7 are rare. See Newman 2004, 026113-026117.

[18] See, respectively, Clauset, Newman, and Moore 2004; Newman 2006*b*,*a*; Blondel et al. 2008; Reichardt and Bornholdt 2006; Newman 2004.

[19] Danon et al. 2005; Porter, Onnela, and Mucha 2009.

[20] Fortunato see 2010, 100-101.

Table 8.7. Number of Communities and Modularity for Different Approaches

	Fast Greedy		*Leading Eig.*		*Louvain*		*Spin-Glass**		*Geography*†	
	No.	*Q*	*No.*	*Q*	*No.*	*Q*	*No.*	*Q*	*No.*	*Q*
1970	3	0.15	3	0.15	4	0.18	4	0.18	5	0.08
1975	3	0.14	3	0.14	4	0.17	4	0.17	5	0.10
1980	3	0.14	3	0.13	5	0.14	5	0.15	5	0.09
1985	3	0.14	3	0.13	4	0.16	5	0.15	5	0.09
1990	3	0.14	3	0.12	5	0.15	5	0.14	5	0.10
1995	3	0.13	3	0.13	5	0.16	5	0.15	5	0.13
2000	3	0.13	1	0.00	5	0.16	5	0.15	5	0.13
2005	4	0.14	5	0.13	5	0.16	5	0.15	5	0.14
2010	4	0.12	4	0.14	4	0.17	5	0.16	5	0.14

Notes: Values reflect the results obtained in more than half of ten runs. *Q* denotes modularity. Shaded areas indicate the highest modularity scores obtained each year.
* I used a cooling factor of 0.1 to increase accuracy (see Danon et al., 2005).
† World's macro-regions according to the UN Statistical Division: Africa, Americas, Asia, Europe, and Oceania.

number of both communities and states assigned to each community. In contrast, the results given by the spin-glass approach vary more depending on the starting point used.

8.4.2 Results

Results indicate that the network has a weak community structure at best. As Table 8.7 shows, the highest modularity values for each year range between 0.15 and 0.18. That is, modularity values are close to zero, which indicates that the number of within-community ties is not much greater than would be expected based on random chance. In addition, the basic within-community statistics shown in Table 8.8 likewise suggest a weak community structure. Most communities are not very dense, and within-community clustering coefficients are similar to the network-level coefficient. Overall, the analysis indicates that states are not more likely to exchange embassies within a community rather than across communities, as would be expected if the diplomatic network had a meaningful community structure.

Table 8.8. Basic Within-Community Statistics (2005)

	Community					*Network*
	Orange	*Purple*	*Pink*	*Green*	*Yellow*	
Nodes	49	14	23	51	50	188
Ties	1239	109	101	840	777	7380
Density*	0.53	0.60	0.20	0.33	0.32	0.21
Symmetric Dyads†	0.87	0.77	0.90	0.83	0.89	0.91
Clustering‡	0.75	0.78	0.29	0.59	0.65	0.54

Notes: Community colors refer to those shown in Figure 8.10(b).
*Measures the proportion of existing to potential ties.
†Measures the proportion of requited dyads, which include mutual dyads (embassies sent by both states) and null dyads (no embassies exchanged).
‡Measures the proportion of closed triads to all network triads.

8.4.3 Geography Drives Community Membership

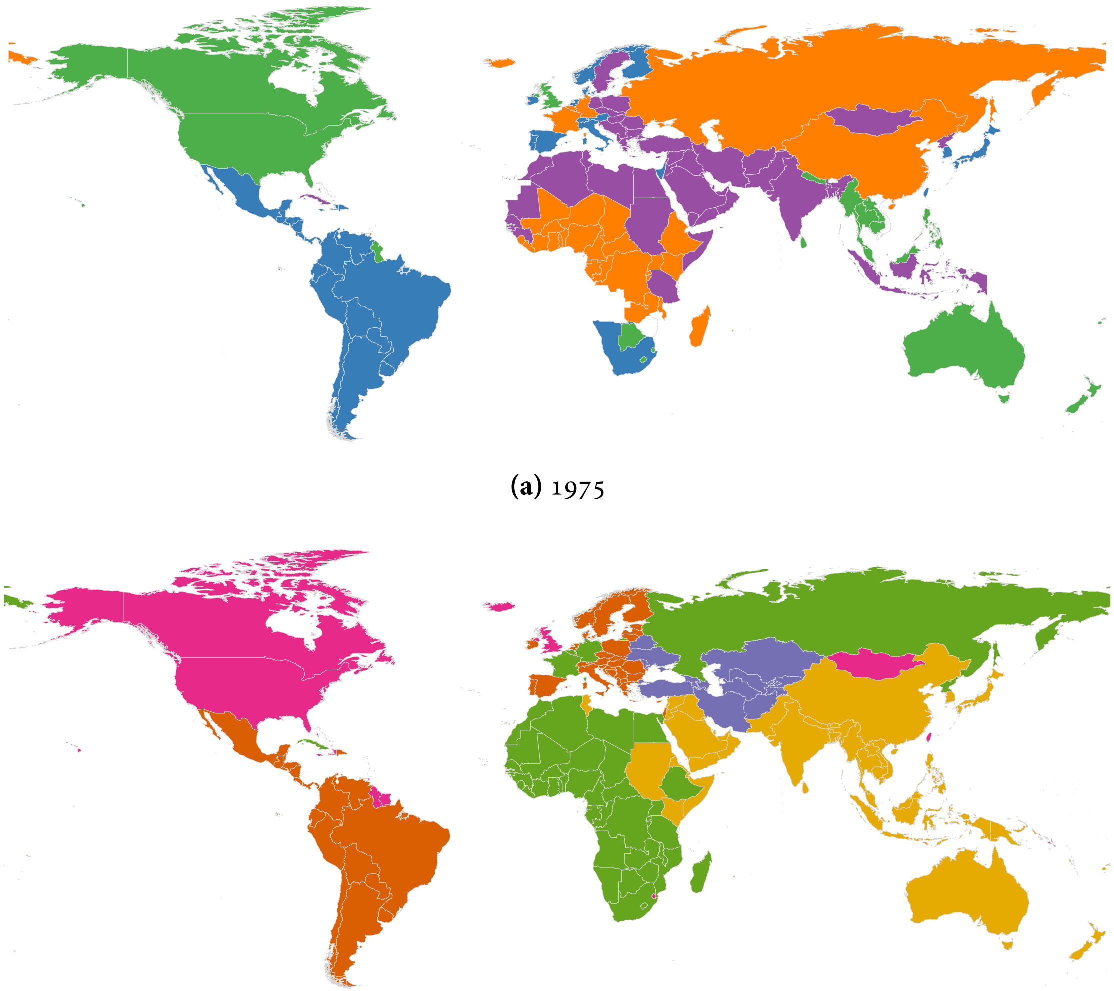
In addition, three factors indicate that the weak community structure detected in the diplomatic network results from geography rather than status. To begin, the communities detected using a modularity maximization approach are not much stronger than communities based on geography. Since previous studies suggest that states cluster regionally in the diplomatic network, I use as a baseline for comparison a set of communities created based on geographic location.[21] For each year, I partition the network into five communities corresponding to the world's five macro-regions according to the UN Statistical Division: Africa, Americas, Asia, Europe, and Oceania. I then calculate the modularity scores for these geographic partitions. As Table 8.7 shows, the modularity scores resulting from a geographic partition of the network are very similar to the scores found using a modularity maximization approach. In addition, the communities detected using a modularity maximization approach seem to follow a geographic pattern. Figure 8.10 shows the communities detected in 1975 and 2005, denoted by different colors. For both years, most states seem to cluster regionally rather than based on factors related to status.

[21] See Brams 1966; Russett and Lamb 1969; Nierop 1994.

Table 8.9. Multinomial Logit Model of Community Membership (2005)

	Model 1		*Model 2*	
	Coef.	*S.E.*	*Coef.*	*S.E.*
Community 1 (Orange)				
Constant	**-12.32**	(3.03)	-30.63	(4405.21)
GDP/capita	**1.28**	(0.52)	1.11	(1.72)
Military Spending	-0.06	(0.20)	-0.60	(0.49)
Nuclear Weapons	-2.71	(1.56)	-2.69	(2.49)
Democracy	**0.46**	(0.17)	**0.83**	(0.42)
Human Rights	-0.56	(0.41)	-1.17	(0.98)
Economic Freedom	0.02	(0.05)	0.07	(0.10)
Community 2 (Purple)				
Constant	**-8.49**	(3.29)	-13.34	(6246.39)
GDP/capita	0.81	(0.45)	0.28	(1.12)
Military Spending	-0.00	(0.21)	-0.56	(0.45)
Nuclear Weapons	-14.58	(763.11)	-20.60	(7258.40)
Democracy	-0.09	(0.07)	-0.08	(0.14)
Human Rights	-0.55	(0.48)	-0.73	(0.97)
Economic Freedom	0.05	(0.05)	-0.05	(0.10)
Community 3 (Pink)				
Constant	**-17.97**	(5.33)	-42.27	(2846.10)
GDP/capita	1.29	(0.96)	1.80	(1.88)
Military Spending	-0.56	(0.31)	**-1.16**	(0.58)
Nuclear Weapons	0.89	(2.32)	1.19	(3.65)
Democracy	0.59	(0.46)	0.73	(0.59)
Human Rights	-0.71	(0.69)	-0.82	(1.17)
Economic Freedom	0.16	(0.09)	0.23	(0.14)
Community 5 (Yellow)				
Constant	**-13.06**	(2.84)	-0.23	(5.97)
GDP/capita	0.06	(0.39)	-0.60	(0.91)
Military Spending	**0.51**	(0.20)	0.14	(0.37)
Nuclear Weapons	-1.25	(1.22)	-3.15	(5.23)
Democracy	**-0.14**	(0.05)	-0.10	(0.13)
Human Rights	-0.27	(0.38)	-0.04	(0.70)
Economic Freedom	**0.12**	(0.04)	0.01	(0.08)
Region dummies	No		Yes	
Observations	147		147	
Log-likelihood	-139.33		-60.31	

Notes: Numbers in bold denote statistical significance at the 5% level. Community colors refer to those shown in Figure 8.10(b).



(a) 1975

(b) 2005

Figure 8.10. Communities in the Diplomatic Network
Note: Detected using the Louvain method.

Finally, states that belong in the same community do not share similar attributes. To assess whether state attributes influence the assignment of states into communities, I estimate a multinomial logit model of community membership in 2005 that includes two types of attributes associated with status: (1) material resources like wealth, military capability, and nuclear weapons; and (2) fundamental values like democracy, economic liberalism, and human rights.[22] While Model 1 in-

[22] See Appendix A for a description of the data sources. Previous attempts to identify subgroups in the diplomatic network use descriptive analysis to examine which state attributes correlate with community membership. See Brams 1966; Russett and Lamb 1969; and Nierop 1994, 76. Unlike the simple correlations used in previous studies, a multinomial logit approach accommodates multiple factors simultaneously, allowing me to more accurately assess the

cludes only these attributes, Model 1 also controls for geographic location by including region dummies corresponding to the world's macro-regions according to the UN Statistical Division: Africa, Americas, Asia, Europe, and Oceania. Table 8.9 shows the estimation results, with coefficients in bold denoting statistical significance at the 5% level. For both models, the community formed by France, Germany, Russia and African states (shown in green in Figure 8.10b) serves as the baseline comparison group. The analysis shows that, once we take geography into account (Model 2), status attributes do not have a significant effect on community membership. Out of the twenty-four coefficients for status attributes in Model 2, only two reach statistical significance. And importantly, including region dummies improves model fit: The higher log-likelihood for Model 2 indicates that Model 2 explains more of the variation in the data than does Model 1. Taken together, these factors indicate that the weak community structure detected in the diplomatic network results from geography, instead of reflecting status distinctions among states.

8.5 Conclusion

This chapter examines the implications of my argument at the structural level of the diplomatic network. Leveraging network analysis, which enables me to test hypotheses involving relational patterns, I investigate how ties are organized in the diplomatic network, and why. As in the previous chapter, the empirical results demonstrate the analytical leverage provided by my relational theory of status. Based on this theory, I derive a new set of observable implications about the underlying dynamics of the diplomatic network. A relational perspective reveals important patterns in status recognition that an individualist perspective cannot accommodate. The analysis shows that status results from systematic social processes that cannot be reduced to the things that states have. And importantly, the empirical results from this chapter are consistent with those from the previous chapter. Overall, the analysis indicates that status depends on a state's position in a social arrangement, rather than directly on its attributes.

effect of each factor on community membership.

In particular, this chapter offers two important findings about the sources of international status. First, status results from a set of network effects, whereby the configuration of ties among states shapes recognition independently of state attributes. To begin, status results from a process of social closure, whereby high-status states share dense relations among themselves but sparse relations with outsiders. As expected, the diplomatic network has a highly centralized form—a core-periphery structure rather than a community structure. States are divided into a densely-connected core, comprised mostly of Western or Western-aligned states; and a sparsely-connected periphery comprised mostly of non-Western states. The core is the preferred destination for sending embassies, regardless of whether the sending state belongs in the core or the periphery of the diplomatic network. While states in the core are very likely to exchange embassies among themselves rather than to the periphery, states in the periphery are more likely to send embassies to states in the core than to other states in the periphery. At the same time, the network has only a weak community structure, not much higher than one would expect based on random chance. This weak community structure structure is due mostly to geography: once geography is taken into account, status-symbolizing attributes do not have a significant effect on community membership.

Moreover, status is self-reinforcing: the more a state is recognized, the more it attracts additional recognition. In fact, the structure of the diplomatic network becomes more and more similar to a core-periphery structure over time. Since the early nineteenth century, states in the core are increasingly likely to recognize one another, while recognition between states in the periphery remains stagnant and rare. As expected, there is little mobility over time between the core and the periphery of the diplomatic network. On the one hand, the core remains stable in its size. Although the number of states substantially increases during the period of analysis, the core remains an exclusive club, which only a minority of states can join. On the other hand, the core remains stable over time in its composition. Most states maintain their positions either in the core or the periphery of the diplomatic network. While a minority of states consistently belongs in the core, most states never reach the core. By contrast, upward mobility is rare. Taken together, these results reveal that the club of high-status states is not very permeable.

In addition, this chapter offers a second important finding: it shows that the relevance of state attributes for status recognition is socially defined, rather than intrinsic to a given attribute. To begin, it is attribute similarity—rather than the possession of attributes per se—that drives status recognition among states. Commonality is the second aspect of social closure: high-status states differentiate themselves by adopting distinctive values and consuming distinctive goods. As expected, states in the core of the diplomatic network have similar attributes, which states in the periphery lack. But importantly, high status is not simply a matter of acquiring material resources, as argued by conventional approaches to status. Rather, recognition requires conformity to the predominant conceptions of state competence—a gestalt that involves not only material resources but also fundamental values associated with the West. While richer and militarily stronger states states are more likely to belong in the core of the diplomatic network, fundamental values moderate the effect of material resources on core membership. Compared to states that score highly both on material resources and fundamental values, states with a high material resources score but a low fundamental values score are less likely to belong in the core. As such, high status involves not only the ability to fend for oneself under anarchy, as conventional approaches argue, but also a Western standard of civilization.

Each of these findings brings with it important implications, which I discuss in Chapter 10. But before that, the next chapter complements the analysis conducted here by examining how the relevance of state attributes for status recognition changes over time, especially as a result of what the high-status states say and do.

9

Do Nuclear Weapons Confer Status?

Why do certain state attributes matter for status recognition? Existing research assumes that international status depends on a state's attributes—such that the richer or militarily stronger a country is, the higher its standing should be. In particular, most studies assume that state attributes impact status because of their functional value, or the extent to which they enable a state to compel or deter other states without using force. But in practice, status-seeking countries often invest in military equipment that provides little functional value—from Wilhelmine Germany's "luxury fleet" to the many outdated and poorly-equipped aircraft carriers scattered around the world.[1] Moreover, symbols of international status comprise not only material attributes but also nonmaterial ones, such as liberal democracy, which have no clear impact on a state's ability to coerce other states.[2] Alternatively, some scholars argue that certain state attributes symbolize status because these attributes are costly or hard to obtain. Based on this logic, high-status states have an incentive to restrict access to status-symbolizing attributes: If such attributes became widespread, they would no longer be informative as signals of high status. Yet in practice, dominant countries often attempt to diffuse their own values abroad, instead of restricting access to symbols like liberal democracy.[3] In and of itself, scarcity is therefore insufficient to explain why certain state attributes (but not others) become relevant for status recognition in the international system.

[1] See Art 1973, 23-24, 36-37; Art 1980, 10-11; Gilady 2018; Morgenthau 1962, 303; Ross 2009; Pu and Schweller 2014, 152-59.

[2] See Neumann 2008, 2014; Pouliot 2014; Pouliot 2016, 79. See also Morgenthau 2006, 92.

[3] See Gilpin 1981, 30; Gordon 2020; Owen IV 2010.

In this project, I argue that state attributes matter for status recognition because of their symbolic value, which depends on the social context, rather than because of their functional value, or the extent to which they enable a state to coerce other states. For a given attribute to symbolize status, actors need to share the belief that it represents status. In particular, state attributes become relevant for status recognition when actors share the belief that such attributes symbolize a latent quality: state competence. To explain why certain state attributes matter for status recognition, we thus need to understand how prevailing conceptions of state competence form (and change) in the international system. On the one hand, it matters what the high-status states say and do. High-status states typically act like standard-setters, shaping the criteria for status recognition in a given era; and as gatekeepers, shaping recognition decisions. On the other hand, it also matters how the international system as whole responds to these actions—either by granting them legitimacy or by denouncing them as illegitimate. As such, the symbolic value of state attributes depends on the social context, rather than on the intrinsic properties of these attributes.

The analysis conducted in the previous chapters provides initial support to my argument. In line with my expectations, results demonstrate that the relevance of state attributes for status recognition is socially defined, rather than intrinsic to a given attribute. Against expectations from the conventional approach in IR, it is attribute similarity—rather than the possession of attributes per se—that drives recognition in the international system. To begin, Chapter 7 shows that states recognize those states that are similar to them, rather than those states with the largest portfolio of a given attribute. Moreover, Chapter 8 shows that high-status states share similar attributes, which low-status states lack. But against expectations from the conventional approach, high status is not simply a matter of having a given attribute, such as economic or military capabilities, in isolation. Rather, high status depends on a Western way of life—a gestalt that involves not only material resources but also fundamental values associated with the West, such as liberal democracy. Given the West's central position in the modern international system, high status requires not only the ability to fend for oneself under anarchy, as argued by the conventional approach, but also a Western standard of civilization that includes fundamental values like liberal democracy.

In this chapter, I build on these results to assess more directly why state attributes matter for status recognition. To that end, I examine the relationship between nuclear weapons—a state attribute typically associated with status—and status recognition. I choose the case of nuclear weapons for two reasons: (1) it involves opposite expectations based, respectively, on my argument and the conventional wisdom; and (2) it remains relatively unexplored. Highly destructive and relatively scarce, nuclear weapons seem like the quintessential status symbol based on the conventional approach. But even though the relationship between nuclear weapons and status recognition is commonly assumed, such a relationship is rarely examined empirically. Existing research indicates that the search for status, in addition to factors like security concerns or domestic politics, can motivate leaders to acquire nuclear weapons.[4] But while states may acquire nuclear weapons to achieve status, there is little evidence that such a strategy effectively evokes international recognition.

In this project, I make two contributions to this debate. My first contribution is theoretical: I develop a network theory of status, which specifies the conditions under which state attributes become relevant for status recognition. I argue that state attributes impact recognition because of their symbolic value, which depends on the social context. On the one hand, high-status states typically act as standard-setters and as gatekeepers, shaping the prevailing conceptions of state competence in the international system. On the other hand, other states may accept these actions as legitimate, or instead denounce them as illegitimate. In this chapter, I apply my theoretical framework to the case of nuclear weapons. Since nuclear weapons became stigmatized in the 1960s and 1970s, I do not expect them to confer status on the states that acquire them, especially if these states do not overall conform to the way of life of high-status states. My second contribution is empirical: Instead of assuming that nuclear weapons confer status, I develop an empirical strategy to test hypotheses about the relationship between nuclear weapons and status. Using the synthetic control method, I first assess whether the acquisition of nuclear weapons increases the international recognition a state receives. Using network analysis, I then examine whether nuclearization evokes recognition, more specifically, from the existing nuclear weapons states.

[4] Gordon 1995; Hecht 2009; Husbands 1982; Hymans 2006; Miller 2014*a*; Rosecrance 1964; Thayer 1995; Sagan 1997, 2011.

9.1 What We (Don't) Know

IR scholars traditionally consider nuclear weapons as a symbol of international status.[5] According to the conventional approach in IR, status depends a state's qualities—such that the larger a state's share of certain attributes (and especially its material capabilities), the higher its standing should be. The conventional approach implies that the acquisition of nuclear weapons should improve a state's status. In particular, two lines of reasoning can be used to justify this claim. On the one hand, one might posit that nuclear weapons improve a state's status because they increase its coercive abilities. According to realist scholars, who define status as reputation for military power, material capabilities matter for status recognition because they increase a state's ability to coerce other states.[6] Following this line of reasoning, a reputation for military strength dissuades weaker states from challenging stronger ones: the higher a state's reputation for military strength, the less other states will be willing to take disputes with that state to the battlefield. Given their immense destructive potential, nuclear weapons constitute a qualitative leap in a state's military capabilities. Therefore, nuclear weapons states should achieve a higher standing than non-nuclear weapons states.

Alternatively, some scholars argue that certain state attributes, like nuclear weapons, symbolize status because they are costly or difficult to obtain. By acquiring rare or costly attributes, a state thus signals its superior military or economic capabilities to other states, improving its status.[7] Following this line of reasoning, nuclear weapons have certain features that make them especially attractive as symbols of great power status. Initially developed by a great power, nuclear weapons have been acquired by only a small portion of states. Moreover, only those states able to invest considerable resources in this sector have acquired nuclear weapons. In addition, the nonproliferation regime formalized the distinction between the nuclear haves and have nots: while a few states were recognized as legitimate owners of nuclear weapons, all other participating states renounced these weapons. Given their exclusive nature, nuclear weapons thus work as a costly signal—serving to dif-

[5] Art 1980; Jervis 1990; O'Neill 2006.
[6] Gilpin 1981, 31; Morgenthau 2006, 92.
[7] See Gilady 2018; O'Neill 2006.

ferentiate between those states that have enough material capabilities to develop a nuclear program on the one hand, and those states that lack such capabilities on the other hand.

But while the relationship between nuclear weapons and status is commonly assumed, such a relationship remains unverified from an empirical standpoint. Existing research focuses on decision-making at the state level, showing that the search for international status—in addition to factors like security concerns or domestic politics—can motivate leaders to develop and maintain a nuclear weapons program.[8] At the same time, previous studies neglect the question of how states ultimately achieve status. As a result, while existing evidence shows that status may motivate the acquisition of nuclear weapons, we still have scant evidence that the acquisition of nuclear weapons actually improves a country's standing. Aside from this book, only one study examines empirically the relationship between nuclear weapons and status.[9] This study finds that, when states have nuclear weapons, they tend to receive more international recognition, measured based on the number of diplomatic representations received. But because this study uses a probit model, which assumes the independence of outcome observations, it is bound to produce biased estimates; as I show in Chapter 7, the independence assumption is violated in diplomatic exchange data. Once I account for network dependencies in diplomatic exchange, the expected association between nuclear weapons and diplomatic recognition disappears from the analysis. Therefore, additional empirical analysis is needed to elucidate the relationship between nuclear weapons and status.

9.2 The Symbolic Meaning of Nuclear Weapons

While IR scholars traditionally consider nuclear weapons as a symbol of great power status, I argue that status depends on a state's relations rather than on its attributes. Because status requires social recognition, state attributes play a secondary role in the process of status attainment. The relevance of a given attribute for status recognition is socially defined: attributes become relevant for status

[8] Gordon 1995; Hecht 2009; Husbands 1982; Hymans 2006; Miller 2014*a*; Rosecrance 1964; Thayer 1995; Sagan 1997, 2011.

[9] See Gartzke and Jo 2009, 222-23.

recognition because of their symbolic value, which depends on the social context. In my argument, an attribute like nuclear weapons does not influence recognition because of its functional value, or the extent to which it increases a state's ability to coerce other states. Rather, state attributes influence status recognition because of their symbolic meaning—or what they communicate about state competence, as understood in a given context. On the one hand, it matters what the high-status states say and do. High-status states typically act like standard-setters, shaping the criteria for status recognition in the international system; and as gatekeepers, shaping recognition decisions. On the other hand, it also matters how the international system as whole responds to these actions—either by granting them legitimacy, or by denouncing them as illegitimate. As such, the relevance of state attributes for status recognition depends on the social context.

Contrary to the conventional approach, my argument implies that a weapon's functional value (or the extent to which it enables a state to coerce other states) needs not go hand in hand with its symbolic value (or what it communicates about state competence, as understood in a given context). And in fact, functional and symbolic value find themselves at odds in some notable examples: as previous research indicates, certain weapons have a distinctly negative symbolic meaning precisely because of their functional value, or their immense destructive capacity. Prohibited under international law, for example, the use of chemical weapons or antipersonnel land mines amounts to outlaw behavior in the contemporary international system.[10] As Wendt and Barnett note, Western countries consider certain weapons of mass destruction—such as biological and chemical weapons—as symbols of "pariah" status, whose owners lie outside the club of "civilized" states.[11] It is no coincidence that, after receiving reports that the Assad regime in Syria was preparing to use chemical weapons against its opposition in 2012, the Obama administration reacted strongly, issuing warnings "that the world was watching, and that Assad would be held accountable by the international community should he use those weapons."[12] Destructive as certain weapons may be, their acqui-

[10] Carpenter 2011; Price 1995, 1998.

[11] Wendt and Barnett 1993, 340.

[12] Ben Rhodes, "Inside the White House During the Syrian 'Red Line' Crisis," *The Atlantic*, 3 June 2018, https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/06/inside-the-white-house-during-the-syrian-red-line-crisis/561887/.

sition (or use) does not symbolize high standing. To the contrary, the possession or use of these weapons is heavily stigmatized, evoking condemnation rather than praise.

I argue that a similar process characterizes the international history of nuclear weapons. For two reasons, I do not expect nuclear weapons to confer status in the contemporary international system. First, the acquisition of nuclear weapons should not elicit recognition because, after the Second World War, both the use and the acquisition of nuclear weapons became stigmatized. While nuclear weapons may have initially symbolized high status, they became associated with deviant behavior once nonproliferation became the norm. Second, the acquisition of nuclear weapons should not elicit recognition because status recognition hinges on a Western way of life—a gestalt that involves not only material capabilities, but also fundamental values associated with the West. However, those states that acquired nuclear weapons despite the nonproliferation regime—Israel, South Africa, India, Pakistan, and North Korea—deviate in notable ways from the way of life associated with high status nowadays. Next, I discuss each of these mechanisms in turn.

9.2.1 The Stigmatization of Nuclear Weapons

Based on my theoretical framework, nuclear weapons do not confer status in the contemporary international system, for two reasons. First of all, nuclear weapons became stigmatized as weapons of mass destruction after the Second World War. On the one hand, the use of nuclear weapons gradually became stigmatized after 1945—as Tannenwald shows by carefully tracing deliberations among U.S. leaders during subsequent militarized conflicts.[13] Developed by the U.S., nuclear weapons were used only once during conflict, in the notorious bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the end of the Second World War. Less than a decade later, American leaders considered using nuclear weapons during the Korean War, but ultimately decided against it—not only for reasons of military strategy, but also due to concerns about its anticipated effect on world opinion. As Tannenwald observes, after Truman conveyed that the U.S. was considering using nuclear weapons in Korea in 1950, "a political and diplomatic furor ensued." While the British prime minister conducted an im-

[13] Tannenwald 1999, 2007.

promptu visit to Washington to address the issue, policymakers around the world pointed out that the U.S. was "willing to use mass destruction methods on Asians but not on Europeans," as the U.S. Representative to the UN noted in a telegram to Washington. Given the international opprobium against nuclear weapons, U.S. policymakers worried that "If the United States acted "immorally" (by using atomic weapons) it would sacrifice its ability to lead."[14]

During subsequent conflicts, U.S. leaders would consider nuclear weapons less and less as a legitimate strategic option. During the Vietnam War, top officials worried that the use of nuclear weapons would compromise American leadership abroad, especially when the potential target was once again an Asian country. While the consideration of nuclear weapons in strategic discussions was increasingly considered as "practically taboo," presidents Kennedy and Johnson refused to even threaten using nuclear weapons, despite sustaining unexpected military losses in Vietnam.[15] In a continuation of this trend, U.S. leaders hardly considered using nuclear weapons to achieve their goals in the Gulf War. At the same time, François Mitterrand, then president of France—one of Washington's closest allies, and a member of the U.S.-led coalition in the war—publicly dismissed nuclear weapons as "barbarian methods."[16] As Tannenwald notes, the use of nuclear weapons had by then been placed outside the boundaries of civilized behavior: U.S. leaders declined to consider using nuclear weapons not only because of its potential impact on American leadership abroad, but also because it contradicted their view of the U.S. as a "civilized" state.

Much like the use of nuclear weapons, moreover, the acquisition of nuclear weapons became stigmatized after the Second World War. High-status states played a key role in this process, acting as standard-setters and gatekeepers in the stigmatization of nuclear proliferation. To begin, high-status states acted as standard-setters: during the postwar period, central countries renounced nuclear weapons. Standard-setters included Western European countries—such as Ireland, Italy, Germany, Norway, and Sweden—as well as regional leaders like Egypt and Japan. By setting an example, these countries played an important role in legitimizing the commitment to nonproliferation, which

[14] Tannenwald 1999, 444-45.
[15] Tannenwald 1999, 452. See also Tannenwald 1999, 451-53.
[16] Tannenwald 1999, 458-60.

would become one of the pillars of the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT). As Tannenwald notes, the decision to promote nuclear restraint often resulted from societal pressures and involved moral considerations. During the 1950s and 1960s, a grassroots movement against nuclear weapons took hold in North America, Western Europe, and Japan. Involving civil society leaders, this movement shifted the public discourse on nuclear weapons—which came to be perceived as weapons of mass destruction akin to chemical and biological weapons, rather than merely as conventional bombs. As more information became available about the long-term effects of radiation exposure and the radioactive fallout from nuclear tests, civil society leaders campaigned to raise public consciousness of this issue and to mobilize public support for nuclear restraint. In countries like Germany, Japan, and Sweden, such movements successfully pressured the government to curb the use, acquisition, and testing of nuclear weapons via domestic and international law.[17]

In addition, high-status states also acted as gatekeepers in the stigmatization of nuclear proliferation.[18] Under the nascent nonproliferation regime, the NPT would proscribe the development of nuclear programs by states outside of the nuclear club, while the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) would monitor treaty compliance and the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) would control access to the resources needed to develop a nuclear weapons program. High-status states played an important role in these organizations. On the one hand, non-nuclear weapons states such as Canada and Germany were among the founding members of the NSG, reinforcing the moral imperative behind nuclear restraint. On the other hand, nuclear weapons states put some muscle behind the nonproliferation regime. Despite their ideological disagreements during the Cold War, the U.S. and the Soviet Union colluded to restrict access to nuclear weapons in the 1960s and 1970s.[19] Since then, the nuclear powers have enforced the nonproliferation norm by offering positive incentives for compliant states while threatening to punish potential deviators.[20] Under the

17 Tannenwald 2005, 21-22. See also Rublee 2009.

18 Gheorghe 2019.

19 Coe and Vaynman 2015; Verdier 2008.

20 Miller 2014*b*, 2017; Montgomery 2005; Rabinowitz and Miller 2015. While actively enforcing nonproliferation, the nuclear powers have implemented only partially and haphazardly their commitment to nuclear disarmament under Article VI of the NPT, ultimately failing to take meaningful steps toward disarmament. See "International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons," United Nations, accessed 8 January 2023, https://www.un.org/en/observances/nuclear-weapons-elimination-day; Kylie Atwood and Jennifer Hansler,

nonproliferation regime, the nuclear powers effectively treat nuclear weapons as a privilege—rather than as a determinant—of great power status.[21] Once nonproliferation became the norm, nuclearization began to trigger international sanctions rather than recognition.

But importantly, the stigmatization of nuclear weapons enjoyed widespread international legitimacy: it involved the international system as a whole, rather than simply the high-status states. As Tannenwald notes, the stigma around nuclear weapons emerged to a certain extent despite—rather than because of—nuclear powers like the United States, which actively opposed any restrictions on the use of nuclear weapons until the mid-1960s. A global movement against nuclear weapons, involving not only non-nuclear weapons states but also non-state actors, started to take shape immediately after the Second World War, setting important precedents in the global treatment of nuclear weapons. The UN served as an important forum for this movement. In 1946, the very first resolution passed by the UN General Assembly instituted the UN Atomic Energy Commission, with the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament. In 1948, the UN Commission for Conventional Armaments prominently included nuclear weapons in its newly-adopted definition of weapons of mass destruction, along with chemical and biological weapons. And as a nonaligned-country majority emerged in the UN General Assembly during the 1960s, it began to pass resolutions calling for nuclear disarmament and a ban on the use of nuclear weapons; to establish committees tasked with the issue of nuclear disarmament; and to dedicate special sessions and high-level meetings to this issue. Much like grassroots movements at home, the global movement against nuclear weapons thus gradually shifted the public discourse on nuclear weapons, categorizing them as weapons of mass destruction.[22]

Over time, the stigmatization of nuclear weapons would become evident in an extensive array of international treaties that call not only for nuclear nonproliferation, but also for nuclear disarmament. Extended indefinitely in 1995, the NPT enjoys widespread international adherence: All but a few countries have joined the treaty, making it the most widely accepted agreement on arms

"Russia postpones nuclear arms control talks with US, State Department says," *CNN*, 28 November 2022, https://www.cnn.com/2022/11/28/politics/us-russia-arms-control-talks/index.html.

[21] See Bukovansky et al. 2012, 81-121.

[22] Tannenwald 2005, 7, 11, 18-20, 29.

limitation in the history of international law.[23] In fact, the NPT enjoys such widespread adherence that most countries favor implementing it more fully—including not only the commitment to non-proliferation, but also the commitment to nuclear disarmament under Article VI. To that end, the UN General Assembly approved in 2017 the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which entered into force in 2021. Besides the NPT, moreover, states have ratified an extensive array of multilateral treaties limiting the use, acquisition, and testing of nuclear weapons. Starting in the 1960s, regional agreements have created nuclear weapons-free zones in multiple geographic regions, including Latin America and the Caribbean (1967), the South Pacific (1985), Southeast Asia (1995), Africa (1996), and Central Asia (2006). In addition, UN members states have proscribed nuclear tests via the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water (1963) and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (1996). In this way, a global movement successfully categorized nuclear weapons as weapons that, because of their immense destructive capacity, carry a distinctly negative symbolic meaning.

9.2.2 Nuclearization as Deviant Behavior

In addition, I do not expect nuclear weapons to confer status on the states that acquired them after 1970 for a second reason: Status recognition depends on a Western way of life—a gestalt that involves not only material capabilities, but also fundamental values associated with the West. To effectively communicate a certain way of life and evoke the corresponding recognition, states attributes need to go well together. States that display an incoherent set of attributes send contradictory signals, and are therefore unlikely to evoke recognition. That is precisely what happens when nuclear weapons come into the picture. As shown in Table 7.2, the possession of nuclear weapons correlates negatively with each of the fundamental values associated with the West, which serve as a basis for social closure in the contemporary international system. On average, nuclear weapons states tend

[23] *UN Office of Disarmament Affairs*, "Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons." https://treaties.unoda.org/t/npt Accessed 13 December 2022. The only states not to join the NPT are those that maintain a nuclear weapons program despite the nonproliferation regime, as discussed below; as well as South Sudan, the latest country to become a UN member in 2011.

to be less democratic, to be less economically liberal, and to respect human rights less, than non-nuclear weapons states. This happens even though the nuclear club includes liberal democracies like France, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

In the eyes of the international community, the typical profile of a nuclear weapons state nowadays seems to be that of a deviant—rather than exemplary—state. Those states that acquired nuclear weapons after the NPT came into force are perceived as deviating from the way of life associated with high status. While South Africa faced increasing international opprobrium during its apartheid regime, for example, Pakistan frequently features in official lists of states that sponsor terrorism.[24] Likewise, Israel has faced international condemnation since the First Arab-Israeli War, when it began to occupy territories originally designated to the Palestinian state. Since the creation of the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in 2006, moreover, Israel has been the object of a high proportion of the Council's country-specific resolutions, which condemn the Israeli treatment of Palestinians.[25] Against expectations from the conventional approach, those states that acquired nuclear weapons since 1970 fit more closely into the profile of a deviant (or pariah) state, rather than the profile of a great power.[26] Such pattern is no coincidence: Countries' policies toward nuclear proliferation tend to reflect their overall positions toward the prevailing conceptions of state competence in the contemporary international system. After 1945, nuclear weapons became stigmatized as weapons of mass destruction. Therefore, countries are more prone to choose nuclear proliferation over restraint when they deviate from the existing recognition standards.

Proscribed by the NPT, nuclear proliferation represents a violation of the shared expectations for competent state behavior in the contemporary international system. Under the nonproliferation regime, those states that acquire nuclear weapons are bound to garner international condemnation, rather than to accrue social esteem (or to be perceived as examples to be followed). That is, while nuclear weapons may have initially symbolized high status, their acquisition became associated with deviant behavior once nuclear weapons became stigmatized as weapons of mass destruction. And

[24] See Byman 2005.

[25] "Human Rights Council's Resolutions - Question of Palestine." United Nations. Accessed September 22, 2021. https://www.un.org/unispal/human-rights-council-resolutions/.

[26] On pariah status and nuclear proliferation, see Betts 1993; Chan 1980; Harkavy 1981.

in fact, since the 1960s and 1970s, the international system as a whole has treated the acquisition of nuclear weapons as a sign of deviant behavior, rather than a signal of high status. On the one hand, countries that renounced nuclear weapons in the postwar period—such as Germany, Italy, Japan, and Sweden—achieved or maintained a high standing in the international system, notwithstanding their limited military capabilities. Indeed, each of these countries receives more international recognition than one might expect based on their military capabilities, as shown in Figure 5.2. By contrast, countries that acquired nuclear weapons despite the nonproliferation regime—such as India, Israel, North Korea, and Pakistan—receive less recognition than one might expect based on their military capabilities, as also shown in Figure 5.2.

While nuclear proliferation constitutes deviant behavior on the one hand, joining the NPT (and therefore abdicating nuclear weapons) constitutes a de facto requirement for upstanding membership in the society of states on the other hand. In the 1990s, newly-created states joined the NPT as they sought international recognition. Ukraine, for example, relinquished the nuclear weapons it inherited from the Soviet Union—despite the history of Russian territorial expansionism in its region—as it sought recognition from Western powers of its national sovereignty and good standing.[27] Likewise, authoritarian states transitioning to democracy in the 1990s joined the NPT as they sought integration into the liberal international order. Brazil, for example, gave up its nuclear program—even though key domestic actors considered the nonproliferation regime inherently unfair for institutionalizing the inequality between nuclear haves and have-nots.[28] As Solingen observes, those states that pursue economic growth through integration into the global economy have tended to refrain from pursuing nuclear weapons since the 1960s. Because nuclearization is expected to elicit sanctions under the nonproliferation regime, it imposes heavy costs on those states that adopt internationalizing (as opposed to inward-looking) models of economic growth.[29] As Sagan suggests, the nonproliferation regime may have changed the symbolic meaning of nuclear weapons: while joining the nuclear club signaled prestige in the 1960s, joining the "club of nations

[27] Budjeryn 2022; Chafetz, Abramson, and Grillot 1996; Sagan 1997, 80-82.
[28] Patti 2021, 157-90; Spektor 2016.
[29] Solingen 2007.

adhering to the NPT" became a source of prestige in the 1990s.[30]

9.3 Empirical Analysis

In this section, I develop an empirical strategy to test hypotheses about the relationship between nuclear weapons and status. Because the explanations above involve observable implications at two levels of analysis, I conduct my analysis in two parts. On the one hand, according to the conventional approach, nuclear weapons states should achieve a higher standing than non-nuclear weapons states. To evaluate this observable implication, I first assess whether the acquisition of nuclear weapons increases the international recognition a state receives using the synthetic control method. On the other hand, my relational approach implies that, if nuclear weapons symbolize status, states with a similar weapons portfolio should be more likely to recognize one another. To evaluate this observable implication, I examine whether nuclearization evokes recognition within the group of nuclear weapons states more specifically, using network analysis.

To measure the acquisition of nuclear weapons, I rely primarily on data from Singh and Way.[31] To measure whether states have acquired nuclear weapons, I use the date of nuclear weapons acquisition, rather than the date of nuclear weapons exploration or pursuit. Based on existing datasets, there are small divergences on the date of nuclear weapons acquisition for each state.[32] However, these small divergences do not impact my analysis, which captures nuclear weapons possession at five-year intervals. Only the Israeli case involves a more significant divergence between the Singh and Way dataset and the others—as the former presents a more conservative estimate of the date of acquisition as happening in 1972, while others code it earlier as 1966 or 1967. But because I assume that nuclear weapons acquisition needs to be visible in order to impact the owning country's status, a more conservative estimate is more adequate for my analysis. For the North Korean case, I rely on data from Bleek, which is the only one to cover the most recent period.

[30] Sagan 1997, 76.
[31] Singh and Way 2004.
[32] See Bleek 2017; Jo and Gartzke 2007.

9.3.1 Do Nuclear Weapons States Attract More Recognition?

According to the conventional approach, status depends on a state's attributes—such that the richer or militarily stronger a state is, the higher its standing should be. Moreover, nuclear weapons symbolize status because they are expensive, scarce, and require advanced technology. By acquiring nuclear weapons, a state thus signals its superior material capabilities to other states. Based on this approach, we should therefore expect nuclear weapons states to achieve a higher standing than non-nuclear weapons states. In fact, the impact of nuclear weapons should be especially significant for those countries that acquired nuclear weapons after the NPT came into force, since none of these countries was particularly strong from a military standpoint. That is, if status depends on a state's military capabilities, militarily weaker states should receive a large status boost after acquiring nuclear weapons, which constitute a qualitative leap in their military capabilities. Therefore, the conventional approach leads to the following observable implication involving diplomatic exchange: *a state should receive more embassies once it acquires nuclear weapons.*[33]

However, the analysis conducted so far indicates that nuclear weapons states do not attract more recognition than non-nuclear weapons states. In Chapter 7, I use temporal exponential random graph models to assess if states are more likely to receive embassies when they own nuclear weapons. Against expectations from the conventional approach, my analysis reveals that nuclear weapons states tend to receive less (rather than more) recognition than non-nuclear weapons states. Across model specifications, nuclear weapons have a consistently negative effect on the odds of receiving an embassy. In fact, nuclear weapons only have a positive effect on recognition in one of the models used—the basic logit model without network effects, which is bound to produce biased estimates because it assumes the independence of outcome observations. Once I account for structural dependencies in embassy exchange by directly modeling network effects, the impact of nuclear weapons on tie formation becomes consistently negative, regardless of model specification.

Though surprising from a conventional standpoint, these results are consistent with my theo-

[33]See Chapter 4 for an explanation of why I choose diplomatic exchange data as a measure of status recognition in the international system, and Chapter 5 for the empirical validation of this measure.

retical framework. For two reasons, I do not expect nuclear weapons to confer status on the states that acquired them after 1970. First, nuclear weapons became stigmatized as weapons of mass destruction after the Second World War. Most importantly for the cases at hand, the institution of the nonproliferation regime turned nuclear weapons acquisition into a sign of deviant behavior. Second, while status recognition depends on a Western way of life that involves fundamental values like liberal democracy, those states that acquired nuclear weapons despite the nonproliferation regime notably deviate from this way of life. Today, the average nuclear weapons state fits more closely the profile of a deviant, rather than high-status, state: On average, nuclear weapons states tend to be less democratic, to be less economically liberal, and to respect human rights less, than non-nuclear weapons states. For these reasons, my relational approach leads to the following observable implication: *a state should not receive more embassies once it acquires nuclear weapons.*

The Synthetic Control Method

To further probe into the relationship between nuclear weapons and status recognition, I conduct additional analyses in this chapter. Using the synthetic control method, I estimate the effect of nuclearization on a country's status, measured by the number of embassies it receives. The synthetic control method offers important advantages given the purposes of my analysis: with a view to reducing biases, this method provides a systematic way to choose comparison units in observational studies that rely on small samples.[34] In doing so, the synthetic control method bridges qualitative and quantitative approaches. On the one hand, it is challenging to estimate the impact of nuclear weapons on a country's status using conventional quantitative methods because only a small number of cases exist during the period of analysis. Since 1970, only five countries have acquired nuclear weapons: Israel (1972), South Africa (1979), India (1988), Pakistan (1990), and North Korea (2006).[35] On the other hand, the absence of explicit counterfactuals for these cases makes it difficult to estimate precise causal effects using qualitative methods.[36] Since nuclear weapons states likely

[34] Abadie and Gardeazabal 2003; Abadie, Diamond, and Hainmueller 2010.
[35] Singh and Way 2004. See also Bleek 2017.
[36] See Geddes 2003; George and Bennett 2005.

differ from non-nuclear weapons states along more than one dimension, any differences in the outcome of interest may reflect disparities among countries in dimensions other than nuclear weapons. As such, it is difficult to determine if nuclear weapons themselves drive any observed differences in the international recognition a country receives.

In this context, the synthetic control method offers important advantages. Following Mill's Method of Difference, the synthetic control method enables the comparison of outcomes between units that experienced an event and otherwise similar units that did not experience the same event. In particular, this method enables me to compare the number of embassies received by countries that acquired nuclear weapons to the number of embassies received by otherwise similar countries that did not acquire nuclear weapons. This method thus provides a systematic way of answering the question: Had a country refrained from acquiring nuclear weapons, would it have received fewer or more embassies than it in fact received? To reproduce the counterfactual for each case of nuclearizarion, the synthetic control models specify a "synthetic" unit (or synthetic control) that did not acquire nuclear weapons. The synthetic unit reflects a combination of similar countries that captures the relevant characteristics of the country of interest. Based on data from the period leading up to the event of interest, the synthetic unit differentially weighs the comparison units so as to most closely capture the relevant characteristics of the country of interest. In the cases below, the synthetic control models account for country characteristics such as the log-transformed GDP, per capita GDP, and military spending; nuclear weapons, democracy, the number of alliances joined, the number of embassies sent, and the number of embassies received.[37]

To interpret the results, we compare the outcome of interest for the unit that experienced an event to the outcome for the synthetic unit, which represents the counterfactual of not experiencing the event. In this case, we compare the number of embassies received by the country that acquired nuclear weapons to the number of embassies received by the synthetic unit, which represents the counterfactual of not acquiring nuclear weapons. If nuclear weapons impact a country's status, the number of embassies received by the country of interest should diverge from the number of

[37] Since I do not have strong prior beliefs about which characteristics drive the outcome, I use all the pre-treatment outcome lags as matching variables to account for confounders. See Ferman, Pinto, and Possebom 2020.

embassies received by the synthetic control after the country of interest acquires nuclear weapons. In particular, if nuclear weapons have a positive effect on a country's standing, the country of interest should receive more embassies than the synthetic unit after it acquires nuclear weapons. Conversely, if nuclear weapons have a negative effect on a country's standing, the country of interest should receive fewer embassies than the synthetic unit after it crosses the nuclear threshold. Finally, if nuclear weapons do not impact a country's standing, the two trends should not diverge, as both country of interest and synthetic unit receive a similar number of embassies.

Because of covariate availability, my analysis does not include the cases of nuclear weapons acquisition before 1970, which were legitimated by the NPT. To measure international recognition, I use data from the Diplomatic Contacts (DIPCON) Database, which cover the period from 1970 to 2010 with measurements at five-year intervals.[38] This dataset provides a list of all the country dyads that exchange embassies headed by an ambassador in a given year. While another dataset—the Correlates of War (COW) Diplomatic Exchange dataset[39]—covers a longer period, it was not suitable for this analysis for two reasons. First, the COW data are relatively less precise. These data include no observations for 1945, when the U.S. acquired nuclear weapons. And while these data include observations for the period between 1950 and 1965—when the other permanent members of the UN Security Council (and legitimate owners of nuclear weapons under the nonproliferation regime)—acquired nuclear weapons, it codes all diplomatic exchanges equally during this period, regardless of the level of diplomatic representation. As a result, the COW data become less informative as a measure of international recognition, as I discuss in Chapter 4. Second, I do not use the COW data because, using the synthetic control method, it was not possible to match the Permanent Five (P5) countries with other states, possibly because of the exceptional nature of the former states. Because the P5 countries significantly differ from other countries along multiple dimensions, the synthetic control method did not yield reasonable counterfactuals for these cases. Therefore, I draw conclusions from the analysis for those cases of nuclearization that took place after 1970, rather than for all existing cases of nuclearization.

[38] Rhamey et al. 2013.
[39] Bayer 2006; Singer and Small 1966.

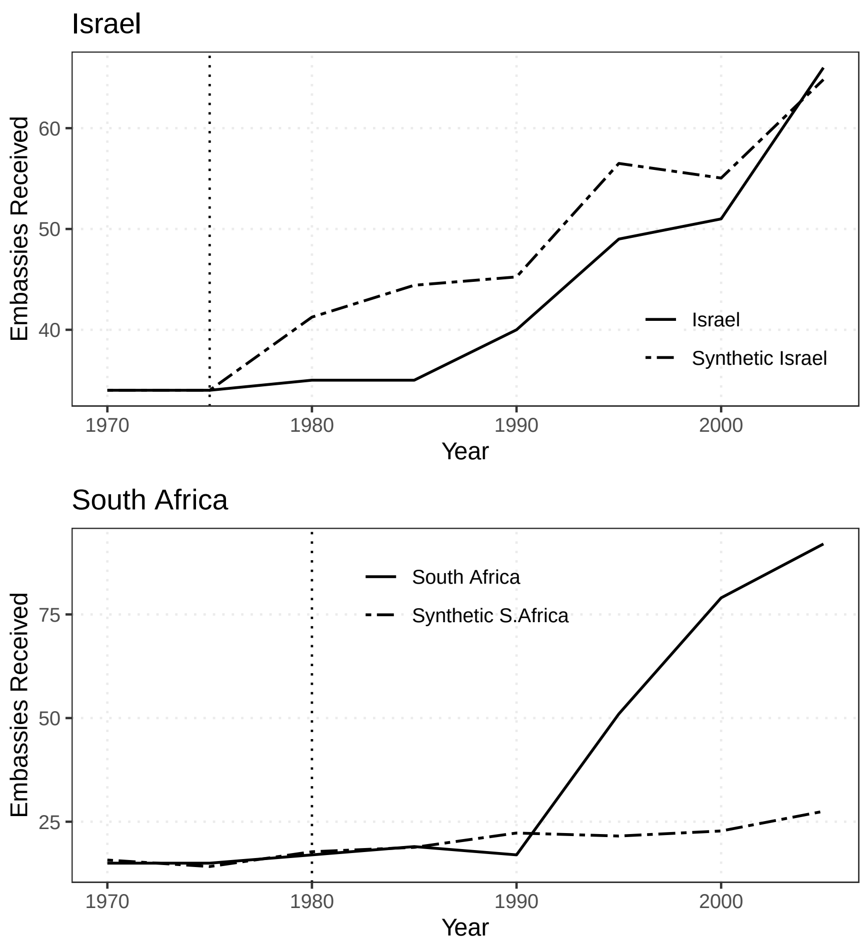


Figure 9.1. Nuclear Weapons Acquisition and Embassies Received.
Note: Dashed vertical lines denote the year when each country acquired nuclear weapons.

Results

Against expectations from the conventional approach, my analysis indicates that nuclear weapons do not confer status on the states that acquired them after 1970. To begin, Figure 9.1 shows the results for Israel and South Africa, the first two cases of nuclear weapons acquisition after the NPT came into force. At the top of the figure, we can see that the number of embassies received by Israel does diverge from the number of embassies received by the synthetic unit after Israel acquires nuclear weapons in 1972; only in 2005 do the two trends converge again. However, Israel receives fewer embassies than the synthetic control after becoming a nuclear weapons state—rather than re-

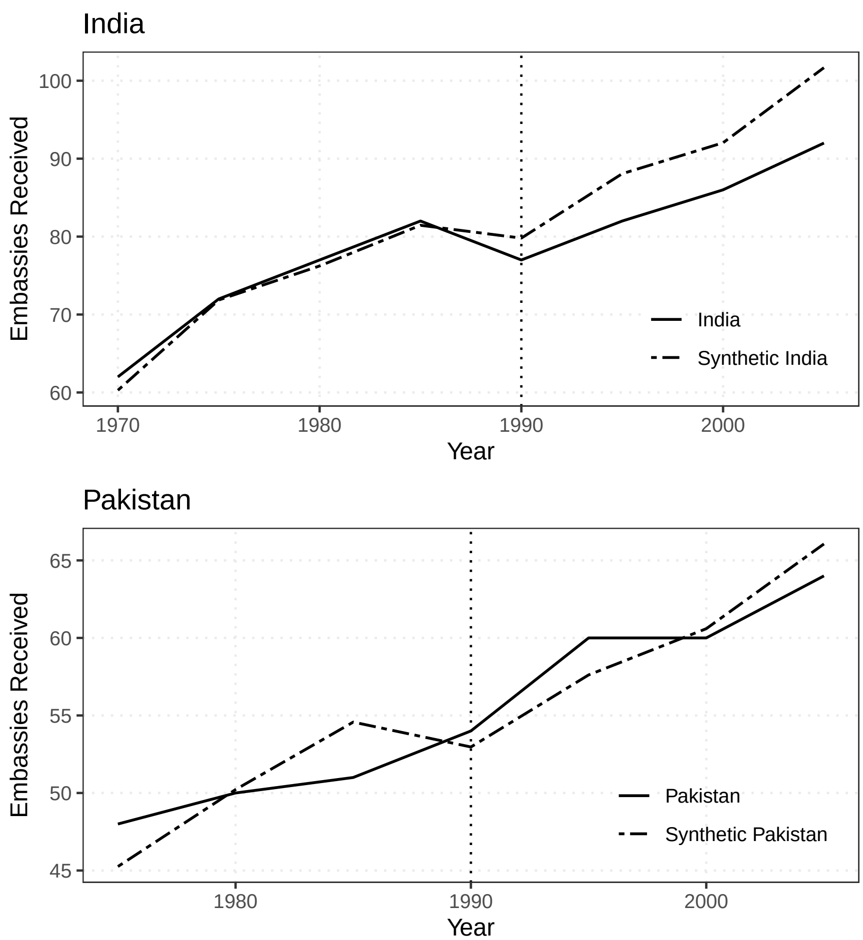


Figure 9.2. Nuclear Weapons Acquisition and Embassies Received.
Note: Dashed vertical lines denote the year when each country acquired nuclear weapons.

ceiving more international recognition, as one would expect based on the conventional approach. The results indicate that, had Israel refrained from acquiring nuclear weapons, it would have enjoyed a higher international standing than it actually did in the subsequent decades. Importantly, this result is consistent with qualitative evidence on the international reaction to Israel's nuclearization. Despite its close alliance with the United States, Israel became the object of widespread international condemnation because its decision to acquire nuclear weapons. Such condemnation was repeatedly expressed, for example, in yearly UN General Assembly resolutions from 1978 to 1987—which criticized Israel's nuclear armament or called the country to place its facilities under supervision of the

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).[40]

Next, at the bottom of Figure 9.1, we find no difference between the number of embassies received by South Africa and by the synthetic unit, respectively, after South Africa acquires nuclear weapons in 1979. However, once South Africa starts to dismantle its nuclear program in 1990, as it transitions to democracy, the number of embassies received increases rapidly, clearly diverging from the synthetic control. The results thus indicate that, while the acquisition of nuclear weapons had a negligible impact on South Africa's international standing, the act of giving up nuclear weapons during democratization was associated with a subsequent spike in international recognition. Against expectations from the conventional approach, it is the abdication of nuclear weapons—rather than their acquisition—that ultimately correlates with a boost in South Africa's international standing. Once again, these results are consistent with qualitative evidence on the international reaction to South Africa's nuclearization in 1979 and subsequent denuclearization in the 1990s. As Liberman notes, "In the 1970s and 1980s, South Africa was subjected to an escalating battery of nuclear sanctions culminating in near-excommunication from Western nuclear suppliers, markets, and scientific forums."[41] More broadly, South Africa's short-lived nuclear program coincided with the height of its diplomatic isolation under P.W. Botha's administration; by contrast, the country's denuclearization during F.W. de Klerk's administration coincided with the beginning of a period of unprecedented international recognition.[42]

Similarly, the results for the Indian and Pakistani cases reveal that the acquisition of nuclear weapons did not increase the number of embassies received by either country, as shown in Figure 9.2. At the top of the figure, we can see that, after India acquires nuclear weapons in 1988, it receives fewer embassies than the synthetic unit. Against expectations from the conventional approach, nuclear weapons seem to have a negative impact on India's international standing—much like in the Israeli case. At the bottom of Figure 9.2, we can see that, after Pakistan acquires nuclear weapons in 1990, the number of embassies it receives resembles the number of embassies received by the

[40] See, for example, UNGA resolutions 33/71-A and 42/44.
[41] Liberman 2001, 48.
[42] See Christopher 1994.

synthetic unit. Rather than improving Pakistan's international standing, the acquisition of nuclear weapons has no discernible impact on the number of embassies sent to Islamabad, much like in the South African case. Importantly, these results are also consistent with the existing qualitative evidence: After crossing the nuclear threshold, both countries faced international condemnation. In response to India's first nuclear test in 1974 using a Canadian-supplied reactor, Canada not only broke off nuclear assistance to India but also joined six other countries—France, West Germany, Japan, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States—in founding the Nuclear Suppliers Group. And after India's second set of tests prompted Pakistan to conduct its first test in 1998, both the G-8 and the UN Security Council condemned the tests.[43]

In sum, the analysis shows that nuclear weapons did not confer status on the states that acquired them after the NPT came into force. For all cases of nuclearization since 1970, nuclear weapons have either a negative impact or no discernible impact on a country's international standing. That is, against expectations from the conventional approach, nuclear weapons states did not receive more recognition than (otherwise similar) non-nuclear weapons states. Importantly, these results are consistent with qualitative evidence on the international reaction to each case of nuclearization. Since nonproliferation became the norm, those states that acquired nuclear weapons became the object of widespread international condemnation, rather than obtaining more social esteem. Most notably, nuclear proliferators faced international condemnation even when they had friends in high places—as in the case of Israel, a traditional U.S. ally.

9.3.2 Do Nuclear Weapons Serve as a Basis for Social Closure?

While the acquisition of nuclear weapons does not directly improve a country's standing, it may still be relevant for status recognition. In this project, I argue that status distinctions involve social closure. One of the aspects of social closure is commonality: high-status states differentiate themselves from outsiders by adopting a distinctive way of life. Based on my theoretical framework, it is attribute similarity—rather than the possession of attributes per se—that drives recognition in

[43] Jha 1998.

the international system. Therefore, I expect states to recognize those states similar to them, rather than those states with the largest amount of attributes. That is, if nuclear weapons symbolize status, we should observe a homophily (or similarity) effect involving nuclear weapons, whereby states with a similar weapons portfolio should be more likely to recognize one another. This leads to the following observable implication involving diplomatic exchange: *nuclear weapons states should be more likely to exchange embassies among themselves.*

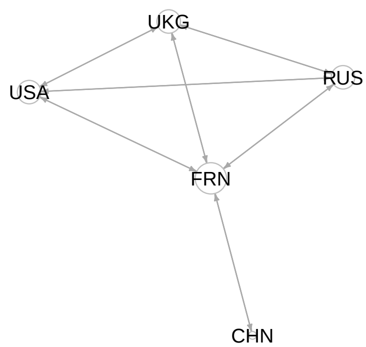
However, the analysis conducted so far indicates that nuclear weapons do not serve as a basis for social closure in the international system. In Chapter 7, I use temporal exponential random graph models to assess if states are more likely to exchange embassies if they have a similar weapons portfolio. Regardless of model specification, I find no homophily (or similarity) effect involving nuclear weapons. In other words, states are not more likely to send an embassy to states that have a similar weapons portfolio as them. A nuclear weapons state, for example, is not more likely to send an embassy to a state that has nuclear weapons than to a state that lacks them. In fact, I find homophily effects for all state attributes included in the analysis, except nuclear weapons. Complementing this analysis, Chapter 8 investigates if the possession of certain attributes increases the likelihood that a state will belong in the core of the diplomatic network, characterized by a high-status group of densely-connected states. I find that states in the core of the diplomatic network consistently differ from other states: core states are richer, militarily stronger, more democratic, and more economically liberal than states in the periphery. However, the effect of nuclear weapons on core membership is unclear, as the coefficient signs flip depending on the model specification used. Unlike other state attributes, nuclear weapons do not consistently impact the probability that a state will belong in the core of the international system. Taken together, these results indicate that nuclear weapons states are not more likely to recognize one another.

Though surprising from a conventional standpoint, these results are once again consistent with my theoretical framework. For two reasons, I do not expect nuclear weapons to confer status on the states that acquired them after 1970. First, the institution of the nonproliferation regime in the 1960s and 1970s proscribed the acquisition of nuclear weapons by new states—turning it into a sign of deviant behavior rather than a symbol of high status. Second, while status recognition depends on a Western way of life that involves fundamental values like liberal democracy, those states that acquired nuclear weapons despite the nonproliferation regime do not adopt such values. For these reasons, my relational approach leads to the following observable implication: *nuclear weapons states should not be more likely to exchange embassies among themselves.*

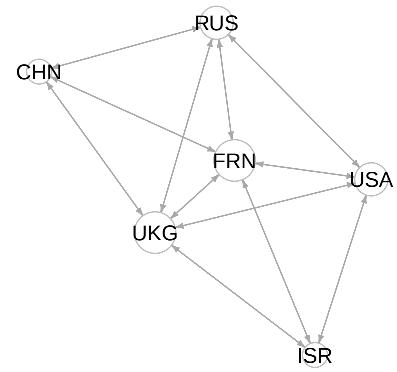
The History of Ties Among Nuclear Weapons States

To further probe into this question, Figure 9.3 shows the history of ties among nuclear weapons states from 1970 to 2010. During this period, the number of nuclear weapons states ranges from five in 1970 to nine in 1990 (after India and Pakistan join the group) as well as in 2010 (after North Korea joins the group). As Table 9.1 shows, tie density within the group—that is, the proportion of potential to existing ties among nuclear weapons states—ranges from 0.70 in 1970, when all nuclear weapons states but France refrain from sending a tie to China; to 0.95 in 2000 and 2005, before North Korea joins the group. We observe the largest increase in tie density in 1995, as South Africa dismantles its nuclear program and therefore leaves the group. Conversely, the largest decrease in tie density occurs in 2010, as North Korea enters the group after its nuclear test. This decline in tie density happens because North Korea receives the smallest number of ties within the group, with only five embassies. The only states to send embassies to Pyongyang are non-Western states—China, India, Pakistan, and Russia—and the United Kingdom. By contrast, most Western states (and Israel) refrain from sending an embassy to Pyongyang.

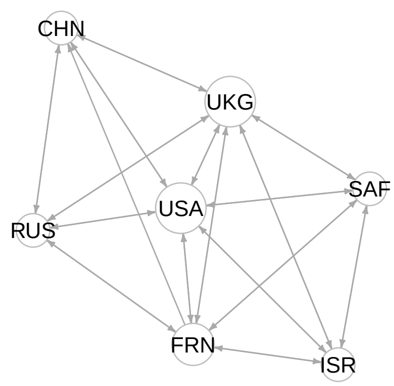
Overall, these patterns indicate that nuclear weapons do not ensure recognition from the states that play a key role in the management of international order, such as the permanent members of the UN Security Council. Throughout the period of analysis, certain nuclear weapons states receive fewer embassies than do members of the group on average, which denotes their relative low status within the nuclear club. To visualize this, Figure 9.4 shows the percentage of embassies received by each state (out of all embassies that could have been received within the nuclear club), with the dotted lines representing the yearly average of embassies received. As the figure shows,



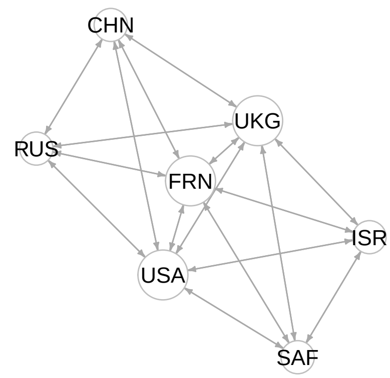
(a) 1970



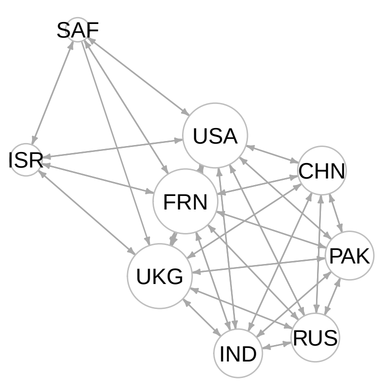
(b) 1975



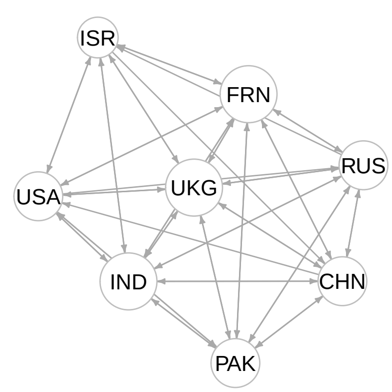
(c) 1980



(d) 1985

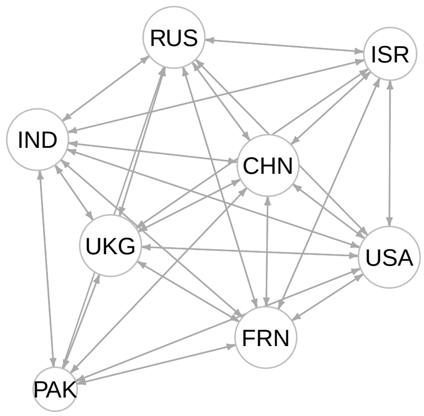


(e) 1990

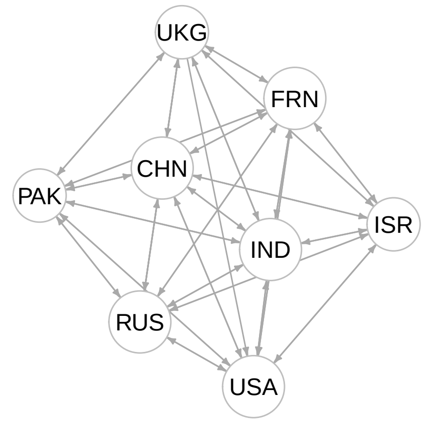


(f) 1995

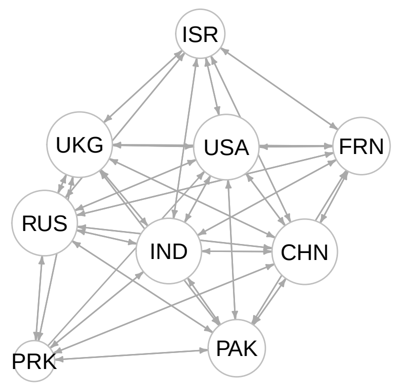
Figure 9.3. Ties among Nuclear Weapons States (1970-2010).
Note: Node size proportional to in-degree (number of embassies received within the group).



(g) 2000



(h) 2005



(i) 2010

Figure 9.3. Ties among Nuclear Weapons States (1970-2010) (cont.).
Note: Node size proportional to in-degree (number of embassies received within the group).

Table 9.1. Proportion of Existing to Potential Ties among Nuclear Weapons States

Year	Tie Density
1970	0.70
1975	0.80
1980	0.79
1985	0.81
1990	0.76
1995	0.89
2000	0.95
2005	0.95
2010	0.90

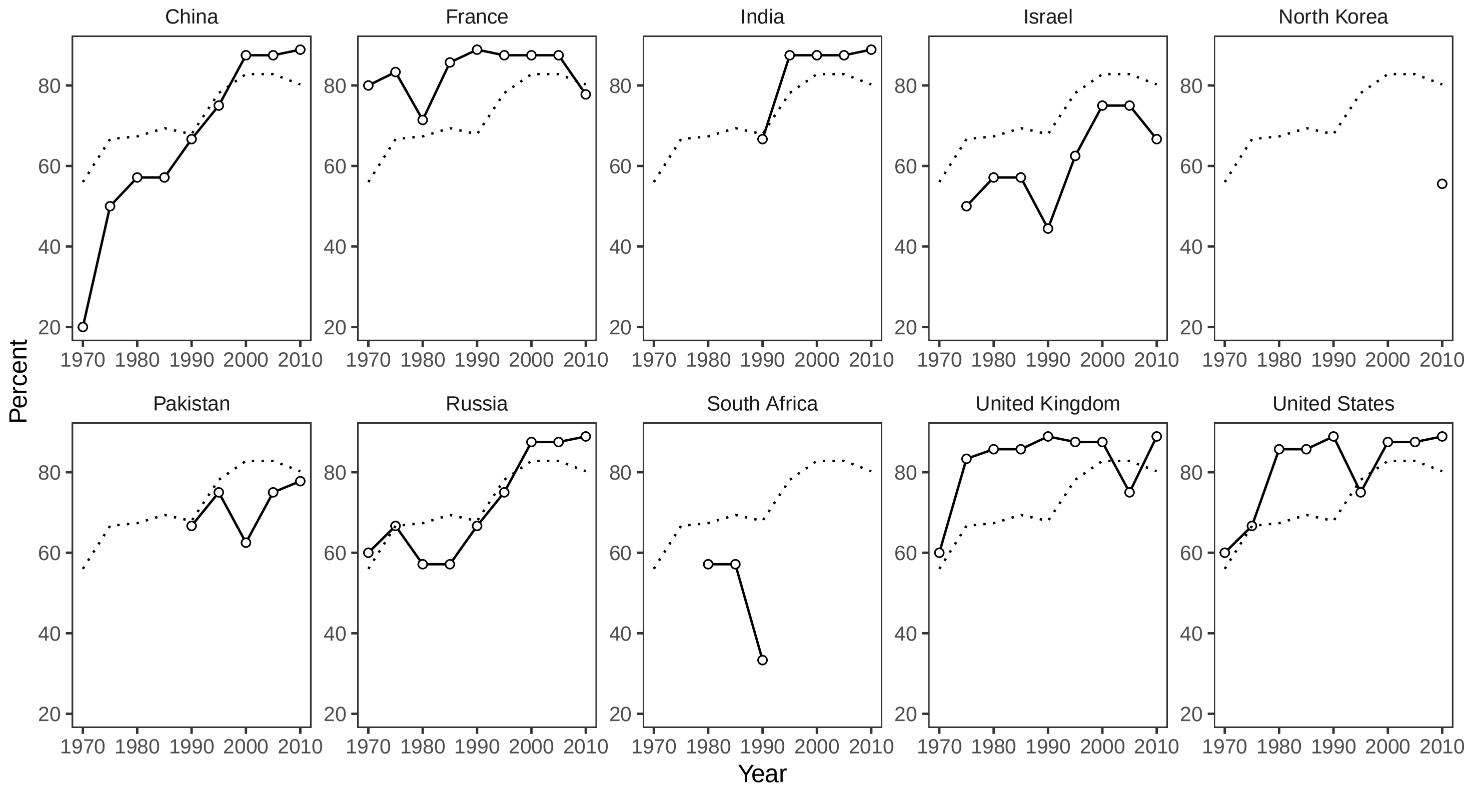


Figure 9.4. Percentage of Embassies Received from Other Nuclear Weapons States.
Note: Continuous lines denote the actual percentage of embassies received out of all embassies that could have been received within the group. Dotted lines represent the yearly average of embassies received per country within the group.

certain states—such as China until 1990, Israel, North Korea, and South Africa—remain relatively isolated within the nuclear club, consistently underperforming relative to the group average. By contrast, Western states consistently outperform the group average, receiving a high proportion of embassies. Therefore, factors other than nuclear weapons—such as a country's overall position in the diplomatic network, or whether it conforms to Western values like liberal democracy—seem to play a key role in determining the international recognition a country receives within the nuclear club. In line with the results from the previous chapters, social closure in the diplomatic network seems to be based on factors other than nuclear weapons.

9.4 Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates that, since nonproliferation became the norm, nuclear weapons do not confer status on the states that acquire them. Highly destructive and relatively scarce, nuclear weapons may seem like the quintessential status symbol based on the conventional approach in IR. But as my analysis shows, the acquisition of nuclear weapons has not improved a country's international standing since the NPT came into force; in fact, we observe quite the opposite in some cases. Using the synthetic control method, I first demonstrate that, compared to similar countries that did not acquire nuclear weapons, those countries that acquired nuclear weapons since 1970 received either less recognition (in the cases of Israel and South Africa) or a similar level of recognition (in the cases of India and Pakistan). That is, against expectations from the conventional approach, nuclear weapons had either a negative impact or no discernible impact on the recognition a country received. Confirming the results obtained in the previous chapters, the analysis reveals that nuclear weapons consistently fall short of eliciting international recognition.

Neither do nuclear weapons serve as a basis for social closure in the international system. Using network analysis, I show in this chapter that, despite acquiring nuclear weapons, certain states—most notably China until 1990, Israel, North Korea, and South Africa—have received limited recognition from other nuclear weapons states since 1970. Overall, the acquisition of nuclear weapons does not ensure recognition within the nuclear club, especially from Western states and their allies. By contrast, Western states typically receive a high proportion of embassies from other nuclear weapons states, consistently outperforming the group average. Therefore, factors other than nuclear weapons—such as a country's overall position in the diplomatic network, or whether it conforms to Western values like liberal democracy—seem to play a key role in determining the recognition a country receives within the nuclear club. In line with the results from the previous chapters, social closure in the diplomatic network involves factors other than nuclear weapons.

More broadly, the results from this chapter demonstrate once again the analytical leverage provided by my theoretical framework, which accommodates important patterns in status recognition that the conventional approach in IR cannot explain. Against expectations from the conventional approach, there is no automatic translation between a state's attributes and the international recognition it receives. Importantly, this pattern applies even to those state attributes that increase a state's military strength, such as nuclear weapons. While these results may seem surprising from a conventional standpoint, they are perfectly consistent with my theoretical framework. Since nuclear weapons became stigmatized under the nonproliferation regime, I do not expect their acquisition to improve a country's standing, especially if the country in question does not overall conform to the way of life associated with high status in the contemporary international system. Complementing the analysis conducted in the previous chapters, this chapter shows that state attributes play a secondary role in the process of status attainment. The relevance of state attributes for status recognition is socially defined: State attributes impact recognition because of their symbolic value, which depends on the social context. Overall, international status depends primarily on state relations, rather than on the qualities of states or the things that they have.

10

Conclusion

This book addresses a hitherto neglected question: how do countries achieve status? Although scholars rely on status to explain important phenomena in international politics, such as hegemonic wars and the foreign policies of emerging powers, previous research pays little attention to the sources of international status. The conventional approach in IR assumes that status is a function of the qualities of states, especially their military and economic capabilities. Yet, this assumption remains like a folk theory of status—an explanation based on practical understandings that people employ in their everyday lives, which is taken to be true even though it has not been put to the test. Most research treats status as an actor motivation, showing that the search for status motivates foreign policy and may even cause wars. By contrast, this book is the first to investigate the sources of status, focusing on international relations rather than the state level.

As the first book-length project to address the question of how countries achieve status, this study contributes to existing scholarship from both a theoretical and an empirical standpoints. Drawing on an interdisciplinary body of research, I develop a theoretical framework that captures the fundamentally social nature of status. I argue that status depends on states' positions in a social arrangement, rather than on their qualities or the things that they have. To explain how states achieve status, I theorize the underlying relational effects that drive recognition in the international system. Importantly, this book adopts a consistently relational approach to the study of status: it uses a relational empirical strategy in the service of a relational theory. To investigate the underlying relational effects that drive recognition among states, I use network analysis tools ideally suited to that purpose. By showing that status is a distinctive phenomenon both conceptually and empirically, this book intends to move status from its current position as a residual category in IR—insufficiently differentiated from material capabilities or the things that states have—to its rightful place as a concept central to the study of international politics. By deploying an appropriate set of analytical and methodological tools, this study adequately grasps the distinctive feature of status: its social nature. As a result, it generates new lessons in areas that have drawn increasing scholarly interest in recent years, but that are still rarely linked to status.

In this chapter, I conclude the analysis above in two steps. In the first couple of sections, I summarize, respectively, the theoretical and the empirical contributions made in this study. Based on these contributions, the chapter's last section then offers three general lessons for research on international hierarchies, international order, and power transitions.

10.1 Theoretical Contributions

From a theoretical standpoint, this study contributes to existing knowledge by highlighting the distinctive features of status. Although status is a relational concept, existing research in IR does not study it relationally. Scholars traditionally define status as a state's ranking based on valued attributes, especially its military and economic capabilities. However, the conventional approach to status in IR leads to (1) generalized fetishism, as it mistakes social relations for actors' properties; (2) material reductionism, as it often equates status with the possession of material resources; and (3) a fallacy of composition, since it assumes that social outcomes (in this case, status inequality) derive from the intentions of actors. What is more, because status is insufficiently differentiated from material capabilities, it is not clear why we need the concept of status in the first place. As such, status remains in the background in IR theories, employed only when some aspect of international politics cannot be explained based on traditional factors like security or survival. IR scholars are thus caught in a conundrum: they claim that status is a fundamental element of international relations, but ultimately render it a residual category.

My theoretical framework integrates interdisciplinary insights to bring research on status in IR in line with research in the social sciences more broadly. In Chapter 2, I develop a conceptualization of status that highlights its fundamentally social nature. To conceptualize status, I rely on the concept formation methodology in the tradition of Giovanni Sartori—which provides clear guidelines for concept formation in the social sciences, and therefore allows me to consciously explore the trade-offs involved in defining a concept like status. My conceptualization seeks a balance between differentiation and the other desirable features in a concept, such as familiarity and theoretical utility. By doing so, it overcomes limitations from existing definitions of status in IR, which either (1) insufficiently different status from terms like material capabilities or hierarchy; or (2) excessively differentiate international status from existing definitions of status in other fields. Following the Weberian tradition in the study of status in the social sciences, I define status as an effective claim to social esteem that involves privileges. As a concept at the intersection of identity and power, status involves two necessary dimensions: recognition (or respect) and hierarchy (or ranking). On the one hand, status requires recognition: for an actor to achieve a particular status, others need to recognize it. On the other hand, status involves hierarchy: depending on a group's level of social esteem, its members become entitled to certain privileges.

Compared to existing definitions of status in IR, the proposed conceptualization offers important advantages. First, by shifting the focus from state attributes to state relations, my conceptualization overcomes the limitations that characterize existing definitions of status in IR—namely, generalized fetishism, material reductionism, and the fallacy of composition. Second, my conceptualization provides the added advantage of integrating two research traditions in IR that rarely come into dialogue: mainstream approaches that treat status as a means to an end; and alternative approaches that treat status as an end in itself. Rather than adopting an either/or approach, I define status as a concept at the intersection of identity and power. Defined in this way, the concept of status can reach its full capacity in the study of international politics. Last but not least, my conceptualization emphasizes the fundamentally social nature of status, instead of reducing status to either individual or material factors. By showing that status is analytically distinct from notions like material capabilities, I lay the conceptual groundwork to consider the role that status plays in important phenomena in international politics that are still rarely associated with status, such as international cooperation and the maintenance of international order.

Building on these conceptual foundations, Chapter 3 draws from interdisciplinary research to develop a network theory of status. I argue that status depends on states' positions in a social arrangement, rather than on the qualities of states. That is, the fundamental causal mechanisms behind status inequality operate in the domain of state relations, rather than inside states. In particular, my argument involves three new propositions about the relationship between status and inequality among states. First, status distinctions legitimate inequality because they create categorical differences between those types of states considered superior—and therefore deserving of exclusive privileges—and the rest. Second, status distinctions stabilize inequality because they set expectations about which types of states should exert authority in a given situation, shaping interaction outcomes. Third, once established, status distinctions reinforce inequality independently from material conditions, via cumulative advantage mechanisms: The higher standing a state enjoys, the more it attracts additional recognition. As such, fundamental relational effects drive status recognition in the international system. To begin, the structure of state relations itself shapes the conditions for status attainment. High-status states tend to attract more recognition because of their popularity, to enjoy privileges that beget more status, and to maintain levels of solidarity among themselves that low-status states cannot afford to establish with one another. In addition, the relevance of a given state attribute for status recognition is socially defined. An attribute becomes relevant for status recognition because of its symbolic value, which depends on the social context.

Compared to traditional assumptions about the sources of status, my theoretical framework provides two important advantages. To begin, this framework offers new answers to fundamental questions about status that the conventional approach in IR insufficiently addresses. First, because the conventional approach treats status as a function of states' attributes, and especially of their material capabilities, it cannot explain why status and material capabilities often mismatch in practice. By contrast, I argue that we should not expect status to go hand in hand with material capabilities because status depends on states' positions in a social arrangement, rather than on the things that states have. Second, while existing studies lack a general framework to explain why certain state attributes matter for status recognition, I argue that a given state attribute becomes relevant for status recognition when actors share the belief that it symbolizes a latent quality: state competence. Besides updating the international pecking order, critical junctures like major wars also serve to update the standards that inform status recognition among states. Third, while existing studies leave the relationship between state attributes and status unexamined, I argue that state attributes play only an indirect role in the process of status recognition. State attributes impact recognition because of their symbolic value, which can only be understood in the context of state relations. By directly addressing each of these questions, my theoretical framework improves our understanding of the processes whereby states ultimately achieve status.

In addition, my theoretical framework provides a second advantage: it establishes the analytical foundations for the development of a novel empirical strategy to study status. To investigate the sources of international status, I examine the overall patterns of state relations, rather than merely ranking states based on certain attributes. In line with my theoretical framework, I develop a relational empirical strategy that is consistent with the social nature of status. My conceptualization of status provides a clear roadmap for the operationalization of status and the validation of my proposed measure. Since embassies express recognition among sovereign states, I use embassy exchange data as a proxy measure of status recognition. But while previous studies use diplomatic representation data at the state level, ranking states based on the proportion of representations received, my analysis uses information about the structure of diplomatic relations—such as who sends a representation to whom, what their previous history of relations (or lack thereof) is, and what ties they share with third parties. Using this information, my analysis reveals higher-order patterns in status recognition that are not observable at the state or the dyad levels. In chapters 7 through 9, I use social network analysis tools that enable me to assess how the structure of state relations itself shapes the conditions for status attainment in the international system. As a result, my analysis uncovers the relational effects that drive recognition among states.

10.2 Empirical Contributions

The empirical results demonstrate the analytical leverage provided by a relational approach to status. Compared to conventional approaches that begin and end with state attributes, my relational model performs much better in theorizing the underlying dynamics of the diplomatic network. To begin, my theoretical framework provides a unified model with multiple observable implications at different levels of analysis. These observable implications involve not only state attributes, but also purely structural effects—whereby the structure of state relations itself shapes the conditions for status attainment. And importantly, the analysis conducted in chapters 7 through 9 supports each of these expectations. In fact, my relational perspective reveals important patterns in status recognition that traditional approaches cannot accommodate. Conventional approaches based on state attributes cannot account for the main results, which involve both network effects (or structural dependencies) and homophily (or similarity) effects.

Overall, my analysis shows that status recognition depends on a state's position in a social arrangement, rather than on its attributes. As shown in Table 10.1, the fundamental causal mechanisms behind status inequality operate in the domain of state relations, rather than inside states. Systematic social processes, which cannot be reduced to the qualities of states, drive recognition in the international system. In fact, three findings demonstrate that state attributes play only a secondary role in the process of status recognition. First, it is attribute similarity, rather than the possession of attributes per se, that drives recognition among states. States tend to recognize those states that are similar to them—rather than the states with the largest portfolio of a given attribute, as argued by the conventional approach. Second, because high status involves a distinctive way of life rather than separate attributes like nuclear weapons or aircraft carriers, state attributes need to go well together in order to evoke status recognition. Finally, state attributes become relevant for status recognition because of their symbolic value, which depends on the social context. Because the relevance of a given state attribute for status recognition depends on the prevailing conceptions of state competence in the international system, it is bound to change over time. As such, studies of

Table 10.1. The Relational Sources of Status: Main Results

	Tie formation level	*Structural level*
Connectedness	• States are more likely to recognize states that reciprocate recognition or states with whom they share diplomatic partners.	• The diplomatic network has a core-periphery structure; • The size of the network's core remains stable over time.
Consensus effects	• States that already host many embassies are more likely to receive additional embassies.	• The composition of the network's core remains stable over time.
Commonality	• States recognize those states that have similar fundamental values and material resources as them.	• States in the network's core have similar attributes, which states in the periphery lack; • Fundamental values moderate the impact of material resources on core membership.
Standard-setting and gatekeeping	• Under the nonproliferation regime, nuclear weapons states are *not* more likely to exchange embassies among themselves.	• Under the nonproliferation regime, a state does *not* receive more embassies once it acquires nuclear weapons.

status that focus on state attributes risk missing the forest for the trees.

Most importantly, the analysis shows that status results from a set of network effects, whereby the configuration of state relations shapes the condition for status attainment independently from the qualities of states. High-status states enjoy a cumulative advantage in status attainment, which derives from their social position rather than from their attributes. In particular, three mechanisms make status self-reinforcing. First, status involves social closure, or the drawing of a boundary between the established group and outsiders. High-status actors differentiate themselves from outsiders by adopting a distinctive way of life and by establishing dense relations among themselves but sparse relations with outsiders. As such, high-status states exhibit levels of solidarity among themselves that low status states cannot afford to maintain with one another. Second, high-status states tend to attract additional recognition simply by virtue of their popularity. Consensus effects shape status recognition: the more a state receives recognition, the more others deem it worthy of recognition. Third, high status involves privileges that beget more status: high-status states act as standard-setters, shaping the criteria for status recognition; and as gatekeepers, shaping recognition decisions. Next, I discuss each of these mechanisms in turn.

10.2.1 Social Closure

Social closure is the first relational process that shapes status recognition in the international system. As expected, the analysis demonstrates that both aspects of social closure—connectedness and commonality—drive recognition in the diplomatic network. To begin, social closure involves connectedness: High-status states share dense relations among themselves but sparse relations with outsiders. Therefore, sharing relational ties, especially with high-status states, brings status. Accordingly, Chapter 7 shows that states prove more likely to recognize (1) states that reciprocate recognition (reciprocity effect) or (2) states with whom they share diplomatic partners (transitivity effect). Likewise, Chapter 8 shows that the diplomatic network has a highly centralized form—a core-periphery structure, rather than a community structure. States are divided into a densely-connected core, comprised mostly of Western or Western-aligned states, and a sparsely-connected periphery. Moreover, status distinctions encourage solidarity among high-status states but undermine solidarity among low-status states. Regardless of whether the sending state belongs in the core or the periphery, the core is the preferred destination for sending embassies. In fact, the structure of the diplomatic network becomes more and more similar to a core-periphery structure over time. Since the early nineteenth century, states in the core are increasingly likely to recognize one another, while recognition between states in the periphery remains stagnant and rare.

In addition, the analysis demonstrates that the second aspect of social closure—commonality—influences recognition in the international system. High-status states differentiate themselves from outsiders by adopting a distinctive way of life, or a set of behaviors and practices that is difficult to mimic. Against expectations from the conventional approach, it is attribute similarity (rather than the possession of attributes per se) that drives recognition in the diplomatic network. As Chapter 7 shows, states recognize those states that are similar to them, rather than the states with the largest share of certain attributes. And although traditional approaches emphasize material resources as symbols of international status, fundamental values also matter for status recognition. States recognize those states that have similar fundamental values and material resources as them. In particular, states are more likely to recognize those states with whom they share similar levels of democracy, human rights, economic liberalism, and military capability.

Likewise, Chapter 8 shows that states in the core of the diplomatic network have similar attributes, which states at the margins lack. But importantly, high status is not simply a matter of acquiring material resources, as argued by traditional approaches. Rather, recognition requires conformity to the predominant conceptions of state competence—a gestalt that involves not only material resources but also fundamental values associated with the West. While richer and militarily stronger states states are more likely to belong in the core of the diplomatic network, fundamental values moderate the effect of material resources on core membership. Compared to states that score highly both on material resources and fundamental values, states with a high material resources score but a low fundamental values score are less likely to belong in the network's core. As such, high status involves not only the ability to fend for oneself under anarchy, as argued by traditional approaches, but also a Western standard of civilization.

10.2.2 Consensus Effects

Besides social closure, a second relational process shapes status recognition in the international system. Status depends on peer attribution, as high-status states are those recognized as such by their peers. But because status is difficult to ascertain, actors rely on each other's evaluations to decide how to rank one another. Actors influence each other's status evaluations, often leading to the emergence of a working consensus about who ranks where in a given status hierarchy. Such consensus effects make status self-reinforcing: the more a state receives recognition, the more others deem it worthy of recognition. By virtue of their social position (rather than their qualities), high-status states thus enjoy considerable advantage in the process of status recognition.

As expected, the analysis demonstrates that consensus effects drive recognition in the diplomatic network. High-status states tend to receive more recognition simply because of their social position, rather than because of their attributes. As Chapter 7 shows, popularity itself brings status: States prove more likely to recognize those states that already receive recognition, even after we account for their qualities or the things that they have. As such, the structure of state relations itself shapes the conditions for status mobility, independently from the qualities of states. Likewise, Chapter 8 shows that there is a high persistence over time in states' positions either in the core or the periphery of the diplomatic network. To begin, the core remains stable in its size. Although the number of states substantially increases over time, the core remains an exclusive club, which only a small portion of states can join. In addition, the core remains stable in its composition. Most states maintain their positions either in the core or the periphery of the diplomatic network. While a minority of states consistently belongs in the network core, most states never reach the core.

10.2.3 Standard-Setting and Gatekeeping

Finally, a third relational process shapes status recognition in the international system. High status involves privileges that beget more status. In particular, high-status states act as standard-setters, shaping the criteria that guide recognition among states; and as gatekeepers, shaping recognition decisions. As such, the relevance of a given attribute for status recognition is socially defined. As Chapter 9 shows, state attributes matter for status recognition because of their symbolic value, which depends on the social context. In that chapter, I examine the relationship between state attributes and status recognition by focusing on the case of nuclear weapons—a relatively unexplored case that involves opposite expectations depending on the theoretical approach used. On the one hand, the conventional approach in IR assumes that status depends on a state's attributes, and especially its material capabilities. Because nuclear weapons are highly destructive and relatively scarce, states should therefore receive more recognition when they have nuclear weapons.

On the other hand, my relational approach implies that nuclear weapons should not confer status on the states that acquired them after 1970, for two reasons. First, a global movement against nuclear weapons stigmatized them as weapons of mass destruction after the Second World War. High-status states played a key role in this process, acting as standard-setters and gatekeepers. To begin, central countries renounced nuclear weapons during the postwar period. Standard-setters included Western European countries—such as Ireland, Italy, Germany, Norway, and Sweden—as well as regional leaders like Egypt and Japan. By setting an example, these countries played an important role in legitimizing the commitment to nonproliferation. In addition, high-status states acted as gatekeepers, enforcing the commitment to nonproliferation via intergovernmental organizations and international sanctions. Once nonproliferation became the norm, nuclearization became a sign of deviant behavior. Second, and as a result, nuclear proliferators tended to deviate from the Western way of life associated with high status, which involves fundamental values like liberal democracy. Under the nonproliferation regime, new nuclear weapons states were thus bound to garner international condemnation for deviating from the existing recognition standards, rather than to accrue social esteem for increasing their military capabilities.

As expected, my analysis demonstrates that nuclear weapons do not confer status in the contemporary international system. Using the synthetic control method, I first show that nuclearization has not improved a country's international standing since the NPT came into force; in fact, we observe quite the opposite in some cases. Compared to similar countries that did not acquire nuclear weapons, those countries that acquired nuclear weapons since 1970 received either less recognition (in the cases of Israel and South Africa) or a similar level of recognition (in the cases of India and Pakistan). That is, against expectations from the conventional approach, nuclear weapons had either a negative impact or no discernible impact on a country's status. Neither do nuclear weapons serve as a basis for social closure in the international system. Despite acquiring nuclear weapons, certain states—like China until 1990, Israel, North Korea, and South Africa—receive limited recognition from other nuclear weapons states. Overall, nuclearization does not ensure recognition within the nuclear club, especially from Western states. Instead, factors other than nuclear weapons—such as whether a country conforms to Western fundamental values—seem to play a key role in determining the recognition it receives within the nuclear club. Though surprising from a conventional standpoint, these results are perfectly consistent with my theoretical framework, demonstrating once again the analytical leverage provided by my relational approach to status.

10.3 Implications

By showing that status is a distinctive phenomenon both conceptually and empirically, this book aims to move status from its current position as a residual category in IR—insufficiently differentiated from material capabilities or the things that states have—to its rightful place as a concept central to the study of international politics. By deploying an appropriate set of analytical and methodological tools, this study adequately grasps the distinctive feature of status: its social nature. By studying status in its own right, I hope to show why it matters for international politics. The concept of status can achieve its full potential in IR scholarship when we give due attention to its fundamentally social nature. By doing so, we can consider not only how status may increase a state's propensity for conflict, as many existing studies argue, but also how status plays a key role in phenomena that have drawn increasing scholarly attention in recent years, but that are rarely linked to status. As I discuss next, my analysis generates new lessons for research in three important areas: international hierarchies, international order, and power transitions.

10.3.1 Hierarchies in International Relations

To begin, my analysis offers new lessons for research on hierarchy in international relations.[1] While the notion of inequality is not new in the study of international politics, IR scholars typically chalk it up to differences in the qualities of states. Scholars usually adopt an individualist approach to account for inequality in international relations—assuming that states differentiate themselves into unequal positions in a social hierarchy (and therefore obtain differential access to privileges) because they differ in salient qualities.[2] This assumption resembles the idea of meritocracy, according to which actors obtain differential access to resources or influence on the basis of their individual talent, ability, or effort. In particular, scholars usually ascribe inequality to the uneven distribution

[1] In recent years, IR research has paid increasing attention to the hierarchical aspect of world politics; for reviews, see Mattern and Zarakol 2016; Zarakol 2017. However, hierarchy and status are rarely integrated in the same research; for notable exceptions to this trend, see Schulz 2019; Keene 2014.

[2] Pouliot's analysis of international pecking orders is a notable exception to this trend. See Pouliot 2016.

of material capabilities among states. Coupling individualism with a materialist approach, most scholars treat hierarchy as a function of disparities in the material capabilities of states.[3] As such, most research treats international hierarchy as a ranking of states along certain attributes or issue areas, especially military and economic. And by assuming that hierarchy is a function of the qualities of states, existing studies suggest that the best strategy to achieve status involves acquiring certain attributes, especially economic and military capabilities.

By contrast, this study departs from the traditional approach to hierarchy in international relations in two important ways. First, my analysis demonstrates that international hierarchies of status are fundamentally social, rather than based on the qualities of states or the things that they have. To begin, network effects shape status recognition. That is, the configuration of state relations shapes the condition for status attainment independently from the qualities of states. And because status depends on peer recognition, state attributes play a secondary role in the process of status recognition. In fact, state attributes only acquire symbolic value in the context of state relations. As such, this study departs from the traditional approach to hierarchy in a second way: it demonstrates that international hierarchies of status are far from meritocratic systems. Status depends on a state's position in a social arrangement, rather than on its individual qualities.

Given its innovative approach, my analysis offers novel implications for hierarchy in international relations. In particular, the relational sources of status have opposite implications for high- and low-status states. On the one hand, it is easier to maintain status than to gain it. High-status states enjoy a cumulative advantage in status attainment, which results from their social position rather than directly from their attributes. To begin, consensus effects make status self-reinforcing: the more a state receives recognition, the more others deem it worthy of recognition. That is, high-status states tend to attract more recognition simply by virtue of their popularity. And because status involves social closure, status recognition follows a principle of transitivity: Sharing relational ties, especially with well-connected states, brings status. As such, a state's existing relations influence its propensity to receive recognition. Status distinctions encourage solidarity among high-status

[3] See, for example, Lake 2009, Ch. 3.

states but undermine solidarity among low-status states. In addition, high status involves privileges that beget more status: high-status states define the rules of the game, shaping the standards that guide recognition in the international system. It is no coincidence that, to this day, status evaluations are based on a Western way of life—a gestalt that includes not only material resources but also fundamental values associated with the West, such as liberal democracy.

On the other hand, the relational sources of status have much less favorable implications for low-status states: they imply that it is more difficult to gain status than to maintain it. While states at the core of the international system maintain their status independently from their qualities, via cumulative advantage mechanisms, states at the margins struggle to obtain recognition even when they change their qualities. Because a state's existing relations influence its propensity to receive recognition, status mobility constitutes the exception rather than the rule. While well-connected states tend to attract additional recognition, sparsely-connected states do not. And while high-status states typically act as rule makers, low-status states typically act as rule takers, pressured to assimilate into the way of life associated with high-status states. High standing involves a distinctive way of life, rather than isolated attributes that can be more easily acquired. Status depends on a gestalt or ensemble of attributes, including both material resources and fundamental values, that is simply out of reach for most states. In fact, the adoption of fundamental values such as liberal democracy typically requires not only material resources (or a certain level of economic growth), but also the human and social capital to effectively incorporate into the domestic realm a set of values imported from abroad, which originated at regions of the world whose political traditions differ from the local ones. Moreover, countries whose leaders question the liberal democratic foundations of the current international order may oppose these fundamental values to begin with.

For status-seeking states, the relational patterns uncovered by this study imply that status recognition is not simply a matter of acquiring certain attributes, such as nuclear weapons. Contrary to the expectations from the conventional approach, investing in material resources may be a counterproductive strategy to achieve status. Although material capabilities play a role in status recognition, fundamental values moderate their impact on status. In fact, depending on a state's ensemble of attributes, the acquisition of military capabilities may even compromise the state's standing. The acquisition of nuclear weapons by South Africa, for example, consolidated its status as a deviant state under the apartheid regime, rather than catapulting it to the status of a great power. More broadly, those states that acquired nuclear weapons despite the nonproliferation regime have faced widespread international condemnation, rather than being recognized as great powers.

But perhaps most importantly, the analysis demonstrates that status recognition is not a matter decided at the state or even the dyadic levels. As the results show, state attributes have a limited impact on status recognition. Crucially, the importance of state attributes for status recognition is socially defined. To begin, states recognize those states that are similar to them, rather than the states with the most material capabilities. Moreover, the symbolic value of state attributes depends on prevailing conceptions of state competence, and especially on who the high-status states are and how they behave. Therefore, the relevance of state attributes for status recognition is bound to change over time, even if the intrinsic properties of said attributes remain constant. Rather than being a matter decided at the state level (through the acquisition of attributes), status recognition depends on the broader social environment—as it requires reconfiguring existing social arrangements and, at the highest levels, ultimately reshaping predominant conceptions of state competence.

10.3.2 International Order

In addition, this study generates new lessons for research on international order. Overall, this book demonstrates that the role of status in international politics is broader, and more complex, than traditionally assumed. Since existing research typically treats as an actor motivation, it tends to neglect the relationship between status and international order. At the same time, this research indicates that status hinders international order in two ways. First, because previous research focuses on the relationship between status dissatisfaction and conflict, it tends to equate status-seeking behavior with aggressive behavior. Second, because previous research assumes that status is a function of a state's qualities, and especially its material capabilities, it suggests that the best strategy to achieve status involves acquiring military capabilities—a strategy that is bound to initiate security dilemmas, thus sowing instability in the international system.

By contrast, this study connects status and international order in two ways. To begin, my analysis indicates that, while status may exacerbate conflict, it can also promote global governance. Status does not necessarily constitute a system-destabilizing motivation. Rather, status may also motivate states to engage in cooperative behavior. Because fundamental values like liberal democracy are relevant for status recognition, hierarchies of status create structural incentives for states to adopt the prevailing norms in the international system. This carries with it important implications. Among them: status-seeking behavior may also be cooperative behavior—that is, status-seeking states may choose to adopt prevailing norms, rather than to initiate security dilemmas by building up their military capabilities. As such, status-seeking behavior does not imply aggressive behavior; rather, it may also contribute to the maintenance of international order.

Perhaps most importantly, my analysis offers novel implications at the level of the international system—an area that remains relatively unexplored in existing research on status. On the one hand, IR scholars have long acknowledged that questions of status lie at the heart of international order. As Gilpin puts it, status is the "everyday currency of international relations, much as authority is the central ordering feature of domestic society."[4] In his words, while authority ensures that commands will be obeyed in domestic politics, in international politics "both power and prestige function to ensure that the lesser states in the system will obey the commands of the dominant state or states."[5] However, the connection between status and international order remained undertheorized in the discipline because status was insufficiently differentiated from military capabilities. Defined as a state's reputation for military power, status lost its theoretical utility. If we assume that status corresponds to a state's military capabilities plus an (unexplained) error term, then it follows that high-status states maintain global stability based on the use of force or its (implicit) threat. But if this is the case, status becomes epiphenomenal: it is not clear what status adds to the maintenance of international order that military capabilities do not already explain.

This study overcomes such a limitation in two steps. First, I differentiate status from material

[4] Gilpin 1981, 31.
[5] Gilpin 1981, 30.

capabilities by conceptualizing status as an effective claim to social esteem that involves privileges. In my conceptualization, status refers to a social ranking based on peer recognition and social esteem, rather than based on the distribution of material capabilities among states. Second, this conceptualization enables me to advance new propositions about the relationship between status and inequality. To begin, I argue that status does much more than signal a state's coercive capabilities to other states; crucially, status legitimates inequality. To become durable, inequality requires some form of legitimation. Status distinctions play an important role in the legitimation of inequality—as they involve not only the drawing of a boundary between a group and outsiders, but also the establishment of a relation of superiority and inferiority between the group and outsiders. Based on status distinctions, certain types of actors are presumed to be more competent than others. By creating categorical differences among actors, status distinctions serve to justify why certain types are entitled to privileges that other types lack. That is, status distinctions rationalize inequality, framing as logical (or even natural) the differential access to privileges among actors.

In addition, I argue that status distinctions stabilize inequality by shaping social perceptions and behavior. By drawing a boundary between those types perceived as superior and inferior, status distinctions create expectations about the ability of either type to exert authority in a given situation. These expectations act as focal points, creating self-fulfilling prophecies during social interactions. Moreover, they generate backlash when behavior deviates from what is expected. In particular, high-status actors tend to be especially wary of behavior by low-status actors that may be perceived as challenging established expectations for authority in a given situation. Finally, I argue that, once status distinctions are established, status reinforces inequality independently from material conditions, via cumulative advantage mechanisms. High-status states tend to attract more recognition by virtue of their popularity, to enjoy privileges that beget more status, and to exhibit levels of solidarity that low-status states cannot afford to maintain with one another.

Overall, my analysis implies that status plays a distinct—and fundamental—role in the maintenance of international order. To begin, status distinctions legitimate inequality because those states at the top are perceived as more competent than others, and therefore deserving of privileges that most states lack. In addition, status distinctions stabilize international order because they establish a standard of state competence in the image of high-status states. While mainstream approaches posit that great powers maintain international order using military or institutional instruments,[6] my analysis demonstrates that great powers also lead by example, setting standards that other states adopt. As previous research shows, high-status states play a key role during critical junctures like the aftermath of major wars, shaping the institutions that they will use to manage international relations thereafter. To the extent that shared norms and institutional structures exist in international politics, they are strongly influenced by those at the top. But crucially, my analysis demonstrates that critical junctures do more than establish a new pecking order: they also shape the conceptions of state competence that inform status evaluations thereafter, laying the foundations for the differentiation of states into positions that involve differential levels of rights and obligations. Under the circumstances that characterize international relations, status thus plays a crucial role in determining who gets what, when, and how. Most of the time in international politics, we are arguably in the realm of status—where actors adjudicate disputes based on social esteem and voluntary deference, rather than based on the use of force or its threat.

10.3.3 Power Transitions

Finally, this study generates new lessons for research on power transitions. To begin, my analysis offers new insight into why disagreements about status can lead to hegemonic wars. Previous work argues that wars result when states receive less recognition than their capabilities would warrant, or when the established powers resist change. However, we still know little about why this happens. Why do the established powers treat some rising powers as legitimate (such as the United States in the early nineteenth century) but others as revisionist (such as Japan in the early twentieth century)? This question matters especially today, when the future of the international order is uncertain and great power rivalry is once again on the rise. And to address this question, we need to understand the sources of international status. Emerging powers may adopt different strategies to achieve in-

[6] See Gilpin 1981; Ikenberry 2001. For an excellent review of these approaches, see Schweller 2001.

ternational recognition. But what determines whether emerging powers will ultimately be satisfied with their status? When should we expect the established powers to recognize an emerging power as an equal—or instead to deny it the desired recognition?

My analysis suggests that disagreements about status emerge when established and emerging powers have conflicting conceptions of state competence.[7] As the previous chapters show, status recognition depends on prevailing conceptions of state competence; nowadays, high status involves not only material capabilities, but also a Western standard of civilization that includes fundamental values like liberal democracy. As such, we should expect the established powers to recognize as equals those states that overall conform to the way of life associated with high status, but to deny recognition to those states that deviate from such a way of life. In the contemporary international system, the latter category includes militarily strong states—such as China and Russia—that do not adopt the fundamental values associated with the West. My analysis thus implies that, to assess whether hegemonic transitions will be violent, we should compare the models of statehood put forward by either side. If the hegemonic transition from Britain to the U.S. was peaceful, since both countries shared a similar conception of state competence based on a Western tradition, a potential transition from the U.S. to China is more likely to spell conflict—as China increasingly questions the liberal democratic foundations of the contemporary international order.

On the other hand, my analysis provides insight into when the emerging powers may be dissatisfied with their status. Previous studies recommend that, to address status dissatisfaction, the established powers should accommodate emerging powers within the existing international institutions. However, this proposition neglects the political implications of status recognition. As I discuss in Chapter 2, while status requires recognition, it cannot be reduced to recognition because it involves privileges. To effectively recognize an actor as member of a group, current members need to walk their talk—that is, they need to share their privileges with the newcomer. It is not

[7] See Goddard 2018; Haas 2005 for related arguments. While Goddard argues that the peacefulness of power transitions depends on whether the established power accepts the rhetoric used by the rising power to legitimize its aims, Haas posits that the peacefulness of power transitions depends on the ideological affinity between established and emerging powers. Complementing this research, my analysis suggests that the peacefulness of power transitions depends on whether established and rising powers share similar conceptions of state competence.

enough, for example, for the established powers to pay lip service to an emerging power's desire to be acknowledged as an equal. Status recognition cannot be undertaken on the cheap, without the corresponding privileges. To effectively recognize an emerging power as an equal, the established powers need to share with it the privileges of great power status. In the case of great power status, recognition involves, at a minimum, inviting the emerging power to sit at the main table and help manage international relations; and at a maximum, letting the emerging power reshape the foundational institutions of the contemporary international order. That is, recognition of great power status ultimately implies a redefinition of the prevailing conceptions of state competence in the international system; a Chinese-led international order, for example, would not be the same as the Pax Americana. For these reasons, it seems unrealistic to expect an emerging power like China to be satisfied within the international institutions it did not create.

At the same time, my analysis suggests that a potential power transition from the U.S. to China could happen even in the absence of a major war between the two countries. As my analysis shows, status recognition is associated with state competence more broadly, rather than with military capabilities more specifically. As such, an emerging power can signal its competence in many ways other than winning a direct war against the established power. Indeed, emerging powers may prefer alternative strategies nowadays, especially given the increasing costs of war and the decreasing benefits of conquest in the modern international system. Therefore, IR scholars should adopt a more holistic approach when considering a potential power transition. In the twentieth-first century, disputes for superiority between established and emerging powers will likely play out in multiple arenas. Such disputes may involve wars waged by proxy by at least one of the sides, much like they did under the shadow of mutually assured destruction during the Cold War. But in addition, such disputes also involve the use of less violent means, as in the cyber attacks against American targets conducted by Chinese and Russian agents; the election interference campaigns against Western targets by Russian agents, which aim to delegitimize democracy as a superior form of government; or in beneficence contests—for example through the provision of foreign aid during the global coronavirus pandemic, or via foreign assistance programs like China's Belt and Road Initiative.

Crucially, disputes over status are disputes for legitimacy. As I argue in this book, status distinctions play a key role in the legitimation of material inequality. Based on status distinctions, certain states become entitled to exclusive privileges because they are perceived as more competent than others—not simply on the battlefield, as assumed by the conventional approach in IR, but across multiple dimensions. Because great powers also lead by example, continued global leadership requires upholding the existing standards of state competence. In the last couple of decades, however, salient events have contributed to the perception abroad that the U.S. violates the liberal democratic standards it is expected to embody. Internationally, these events include the military interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan, which lacked a valid justification in the eyes of international audiences; the use of torture during the "war on terror," which came into relief during the Abu Ghraib scandal; and the indefinite detention, sometimes without a trial, of foreign nationals in Guantánamo Bay. Domestically, these events include the persistence of racialized police violence and voter suppression; the adoption of anti-immigrant policies that violate not only the right to due process but also the international obligation to protect refugees; and a growing dissatisfaction with the democratic rules of the game among sectors of the public, which foments the rise of ethnic nationalism and right-wing populism. As emerging powers like China and Russia leverage these events to question the legitimacy of the U.S.-led international order, it is incumbent upon Washington to persuade international audiences of liberal democracy's strengths as a form of government.

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A

Supplementary Empirical Materials

A.1 Supplementary Materials for Chapter 4

Table A.1. Distributions of Normalized Centrality Measures (2005)

Measure	*Minimum*	*Median*	*Mean*	*Maximum*
Degree	0	.15	.21	.89
Closeness	0	.35	.36	.49
Betweenness	0	0	0	.11
Eigenvector	0	.31	.36	1

Table A.2. Correlations Between Normalized Centrality Measures (2005)

	Degree	Closeness	Betweenness	Eigenvector
Degree	-			
Closeness	.75	-		
Betweenness	.72	.54	-	
Eigenvector	.97	.74	.59	-

Table A.3. Distribution of Out-Degree (Embassies Sent)

	1970	*1975*	*1980*	*1985*	*1990*	*1995*	*2000*	*2005*	*2010*
Minimum	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Median	20	24	24	24	25	24	24	28	33
Mean	27	33	34	35	36	34	35	39	43
Maximum	108	120	127	131	134	148	151	157	160

Table A.4. Power Law Tests (2005)

Data	*Alpha*	*Cut-off*	*Log-likelihood*	*KS*	*p*
In-Degree	3.81	60	-207.17	.08	.90
Out-Degree	4.41	67	-174.89	.07	.99

Notes: Results obtained via Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests; low *p*-values indicate a power-law distribution. See Clauset, Shalizi, and Newman 2009.

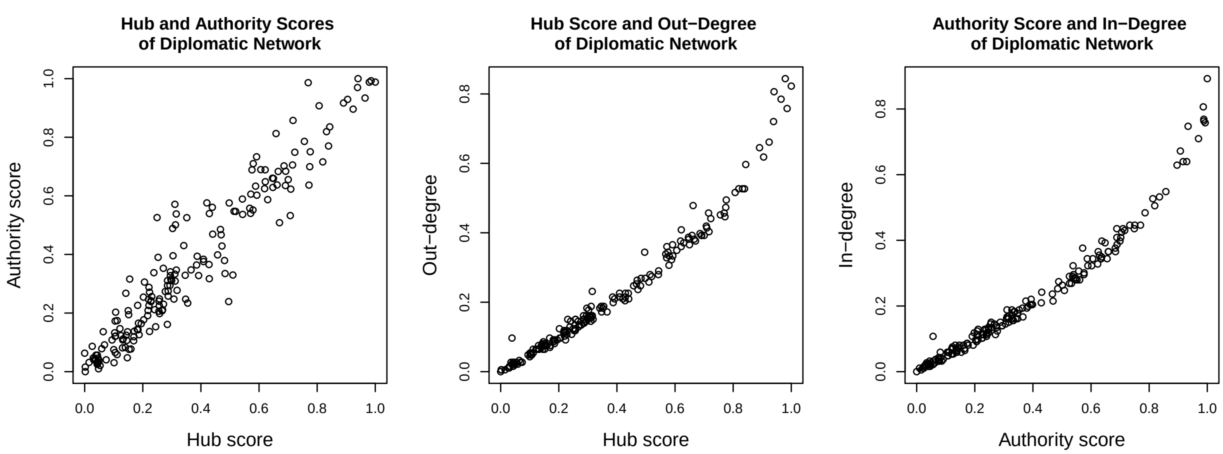

Figure A.1. Hub and Authority Scores (2005)

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Table A.5. Data Sources

Measure	*Source*	*Version*	*Coverage*
Democracy	Gleditsch and Ward (1997)	4.0	1970-2005
Human Rights	Gibney et al. (2015)	-	1980-2005
Econ. Freedom	Heritage Foundation (2015)	-	1995-2005
GDP, GDP/capita	Gleditsch (2002*b*)	6.0	1970-2005
Mat. capability*	Singer, Bremer, and Stuckey (1972); Singer (1988)	4.0	1970-2005
Nuclear Weapons	Singh and Way (2004)	-	1970-2000
Alliance	Leeds et al. (2002)	3.0	1970-2003
Trade	Barbieri, Keshk, and Pollins (2009)	3.0	1970-2005
Contiguity	Stinnett et al. (2002)	3.1	1970-2005
IGO Headquarter	Rohn (1997)	-	1970-1999

Note: *Includes military spending, population, and the CINC Score.

Table A.6. State-Level Variable Distributions for Model 1 (2000)

	GDP/ capita*	Military Spending*	Nuclear Weapons	Demo-cracy	Human Rights	Econ Freedom	IGO HQ
Min.	5.98	8.01	0	-10	1	8.90	0
Median	8.49	13.24	0	6	4	59.55	0
Mean	8.55	13.09	0.06	3.59	3.69	58.73	0.26
Max.	11.12	17.77	1	10	5	87.80	1

Note: *Log-transformed.

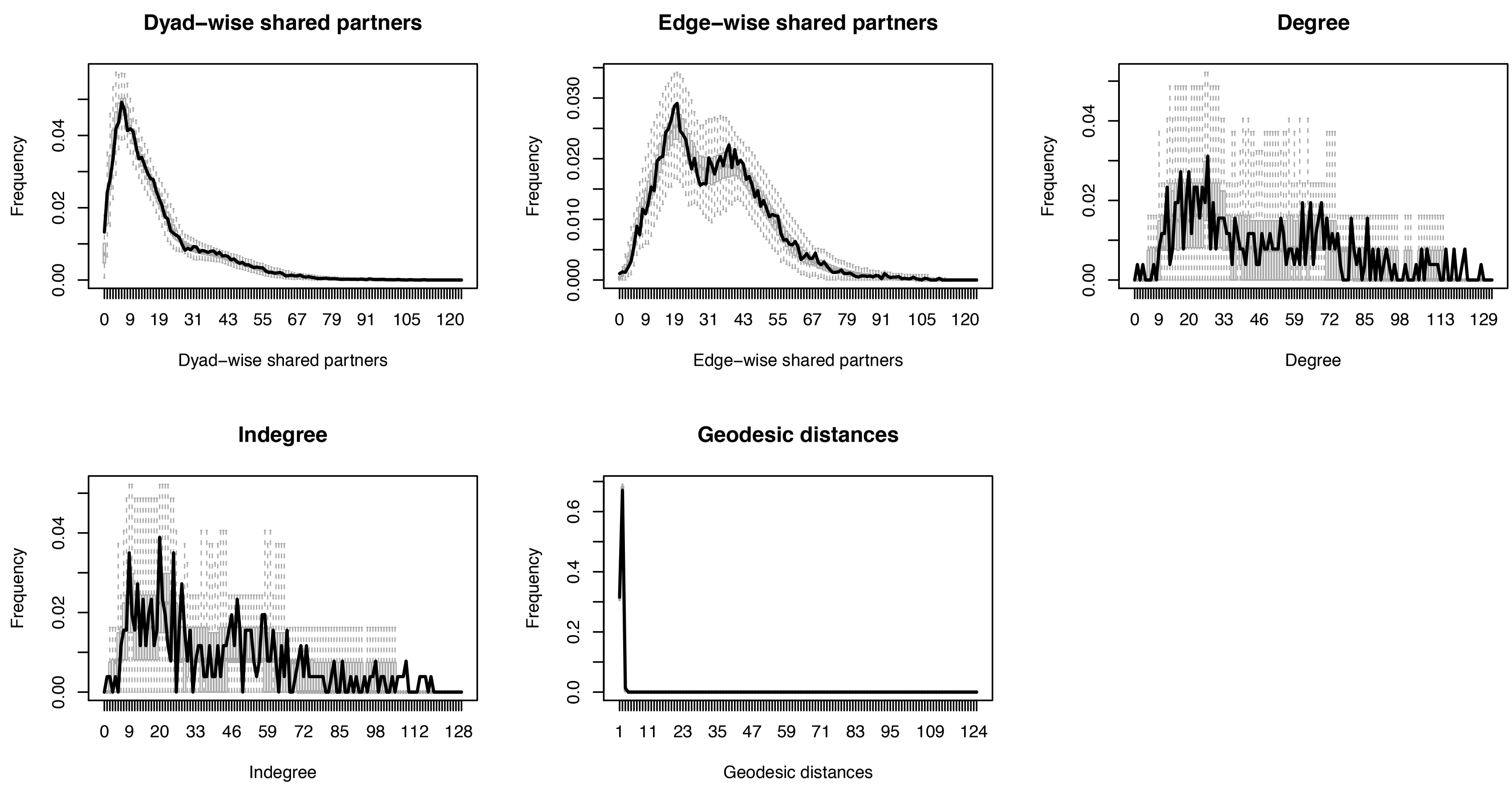

Figure A.2. Goodness-of-Fit of the TERGM of Diplomatic Ties (Model 1).
Note: Boxplots represent the distribution of statistics from 1,000 simulated networks generated from the estimated model. Solid lines represent predicted probabilities. Lines close to the simulated median indicate good model fit.

Table A.7. Degeneracy Checks: TERGM of Diplomatic Ties (Model 1)

	$t=2$						$t=3$					
	Observed	*Simulated*	*Estimate*	*s.e.*	*z*	*p*	*Observed*	*Simulated*	*Estimate*	*s.e.*	*z*	*p*
Popularity	133583.00	148412.18	14829.18	27089.58	0.55	0.58	166467.00	148412.18	-18054.82	27089.58	-0.67	0.51
Sociality	136244.00	149261.06	13017.06	24172.69	0.54	0.59	165934.00	149261.06	-16672.94	24172.69	-0.69	0.49
Reciprocity	1966.00	2107.56	141.56	267.62	0.53	0.60	2287.00	2107.56	-179.44	267.62	-0.67	0.50
Transitivity	202320.00	223329.84	21009.84	39483.86	0.53	0.59	251062.00	223329.84	-27732.16	39483.86	-0.70	0.48
Democracy$_{\|i-j\|}$	31945.00	32872.42	927.41	3253.02	0.29	0.78	34664.00	32872.42	-1791.59	3253.02	-0.55	0.58
Human Rights$_{\|i-j\|}$	6743.00	6674.53	-68.47	343.86	-0.20	0.84	6778.00	6674.53	-103.47	343.86	-0.30	0.76
Economic Freedom$_{\|i-j\|}$	58731.20	60601.42	1870.22	5305.65	0.35	0.72	64229.50	60601.42	-3628.08	5305.65	-0.68	0.49
GDP/capita$_{\|i-j\|}$	6306.80	6842.83	536.02	965.91	0.55	0.58	7555.39	6842.83	-712.56	965.91	-0.74	0.46
Military Spending$_{\|i-j\|}$	12162.09	12829.02	666.93	1474.09	0.45	0.65	13736.01	12829.02	-906.99	1474.09	-0.62	0.54
Nuclear Weapons$_{\|i-j\|}$	1133.00	1179.01	46.01	110.97	0.41	0.68	1248.00	1179.01	-68.99	110.97	-0.62	0.53
Democracy$_j$	19847.00	21936.68	2089.68	4116.79	0.51	0.61	24419.00	21936.68	-2482.32	4116.79	-0.60	0.55
Human Rights$_j$	17071.00	18805.14	1734.14	2800.57	0.62	0.54	20983.00	18805.14	-2177.86	2800.57	-0.78	0.44
Economic Freedom$_j$	286255.00	307397.91	21142.91	37981.87	0.56	0.58	335699.80	307397.91	-28301.89	37981.87	-0.75	0.46
GDP/Capita$_j$	42847.24	45714.27	2867.03	5283.01	0.54	0.59	49702.12	45714.27	-3987.84	5283.01	-0.75	0.45
Military Expenditure$_j$	69861.50	74078.51	4217.00	7989.10	0.53	0.60	80118.42	74078.51	-6039.91	7989.10	-0.76	0.45
Nuclear Weapons$_j$	583.00	609.39	26.39	73.08	0.36	0.72	650.00	609.39	-40.61	73.08	-0.56	0.58
Alliance	1443.00	1553.53	110.53	205.13	0.54	0.59	1678.00	1553.53	-124.47	205.13	-0.61	0.54
Trade	7610.53	7391.64	-218.89	925.77	-0.24	0.81	7401.20	7391.64	-9.57	925.77	-0.01	0.99
Contiguity	351.00	376.45	25.45	44.87	0.57	0.57	407.00	376.45	-30.55	44.87	-0.68	0.50
Same Region	596.00	639.34	43.34	86.44	0.50	0.62	688.00	639.34	-48.66	86.44	-0.56	0.57
IGO Headquarters	1822.00	2010.24	188.25	286.73	0.66	0.51	2193.00	2010.24	-182.75	286.73	-0.64	0.52
GDP/capita$_i$	43005.92	45825.48	2819.56	5235.73	0.54	0.59	49770.45	45825.48	-3944.97	5235.73	-0.75	0.45
Tie Stability	4183.00	4384.92	201.92	359.35	0.56	0.57	4667.00	4384.92	-282.08	359.35	-0.78	0.43
Edges	4823.00	5119.63	296.63	568.11	0.52	0.60	5546.00	5119.63	-426.37	568.11	-0.75	0.45

Notes: Checks compare the distributions from 1,000 simulated networks generated from Model 1 to the observed distributions for all model statistics at $t = 2$ (year 2000) and $t = 3$ (year 2005). Results from 2 "basis" networks (with 1,000 simulations each) and 2 observed "target" networks; p-values based on a two-sample t-tests. Small p-values indicate a significant difference between simulations and observed networks (or degeneracy).

Table A.8. TERGM of Diplomatic Ties for 1995-2005 (Robustness Checks)

	Model 2† *State Attributes; No Network Effects*	*Model 3*† *State and Dyad Attributes; No Network Effects*	*Model 1* *Main Specification; With Network Effects*
Network Effects			
Popularity			0.031 (0.028; 0.039)*
Sociality			0.028 (0.026; 0.032)*
Reciprocity			1.756 (1.661; 1.827)*
Transitivity			0.005 (0.002; 0.006)*
Homophily			
$\text{Democracy}_{\lvert i-j \rvert}$		−0.006 (−0.021; 0.013)	−0.014 (−0.024; −0.002)*
$\text{Human Rights}_{\lvert i-j \rvert}$		−0.075 (−0.110; −0.030)*	−0.056 (−0.100; −0.017)*
$\text{Economic Freedom}_{\lvert i-j \rvert}$		−0.011 (−0.016; −0.005)*	−0.004 (−0.006; −0.001)*
$\text{GDP/capita}_{\lvert i-j \rvert}$		0.042 (0.006; 0.065)*	−0.053 (−0.090; −0.017)*
$\text{Military Spending}_{\lvert i-j \rvert}$		−0.069 (−0.100; −0.032)*	−0.013 (−0.030; −0.013)*
$\text{Nuclear Weapons}_{\lvert i-j \rvert}$		1.249 (1.247; 1.291)*	−0.002 (−0.025; 0.037)
State Attributes			
Democracy_j	−0.004 (−0.008; 0.004)	−0.006 (−0.013; 0.006)	−0.030 (−0.044; −0.013)*
Human Rights_j	0.086 (0.057; 0.125)*	0.077 (0.062; 0.114)*	0.051 (0.051; 0.057)*
$\text{Economic Freedom}_j$	−0.004 (−0.011; 0.002)	−0.007 (−0.013; −0.001)*	0.008 (0.008; 0.011)*
GDP/capita_j	−0.094 (−0.168; −0.053)*	−0.070 (−0.169; −0.015)*	−0.093 (−0.149; −0.065)*
$\text{Military Spending}_j$	0.350 (0.332; 0.383)*	0.366 (0.340; 0.409)*	0.034 (0.027; 0.034)*
Nuclear Weapons_j	0.098 (0.014; 0.156)*	−0.969 (−1.136; −0.852)*	−0.332 (−0.419; −0.270)*
Control Variables			
Alliance	1.114 (0.945; 1.334)*	1.134 (0.912; 1.451)*	1.041 (0.890; 1.263)*
Trade	0.005 (−0.003; 0.012)	0.007 (−0.003; 0.014)	0.007 (0.006; 0.007)*
Contiguity	1.160 (0.896; 1.439)*	1.085 (0.798; 1.355)*	0.693 (0.479; 0.886)*
Same Region	0.688 (0.554; 0.807)*	0.638 (0.523; 0.731)*	0.884 (0.814; 0.949)*
IGO Headquarters	0.222 (0.189; 0.261)*	0.269 (0.246; 0.309)*	0.054 (0.028; 0.082)*
GDP/capita_i	0.274 (0.267; 0.284)*	0.271 (0.267; 0.277)*	−0.021 (−0.026; −0.013)*
Tie Stability	4.870 (4.802; 4.987)*	4.765 (4.708; 4.880)*	3.610 (3.451; 3.806)*
Edges	−9.204 (−9.511; −8.865)*	−9.056 (−9.455; −8.673)*	−5.677 (−5.687; −5.677)*

Notes: $N_{1995} = 123$, $N_{2005} = 134$. Following network notation, *i* denotes the sending state and *j* denotes the receiving state.

* 0 outside 95% confidence interval based on 1,000 bootstrap replications.

† A TERGM without network effects is equivalent to a logit model (Cranmer and Desmarais, 2011, 79).

Table A.9. TERGM of Diplomatic Ties (Robustness Checks)

	Model 4 (*Democracy*)	*Model 5* (*Human Rights*)	*Model 6* (*Economic Freedom*)	*Model 1* (*Main Specification*)
Network Effects				
Popularity	0.030 (0.025; 0.034)*	0.023 (0.018; 0.028)*	0.029 (0.026; 0.035)*	0.031 (0.028; 0.039)*
Sociality	0.027 (0.024; 0.032)*	0.025 (0.023; 0.029)*	0.027 (0.026; 0.029)*	0.028 (0.026; 0.032)*
Reciprocity	1.888 (1.679; 2.078)*	1.674 (1.555; 1.796)*	1.739 (1.674; 1.792)*	1.756 (1.661; 1.827)*
Transitivity	0.005 (0.002; 0.007)*	0.006 (0.003; 0.008)*	0.004 (0.003; 0.005)*	0.005 (0.002; 0.006)*
Homophily				
Democracy$_{\|i-j\|}$	−0.017 (−0.024; −0.013)*			−0.014 (−0.024; −0.002)*
Human Rights$_{\|i-j\|}$		−0.044 (−0.061; −0.016)*		−0.056 (−0.100; −0.017)*
Economic Freedom$_{\|i-j\|}$			−0.003 (−0.004; −0.003)*	−0.004 (−0.006; −0.001)*
GDP/capita$_{\|i-j\|}$	−0.052 (−0.087; −0.005)*	−0.048 (−0.072; −0.022)*	−0.095 (−0.113; −0.073)*	−0.053 (−0.090; −0.017)*
Military Spending$_{\|i-j\|}$	−0.003 (−0.022; 0.009)	−0.009 (−0.019; −0.001)*	−0.008 (−0.018; −0.008)*	−0.013 (−0.030; −0.013)*
Nuclear Weapons$_{\|i-j\|}$	0.114 (−0.023; 0.239)	0.178 (0.102; 0.241)*	−0.091 (−0.170; −0.024)*	−0.002 (−0.025; 0.037)
State Attributes				
Democracy$_j$	−0.027 (−0.036; −0.015)*			−0.030 (−0.044; −0.013)*
Human Rights$_j$		0.007 (−0.048; 0.051)		0.051 (0.051; 0.057)*
Economic Freedom$_j$			0.006 (0.001; 0.010)*	0.008 (0.008; 0.011)*
GDP/capita$_j$	0.063 (0.015; 0.082)*	−0.039 (−0.098; 0.029)	−0.130 (−0.167; −0.097)*	−0.093 (−0.149; −0.065)*
Military Spending$_j$	−0.059 (−0.087; 0.012)	0.034 (0.009; 0.059)*	0.054 (0.041; 0.063)*	0.034 (0.027; 0.034)*
Nuclear Weapons$_j$	−0.200 (−0.406; −0.043)*	−0.348 (−0.632; −0.079)*	−0.475 (−0.612; −0.336)*	−0.332 (−0.419; −0.270)*
Control Variables				
Alliance	0.613 (0.425; 0.828)*	0.758 (0.538; 0.957)*	1.000 (0.876; 1.168)*	1.041 (0.890; 1.263)*
Trade	0.005 (−0.009; 0.021)	0.013 (0.003; 0.022)*	0.007 (0.006; 0.007)*	0.007 (0.006; 0.007)*
Contiguity	0.837 (0.684; 1.005)*	0.834 (0.598; 1.097)*	0.684 (0.461; 0.916)*	0.693 (0.479; 0.886)*
Same Region	0.759 (0.601; 0.898)*	0.826 (0.653; 0.983)*	0.886 (0.824; 0.947)*	0.884 (0.814; 0.949)*
IGO Headquarters	0.087 (0.012; 0.163)*	0.028 (−0.031; 0.134)	−0.045 (−0.045; −0.035)*	0.054 (0.028; 0.082)*
GDP/capita$_i$	−0.019 (−0.033; 0.002)	−0.010 (−0.043; 0.031)	−0.028 (−0.031; −0.025)*	−0.021 (−0.026; −0.013)*
Tie Stability	3.253 (2.901; 3.547)*	3.550 (3.423; 3.707)*	3.632 (3.469; 3.817)*	3.610 (3.451; 3.806)*
Edges	−5.010 (−5.720; −4.608)*	−5.475 (−6.149; −5.085)*	−5.391 (−5.420; −5.365)*	−5.677 (−5.687; −5.677)*
Period	1970-2005	1980-2005	1995-2005	1995-2005
N	$N_{1970} = 122$, $N_{2005} = 144$	$N_{1980} = 132$, $N_{2005} = 159$	$N_{1995} = 131$, $N_{2005} = 140$	$N_{1995} = 123$, $N_{2005} = 134$

Notes: Following network notation, *i* denotes the sending state and *j* denotes the receiving state.

* 0 outside 95% confidence interval based on 1,000 bootstrap replications.

Table A.10. TERGM of Diplomatic Ties for 1995-2005 (Robustness Checks)

	Model 8 (*GDP and Population*)	*Model 9* (*CINC Score*)	*Model 1* (*Main Specification*)
Network Effects			
Popularity	0.032 (0.028; 0.039)*	0.032 (0.030; 0.037)*	0.031 (0.028; 0.039)*
Sociality	0.027 (0.027; 0.028)*	0.025 (0.023; 0.029)*	0.028 (0.026; 0.032)*
Reciprocity	1.757 (1.656; 1.837)*	1.744 (1.639; 1.818)*	1.756 (1.661; 1.827)*
Transitivity	0.004 (0.001; 0.006)*	0.007 (0.004; 0.008)*	0.005 (0.002; 0.006)*
Homophily			
Democracy$_{\lvert i-j\rvert}$	−0.014 (−0.024; −0.001)*	−0.014 (−0.024; −0.001)*	−0.014 (−0.024; −0.002)*
Human Rights$_{\lvert i-j\rvert}$	−0.074 (−0.105; −0.046)*	−0.057 (−0.103; −0.017)*	−0.056 (−0.100; −0.017)*
Economic Freedom$_{\lvert i-j\rvert}$	−0.005 (−0.008; −0.002)*	−0.003 (−0.005; −0.000)*	−0.004 (−0.006; −0.001)*
GDP/capita$_{\lvert i-j\rvert}$		−0.049 (−0.092; −0.013)*	−0.053 (−0.090; −0.017)*
GDP$_{\lvert i-j\rvert}$	−0.050 (−0.066; −0.028)*		
Population$_{\lvert i-j\rvert}$	0.035 (0.012; 0.061)*		
Military Spending$_{\lvert i-j\rvert}$	0.000 (−0.016; 0.000)		−0.013 (−0.030; −0.013)*
CINC Score$_{\lvert i-j\rvert}$		1.206 (0.969; 1.414)*	
Nuclear Weapons$_{\lvert i-j\rvert}$	−0.011 (−0.013; 0.006)	−0.067 (−0.105; −0.022)*	−0.002 (−0.025; 0.037)
State Attributes			
Democracy$_j$	−0.029 (−0.043; −0.013)*	−0.032 (−0.046; −0.015)*	−0.030 (−0.044; −0.013)*
Human Rights$_j$	0.045 (0.045; 0.053)*	0.032 (0.019; 0.050)*	0.051 (0.051; 0.057)*
Economic Freedom$_j$	0.008 (0.008; 0.010)*	0.009 (0.009; 0.011)*	0.008 (0.008; 0.011)*
GDP/capita$_j$		−0.074 (−0.132; −0.049)*	−0.093 (−0.149; −0.065)*
GDP$_j$	−0.084 (−0.099; −0.073)*		
Population$_j$	0.089 (0.063; 0.139)*		
Military Spending$_j$	0.034 (0.008; 0.038)*		0.034 (0.027; 0.034)*
CINC Score$_j$		−1.143 (−2.075; −0.250)*	
Nuclear Weapons$_j$	−0.352 (−0.435; −0.288)*	−0.264 (−0.411; −0.165)*	−0.332 (−0.419; −0.270)*
Control Variables			
Alliance	1.051 (0.884; 1.288)*	1.040 (0.900; 1.250)*	1.041 (0.890; 1.263)*
Trade	0.006 (0.005; 0.006)*	0.007 (0.006; 0.007)*	0.007 (0.006; 0.007)*
Contiguity	0.718 (0.509; 0.906)*	0.704 (0.494; 0.901)*	0.693 (0.479; 0.886)*
Same Region	0.901 (0.852; 0.945)*	0.882 (0.823; 0.942)*	0.884 (0.814; 0.949)*
IGO Headquarters$_j$	0.049 (0.020; 0.085)*	0.055 (0.036; 0.086)*	0.054 (0.028; 0.082)*
GDP/capita$_i$		−0.016 (−0.020; −0.008)*	−0.021 (−0.026; −0.013)*
GDP$_i$	0.024 (−0.040; 0.094)		
Tie Stability	3.612 (3.451; 3.818)*	3.603 (3.440; 3.804)*	3.610 (3.451; 3.806)*
Edges	−6.756 (−7.837; −5.966)*	−5.349 (−5.548; −5.229)*	−5.677 (−5.687; −5.677)*

Notes: $N_{1995} = 123$, $N_{2005} = 134$. Following network notation, *i* denotes the sending state and *j* denotes the receiving state.

* 0 outside 95% confidence interval based on 1,000 bootstrap replications.

A.3 Supplementary Materials for Chapter 8

Table A.11. Data Sources

Measure	*Source*	*Version*	*Coverage*
Democracy	Coppedge et al. 2017	7.1	1970-2010
Econ. Freedom	Heritage Foundation 2015	-	1995-2010
Human Rights	Fariss 2014	-	1970-2010
GDP, GDP/capita	Gleditsch 2002*a*	6.0	1970-2010
Military Spending	Singer, Bremer, and Stuckey 1972; Singer 1988	5.0	1970-2010
Nuclear Weapons	Singh and Way 2004	-	1970-2000

Table A.12. Variable Distributions (2000)

	Min.	*Median*	*Mean*	*Max.*	*NA's*
GDP	138	23,674	263,093	11,275,426	3
GDP/capita	217	4,474	9,749	67,507	3
Military Spending	0	277	4,524	303,136	5
Nuclear Weapons	0	0	0.05	1	6
Democracy	0.01	6	3.59	10	21
Economic Freedom	8.90	59.00	57.89	87.70	28
Human Rights	-2.70	0.43	0.59	4.34	-

Table A.13. Core-Periphery Structure Results (Continuous Model)

	1970	*1975*	*1980*	*1985*	*1990*	*1995*	*2000*	*2005*	*2010*
Core-periphery fit									
Correlation	0.60	0.60	0.64	0.63	0.64	0.64	0.65	0.65	0.65
Gini coefficient*	0.42	0.40	0.43	0.43	0.44	0.45	0.43	0.42	0.39
Concentration†	0.87	0.86	0.87	0.88	0.88	0.87	0.87	0.87	0.87
Proportion of states									
In the core	0.33	0.37	0.38	0.37	0.34	0.29	0.30	0.33	0.33
In the periphery	0.67	0.63	0.62	0.63	0.66	0.71	0.70	0.67	0.67

Notes: Results from continuous models in UCINET using correlation as the fitness function.

* Measures how unequally coreness scores are distributed over the population.

† Measures the difference in coreness between core and periphery.