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Extant work on status attribution has largely focused on major powers or state capabilities as key explanatory factors driving these social processes, and suggest that status considerations increase conflicts between states. We argue for a more comprehensive approach to status attribution which considers international norms as another major factor which is weighed in the attribution process. We contend that states (policymakers) evaluate one another not only on the basis of economic and military capabilities, but also on the extent to which there is behavioral

conformance with normative expectations, and reward one another dependent upon whether these expectations are met. However, this attribution of status is dependent upon the level of contestation pertaining to that norm. Using a dataset which assesses consistency with six different norms (resource transference, multilateralism, economic liberalism, democratic governance, respect for human rights, and peaceful dispute resolution), we find that status attribution is associated with norm-consistent behavior but only when these norms are uncontested at the global level.

KEYWORDS international norms, norm contestation, status attribution, status seeking

There is little doubt that, for myriad reasons,[1] foreign policymakers care about their state's status and its position relative to other states in the international pecking order. Such concerns have led states to engage in a variety of highly conflictual status-seeking strategies: fighting wars (Wallace 1971; Wohlforth 2009), disassociating from ideologically compatible allies (Badie 2011), deploying aircraft carriers (Shadbolt 2013) and nuclear submarines (Li and Weuve 2010), or developing nuclear weapons (O'Neill 2006).

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[1] Motivations behind status concerns appear to range from material through ideational interests. The extant literature is in agreement about both the complex range of motives and the difficulties involved in disentangling them (for example, Dafoe, Renshon, and Huth 2014).

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If status concerns lead states to invest substantial resources and engage in status pursuits that may have substantial interstate consequences, they become a worthy focus of attention. A number of critical puzzles need further focus, including whether or not the pursuit of status necessarily exacerbates interstate conflicts. As the examples in the previous paragraph suggest, status-seeking by states, particularly so-called "realist" strategies of enhancing military capabilities or abruptly changing security relationships, are closely tied to conditions that increase conflicts and wars (Lebow 2008; Senese and Vasquez 2008; Wohlforth 2009). Pursuing status especially through the acquisition of military capabilities can quickly agitate other states to the point of conflict, and especially when the strategy involves nuclear weapons development. Israel has bombed both Syrian and Iraqi targets in order to thwart attempts in this direction; Iran has been targeted with economic sanctions, assassinations, and cyber-attacks; and North Korea is regularly subjected to increased condemnation as it continues to test new delivery systems.

Thus, the pursuit of status through enhancing capabilities may be a perilous strategy. Yet, some have argued persuasively that status-seeking need not have such conflict-producing consequences (for example, Rhamey and Early 2013). Larson and Shevchenko (2010) suggest three types of strategies, including social conflict (akin to realist strategies), social mobility (global norm acceptance), and social creativity (for example, successful Olympic competition). Of the three, it is the first that is most conflict prone and appears to be the one most often studied.

Viable alternatives to conflict-producing status-seeking strategies have not been systematically tested, due in large part to a lack of emphasis in the literature on the conditions under which

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status is actually attributed in the international system. While progress has been made about the determinants of status attribution for major powers,[2] there is little systematic examination of status attribution for the entire community of states, leading us to focus on this topic.

In order to understand better the conditions through which states attribute status to each other, and to assess the extent to which there may be useful status-seeking strategies that may have less dramatic consequences for interstate conflicts, we focus on norms as an important part of this dynamic. Virtually none of the status literature has systematically integrated norm considerations into studies of status attribution, nor has the voluminous norms literature explored systematically the extent to which behavioral consistency with norms is rewarded with status by the global community of states. Specifically, we suggest and test the argument that behavioral conformance to widely accepted norms enhances states' status, and do so by demonstrating that the explanatory power of a baseline model of status driven by capabilities is substantially enhanced with the addition of state behavioral compliance with certain norms.

STATUS AND GLOBAL POLITICS

Status in international politics has been a focus of scholarship since Thucydides (1951). Dynamics associated with status-seeking and status attribution have been forwarded as plausible motivations for a variety of state behaviors, particularly interstate conflicts (East 1972; Lebow

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[2] For reviews of this literature, see Dafoe, Renshon, and Huth (2014); Paul, Larson, and Wohlforth (2014); Volgy, Miller, Cramer, Hauser, and Bezerra (2013).

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2008; Wallace 1971), yet scholars have rarely attempted to focus on status attribution as the dependent variable of interest. As a consequence, the conditions that are linked to status attribution are theoretically and empirically underdeveloped, while unsurprisingly, the literature exhibits conflicting theories regarding status-seeking.

The theoretical framework we outline seeks to integrate aspects of realist and liberal based findings in the literature with the constructivist orientation of social-identity theory (SIT). Our own theoretical orientation is agnostic, based on a reading of the literature that suggests alternative theoretical orientations to be complementary rather than contradictory, and we seek to integrate their arguments in our framework. Especially given the emphasis by both constructivist and non-constructivist scholars on norms and normative commitments by states, we think it fruitful to assess whether behavioral consistency with such norms is rewarded with status by the community of states.

DEFINING STATUS ATTRIBUTION

Definitions of status (and its attribution) depend on theoretical orientation, although perceptual approaches[3] to status and status attribution have been the dominant international relations tradition (Dafoe, Renshon, and Huth 2014:376; Singer 1988). We follow this tradition, adopting

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[3] Objective approaches have been typical in sociology (Olzak and Tsutsui 1998), studies of voting behavior (Brodie 1996) and in some international relations literature (Galtung 1965; Maoz 2011).

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the Bezerra, Cramer, Hauser, Miller, and Volgy (2014) definition: based on social comparisons, status attribution is the overtly recognized hierarchical ranking within a status group (in this case the community of states) that conveys standing different from those ranked higher or lower in the group. This definition is similar to conceptualizations that approach status attribution as an agency-based, perceptual phenomenon (Larson and Shevchenko 2010; Tajfel and Turner 1986).

The definition suggests a two-step process—one social and one political—associated with the attribution of status. First, attribution is a function of social comparisons made by policymakers, leading to a hierarchical ranking of states. Second, the definition requires public manifestation of hierarchical assessment. We view the second criterion as necessary for international politics since the large and heterogeneous community of states means that private methods of status attribution are much less likely to receive attention or broad public recognition. Consequently, private social comparisons will carry less impact than public recognition,[4] and entail fewer costly political consequences than the political act of public recognition. Clearly, the two processes are not identical: it is not unusual in international politics to find substantial differences between social comparisons and the overt recognition of state status (for example, Bezerra et al. 2014,

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[4] Sylvan, Graff, and Pugliese (1998) argue that status considerations involve consequences including rights, responsibilities and benefits, and none of those consequences are likely without public recognition of rankings.

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footnote 16).   Theories of status attribution should thus address political constraints operating on states as they overtly recognize hierarchical assessments.[5]

A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR STATUS ATTRIBUTION

Our theoretical framework is based on the limited empirical work on community-based status attribution, the more extensive work on major power status, and the literature on norms and their implied effects on how states may make social comparisons. We borrow from all three to focus on a) two dimensions (state capabilities and norm consistent behavior) around which social comparisons are made; and b) the constraints operating on state policymakers regarding both the process of making social comparisons and the linkage between such comparisons and their public manifestations (Figure 1).

THE SALIENCE OF STATE CAPABILITIES

We begin by suggesting that state policymakers engage in social comparisons regarding the relative standing of other states through assessments of *capabilities* that states can utilize to

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[5] The definition underscores a difference with SIT theory, which emphasizes perceived group membership and the consequences of those perceptions. We assume that issues about group membership (what constitutes a state) have been resolved, and what matters more is relative position in the status hierarchy within the group.

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potentially effectuate their environment and pursue their objectives. This claim is consistent with both large-N analyses of community-based status attribution[6] and work on major power status attribution regarding the need for unusual military and economic assets as necessary conditions for attribution (Fordham 2011; Levy 1983; Nayar and Paul 2003; Paul et al. 2014; Volgy, Corbetta, Baird, and Grant 2011).

The finding that capabilities matter for assessing the relative status of states is neither surprising nor provocative given decades of claims by realists and neo-realists. In an anarchic system characterized by weak authoritative governance structures, state policymakers are likely to respect and recognize the relative *potential* of other states in effectuating regional and global politics.

The Salience of Behavioral Consistency with Widely Accepted Norms

Beyond capability assessments, we suggest that policymakers also formulate social comparisons based on the behavior of others states, including both foreign and domestic activities. Although clearly recognized in the major power literature, (for example, Deng 2008; Fordham and Asal 2007; Levy 1983; Nayar and Paul 2003; Tammen 2006; Volgy et al. 2011), behavior-based social comparisons for the broader community of states have not been

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[6] For a review of large-N published work on community based status attribution, see Rhamey and Early (2013), and Volgy et al. (2013).

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systematically investigated.[7] We propose that social comparisons regarding state behavior are made in the context of widely accepted norms in international politics, and such comparisons critically complement social comparisons regarding state capabilities.

In its most basic conceptualization, a norm is a standard of appropriate behavior—often linked to a larger value system (Florini 1996)—that is universally recognized[8] and which can include some form of reward for compliance or sanction for violating the standard (Axelrod 1986; Finnemore and Sikkink 1998; Goertz and Diehl 1992). We focus on two key issues regarding norm-based social comparisons: first, is there an identifiable *threshold* above which advocacy about appropriate behavior turns into a norm that can be utilized to evaluate state behavior? Second, are all norms pertinent to status attribution, or are there conditions under which some norms are more relevant than others for making comparisons regarding status positions?

Regarding the threshold issue, norm theorists suggest alternative paths through which norms come into existence,[9] and identifying when a threshold has been crossed remains a challenging

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[7] For two exceptions, see Rhamey and Early (2013), and Bezerra et al. (2014).

[8] However, as we note below, universal recognition of a norm simply means that it has reached past some threshold of acceptance; it does not mean that it is no longer contested, or that there will not be substantial variation in behavioral consistency with the norm.

[9] The "norm cascade" approach identifies key stages in the norm life cycle (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998). A second theory suggests that a norm is not formed until a shock to the system causes enough actors to create new practices that challenge the status quo (Goertz 2003). A third

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aspect of the literature. One exception is Finnemore and Sikkink (1998:901) who suggest that the norm threshold has been crossed when 1) one third of states, including 2) critical actors accept the new norm,[10] and 3) the standard becomes institutionalized.[11] These are the three criteria we use to assess whether or not an acceptable standard of behavior has become a norm.

Once advocated standards of behavior cross the norm threshold, a norm can be further differentiated by a) whether or not there is substantial continued contestation over its appropriateness; and b) the extent to which states are willing to behave consistently with the norm, regardless of the amount of consensus prevailing over its principles (Avdeyeva 2007; Sandholtz 2008).[12] We suggest that both of these considerations should be important in status judgments. Whether or not a norm is contested should be critical for making social comparisons. Contested norms may create substantial uncertainty in the minds of policymakers as being useful yardsticks with which to assess behavior. Furthermore, publicly attributing status—since status

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approach emphasizes a continuous cycle of conflict between existing normative structures and new prescriptions, with groups eventually embracing new norms (Sandholtz 2008).

[10] For a similar argument regarding the need for a critical mass, see Marwell and Oliver (1993), Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink (1999) and Studlar and McAllister (2002).

[11] See also Checkel (2005), Ku and Diehl (2006), and Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink (2013) on institutionalization.

[12] Consistent with the literature, we are differentiating between norm contestation versus behavioral conformance to the norm (for example, Simmons 2009, chapter 3).

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attribution is not without substantial potential costs [13] —is less risky when behavioral

conformance is based on uncontested norms. Additionally, we expect that it is not agreement in

principle with the norm that is rewarded with status but behavior that is consistent with the norm.

We are mindful as well of the complexity of norms and the variety of contestation that may

result. Norms include standards ranging from foundational principles of acceptable conduct,

through organizational principles and procedural requirements for action (Wiener 2004, 2007).

Contestation may occur over one or more of these dimensions and states may act consistent with

only some of these dimensions. Our focus is primarily on whether or not there is contestation

over a norm's foundational principle, [14] since our reading of the literature suggests that

behavioral consistency with the foundational principles of uncontested norms would form the

most likely basis for social comparisons.

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[13] For an analysis of the variety of domestic costs to states, see Simmons (2009).

[14] As elaborated in online Appendix 1, foundational principles are determined according to a

general reading of the literature on each norm—for example, norms work on human rights

focuses on physical integrity rights as the base requirement for individual or social rights. We

derive these foundational principles from preexisting work, which investigates shared

perceptions, primary norms documents, and existing empirical analyses. For a systematic

analysis of the complexity of human rights norm contestation, regarding both foundational and

procedural elements, see Simmons (2009: chapter 3).

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Thus, we anticipate that a substantial component of social comparison by policymakers is based on the perceived potential of states to impact the foreign policies of other states, with such perceptions being based on key state capabilities. However, we also expect that judgments about status positions will include assessments of how states act with the capabilities available to them, consistent with the foundational principles of widely accepted norms regarding appropriate domestic and foreign behaviors.

CONSTRAINTS ON SOCIAL COMPARISON AND PUBLIC ATTRIBUTION OF STATUS

We suggest four salient constraints that may operate on both social comparisons made by policymakers, and importantly, on the public manifestations that create status attribution and the subsequent hierarchical positions of states. First, in order for policymakers to be able to make social comparisons, they need to have readily available and reliable information regarding both the capabilities of other states and the extent to which they conform to the norms utilized to evaluate their behaviors. If behavioral consistency with a widely accepted norm is not clear, subsequent evaluations are difficult to make. Likewise, capabilities that are hidden from analysis minimize the ability of policymakers to make sound judgments. Generally, as we note below, the information on behaviors consistent with the norms we address is widely available to most states, as are the capabilities we describe.

Second, and more problematic, is the expectation that social comparisons are not routinely made and reviewed by policymakers. Research on both major power (for example, Kennedy 1989) and

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community-based status attribution (Bezerra et al. 2014; Rhamey and Early 2013) indicate that social comparisons and the resulting public manifestations of hierarchical positions are path dependent, slow to change, and tend to carry a halo effect, lagging behind changing circumstances.[15] Thus, analyses of conditions associated with status attribution need to take into account path dependency and the slow moving nature of status attribution.

Third, there is evidence in the literature that regional context likely plays a role in norm acceptance and evaluations of behavior, as it does with other aspects of international politics. With respect to norms, there are often conflicts between global expectations and regional customs or practices (Acharya 2004; Simmons 2009: chapter 3), suggesting the salience of regional context,[16] and that policymakers' judgments about the relative status of individual states are impacted by the regional context in which a particular state resides (Bezerra et al. 2014). For

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[15] This is due to a combination of factors, including the pace at which material capabilities change, institutionalized bureaucratic status ranking practices, and the time it takes for foreign policy bureaucracies to move from changes in social comparisons to public manifestation of status rankings.

[16] An example of this kind of conflict can be found in Asia where regional or local expectations pertaining to rights are communal in nature while global expectations are more individually oriented (Sen 1996). Diverse regional conditions (high levels of integration in Europe; ongoing conflicts in the Middle East) are also likely to impact assessments of states located in those geopolitical spaces.

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example, Romania may be perceived as having more status as a European state, all other factors being equal, compared to its status were it a South American state.

A fourth factor that may constrain both social comparison and particularly the public attribution of status pertains to the changing nature of global politics and the polarity of the system. Status attribution is likely to be different in unipolar versus bipolar or multipolar systems, and high levels of polarization or system-wide conflict are likely to impact status attribution (Larson and Shevchenko 2008; Volgy and Mayhall 1995; Volgy et al. 2013; Wohlforth 2009). Particularly during times of substantial political polarization, policymakers may make more favorable social comparisons regarding their allies than those not aligned with their camp. Additionally, under conditions of intense polarization, major powers will seek to actively increase status for those they favor in the conflict and to minimize status attribution to those they oppose, leading to increased costs for states that would translate social comparisons to public recognition of status.[17]

With these constraints in mind, we suggest the following general proposition: although constrained by a variety of factors, including global and regional political dynamics, status attribution, and specifically the positioning of states in the international status hierarchy, will be

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[17] During the Cold War both superpowers actively worked to increase status for their allies. The PRC still engages in a successful, systematic campaign to minimize the status of Taiwan (responding swiftly to even small gestures, see Wright and Eishen 2014), even though Taiwan scores high on typical measures of economic and military capabilities.

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associated with both state capabilities AND behavioral consistency with widely uncontested norms. The proposition moves beyond the findings in the extant literature by: a) identifying conditions under which norms may have utility for states in attributing status; b) offering a comparative analysis of norms for status attribution; and c) utilizing a testable model (discussed below) to assess the extent to which behavioral conformance to certain norms predicts to additional status beyond state capabilities.

Note that we do not seek to explain status-*seeking* behavior,[18] and therefore we do not make claims about whether or not states primarily utilize behavioral consistency with norms to increase or maintain their status in international politics. Our primary purpose is to explore whether or not behavioral consistency with norms has a demonstrable effect on the status positions of states. Status-seeking strategies other than conformance to widely accepted norms may also yield additional status for states, but that is not the subject of this effort.[19]

RESEARCH DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

Based on our theoretical framework, we test two hypotheses. All else being equal, we propose that:

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[18] We acknowledge the two sides of the foreign policy substitutability issue (for example, Most and Starr 1984): one policy can serve multiple objectives, while several policies may serve the same objective.

[19]For an analysis of social creativity versus norm compliant behavior, see Bezerra et al. (2014).

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H1: *behavior consistent with relatively uncontested norms will be associated with*

significant additional status attribution from the global community of states; while

H2: *behavior consistent with norms that are highly contested will not generate additional*

status attribution.

THE CHOICE OF NORMS

In order to provide an appropriate test that salient, uncontested norms matter for status attribution within the community of states, we choose six norms, three of which are uncontested and three that are contested in the international system. These six norms constitute neither an exhaustive list nor a random sample of norms in international politics. However, they are chosen on the basis of the following considerations, consistent with our theoretical arguments:

a) All six norms have crossed the threshold from advocated standards. We provide Google Ngram data of public discourse surrounding each norm in online Appendix 1 to demonstrate that each norm has substantially surpassed thresholds of attention, at least in English language publications;

b) All six norms refer to either highly salient standards of behavior guiding economic and security relations between states or appropriate governance conduct within states, while having

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universal applicability to all states in international politics. Universal applicability is necessary in order for all states to have the opportunity to conform to the norm. [20]

c) All six norms involve behaviors associated with norm compliance over which there is substantial and verifiable information. In addition to state intelligence agencies, a variety of inter and non-governmental organizations including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the OECD, and the WTO make considerable efforts to create reliable information on the measures we utilize to assess behavioral compliance with the foundational principles of all six norms.

d) All six norms are at a sufficiently similar stage in the norm cycle to allow for comparative analysis. As online Appendix 1 notes, five of the six norms are embedded into either the UN's charter or General Assembly resolutions (the sixth in the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs in the 1940s), and all six appear to have crossed the norm threshold by the mid-to-late 1970s.

e) To assess the effects of contestation, we choose three norms that should be clearly uncontested and three that are substantially contested in international politics. These choices are based on the norms literature, which suggests that contestation occurs due to structural and agent based factors. [21] Structural contestation arises when existing norms create expectations contrary to the prescriptions of new norms (Goertz 2003; Sandholtz 2007); agent-based contestation is a

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[20] Some norms, such as the "responsibility to protect" or first use of nuclear weapons, have limited applicability either to all states or to the broad range of activities in which states engage.

[21] For the complexity of norm contestation, see Clark (2005: chapter 10).

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function of powerful actors operating within these social structures that actively oppose new norms (Kratochwil 1989:61). We selected and categorized the six norms by assessing a combination of structural (the extent of conflict with existing norms of sovereignty) and agent factors (the extent of active opposition by major powers that have the ability to project their preferences onto other states).[22]

To address space requirements, the narratives regarding each norm and its relationship to these criteria, appropriate references, and the Google Ngram data are displayed in the online Appendix. Table 1 summarizes and compares the narratives for the six norms.

The three uncontested norms, along with measures[23] reflecting consistency with (or rejection of) the foundational principles of each norm include:

Resource Transference, which refers to the norm of states' responsibility to voluntarily transfer economic capabilities to less wealthy states. We operationalize behavioral consistency with the norm in terms of whether or not a state provides foreign aid. The measure is dichotomous, and

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[22] We asked numerous scholars, both students of international politics and norm-based scholars if they would agree or disagree with our classification of the six norms. None of them disagreed with our classification since there is broad agreement that the first three are relatively uncontested and the second three broadly contested, based on both structural conflicts and agent-based (major power) resistance to them.

[23] Online Appendix 3 delineates appropriate sources, references, and manipulations for all variables.

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determined by a state's identification as an aid donor, addressing the foundational principle of resource transference through bilateral aid[24]; it does not utilize the *amount* of aid giving in order to avoid the (contested) procedural principle of how much aid a state should provide.

Economic Liberalism, which refers to the norm of free trade and competition in the global market. We measure behavior consistent with the foundational aspects of the norm through the extent to which a state is engaged in international trade (including both exports and imports). We create a dichotomous measure based on whether or not a state's actual trade exceeds twice the value of its global share, based on the number of countries in the global system, reflecting high levels of trading consistent with the norm.[26]

Multilateralism, which refers to the foundational principle that states maintain and foster their interactions through structured, joint problem-solving settings. The institutionalization of the norm is reflected in the large architecture of regional, inter-regional and global intergovernmental organizations (IGOs). We measure the extent of behavioral consistency with the norm as a count of the total number of memberships a state holds in IGOs, reflecting consistency with the norm's foundational principle.

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[24] According to OECD statistics, the vast majority of non-military aid occurs in the form of bilateral assistance.

[26] We created this measure to reflect a variable that was restrictive enough to highlight states that were active traders without being so restrictive that only the wealthiest of states would be included.

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The three contested norms include:

Democratic Governance, which addresses the relationship between those who govern and their citizens. The norm represents a highly complex set of institutions and behaviors domestically; a ranking of 8–10 on the Polity scale typically indicates high levels of democratic governance. Accordingly, we create a dichotomous variable where either a state practices democratic governance (eight or higher on Polity) or not[27]; states that practice democratic governance conform to the norm.

Human Rights, which refers to the general notion that political leaders and regimes should prioritize human needs over other policy objectives. We focus on physical integrity rights as these necessarily precede other human rights. We use the Political Terror Scale to assess behavioral conformance, which is based on four different physical integrity rights[28] and assigns each state a score ranging from one (for few violations) to five (for widespread and nondiscriminatory violations). We create a dichotomous variable by utilizing scores at two or above as the threshold for behavioral nonconformity.[25]

Peaceful Dispute Resolution, which refers to the normative expectation that states will refrain from engaging in violent conflict with one another in the course of interstate disputes. We utilize

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[27] Alternative measurement strategies were tested with similar outcomes, as discussed below.

[28] These include freedom from murder, freedom from torture, freedom from "being disappeared" and freedom from political imprisonment.

[25] See robustness discussion below for alternative measurement choices.

the Militarized Interstate Disputes (MID) data to measure behavioral inconsistency with the norm, and we do so by using only counts of MIDs that result in some level of violent interactions (level of four or five).

Note that with the exception of the multilateralism measure, we dichotomize our norm variables to proximate what is likely to be perceived as norm-compliant behavior. Policymakers, when attributing status, are likely to be bounded rationally (Simon 1955), seeing states in terms of whether or not they are democracies (or systematically violate human rights, etc.), rather than consistent with the finer gradations created by measures such as Polity values or Political Terror scores.

CAPABILITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

Previous work has found a strong relationship between the capabilities of states and their hierarchical positioning on the global status ladder. Three state attributes in particular have been strong predictors of relative status (Bezerra et al. 2014; East 1972; Rhamey and Early 2013; Wallace 1971) and they are included in the model: economic size (GDP), military capability (spending), and population size. Since there is a high correlation between military spending and GDP, we reconfigure the military capability variable (Online Appendix 3) to show the extent to which military strength is above or below economic capabilities.

We account as well for constraints that may interfere with either social comparisons or the public manifestation of status assessments, by 1) including a time counter for path dependency; 2) a dummy variable to account for the impact of Cold War political dynamics; and

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3) regional controls to account for sub-global dynamics. [26] The fourth constraint of sufficient information being available to policymakers on behavioral conformance with norms is created by selecting only those norms where this condition would hold (Table 1).

DEPENDENT VARIABLE

Our dependent variable of interest is the hierarchical positioning created from the global status attribution by the community of states. To assess the overt behavioral manifestation of status, we use the indicator most commonly employed by nearly all previous large-N analyses (see Bezerra et al. 2014) that have conceptualized status attribution as a perceptual phenomenon and focused on the full state system: the number of embassies received by a state. This measurement strategy is consistent with Kinne's (2014:247) observation that states engage in "[e]xtensive reliance on diplomatic missions as a source of prestige or status."

Despite its extensive usage, the measure is far from perfect, and it would be more desirable to generate multiple measures of public status attribution, similar to ones specified for major powers (for example, Volgy et al. 2011). Unfortunately, those are not available for most states.[27]

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[26] We control for regional variation by creating a number of dummy variables corresponding to geopolitical regions (identified in Online Appendix 3)

[27] We attempted to create a number of additional status measures, including elections to positions in the UN General Assembly and its other organs, and in other global organizations. Unfortunately, these measures are tainted by both geographical and political quotas and

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To minimize noise in the measure,[28] we make the following adjustments: we 1) include only those diplomatic missions that contain high level staffing (ambassadorial level or higher); 2) exclude from the analysis microstates and states that neither send nor receive embassies[29]; and 3) create a percentage measure by dividing the number of embassies received by the total number of states in the system in order to compare status attribution scores over time as the numbers of states in the system change.[30]

SPECIFICATIONS

"rotational" requirements, and the results do not reflect status hierarchical rankings well, even in five-year increments.

[28] We are also cognizant of the fact that some of the "noise" in the measure is created by some reciprocity between states in creating diplomatic relations. We have sought to minimize this contamination to the extent possible by excluding from the data set minimal reciprocity (diplomatic representation that is not in the state's capital, and does not involve ambassadorial level staffing. Furthermore, since most of such reciprocity (a network based measure of reciprocity shows that at least one third of such linkages are not reciprocated) is at the regional level (Volgy et al. 2013), we use regional controls in our model.

[29] We exclude states with populations under 200,000 as of the year 2010.

[30] Online Appendix 2 compares the rankings of the top 50 states and we also graph rankings for major powers and regional powers, comparing the 1980 rankings with those in 2010.

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Since processes of status attribution, are bound to be "sticky" in nature, we utilize five-year time frames for the dependent variable, allowing us to more realistically model the long-term decisions of policymakers. Given that the information on our behavioral measures requires some time to accumulate and disseminate, we also lag our independent variables one period to account for this delay.[31] The full specification of the status attribution model is as follows[32]:

Status Attribution = $\beta_1 GDP_{t-5}$ + $\beta_2 MilitaryPerformance_{t-5}$ + $\beta_3 Population_{t-5}$ + $\beta_4 TimeCounter$ + $\beta_5 ColdWar$ + $\beta_6 Aid_{t-5}$ + $\beta_7 IGOs_{t-5}$ + $\beta_8 Trade_{t-5}$ + $\beta_9 Polity_{t-5}$ + $\beta_{10} PTS_{t-5}$ + $\beta_{11} MIDs_{t-5}$ + $\beta_{12-19} Regions(1-8)$ + ε

Due to the limitations surrounding some of the independent variables,[33] the dataset utilized for our estimations covers 1975–2010. Our unit of analysis is state-year and we begin

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[31] Given the nature of our data, a single lag represents a five-year time differential between the independent and the dependent variable, providing sufficient time for the potential effects of the variables in question. Lagging by more than one time period, we believe, creates too long a time frame, and may provide substantial errors as other factors can arise across an entire decade. However, when we lag the independent variables by two periods (ten years), the primary relationships continue to hold with one exception: peaceful dispute resolution gains significance at the .05 level.

[32] Online Appendix 4 provides descriptive statistics for each measure.

[33] Data for all the variables are available from 1975–2010, except for: IGOs (1975–2005); Human Rights (1980–2010).

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with 1,018 observations; in each model the data are clustered by state and employ robust standard errors. We use a time counter to control for time effects in our panel data.[34] Although normally it would be prudent to utilize country fixed effects, it would be inappropriate to do so here since the dependent variable is slow moving. The limited variation of our dependent variable, whilst using fixed-effects modeling, would only serve to distort the estimations (Wawro, Samii and Kristensen 2011). Mixed effects modeling, when integrating both random and fixed effects, presents similar issues given the nature of our dependent variable and controls. Thus, given the limited variation of our dependent variable, the most appropriate methods are to use control variables for both time and region, and estimate the models with random effects.

FINDINGS

The findings are illustrated through four models estimated in Table 2. The Baseline model, utilizing only the controls and the relationship between status attribution and capabilities, reflects our expectations that a substantial amount of the variation in status attribution is associated with state capabilities; the variety of controls (including fixed effects for regions) also produce

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[34] We have also explored utilizing squared and cubed versions of the time counter in order to account for potential nonlinearity in the model. The inclusion of these additional time variables does not change our findings.

significant impacts on status attribution with the baseline model accounting for nearly 47% of the variation in status positions.

The Uncontested Norms model addresses our first hypothesis by adding to the baseline model the three behavioral measures reflecting consistency with the uncontested norms. The results indicate that all three measures are significantly related to status attribution, and their cumulative addition to the model increases the amount of variance accounted for by more than 50% (R^2 increases from 0.467 to 0.711).[37]

The substantive impact of the three variables on status attribution does not appear to be uniform (Table 3). The measures linked to resource transference and economic liberalism yield an average status increase of 5% and nearly 7%, or an average increase of nearly eight and 11 diplomatic representations respectively. The yield from the measure associated with multilateralism appears to be substantially smaller, but this is due to our coding of IGO membership as a count variable. Since states operate in an IGO-rich environment and have the opportunity to join hundreds of IGOs, a clearer substantive implication comes when looking at the mean level of IGO membership change (4.72) at five-year intervals. Such changes result in an average of 1.5 new diplomatic representations per year. Cumulatively, behavioral conformance to these three uncontested norms appears to yield additional status attribution values ranging from 12–14%. Such results are not trivial, especially given that the mean status attribution score for all states averages around 24%.

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[37] Additional analyses using AIC/BIC statistics confirm this improvement over the base model.

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The next two models regarding contested norms also yield results consistent with our expectations. We expected no significant effects on status attribution from behavioral conformance with contested norms; in the Contested Norms model none of the measures is significant, and they add little predictive power to the base model. In the Integrated model we expected no significant additional impact on status attribution when contested norms were added to the uncontested ones. The results are as we had expected.[38]

ALTERNATIVE POSSIBILITIES

We raise four alternatives to the conclusions we draw from our models. First, it is plausible that alternative specifications of our measures of norm consistent behavior—when different options would still correspond with our conceptualization—could yield different outcomes. Yet, changing the democracy measure by lowering the Polity threshold, or using raw Polity values, did not change the outcome in the model. Likewise, changing the specification on

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[38] The lack of significant findings for uncontested norms do not appear to be due to multicollinearity problems. While there is an expected, significant relationship between democratic governance and human rights practices, the relationship between the other two variables averages correlations at .1. Individual VIF and tolerance estimates for the integrated model, furthermore, do not achieve scores higher than 3.46 or lower than 0.29, respectively, while the mean VIF is 1.88. By each measure, the model falls below broadly accepted standards used for identifying multicollinearity.

human rights violations or peaceful dispute resolution by setting those dichotomous variables to the most egregious levels of human rights violations (PTS Scores of four or five) or selecting an alternate dispute cutoff (MIDs at level five only) still produces insignificant relationships with the dependent variable.

Second, it is plausible that our dependent variable is associated with norm consistent behaviors for strictly instrumental reasons involving the conduct of interstate relations. Perhaps the linkage with foreign aid donors exists because recipient countries need to establish high-level diplomatic representations to maintain the donor/recipient relationship, and/or that trading partners need substantial diplomatic infrastructure to deal with myriad issues emerging from trade relationships. If correct, then the measure would not be reflecting status attribution as much as specific policy dynamics linked to the behaviors in the model. The data suggests that this alternative interpretation is not accurate. [35] Regarding the linkage between donor states and status attribution, roughly 82% of high level diplomatic representations received by donor states come from states that are *not* recipients of the assistance (Bezerra et al. 2014). In the case of

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[35] Alternatively, we link the relationship between foreign policy activism and conferred diplomatic representation to assess a generic instrumental relationship that may be driving the sending of high-level diplomatic infrastructure. We conducted a preliminary test of this notion, using the Integrated Data for Event Analysis database (Bond et al. 2003) and lagging all events sent by states. The relationship for 2005–2010, as an illustration, indicates that 67% of the variation in diplomatic representation is *unexplained* by the extent of all forms of recorded activity engaged by a state.

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trading states, roughly 96% of high-level diplomatic representations come from states that are *not* trading partners of the states in question.[36]

Third, it is plausible that a subset of states—embedded in regions that promote norms that are globally contested—may confer additional status on states outside of their regions more so than the larger community of states. We test this possibility by considering the contested norm of democratic governance in the context of the European Union (EU), as EU states are a critical part of democracy promotion in the region and globally. If our argument about contested norms is valid, then we should find that the norm of democratic governance will not be globally rewarded even by EU states. As Table 4 indicates, the relationship between democratic governance practices and the status that EU states attribute to states outside of the European Union appears to be insignificant.

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[36] This was determined by analyzing dyadic trade (Barbieri and Keshk 2012) and diplomatic representation data for two periods, 1980 and 2000. The focal states are those that receive the value of one on the economic liberalism variable. The trade data was then used to determine a state's trading partners (a state whose trade value met or exceeded the average trade amount conducted by the state in question). Change in diplomatic representation from 1980–1985, and 2000–2005, was compared against states that were and were not "trading partners." In 1980, a net of two diplomatic representations were gained by economically liberal states from trading partners compared to a net of 22 from non-trading partners; in 2000, only a net of two diplomatic representations were gained by economically liberal states from trading partners, compared to a net of 77 from non-trading partners.

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Fourth, it may be plausible that not only behavioral consistency with the foundational principles of norms matter, but as well, consistency with their procedural aspects. We probe further this distinction through the norms of resource transference and democratic governance. Resource transference is an uncontested norm in terms of its foundational principle of aid provision, yet there is substantial contestation over the procedural issue of how much to give. With respect to democratic governance, the foundational principle of democratic governance is widely contested but the procedural aspect of holding popular elections is more broadly endorsed among states. The results displayed in Table 4 parallel our expectations.   While the overall provision of foreign aid is significantly and positively related to status attribution, the amount of aid is not. Likewise, democratic governance is not significantly related to status attribution and neither is the less contested procedural norm of holding democratic elections.

CONCLUSION, CAVEATS, AND IMPLICATIONS

The results of our empirical analysis provide support for the arguments made in the theoretical framework regarding status attribution by the community of states. State capabilities are strong predictors of status attribution, and the various constraints we had enumerated matter in the public manifestation of hierarchical position. However, behavioral consistency with a number of uncontested norms is also significantly associated with status attribution, as those norms appear to constitute salient yardsticks for making judgments about the behaviors of states. This finding is significant since it not only demonstrates that normative based evaluations complement more traditional markers of state status, but also identifies an alternative route to status attribution,

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suggesting strategies of status-seeking that may generate substantially less conflict between states than more realist-based strategies of social competition.

Yet, five caveats are in order. First, we have no direct evidence that state policymakers actually *use* uncontested norms to create a hierarchical assessment of states, only that behavioral consistency with such norms is strongly associated with hierarchical positions. More direct evidence is needed to link actual judgments to status attribution but such evidence is far from available systematically. The evidence we offer suggests that such linkages likely exist and further research utilizing the statements of policymakers could provide useful additional evidence.[37]

Second, we acknowledge that the status attribution measure, while constituting a fair reflection of a global indicator of overt public status recognition, is far from being ideal, irrespective of whether or not nearly all empirical analyses utilize it. The measure can reflect political realities in addition to status and an alternative, more nuanced indicator would be preferable. We encourage future research to search for one but until a better measure becomes available, its advantages outweigh its disadvantages.

Third, the six norms on which we focus constitute neither an exhaustive inventory nor a representative sample of norms that may be relevant to status attribution. While this effort provides a first step toward establishing a more comprehensive assessment of status attribution

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[37] For instance, President Obama publicly noted Russia's ascension into the WTO (adherence to economic liberalism) as warranting recognition and respect (Obama 2014).

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processes, further research is needed to expand the range of relevant norms and to assess which additional ones are likely to be associated with status rankings.

Fourth, the time-frame in this study does not allow us to show whether as a contested norm becomes uncontested, behavioral conformance to the norm receives substantially more status attribution than earlier. This type of information would constitute additional evidence for our arguments and we hope to pursue this avenue for future research.

Fifth, behavioral consistency with uncontested norms is a large part of the strategy of social mobility for status-seeking states. Social mobility strategies, however, are not the only vehicles for improving status. For most states status competition is far too costly a process, but the third avenue—social creativity—is not. There has been little work done on the variety of social creativity strategies[38] that may be available to most states. More research is needed to assess the range of such strategies practiced by states and the extent to which they effectively increase status positions.

Finally, we suggest that there are significant implications for policymakers searching for strategies with which to enhance their state's status in the global hierarchy. Realist strategies certainly produce positive status gains but it is quite costly to generate significant changes in GDP, military spending, or population growth through state action. Strategies consistent with liberal theories may be less costly (and give states more agency) and can produce sizeable status gains if consistent with norms broadly accepted by the international community. Meanwhile, as

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[38] Two primary exceptions are Larson and Shevchenko (2010) and Rhamey and Early (2013).

contestation continues over other norms, policymakers may choose sides and agree to behaviors consistent with peaceful dispute resolution, human rights advocacy or the expansion of domestic democratic practices. The status rewards though will be unlikely until the process of contestation over these fundamental principles is successfully resolved. That is not likely in the near future.

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL

Supplemental data for this article (Four Appendices: Narratives of Six Norms with Google Ngrams; Change in Status Rankings from Cold War to Post Cold War Periods; Variable Descriptions, Coding, and Sources; Summary Statistics) can be accessed online at the publisher's website at http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03050629.2015.1037709.

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FIGURE 1 A Framework For Status Attribution.

TABLE 1 Comparative Assessment of Norms for Status Attribution

	Norms					
	Resource Transferenc e	Multilateralis m	Economi c Liberalis m	Democrati c Governanc e	Human Rights	Peaceful Dispute Resolutio n
Threshold						
Critical Mass of Actors	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
One or more Major Powers Accepting/ Advocating	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Institutionalizati on	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Contestation

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Conflict with Sovereignty	Low	Low	Low	**High**	**High**	**Moderate/ High**
Major/Regional Power Opposition	Low	Low	Low	**High**	**High**	**Variable**

Norm Relevance and Information Access

Applicability	Universal	Universal	Universal	Universal	Universal	Universal
Longitudinal Similarity	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Information re: Norm Compliance	Verifiable	Verifiable	Verifiable	Verifiable	Verifiable	Verifiable

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TABLE 2 Contested Norms, Uncontested Norms, and Status Attribution, 1975-2010

	Baseline	Uncontested Norms	Contested Norms	Integrated Model
Resource Transference$_{t-5}$	-	0.047*	-	0.042**
		(0.018)		(0.016)
Economic Liberalism$_{t-5}$	-	0.083**	-	0.078**
		(0.031)		(0.028)
Multilateralism$_{t-5}$	-	0.002***	-	0.002***
		(0.0005)		(0.0005)
Democratic Governance$_{t-5}$	-	-	0.008	0.002
			(0.009)	(0.008)
Human Rights$_{t-5}$	-	-	-0.0009	0.008
			(0.005)	(0.005)
Peaceful Dispute	-	-	0.002	0.002

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Resolution$_{t-5}$

			(0.001)	(0.001)
GDP $_{t-5}$	5.21e-05***	4.41e-05***	6.92e-05***	5.38e-05***
	(1.33e-05)	(9.23e-06)	(1.55e-05)	(1.08e-05)
Military Performance $_{t-5}$	0.462*	0.223	1.197***	0.703*
	(0.190)	(0.138)	(0.341)	(0.333)
Population $_{t-5}$	3.65e-10***	2.97e-10***	3.74e-10***	3.26e-10***
	(8.06e-11)	(7.8e-11)	(7.13e-11)	(6.9e-11)
Cold War	0.049***	0.054***	0.052***	0.058***
	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.006)
Time Counter	0.015***	0.004	0.017***	0.006*
	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.003)

Constant	0.203***	0.101***	0.175***	0.063*
	(0.030)	(0.029)	(0.030)	(0.031)
Observations	1,018	953	882	827
Adjusted R^2	0.4872	0.7146	0.5369	0.7421
Mean VIF	1.61	1.92	1.60	1.88
Mean Tolerance	0.74	0.61	0.69	0.59

Standard errors in parentheses
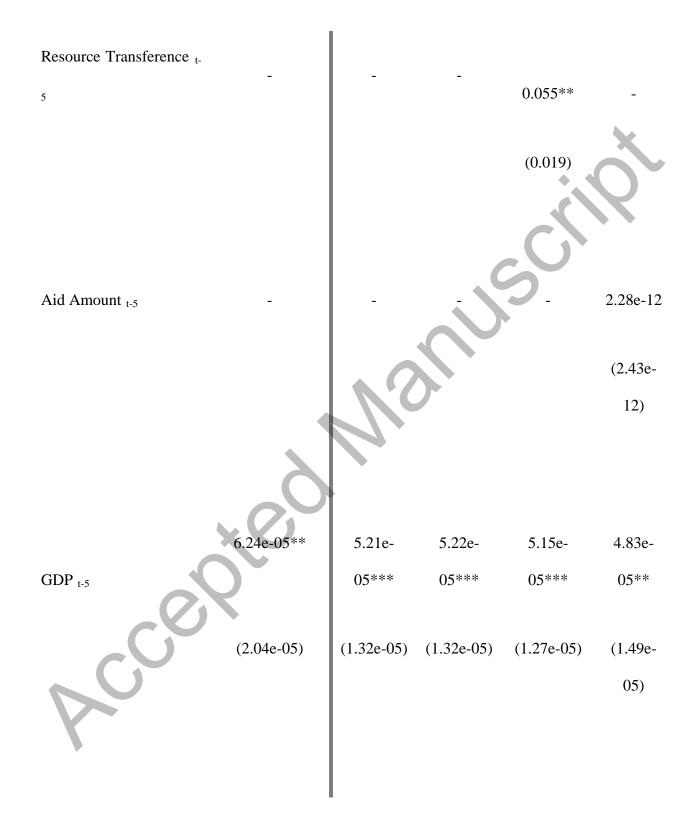
* p <.05, ** p <.01, *** p <.001

Region fixed effects were used in all models.

TABLE 3 Substantive Impact of Behavioral Conformance to Uncontested Norms

Norm	Statistical Value	Average Impact (all time periods)	Applied Impact
Resource Transfer (Foreign Aid)	0.047 (dummy)	+7.5 Diplomatic Representations	1975: +6.45 Dip. Reps
			2000: +8.04 Dip. Reps
Liberalism (Trade)	0.083 (dummy)	+13.25 Diplomatic Representations	1975: +11.37 Dip. Reps
			2000: +14.19 Dip. Cons
Multilateralism (IGO Membership)	0.002 (per IGO)	+0.32 Diplomatic Representations per IGO	1975: +0.27 Dip. Reps/org
			2000: +0.34 Dip. Reps/org

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TABLE 4 Robustness Checks for Group Attribution and Foundational vs. Procedural Norms

	Group Attribution	*Foundational vs. Procedural Norms*			
	EU Status Attribution	Democratic Governance	Democratic Elections	Aid Provided	Amount of Aid Provided
Democratic Governance t-5	0.021	0.007	-	-	-
	(0.015)	(0.008)			
Elections t-5	-	-	0.013	-	-
			(0.009)		

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Resource Transference $_{t-5}$	-	-	-	0.055**	-
				(0.019)	
Aid Amount $_{t-5}$	-	-	-	-	2.28e-12
					(2.43e-12)
GDP $_{t-5}$	6.24e-05**	5.21e-05***	5.22e-05***	5.15e-05***	4.83e-05**
	(2.04e-05)	(1.32e-05)	(1.32e-05)	(1.27e-05)	(1.49e-05)

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Military Performance $_{t-5}$	0.578	0.460*	0.452*	0.450*	0.469*
	(0.312)	(0.185)	(0.181)	(0.180)	(0.198)
Population $_{t-5}$	4.88e-10***	3.65e-10***	3.66e-10***	3.62e-10***	3.76e-10***
	(9.17e-11)	(8.03e-11)	(7.93e-11)	(9.39e-11)	(8.45e-11)
Cold War	-0.027*	0.049***	0.050***	0.046***	0.048***
	(0.012)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Time Counter	-0.030***	0.014***	0.014***	0.013***	0.014***

	(0.004)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Constant	0.838***	0.200***	0.196***	0.192***	0.205***
	(0.041)	(0.031)	(0.031)	(0.028)	(0.030)
Observations	1,015	1,018	1,018	1,018	1,017
Adjusted R^2	0.4678	0.4882	0.4897	0.5397	0.4892

Standard errors in parentheses

*$p <.05$, **$p <.01$, ***$p <.001$

Region fixed effects were used in all models.

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