Not All Major Powers Have the Same Status: An Alternative Conceptualization and Measurement Strategy.[1]

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Introduction

The study of major powers in international politics is as old as Thucydides' (1951) observations about disparities in power relationships between ancient Greek city-states. One particular attribute of major powers (separate from their capabilities) is their *status*, which has also received considerable attention in international relations research, although the focus on major power status considerations has ebbed and flowed cyclically in the literature.[2] Yet, the empirical value of status in most systematic, empirical studies has remained constant. Typically, a measure of major power *status*—separate from the capabilities of major powers—has been used as a control variable in empirical models, and typically the status measure demonstrated a significant, independent effect on the phenomenon under study.[3] This has been the case not only for MIDs and interstate wars, but as well for alliance formation and membership, crisis intervention, and multilateralism.[4]

The "gold standard" for identifying major power status in empirical studies is the Correlates of War (COW) status measure. Conceptually, COW recognizes status as a perceptual phenomenon separate from major power capabilities; its measure is based on responses from a group of IR scholars and diplomatic historians who are asked to *identify states that other states would likely perceive to be major powers* at different points in time (Singer 1988).

[2] Galtung's (1964) classic work, highlighting the importance of status was followed by an early wave of theoretical and empirical studies on major power status (e.g., East 1972; Gilpin 1981; Midlarski 1975; Wallace 1971; 1973). A systematic reexamination of status occurred following the end of the Cold War (Hymans 2002; Larsen and Shevchenko 2003; 2010; Mercer, 1995; 1996; Nayar and Paul 2003; Sylvan et al. 1998; Volgy et al. 2011; Wohlforth 2009; Wohlforth and Kang 2009), as new states emerged and vied for membership into the major power club.

[3] The significant and independent effect of major power status on various international phenomena and on conflict in particular persists across studies despite claims that status is statistically correlated with and conceptually indistinguishable from capabilities (for example, Ray 2003).

[4] Some of the empirical findings connecting the status of major powers with varied forms of conflicts and interactions in international politics include

While the COW measure has served to underscore the salience of status considerations, we argue that it is problematic on two grounds: 1) it treats all major powers as having the same status; and 2) failure to specify the dynamics beneath the attribution of status to major powers (as we note below) has led to some misspecification of the variable. We offer a) an alternative conceptualization of major power status; b) a method for empirically identifying different types of major power status; and c) demonstrate some consequences for both conflict and cooperation dynamics in international politics.

The COW Status Designation

The creators of the COW status variable have recognized that major power status is not a sociological phenomenon, equated with some objective position in the global system based on state capabilities. Instead, they viewed major power status as a perceptual phenomenon based on social comparisons and attributed to a handful of states by others in international politics (Singer 1988), consistent with the theoretical (if not the methodological) approaches taken by constructivists and social psychologists toward status attribution.

However, the COW conceptualization and measurement strategy raises two key questions. First, once a state clears the threshold of being perceived as a major power, does it receive the same status as any other state that has cleared the same hurdle? The answer from COW is yes: the variable is a dummy one, differentiating only states that have crossed some threshold from states that have not. Second, what's the threshold to be cleared: do we know why "experts" attribute major power status to certain states? There doesn't appear to be an answer to the second question short of some consensus among those being surveyed. We argue that both of these answers are problematic.

Below, in Table 1 is the list of states identified by COW as having major power status. During the last two hundred years of international politics, there are nine states designated as having major power status, with remarkable stability in the group. Only one continuous state (Italy) loses its status and fails to regain it later. Over the last century, there is only one new entrant (China) in the major power status club. Finally, virtually all those that lose their status do so as a result of being on the losing side of a world war, and then appear to regain it after a similar, major turbulence in international politics (World War II or the end of the Cold War).[5]

Regarding the first issue, it is clear that not all members of the major power club appear to have the same type of status or standing in global politics. Did the community of states attribute the same type of major power status to Italy as it did to Germany or the UK prior to 1939? Did the PRC in the 1960s receive the same type of status attribution as the US or the Soviet Union? Did the UK or France—commanded by the US to withdraw from Suez in 1956—receive the same major power status attribution as the US? Did the Russian Federation during the 1990s enjoy the same status as did the USSR during the Cold War? We think not, but there is no differentiation within the COW status category.

Regarding the second issue of thresholds for designating major power status, it is unclear whether all cases in the table are correctly and consistently identified. For instance, according to COW, China enters and never leaves the club after 1950; yet, China's capabilities[6] as a major power are virtually non-existent through the Cultural Revolution, and it doesn't even aspire to

[5] This last tendency continues to lead scholars to conclude ---erroneously, in our belief--- that major power status is the result of such major turbulences. Conversely, it is just as plausible that major systemic shake-ups are the result of states' competition over status, which is all the more likely when status disparities exist among would-be major powers.

[6] While capabilities do not equate automatically with major power status, as we show below, states need very high levels of such capabilities before they can be considered as having some major power status.

major power status until the end of the 1970s (Deng, 2008).[7] Japan, however, is not classified as having major power status through the 1980s, despite its formidable economy and substantial military spending (both ranking substantially higher than China), yet—along with Germany—it immediately attains major power status following the end of the Cold War.

--Table 1 about here--

An Alternative Conceptualization of Major Power Status

In order to address these issues we present an alternative approach, based on an integration of opportunity, willingness, and community attribution perspectives. We begin with and slightly modify Levy's (1983) classic definition: A state has major power status if it has a) the *opportunity* to act as one through unusual capabilities with which to pursue its interests in interstate relations; b) demonstrates its *willingness* to act as one by using those capabilities to pursue unusually broad and expansive foreign policies beyond its own region and seeks to influence the course of international affairs *relatively independently* of other major powers; and c) is *attributed major power status* by policy makers of other states within the international community, and they act toward it consistent with that perception. If a state meets minimal empirical thresholds on all these dimensions, then we designate it as belonging to the status club of major powers.

The attribution of major power status by the community of states in international politics should be a function of a number of factors, including perceptual judgments about whether a state looks like and acts as a major power, but also stemming from a variety of constraints, including the influence of very strong states that may wish to limit the status granted to those with which they are

[7] It is plausible that the PRC is included early because of its military role against the US during the Korean War. That war may have boosted its status, but classifying it as a major global power so early in the Cold War runs against the grain of both Chinese capabilities and willingness to engage global politics.

in conflict (or to enhance status for like-minded states).[8] Therefore, the attribution of major power status may not mirror well the capabilities and actions of states that have the opportunity and willingness to act as major powers. The extent to which *being* a major power corresponds to *receiving* major power status should vary with these perceptions and constraints.

Thus, we move further to differentiate between types of status attribution. Once states have crossed minimal thresholds, we focus on the consistency between opportunity, willingness and the level of status being attributed to a major power. We specify three types of major power status attribution. First, *status consistent* major powers cross thresholds on all relevant measures of opportunity and willingness, and are accorded full status attribution by the community of states. However, there are likely to be two cases of *status inconsistency*. In one case, states pass all thresholds on opportunity and willingness, but are not attributed as much status as these dimensions would predict. These states we label *status underachievers*. In the second case, a state is fully attributed status as a major power but its opportunity and willingness scores are mixed. These states we label *status overachievers*.[9]

Such status inconsistencies should not come as a surprise. Clearly, while some states receive status consistent with their capabilities and behavior, others do not: some are attributed major power status when they are no longer (a halo effect);[10] some are denied their status while becoming a great power (latency effect).

[8] For instance, the U.S. pressured states to increase the status of its allies (West Germany, Israel, etc.) and to minimize the status of communist states during the height of the Cold War.

[9] Note that all three types are "in the club"; that is, they have surpassed the minimal thresholds sufficiently to be placed in the club for having major power status, but are differentiated by the relationship between their capabilities, actions, and attribution of status above the minimal thresholds needed to get into the club.

[10] Historically, Italy's major power status attribution actually "covered some stupendous weaknesses" (Kennedy 1987: 206); Austria-Hungary's status attribution dwarfed its capabilities well prior to its disintegration (Sylvan et al. 1998).

Measuring Major Power Status Club Membership

We assume that there are only a handful of atypical states that can meet or exceed the threshold of membership in the major power status club. These are states that possess unusual amounts of capabilities (opportunity), are unusually active in extra-regional affairs (willingness), and are attributed by other states the status of being a major power that will seek to effectuate the course of international affairs. Aspects of any of these three dimensions may be characteristics of a substantial number of states, but it is the combination of these dimensions that indicates that a state is a member of the major power status club.

We establish the following criterion as a minimal threshold to be crossed in order to be classified as having major power status (club membership): a state must demonstrate unusual degrees of opportunity, willingness, and status attribution simultaneously. Once it has crossed this multidimensional threshold, we can then assess the extent to which it is status consistent, is an underachiever, or an overachiever, by estimating the extent to which its attribution is in synch with its opportunity and willingness measures.

Measuring the opportunity dimension

There is little controversy over what types of capabilities it takes to be a major power. In order to have the opportunity to act as one, a state needs unusually large economic and military capabilities. We generate four measures of this dimension. The first two are military. We expect that a major power would stand out from others by spending an unusual amount of its revenues on the military.[11] We measure *unusual* as spending that is at least one standard deviation above the mean spending by all states in a given year. However, since spending alone may not reveal

[11] All indicators, their measures, and the source(s) used are detailed in the Appendix.

the extent to which such military capabilities can be used extra-regionally, we create a second measure of military reach: spending divided by the size of the armed forces (Fordham 2006). While an imperfect measure, we expect that the higher the spending per capita on the military, the greater the spending on the type of technologies that allow coercive capacity to reach beyond the state's immediate region. We identify unusual reach as exceeding by one standard deviation the mean for all states in a given year.

We engage in a similar exercise for economic capabilities. We measure the size of a state's economy (GDP) relative to other states, and identify those whose economies exceed by one standard deviation the mean for all states in a given year. Economic size, however, only measures bulk, and therefore we create a second measure of economic reach, which is calculated as the amount of trade a state engages in, as a function of all global trade. We look for those states that surpass the one standard deviation threshold as having economic reach consistent with being a major power. Thus, our opportunity dimension is measured by these four indicators.

Measures of Willingness

We suggest two measures of willingness to act as a major power, by focusing on the behavior of states. Using events data, we assess the extent of state engagement in conflict and cooperative behaviors in international politics, paying particular attention to the extent that states are active outside of their own regions. States that exceed by one standard deviation the mean levels of activity on conflict and cooperation measures respectively are judged to be acting as major powers.[12] These two indicators create for us the willingness threshold.

Measures of Status Attribution

[12] If such activity is primarily restricted to a state's region, we do not qualify it as exceeding the threshold needed to be a major power in international politics.

The operationalization of the status attribution dimension is likely to be controversial, and understandably so. We concur with both COW and social identity theorists (Tajfel and Turner 1986) that the attribution of (major power) status is a perceptual phenomenon based on social comparisons, and virtually impossible to measure directly. However, such perceptions should have behavioral consequences, and we are interested in those behavioral manifestations that result from a combination of state policy makers' perceptions and the constraints placed on states in attributing such status to a handful of others that is salient for international politics.

We recognize that virtually any behavioral measure we adapt will likely contain substantial amount of noise surrounding the information we seek. As a point of illustration, a focus on diplomatic contacts received (the establishment and staffing of embassies in country X with high level personnel from country Y) is a useful measure of status: such contacts have been the source of conflicts, as states have sought to deter others from establishing formal diplomatic relations with those considered antithetical to their foreign policy objectives (e.g. recognition of East or West Germany, the PRC, Taiwan, Israel, or Cuba). Likewise, Egypt's diminished status in its own region—following the Camp David accords with Israel—is duly noted by the diminution of substantial numbers of diplomatic contacts withdrawn from Cairo by states in the Middle East.

Yet, diplomatic contacts are established for a host of reasons, and the pure number of diplomatic contacts sent to a specific state may not fully reflect its status in international politics. Consider the case of Belgium, a state that clearly does not have major power status. Yet it ranks vary high on the number of diplomatic contacts received, in large part due to the location of the EU in Brussels and the "two-for" that is created for states by sending an embassy to the Belgian capital.

In order to deal with these issues, we opt for two indicators of status, and require the threshold to be at two standard deviations above the mean in order to minimize noise in our data. The first measure is diplomatic contacts received; this indicator consists of the number of embassies sent to a state's capital, and staffed by an ambassador in residence. The second measure is the number of state visits received in a given year by a state, conducted by the highest ranking foreign policy officials of others states. These state visits appear to be particularly symbolic and reflect the salience and status of the recipient state.

The two measures differ from each other on the criterion of volatility. Diplomatic contacts, absent tumultuous events, change slowly while state visits fluctuate substantially from year to year. When both of these measures consistently point to a state as having an unusual amount of such contacts, it is likely reflecting a very high level of status attribution by the community of states. Furthermore, we do not consider the two status attribution measures in vacuum. Only if a state has crossed minimum thresholds on opportunity and willingness do we focus on these indicators. As an illustration, Belgium's high rate of diplomatic contacts received—since it fails to cross any thresholds on willingness and opportunity—represents "noise" that has been excluded from the analysis.

The Missing Dimension

Part of our definition required that a state be willing to not only pursue active engagement in global affairs, but to do so relatively independent of other major powers. We included this requirement under the assumption that there is more likely to be status attribution to a major power that is conducting an independent approach to global affairs than to a state that basically supports another major power's direction. However, we do not directly assess this

requirement, treating it as endogenous to dynamics involving state attribution of status.[13] We expect that the independence criterion will be part of the calculations made by those attributing status to major powers.[14]

Putting It Together

Applying these measures and the standard deviation criteria to the 1951-2010 time frame (in five-year aggregates),[15] we identify three types of cases above the thresholds: status consistent major powers, underachievers, or overachievers. Major powers qualify as status consistent when they a) demonstrate opportunity to be one by crossing the threshold on all four capability measures; b) demonstrate unusual willingness to act by crossing the threshold on both cooperation and conflict outside their regions; and c) are attributed full status by crossing the thresholds on both diplomatic contacts and state visits.

--Table 2 about here—

Status underachievers meet threshold criteria on both opportunity and willingness but lack consistency on status attribution (attributed status on only one of the two indicators). Status overachievers cross thresholds on both status measures but fail to do so consistently across all

[13] Since the goal of this effort is to identify which major powers exist and their status, estimating independence would require that we know a priori the identity of the major powers, making the operationalization virtually impossible. Furthermore, much of the issue of independence may depend on the nature of the system: in unipolar systems conformance to one power, in bipolar systems independence from both lead powers.

[14] In a previous effort we sought an objective measure of independence by creating foreign policy portfolios for all the major powers and comparing them to the U.S. portfolio, and then assessing if the similarities in portfolios predicted to differences in status attribution between the UK (very close to the US) and France (much more distant). They did. However, the Japanese foreign policy portfolio was not very close (nor was its alliance portfolio) to the U.S., despite *perceptions* that Japanese foreign policy was very close to matching U.S. direction (authors 2011).

[15] We use five year time frames since many of our measures, including status attribution, are expected to move slowly over time. In order to qualify as surpassing the threshold, a measure must exceed the standard deviation for the indicator at least four out of five years.

measures of opportunity and willingness.[16] The results are noted in Table 2 and compared with the COW status designations.

Assessing Validity

Cumulatively, do our measures provide a more valid representation of major power status attribution than does the COW measure? In order to make an argument for the validity of our procedures, and the value added by our measures over COW's, we should be able to show that outcomes generated by them are a) *generally* in line with the COW measures, and b) when the two sets of measures disagree, the disagreements should be substantive, reflecting reasonable assertions regarding the weaknesses of certain states in qualifying for gaining major power status from the larger community of states; and c) our measures should provide additional, theoretically useful information compared to the COW measures.

Table 2 appears to suggest that all of these conditions are met. First, the agreement between the two sets of measures is substantial, at 82 percent of the cases, as long as status attribution is treated as a dichotomous variable.

Second, where there is disagreement, it doesn't appear to be an artifact of our data procedures: virtually all the cases of disagreement revolve around the status of China and the UK during the Cold War, and around Germany's status after the Cold War. Given the (aforementioned) enormous weaknesses in Chinese capabilities and its reluctance to engage outside of its region during virtually the entire period between 1951 and 1989 (Deng 2008), it appears to us to that our measures may capture its status better than the COW measure. Neither does the UK case appear to be an anomaly if status perceptions include calculations of relative

[16] We require that they cross thresholds on at least one measure of each dimension of opportunity and willingness in order to enter the major power club. Thus, overachievers meet both status attribution thresholds but fail to cross *all* thresholds for willingness and opportunity (for additional details, see Volgy et al. 2011).

independence from the leading global powers. While both the UK and France had similar capabilities through much of the Cold War, French independence from U.S. policy direction was pronounced compared to the UK's support of US initiatives.

In the German case the 1991-95 period corresponds to substantial German economic and military capabilities (opportunity), along with high levels of inter-regional activism (willingness), and limited status attribution (on diplomatic contacts but not on state visits), reflecting its status as a status underachiever. However, as the post-Cold War era progresses, German military capabilities are reduced, and more important, its activism in foreign affairs is primarily re-oriented toward the European region. Thus is falls below our threshold on the willingness dimension, and out of the major power status club. This appears to be a reasonable description of German foreign policy following the Cold War, as it first sought to increase its presence in post-Soviet space and Asia, then refocused its attention to the EU and Europe, acting more like a regional power rather than a major, global power.[17]

Thus, the differences between our data and COW's appear to represent substantive disagreement over what may constitute for the community of states a state holding major power status. More salient, however, is the other major difference in Table 2: since the COW designation is a dichotomous one, our measures provide much more information about the type of status being held by the members of the major power club. Yet, of what value is this additional information?

Differentiating between Status Types

[17] For a similar assessment, see "Special Report: Europe's Reluctant Hegemon," *The Economist*, June 15, 2013, pps. 3-16.

If differentiation of major powers by status type provides useful information, we should be able to link such status differences between major powers to their conflict and cooperative behaviors. Of the three types of status designations, status overachievers hold the most fragile of attribution: they are endowed with full status by the community of states, although their capabilities fail to match such attribution. Thus, they are likely to behave differently than status consistent major powers that are fully endowed with unusual capabilities and high status, and even underachievers that have the full capabilities of major powers but fail to receive sufficient status attribution.

Specifically, we three consequences linking status and foreign policy behavior, Status consistent major power states, endowed in equal amounts with opportunity, willingness, and status recognition, will have the broadest foreign policy objectives and the greatest incentives to pursue them. Status inconsistent overachievers, limited in either capabilities or foreign policy objectives, and likely fearful of having their weaknesses exposed, will behave prudently in the foreign policy arena. Status inconsistent underachievers will actively pursue an extensive foreign policy agenda in the attempt to achieve a degree of status matching their capabilities and aspirations. These consequences lead to two specific hypotheses: 1) status overachievers, possibly fearing loss of status by having their weaknesses exposed, are less likely to engage in conflict than either underachievers or status consistent major powers; and 2) since cooperation may often be less costly than conflict, status overachievers are more likely to engage in cooperative processes to demonstrate their major power leadership (and to hold on to their status) than either underachievers or status consistent powers.

In terms of foreign policy behavior intervention in militarized interstate disputes (MIDs) has been the hallmark of major powers, differentiating them from other states,[18] and COW's major power status variable is often used as a control in empirical models predicting MID intervention. MID conflict involvement is a good proxy for testing the relative value of the additional information provided by our measure of status differentiation. Table 3 presents a simple frequency distribution of the number of dispute-years within our empirical domain in which major powers join a MID, as a function of their status. [19] As the table illustrates, both status consistent major powers and underachievers are highly active in MIDs, intervening roughly in half the MID years available. Overachievers however are dramatically different: their intervention is both minimal and far closer to those of non-major power states that are contiguous to the MID. Further inspection of these MIDs indicates that overachievers intervene mostly in MIDs within their own regions over conflicts most likely to impact directly on their own security. This is not the case for either underachievers or status consistent states.

--Table 4 about here--

In order to demonstrate both the added information provided by our measures and to show that these results are not due to additional considerations that may be associated with MID involvement, we reproduce in Table 4 a standard model of MIDs intervention, first using the COW measure (Model 1) and then our status differentiated measure (Model 2). Note that the differences between overachieving major powers and the other two categories remain

[18] For a definition and operationalization of Militarized Interstate Disputes see Jones et al. (1996) and Ghosn et al. (2004).

[19] Intervention is defined as a third party state's militarized act of joining on the sides of either dispute initiator, as identified by the Correlates of War's MID project. Note that the correlation between conflict interactions, using events data and MID involvement, including MID joining is low

substantially different even when standard controls are added, and substantially more information is being conveyed about major power MID involvement in Model 2 than Model 1.

Regarding the second hypothesis concerning differences over patterns of cooperation, we look at the creation of formal, intergovernmental organizations (FIGOs)[20] in post-Cold War international politics as the arena where overachievers can demonstrate leadership and involvement in international politics without the major risk of exposing their weaknesses. The creation of such organizations is not without cost, but it is likely to be less costly than involvement in escalating conflicts surrounding MIDs.[21]

It is extraordinarily difficult to gauge the specific states that create IGOs; as an alternative, we look at the founding states at the creation of new FIGOs after the end of the Cold War[22], and gauge whether or not overachievers stand out as being more often present at the creation than underachievers or status consistent powers. We differentiate between global, regional, and inter-regional FIGO creation. Global FIGOs are by definition inclusive and are most likely to have all three as founding members. Regional FIGOs reflect primarily concerns about the neighborhood of major powers. Thus, it is in the realm of inter-regional FIGO creation where we should find substantial differences.

--Figure 1 about here—

[20] FIGOs are the stronger IGOs in international politics, with some amount of autonomy and independent resources. See Volgy et al. 2009.

[21] Even failure to construct viable, enduring cooperative architecture is less of a risk for overachievers than exposing weaknesses in economic or military capabilities.

[22] We confine this analysis to the post-Cold War era since the FIGOs in existence since 1989 can be tracked through the internet for their founding states far better than FIGOs in the earlier era. We would expect, however, that with similar data, we would find similar patterns during the Cold War as well.

Figure 1 illustrates the differences between major powers involved with the founding of post-Cold War FIGOs. Overachievers, as predicted, are the most active outside of regional FIGO creation, both at the inter-regional and global levels, outdistancing even status consistent major powers. Chi^2 values indicate that for all FIGOs, the difference between overachievers and underachievers is significant at .01, and the difference at inter-regional FIGO creation level is significant at .001. In fact, at the inter-regional level underachievers engage in helping to create FIGOs at a rate significantly higher ($p = .05$) than even status consistent major powers.

Discussion and Conclusions

Our analysis suggests that an approach more nuanced than treating major power status as a dummy variable provides substantial additional information about the type of status major powers hold and the relationship of their status attribution to their opportunity and willingness to act as major powers. The additional information also provides additional predictive capability in assessing differences between different types of major power status, and the engagement of major powers—differentiated by their status—with patterns of conflict and cooperation, including MID involvement and the construction of formal intergovernmental organizations.

There are also drawbacks to our approach for both identifying major power status and for assessing the effects of status differentiation. For instance, we require substantial amounts of data in order to establish both willingness and opportunity thresholds for major powers. Thus, compared to COW's measurement, we are unable to engage in longitudinal analysis that would involve international relations prior to World War II, and the dynamics that may be involved with global systems that are not primarily bipolar (Cold War) or unipolar (post-Cold War) in nature. It is possible that the dynamics we have associated with status differentiation may be

linked to system types, and may have less relevance in multipolar systems than in bipolar or unipolar ones. Unfortunately, our strategy requires the use of events data for three of our measures and those data are unavailable prior to 1945.

A second caveat pertains to our findings regarding cooperative structures of IGOs being created by major powers. We note that the data we utilized to test this hypothesis are based on FIGO creation *since* the end of the Cold War only. While we have no reason to believe that the patterns would not be similar during the Cold War, information about founding states is far more sketchy prior to the utilization of the internet, and we are somewhat reluctant to utilize the data available prior to 1989 without being able to double check founding status, and especially for those organizations that no longer exist.[23]

Finally, we note that the identification of differential status for major powers has substantial theoretical and policy implications. As history attests (Wohlforth 2009), the attribution of major power status—both for domestic political and foreign policy reasons—matters for policy makers of major powers. Status differentiation may help to account for what types of competition for status may occur between major powers, and whether or not such competition will result in greater conflict or cooperation in international politics (Larson and Shevchenko 2010). For instance, status underachievers may compete more aggressively to generate additional status while overachievers may seek to hold on to their attributed status—despite their limited capabilities—through more cooperative ventures. Thus, while status competition is likely to occur, the form that status competition may take between major powers may vary with the type of status attributed to them.

[23] The death rate of Cold War FIGOs is substantial, particularly for inter-regional and regional organizations (Volgy et al. 2009).

International politics has been in considerable flux since the end of the Cold War. Part of the change has been the ascendance of regional powers (especially India and Brazil) and their interest in joining the club of major powers along with appropriate status conferred on them by the community of states. Whether or not they would enter the club as underachievers or overachievers (and/or whether or not they will enter at all) appears to matter for conflict and cooperative processes in international politics. It is likely no coincidence that the most recent entrant—China—comes into the club as an overachiever, and has acted conservatively outside its own region in generating conflicts with both major powers and other states.

Conversely, extant major power status club members also have choices in how to approach potential entrants, and especially so since variation in behavior across major power status types suggests that entrance into the club is not necessarily a zero sum game. Encouraging status attribution to ascending major powers *overachievers*—rather than frustrating their ambitions—appears to be a useful strategy, and it is clearly one that the U.S. and others have practiced with China. Something similar may be unfolding with India as well.

Much more problematic is the issue of how to address both underachievers and states that may be in danger of slipping from the major power status club. These may be the precise conditions under which status competition turns substantially more threatening to international peace. Future research should focus on both types of cases: to uncover conditions under which new arrivals (India, Brazil) are likely to enter the club, and as well, the conditions under which continuing major power status attribution is threatened for extant club members (Japan, Russia).

Table 1: COW Designations of Major Power Status, 1816-2002.[24]

STATE	Years Designated	Lost Status	IF Lost Status, Regained?
Austria Hungary	1816-1918	Yes	na (disappeared as state)
China	1950-2002	No	na
France	1816-1940	Yes	Yes
	1945-2002		
Germany/Prussia	1816-1918	Yes	Yes
	1925-1945		
	1990-2002		
Italy	***1860-1943***	***Yes***	***No***
Japan	1895-1945	Yes	Yes
	1990-2002		
Russia/USSR	1816-1917	Yes	Yes
	1945-2002		
UK	1816-2002	No	na
US	1898-2002	No	na

[24] http://www.correlatesofwar.org/

Table 2: Major Power Status Club Membership, Compared to COW Status Designations, Aggregated at Five Year Intervals, 1951-2010.

Time Frame	Major Power and Status Designations													
	US		USSR/Russia		UK		France		Germany		Japan		PRC	
	Club	COW	Club	COW	Club	COW	Club	COW	Club	COW	Club	COW	Club	COW
1951-55	SC	Yes	SU	Yes	**no**	**Yes**	SU	Yes	no	no	no	no	**no**	**Yes**
1956-60	SC	Yes	SU	Yes	**no**	**Yes**	SU	Yes	no	no	no	no	**no**	**Yes**
1961-65	SC	Yes	SU	Yes	SU	Yes	**no**	**Yes**	no	no	no	no	**no**	**Yes**
1966-70	SC	Yes	SU	Yes	SU	Yes	SU	Yes	no	no	no	no	**no**	**Yes**
1971-75	SC	Yes	SU	Yes	**no**	**Yes**	SO	Yes	no	no	no	no	**no**	**Yes**
1976-80	SC	Yes	SU	Yes	SU	Yes	SO	Yes	no	no	no	no	**no**	**Yes**
1981-85	SC	Yes	SU	Yes	SU	Yes	SO	Yes	no	no	no	no	**no**	**Yes**
1986-90	SC	Yes	SO	Yes	SU	Yes	SO	Yes	no	no	no	no	**no**	**Yes**
1991-95	SC	Yes	SO	Yes	SU	Yes	SC	Yes	**no**	**Yes**	SO	Yes	SO	Yes
1996-2000	SC	Yes	SO	Yes	SC	Yes	SC	Yes	SU	Yes	SC	Yes	SO	Yes
2001-05	SC	Yes	SO	Yes	SU	Yes	SU	Yes	**no**	**Yes**	SU	Yes	SO	Yes
2006-10	SC	Yes*	SO	Yes*	SU	Yes*	SU	Yes*	**no**	**Yes***	SU	Yes*	SO	Yes*

no = failed to meet threshold; SC = status consistent major power; SO = overachieving major power status; SU = underachieving major power status; Yes* = indicates estimate of whether or not COW is likely to designate as having major power status; **Bold** entries indicate disagreement between the two measures.

Table 3: Major Power Status and MID Joining, 1950-2001.

State	Percent Years Joins a MID
Non Major Power*	3%
States with Major Power Status	31%
Status consistent	43%
Status underachiever	48%
Status overachiever	***10%***

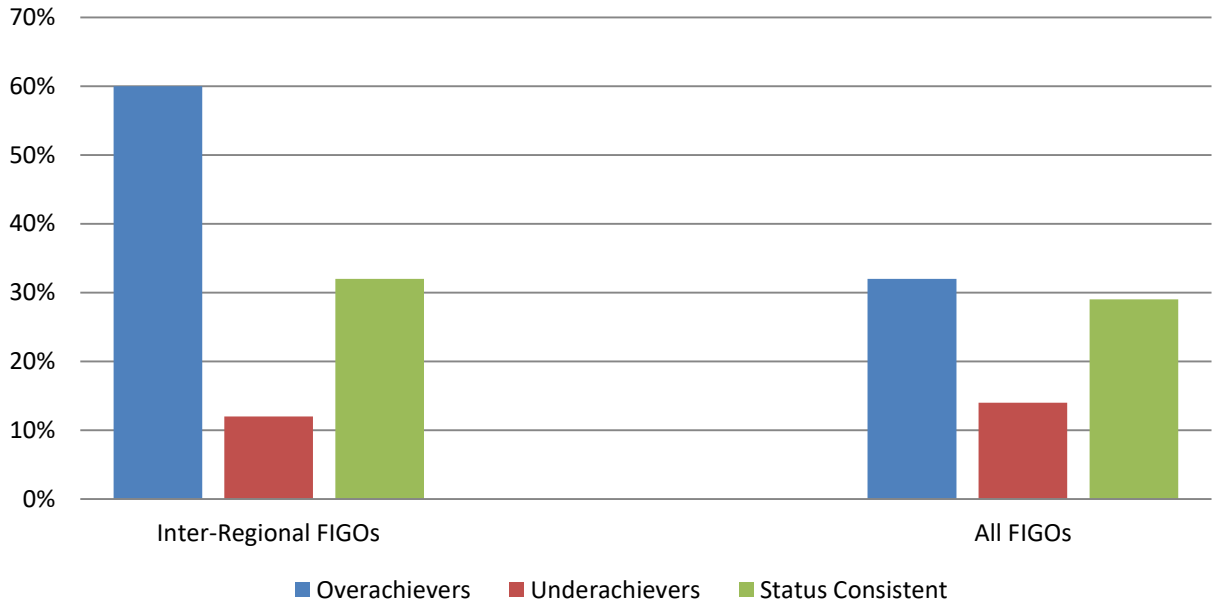
* "Politically relevant" states that are contiguous to the states initially involved in the MID.

Table 4: Logit Models of Major Power Status and MID Joining, 1950-2001.*

Variables	Model 1	Model 2
All Major Powers (COW)	.83*** (.231)	
Status Consistent Major Powers		1.34*** (.333)
Overachievers		.61 (.340)
Underachievers		.58*** (.224)
In (Capabilities)	.33*** (.048)	.32*** (.048)
Constant	1.33*** (.369)	1.25*** (.375)
N	6,441	6,441
Chi 2	493.88***	770.96***

* Other control variables, including contiguity, regime type, peace years, and GDP/capita are not shown.

Figure 1: Major Power Founding Members of Inter-Regional and All FIGOs, by type of Major Power Status, 1989-2008.



Chi^2 for			All FIGOs:	For Inter-regional FIGOs:
Overarchievers	v	Underachievers	= 6.27 (p =.01)	= 12.2 (p = .001)
Overachievers	v	Status Consistent	= .12 (ns)	= 3.82 (p = .05)
Underachievers	v	Status Consistent	= 4.68 (p =.03)	= 2.88 (ns)

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APPENDIX: Indicators, Measures, and Sources Used.

Variable	Measure	Sources
Military Spending	Amount spent on military/ all spending by all states	
Military Reach	Military spending/ total size of armed forces	
Economic Size	GDP	
Economic Reach	All trade by state/total global trade	
Conflict		
Cooperation		
Diplomatic Contact	Total # of embassies received*	From COW diplomatic exchange data at http://www.correlatesofwar.org and DIPCON at: http://www.u.arizona.edu/~volgy/data.html
State Visits	Total # of visits received from states (high ranking officials)	State visits are extracted from events data sources noted above
FIGOs	Total numbers of FIGOs when member at founding	http://www.u.arizona.edu/~volgy/data.html
MIDs	COW MID data	http://www.correlatesofwar.org/MIDs/MID310.html

* Staffed at level of "ambassador" or higher.