**The Two Clubs: Major Powers, Regional Powers, and Status Considerations in International Politics.**

Thomas J. Volgy, Renato Corbetta, J. Patrick Rhamey, Ryan G. Baird and Keith A. Grant

In 2010, China surpassed Japan as the world's second largest economy.[[1]](#footnote-1) One consequence of this event relates to its significance for the two countries' competition for global and regional status. Over the last four decades, their trajectories have presented an interesting paradox. As an economic powerhouse, Japan has been considered a global power by the rest of the international community and by other major powers. Yet, within East Asia, Japan has not been attributed regional power status by its own neighbors (Cline et al. 2011). Conversely, for several decades East Asian states have considered China to be the most relevant regional power, while the international community has struggled to attribute her global major power status. China's slow but steady ascendance from regional to global power and Japan's failure to achieve regional recognition despite being considered a global power lead to several challenging questions about the relationship between regional and global major power status. This effort focuses on one such question: In an era of shifting major power hierarchy, which regional players are the most likely to be attributed global power status next?

We begin with the premise that status in international politics matters and states may belong to a variety of *status* clubs.[[2]](#footnote-2) Our purpose is to explore whether the current most powerful members of the regional powers club (India and Brazil) who also have aspirations to join the most prestigious club of major powers, will likely do so in the foreseeable future. Whether these states can make the transition to the major power club, and the manner in which such a change would occur, should have substantial consequences for the study and practice of international politics.

**The Status of Research on (Major Power) Status**

The salience of status attribution and status competition for explaining international political phenomena has waxed and waned among international relations (IR) scholars. Major powers have been the object of constant interest, yet scholarly attention to their status—separate from their capabilities—has followed a cyclical pattern. The salience of major power status was recognized as early as the Melian debates (Thucydides 1951:331), resuscitated systematically by Galtung’s (1964) classic work, and followed by a short explosion of scholarship (e.g., East 1972; Gilpin 1981; Midlarsky 1975; Wallace 1971; 1973). However, status considerations receded again as empirical models narrowed their foci on more measurable observations involved with the changing capabilities between major powers.

Yet, over the decades, major power *status* has stubbornly persisted in significance across empirical conflict models: major power status*, in addition* to military or economic capabilities, is a significant predictor of conflict initiation, alliance formation and membership, militarized interstate disputes (MIDs) and crisis intervention, and multilateralism.[[3]](#footnote-3) These findings are based typically on an empirical identification of major power status created by the Correlates of War (COW) project. COW creates a dummy variable identifying major powers based on experts’ perceptions about the attribution of major power *status* by other states (Singer 1988).

Following the end of the Cold War, there has been a reemergence of studies focusing on status attribution, status seeking, and status competition between major powers (Deng 2008; Larson and Shevchenko 2003, 2010; Mercer 1995; 1996; Nayar and Paul 2003; Volgy and Mayhall 1995; Wohlforth 2009; Wohlforth and Kang 2009). Some of these works have been driven by dissatisfaction with the limitations of the COW measure. Others have been motivated by the recognition that the field lacks an adequate theoretical framework for understanding status, especially in comparison with sociology or social psychology. Increasingly, social identity theory (SIT)—probing the social constructivist dimension of being a major power—has been utilized as the theoretical foundation for exploring status attribution as well as its consequences.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Our work (Corbetta 2006; Corbetta et al. 2008; Grant et al. 2010; Volgy et al. 2011a) has relied on the integration of SIT and materialist explanations to create a conceptualization and measurement of status for major regional powers. We have delineated membership within two status clubs: the club of major powers (Volgy et al. 2011b) and the club of regional powers (Cline et al. 2011). Within these clubs we have differentiated conceptually and empirically between status consistent and status inconsistent powers and suggested likely consequences of such a distinction (Volgy et al. 2011). Our framework accounts for variation within the major power hierarchy since 1950 and variation in behavior within the exclusive club of major powers. It offers a methodology with which to identify empirical conditions about how such a club may expand or narrow in the future. Below, we discuss the salience of major power status, summarize our definition and operationalization of the concept of membership in the club of major powers, explore differences across status types in terms of their engagement with international politics, and propose a set of conditions that the strongest of regional powers need to meet to achieve higher (global) status. We apply these criteria to India and Brazil, and suggest some consequences for international politics.

**Why Status?**

Why focus on major powers’ status and status inconsistencies rather than simply on their material strength? As noted above, there is substantial empirical evidence that the *status* of major powers matters—in addition to their capabilities—for a variety of interstate behaviors. We summarize below the theoretical reasons we believe are behind these empirical relationships.[[5]](#footnote-5)

Much of the extant literature has treated status attribution as a unidirectional process through which an unspecified number of countries recognize that a few states occupy a special position in the international system. We argue, instead, that the process of major power status attribution is bidirectional and three-pronged. It is bi-directional because major power status is not likely conferred on some states if they do not actively seek it. It is three-pronged because it depends on the convergence of three forms of attribution: (a) self-ascription; (2) attribution by the international community; and (3) attribution by existing major powers.

Self-ascription, or the seeking of status, is salient for states because it provides a form of soft power with which status recipients can complement their material capabilities. Acceptance by others as being a major power creates legitimacy for a wide variety of foreign policy pursuits, making it less costly to either intervene in conflicts or create mechanisms of cooperation. The reputation associated with major power status strengthens the credibility of both threats and commitments, increasing the likelihood that great powers will achieve their diverse goals in international politics.

Thus, status-based soft power provides major powers added influence and motivation to pursue policies and interests outside their immediate neighborhoods. Major power foreign policies constitute to a large extent a self-fulfilling prophecy. An expansive foreign policy is a pre-requisite for the attribution of status by the international community and by other major powers (Levy 1983). However, once status has been ascribed, the range and scope of commitments that come with it force major power states to expand further their role and prevent them from disengaging from international politics.[[6]](#footnote-6) When the community of states attributes major power status to a few of its members, such attribution comes with expectations that these states will exercise leadership on a variety of issues and conflicts central to international or regional politics. Recipients are expected to be involved in international affairs, and may even be asked for assistance. French involvement in simmering disputes among and within Francophone African countries, Kyrgyz requests for Russian assistance with its domestic conflicts, or recent involvements in Libya are examples of expectations and receptivity toward those considered as major powers assisting with regional order.[[7]](#footnote-7) Status-based receptivity to major power activity is similar to the Weberian notion of status as a soft power that confers privileges to certain states (Sylvan, Graff and Pugliese 1998:7-8; Nayar and Paul 2003).

However, while major powers are clearly the strongest actors in international politics, evidence also suggests that their *structural strength* has been diminishing. Relative strength is about the strength of one state versus another; structural strength is the strength a major power possesses with which to effectuate the course of global affairs (Strange 1989), or for a regional power to create order within its region. It is plausible that while the relative strength of a major power may increase substantially *compared* to other major powers, the structural strength of all major powers may be diminishing. Volgy and Bailin (2003), for example, show that structural strength has declined among *all* major powers, including those whose relative strength appears to have increased (U.S., China) after the Cold War.

Thus, status attribution may be even more salient for major powers when structural strength is decreasing. To the extent that states look at great powers for leadership and assistance in the face of crises and collective action problems, high status may reduce some of the material costs of efforts to structure order and/or institutional development necessary for global governance. Major powers may seek additional status if they perceive a mismatch between the status attributed to them and the status they “deserve” or create maintenance strategies if they are in jeopardy of losing the status they have had. For instance, we suspect that status issues motivated both Russia and China to develop new governance mechanisms for the conduct of relations in Central Asia after the Cold War. Seen in this context, the aspirations of India and Brazil to become major powers and to be attributed the corresponding status is not just of symbolic value: it is likely embedded in foreign policy strategies aimed at pursuing vital regional and global interests.

When major power status is valued domestically, foreign policy makers also gain from status attribution by receiving added support from domestic constituencies and political elites for being active, influential, and important major players in global politics. Conversely, the domestic value placed on such international status may require policy makers to seek to maintain or increase their state’s status or run the risk of being removed from office.[[8]](#footnote-8) In democratic systems, the acquisition and preservation of major power status may represent one "public good"—not unlike national security—that policy-makers provide for their large winning coalitions. In non-democratic systems, the policies associated with achieving or preserving major power status may produce privatized "externalities" that policy-makers dole out to their narrow coalition of supporters (see Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003). Thus, status should matter across regime types, and as structural strength declines, status may matter even more.

**Defining Major Powers and Their Status**

The question of regional power ascent to the major power club requires first defining what is meant by a major power and its status. We begin with and slightly modify Levy’s (1983) classic definition. A state is a ***major power*** if it: a) has the *opportunity* to act as one through unusual capabilities; 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 does so *relatively independent* of other major powers; and c) is attributed an unusual amount of *status* by policy makers of other states within the international community. A state belongs to the major power club if it meets minimal empirical thresholds on all these dimensions. For theoretical reasons we focus on community attribution (rather than self-ascription or in-group attribution). Community attribution comes closest to the “soft power” considerations we consider salient in the context of declining structural strength and is, therefore, of most immediate interest to the prospects of major power aspirants.

The attribution of major power status by the community of states is based on a number of factors, including perceptual judgments about whether a state looks and acts as a major power. These judgments may be influenced by existing major powers who seek to act as gatekeepers for the club, excluding rivals or granting access to like-minded states.[[9]](#footnote-9) The extent to which being a major power corresponds to receiving major power status should vary with these perceptions and constraints. [[10]](#footnote-10)

Since some states receive status consistent with their capabilities and behavior while others do not, we differentiate between types of status: assuming a threshold above which a state would be considered a major power, ***status inconsistency*** occurs either when major power status attribution is not in synch with the capabilities and/or the foreign policy pursuits of the state in question, or, if states are inconsistent in awarding status to a major power. We suggest three types of status conditions for major powers: ***status consistent*** major powers (status attribution parallels major power capabilities and behavior), status ***underachievers*** (lacking the status proportional to their capabilities and behavior), and status ***overachievers*** (who are attributed more status than their capabilities and/or behavior would warrant).

**Status Consistent Versus Status Inconsistent Powers**

This framework suggests that the amount and type of status a major power has matters. Status consistent powers should have the most legitimacy and influence, engaging in a range of activities that are too costly for status inconsistent major powers and regional powers. Given their strength and receptivity to their actions, status consistent major powers are likely to pursue their objectives with higher expectation of success, run lower risks of failure externally, and risk fewer domestic political consequences for their foreign policy pursuits.

Wolforth (2009) proposes that when states experience status inconsistency they will seek to resolve it. This will result in status competition with other states “whose portfolios of capabilities are not only close but also mismatched (2009: 40).” We agree and suggest that status underachievers—given their muscular portfolios but unmatched status attribution—will seek to resolve uncertainty around their status by competing more aggressively than overachievers[[11]](#footnote-11) to create larger roles for themselves in global affairs. However, lacking the soft power of full status attribution, they will be less aggressive than status consistent major powers.

Status overachievers have full status attribution but lack either some opportunity and/or willingness to match the position accorded to them. Given this mismatch, we expect that overachievers would be less likely to risk exposing their weaknesses and would engage in international affairs less aggressively than underachievers.[[12]](#footnote-12) Their quest to keep status can be pursued with fewer risks by engaging in architectures of cooperation: creating, sustaining, and participating in networks of intergovernmental organizations consistent with social creativity and social mobility strategies of status enhancement (Larson and Shevchenko 2010).

**Identifying Membership in the Major Power Club**

Previously (Corbetta et al. 2008; Grant et al. 2009; Volgy et al. 2011b) we had identified measures of major power opportunity, willingness, and community-based status attribution. Unusual opportunity is measured by military size and military reach, as well as the size of a state’s economy and its economic reach beyond the region.[[13]](#footnote-13) We consider opportunity and willingness to be "unusual" if a state is situated at least one standard deviation above the mean in the distribution of the aforementioned measures. Willingness to act as a major power is measured by unusually high levels of both cooperative and conflictual activity globally.[[14]](#footnote-14) Willingness, however, cannot depend exclusively on a state's "volume" of foreign policy activity. The ability to chart an independent foreign policy path also matters.[[15]](#footnote-15) Independence in foreign policy orientation is measured by matching foreign policy portfolios[[16]](#footnote-16) to the lead major power (U.S.) and requiring low thresholds of conformance with U.S. leadership.[[17]](#footnote-17)

Measuring community status attribution is problematic: it is largely based on the perceptions of policy makers, for which there is no direct, systematic measurement. Such perceptions, however, have behavioral consequences and result in actions that reflect symbolically when states view others as major powers. We measure major power status by an unusually high level (two standard deviations above the mean) of embassies sent to the major power, and a corresponding number of state visits to its capital.[[18]](#footnote-18)

Applying these measures and the standard deviation criteria to the 1951-2005 period (in five-year aggregates), we identify cases above the thresholds where states are status consistent major powers, underachievers, or overachievers. Below the thresholds states are not considered to be members of the major power club. Status consistent major powers a) demonstrate opportunity to be one by consistently crossing the threshold on all four capability measures; b) demonstrate unusual willingness to act by crossing the one standard deviation threshold on both cooperation and conflict outside their regions, while maintaining relative foreign policy independence from other major powers; and c) are attributed full status by crossing the thresholds on both diplomatic contacts and state visits. Status underachievers meet criteria on both opportunity and willingness but lack consistency on status attribution. Status overachievers cross thresholds on both status measures while they fail to do so consistently across measures of opportunity and willingness.

Our delineation of major power status differs substantially from the COW designation. It is based on observable data and does not rely on experts’ assessments (Singer 1988); it allows us to differentiate between status consistent and status inconsistent powers, showing more variation in club membership across time than by COW; finally, we "fix" some of the most glaring anomalies in the COW designations.[[19]](#footnote-19) Our results are displayed in Appendix A.[[20]](#footnote-20)

**Consequences for Variation in Major Power Status**

Differences in status attribution should be manifested both in major power conflict and cooperative behaviors. Status consistent major powers, equipped with capabilities, willingness to act, and substantial status, should be more likely to intervene in ongoing interstate conflicts than both status inconsistent major powers and other states. Status *underachieving* major powers should intervene frequently in conflicts, although less so than status consistent major powers because they lack full status attribution and have limited capabilities to engage successfully. Lacking sufficient material capabilities to match their status, *overachieving* major powers should be least willing to join ongoing interstate conflicts.

These predictions are tested using data on states joining ongoing militarized interstate disputes (MIDs) [[21]](#footnote-21) for the 1950-2001 period (Table 1). Three logit models are used. [[22]](#footnote-22) Model 1 consists of a standard, baseline model of control variables used in the empirical literature to analyze MIDs involvement:[[23]](#footnote-23) capabilities, contiguity, regime type, peace years, and GDP/capita. We substitute our measure of major power status for the COW designation in Model 1, while Models 2 and 3 differentiate between types of status attribution. The relationships hold as expected, even as the capabilities of states are separately estimated in the models. Status overachieving, status underachieving and status consistent major powers demonstrate significantly different patterns of involvement with ongoing militarized interstate disputes.

**Table 1: Logit Models of Major Power Status and MID Joining, 1950—2001.**

**Variables Model 1 Model 2 Model 3**

All Major Powers .83\*\*\*

(.231)

Status Consistent Major Powers 1.34\*\*\* 1.34\*\*\*

(.332) (.333)

Status Inconsistent Major Powers .59\*\*

(.200)

Status Inconsistent Overachievers .61

(.340)

Status Inconsistent Underachievers .58\*\*\*

(.224)

==============================================================================

In (Capabilities) .33\*\*\* .32\*\*\* .32\*\* (.048) (.048) (.048)

Constant 1.33\*\*\* 1.25\*\*\* 1.25\*\*\*

(.369) (.372) (.375)

N 6,441 6,441 6,441

Chi 2 493.88\*\*\* 738.81\*\*\* 770.96\*\*\*

Status overachieving major powers do not appear to be engaged with MIDs as significantly as are status consistent and underachieving major powers. This conforms to our expectation that overachievers behave more assertively in the realm of structured international cooperation, where states are less dependent on overwhelming material capabilities for the pursuit of their objectives. Overachievers are most likely to be engaged in intergovernmental organizations through creation, participation, and maintenance.

Since the end of the Cold War, status overachieving major powers have been at the forefront in creating inter-regional formal intergovernmental organizations (FIGOs) and *articulating* visions of global FIGOs, though lacking the substantial capabilities necessary for creation. Russia and China, two overachievers, have led in the creation of inter-regional structures in former Soviet space since the end of the Cold War (Volgy et al. 2009). Russian policy makers have also been most vocal in demanding new global security arrangements to replace Cold War structures (Larson and Shevchenko 2010).

Recent analysis of post-Cold War organizational creation[[24]](#footnote-24) suggests that, when *inter-regional* FIGO creation occurs after 1989, overachieving major powers lead the effort in partnership with at least one other overachieving major power or a regional power that is highly salient to the geopolitical space in question. The long term viability of these efforts, given limited resources with which to nurture and stabilize these organizations, is somewhat questionable: while FIGOs created by overachieving major powers tend to outlive those without any major power involvement, they are less likely to endure than those created by status consistent major powers.

**Crossing Thresholds: When Will India and Brazil enter the Major Power Club?**

One of the advantages of our definition and measurement of major power status is that it moves us beyond a binary view of the concept, allowing a more fine-grained assessment of the hierarchy of states. As Appendix A indicates, the club of major powers is constant neither in terms of membership nor in terms of its members’ status consistency. One or more states outside the club will likely seek membership in the future while some of the present powers may lose their membership. We assume that the states most likely to gain community-based major power status attribution are the strongest members of the regional power club and have demonstrated an explicit interest in becoming major powers. [[25]](#footnote-25)

We identified eleven different regions in post-Cold War international relations using cluster analysis based on capabilities, primary interactions between states, and cultural/linguistic similarity. Then we estimated, based on a regional version of our approach to identifying major powers, whether or not there are any regional powers in those regions. Finally, we ranked regional powers based on their capabilities (Cline et al. 2011).

As Appendix B indicates, apart from the global powers that are also regional powers, embedded in eleven regions are five regional powers: Australia in Oceania, Brazil in South America, India in South Asia, Nigeria in East Africa, and the Republic of South Africa in Southern Africa. The five members of the regional powers club are all status consistent regional powers. Two of the regional club members dwarf the others with their economic capabilities and military potential: Brazil and India.[[26]](#footnote-26) We focus on these states as most likely to seek and receive major power club status.

We present two sets of data to estimate the likelihood of Brazil and India’s prospects for gaining entry into the major power club. First we assess their current status, capabilities, and foreign policy behavior with those states that have most recently emerged[[27]](#footnote-27) as global major powers after 1989: China, with growing capabilities, but as an overachieving major power; Japan with shifting status attribution between status consistency and inconsistency; and Germany, which emerges briefly into the major power club but only for one of the three post-Cold War periods (Appendix A).

Second, we present a number of alternative scenarios with which to make judgments about when/if, and under what conditions Brazil and India are likely to enter the club. The scenarios attempt to project when these states are likely to cross the major power thresholds on opportunity, willingness, and status attribution, given various assumptions regarding a) their historical progress over the last decade; b) the degree of political extraction ability of their governments; and c) what major powers may or may not do to counter such movements by these aspirants.

Foreign policy independence, especially from the U.S., is one of the conditions states must meet to enter the major power club. Both Brazil and India meet this requirement: using the IDEA events data base for 1990 through 2007, we compare the foreign policy profiles of the two states to the U.S. by generating conflict and cooperation activity—scaled for intensity using Goldstein’s (1991) scale—for all three states. The scale ranges from 1 (perfect similarity) to -1 (complete dissimilarity). Major powers typically range between +.6 and -.8. Both Brazil and India range around 0, satisfying the independence criterion (Volgy et al 2010).

*Where are they now?*

We first compare trends in capabilities, foreign policy activity, and status attribution for Brazil and India since the end of the Cold War, with the three states that emerged into the major power club after 1989, while illustrating the standard deviation thresholds that aspiring powers need to cross to attain major power club membership. Comparisons on military spending and reach are presented in Figures 1a and 1b. While both Brazil and India have increased their military spending in the last decade, they are substantially below the major power threshold on this measure. The measure of military reach shows an even larger gap between these aspirants and the threshold for major power membership. By comparison, China, over the last two decades doubles her efforts on both measures.

Figure 2 indicates capabilities regarding economic reach, measured by trade as a function of global trade. We do not show statistics on GDP size since both Brazil and India have been above the one standard deviation threshold on GDP size for over two decades. Despite the large and growing size of their economies, neither Brazil nor India appear to be moving towards the economic reach threshold crossed by club members.

Figures 3A and 3B present trends in the volume and intensity of global activity. While both Brazil and India are very active in their respective regions and meta-regions, neither demonstrates levels of cooperative and/or conflictual engagement outside of their regions above the thresholds.[[28]](#footnote-28)

Figures 4A and 4B present trends for status attribution measures. The pattern for diplomatic contacts received (Figure 4B) shows a substantial movement on the part of India toward the volume of contacts received by Japan and Germany. India also receives substantially more state visits after 2000,

although it still fails to reach the designated threshold. Given the combination of the two status measures, it appears that India is progressing toward high status. Brazil’s numbers lag behind and

only diplomatic contacts are progressing toward the threshold, while the state visits measure does not show any substantial movement.

**Figure 5: A Comparison of Threshold Entry requirements for Brazil and India, Compared with New Major Powers, 2000-2007 Timeframe.**

**STATE Capabilities Foreign Policy\* Status\*\* Consistency\*\*\***

**GDP EcReach MilSp MilReach Coop Conflict Dipcon Visits**

***Brazil*** + NIC

***India***  + +\* + NIC

***China*** + + + +\* + + SO

**Japan** + + + + + SU

**Germany** + + +\* +\* + NIC\*\*\*\*

\* indicates that the threshold is met but not for extra-regional interactions. \*\* Measured at two standard deviations from the mean. \*\*\* SIO = overachiever; SIU = underachiever; NIC = not in major power club. \*\*\*\*Germany qualified as a member of the club only during one of the three post-Cold War timeframes; in this period (2000-2007), it slips out as its foreign policy activity is primarily within its region.

Figure 5 integrates the data and provides a comparative positioning of Brazil and India for the most recent time frame (2000-2007), across opportunity, willingness, and status attribution thresholds. Clearly neither is a member of the club, albeit some progress has been made by India toward meeting membership requirements.

*Seeking Entrance into The Club*

Will Brazil and India enter the major power club in the foreseeable future, and if so, under what type of status attribution conditions? We create three scenarios, based on varying assumptions regarding Brazilian and Indian capacity to accelerate their capabilities and activities relative to other major powers. The first scenario we propose is the *baseline/frozen status quo model*. In this scenario we estimate prospects of entry based on a) the *projected* increase in their capabilities, willingness, and status attribution[[29]](#footnote-29) from existing data since 1991, b) assuming their average levels of political extraction[[30]](#footnote-30) from society by their governments over the last decade, with c) other states and major powers frozen at their present levels.

In the second scenario—the *accelerated status quo model--*Brazil and India’s projections are scaled by their *maximum* political extraction performance on the historical values since 1991. All other countries—including major powers—remain frozen in time. We assume that the maximum political extraction of Brazil and India in our models increases the rate at which each of our indicators will rise over time. If these states extract resources at their maximum observed levels, such increases should result in a proportional rise in the rate at which they will increase their capabilities, foreign policy activity, and acquire status.[[31]](#footnote-31)

In the third scenario, the *minimally* *contested accelerated model,* Brazil and India perform at their maximum political extraction, but now the values for extant major powers are projected through 2050, allowing the thresholds to vary over time with changes in existing major power capabilities, activity, and status. This scenario contains a minimal response on the part of major powers to accelerated status seeking by these aspirants.[[32]](#footnote-32)

The political extraction (RPE) variable measures the *relative* ability of states to extract resources from their domestic societies, providing a more accurate reflection of the resources available to states, compared to more traditional measures (Arbetman and Kugler 1995). [[33]](#footnote-33) An increase in extraction represents increased resources available. In the second model, we use RPE to scale the rate at which states generate capability, activity, and status attribution. In the baseline scenario we assume typical levels of RPE based on existing data and project values for each measure for India and Brazil based on current yearly trends. In the accelerated status quo model, we focus on the maximum observed value of RPE for Brazil and India and increase the annual projected rate of change in each measure by the proportional difference between the state's maximum and average level of political extraction. In the minimally contested model, where Brazil and India continue to operate at their maximum RPE’s, the values for existing major powers are allowed to increase, projected on the basis of existing data and assuming an average level of RPE.

**Figure 6: Projections for Brazil and India, Baseline Scenario. Brazil**

Milex Milreach GDP Econreach Coop Conf Dipcon Visits Position\*

2010-15 + NIC

2016-20 + NIC

2021-25 + NIC

2026-30 + NIC

2031-35 + + + NIC

2036-40 + + + NIC

2041-45 + + + NIC

2046-50 + + + NIC

**India**

2010-15 + + + NIC

2016-20 + + + NIC

2021-25 + + + + NIC

2026-30 + + + + NIC

2031-35 + + + + NIC

2036-40 + + + + NIC

2041-45 + + + + + **SO**

**2046-50 + + + + + + SO**

\* NIC = not in status club; SO = Status overachieving major power

In all three scenarios we assume that the condition of relative foreign policy independence vis-à-vis the leading global state will not have changed appreciably in the near future. We also assume that the immediate conditions in their regional relationships will not deteriorate significantly, allowing these states to continue to focus on politics beyond their region. All three projections are based on extremely conservative assumptions regarding how states presently in the club would respond to Brazilian and Indian aspirations. These constitute the best case conditions under which Brazil and India would succeed in entering the club.[[34]](#footnote-34)

**Figure 7: Projections for Brazil and India, Status Quo Accelerated Scenario.**

**Brazil**

TIME Milex Milreach GDP Econreach Coop Conf Dipcon Visits Position\*

2010-15 + NIC

2016-20 + NIC

2021-25 + NIC

2026-30 + NIC

2031-35 + + + NIC

2036-40 + + + NIC

2041-45 + + + NIC

2046-50 + + + NIC

**India**

2010-15 + + + NIC

2016-20 + + + NIC

2021-25 + + + + NIC

2026-30 + + + + NIC

2031-35 + + + + NIC

2036-40 + + + + NIC

**2041-45 + + + + + + SO**

**2046-50 + + + + + + SO**

\* NIC = not in status club; SO = Status overachieving major power

Note that the projections are linear in nature.[[35]](#footnote-35) We do so based on a vast body of literature suggesting that states’ relative growth in material capabilities and foreign policy behavior occurs linearly over time (e.g., Organski and Kugler 1980; Kugler and Lemke 2000). Two of the three recent members of the club (China and Japan) demonstrated such linear changes. Germany did not due to the sudden integration of the two Germanies. However, Germany is the only case after 1989 that enters and then slips out of the major power club. Below we will suggest conditions under which linear patterns may change, especially for India.

The results of the three scenarios are summarized in Figures 6 through 8.[[36]](#footnote-36) None of the three scenarios create conditions that would allow Brazil to emerge as a major power over the next four decades. Regardless of the scenario utilized, Brazil appears to resemble a major power only on economic capabilities, even when it is operating at the high end of its political extraction capacity.

**Figure 8: Projections for Brazil and India, Minimally Contested Accelerated Scenario.**

**Brazil**

TIME Milex Milreach GDP Econreach Coop Conf Dipcon Visits Position

2010-15 + NIC

2016-20 + NIC

2021-25 + NIC

2026-30 + + + NIC

2031-35 + + + NIC

2036-40 + + + NIC

2041-45 + + + NIC

2046-50 + + + NIC

**India**

2010-15 + + + NIC

2016-20 + + + NIC

2021-25 + + + + NIC

2026-30 + + + + NIC

2031-35 + + + + NIC

2036-40 + + + + NIC

2041-45 + + + + NIC

2046-50 + + + + NIC

The projections are more promising for India, although they may be a source of frustration for Indian policy makers if they are expecting entrance into the club soon. In the baseline scenario India does not emerge into the major power status club until the last decade of the time series. Even operating at the highest range of its political extraction capability and without major power resistance, India still does little better as it emerges into the club as an overachieving major power. In the third scenario, if existing major powers offer a minimal response by continuing their historical capability and activity trends, India will not join the club regardless of its political extraction level. For this picture to change, India’s efforts at capacity generation and global involvement would have to be above and beyond what she has been able to demonstrate historically.

The three scenarios are based on various assumptions regarding changes endogenous to Brazil and India, and thresholds that are driven exogenously, depending on whether or not major powers respond to status seeking on the part of these states. We have not created scenarios where other exogenous stimuli compel Indian decision-makers to ramp up their capabilities and activities. India is particularly vulnerable to such changes given its rivalry with an unstable nuclear Pakistan, and competition with China that ranges from ongoing border issues to active Chinese involvement in South Asia.[[37]](#footnote-37) Increased tensions with Pakistan may lead India to substantially increase its capabilities and its regional and global involvement in security affairs. Increased competition with China could result in similar changes in capabilities and activities and may lead India to seek alternative cooperative and security structures, including closer relationships with Japan, the U.S., and the EU. Those changes could bring it closer to achieving major power status than in our models.[[38]](#footnote-38)

**Consequences for International Politics**

Our effort assumes that increasing the size of the major powers club is not necessarily a zero sum game. While membership in the club increases a state's soft power, how a state behaves with its additional capability may depend on the type of status it achieves. Foreign policy-makers may recognize this, especially for potential major powers that enter the club as overachievers. The case of China—as a new, overachiever—is illustrative. It has taken an extremely conservative approach to contesting the global order as long as other states provide it with major power status (Deng 2011). Likewise, the Russian/Soviet shift from underachieving to overachieving major power has led to reduced direct conflict with other major powers outside its own region, and presently, it is attempting to seek accommodation with both established Western[[39]](#footnote-39) and rising Chinese power. It is difficult to imagine an equally benign scenario had Russia been excluded from the club after 1991.

The conditions under which India is seeking entrance to the club differ from Chinese entrance. India has already reached the threshold of substantial status but without the qualifying capabilities and activities. Recognizing India as a major player in international affairs may minimize its need to develop the type of status seeking strategy that would destabilize global governance. However, in order for this to happen, India must demonstrate a dramatic increase in capabilities, reach, and commitment to engage in global affairs. Without the necessary components of opportunity and willingness, the conferral of high status alone will not be enough to guarantee a legitimate place in the club.[[40]](#footnote-40)

In the absence of sudden, unexpected, monumental events that may change the linear course of these projections it appears that membership in the major power club is not likely to increase in the next few decades, despite explicit efforts by both India (Basrur 2011) and Brazil (Herz 2011) to join. The task appears especially difficult for Brazil as it lags far behind India and the existing great powers on a variety of indicators.

Historically, Brazil and India differ in self-ascription, and ascent to major power status may be valued somewhat differently in the two countries. While neither Indian nor Brazilian policy-makers have made a secret of harboring major power ambitions, these discussions in Brazil solidified only during the last decade (Herz 2011). Indian officials have proclaimed intentions toward major power status for a substantially longer period, and this goal has been especially stimulated by dramatic economic growth. Some Indian policy-makers already see India as having completed the transition from regional to global power (Basrur 2011). If in fact such a transition will take several decades, it could lead to considerable frustration in India's behavior and rhetoric.

It may be argued that our projections are too conservative given the recent changes that have taken place in the global economy. For example, Brazil and India may gain substantially from the recession that impacted existing major powers in ways that linear projections cannot capture. A few economic and foreign policy think tanks have already attributed major power status to India.[[41]](#footnote-41) These assessments, however, are either based primarily on economic indicators, or on non-replicable “expert opinion”. They seem to reflect what we have termed "opportunity", failing to capture the “willingness” component of major power status and the process by which major power status ascription is likely to be conferred by the community of states.

Rather than growing, it is plausible that the major power club will shrink in the near future. Germany, for one, has flirted with club membership in the post-Cold War period, and has moved in and then out, expanding and then contracting its activities outside of Europe. Presently, it is seeking to reduce further the size of its military, and planning other cutbacks that could reduce its status to a regional power.

Japan is an entirely different case. Its bona fides as a regional power are lacking status attribution from East Asian states; its legitimacy in the region is primarily based on the size of its economy, economic reach, and status as a major *global* power. As its economy continues to shrink, it has been further weakened by the recent tragic earthquake. Its 1% commitment of its GDP to military spending is looking less strong than during the booming years. Its political system appears fragile, and its foreign policy deferential to Chinese assertiveness[[42]](#footnote-42) even in its immediate neighborhood.

Perhaps the more salient question for international politics is not the growth of the major power club but the possibility of its shrinkage, and the consequences such exits hold as states struggle to maintain the status they have. There are two types of states that could lose their membership. There are recent joiners that may be unwilling or incapable of maintaining their capabilities or their willingness to play global roles, as perhaps exemplified by Germany’s brief and temporary entrance into the club after the end of the Cold War.

The second type is the “established member”. These would be states with a long history of club membership, still enjoying major power status, but having lost critical capabilities and consequently the willingness to consistently play on the global stage as a major power. This second group often enjoys a “halo” effect, and continues its membership for some time. Attribution of its status by the global community remains high, and likely does in-group attribution by other club members. The extent to which it is committed to maintaining its status by working to expand its capabilities and willingness to act as a major power (the salience of its self-attribution) is probably critical to whether or not it can keep its membership.

The Russian Federation is an excellent illustration of this type. Its military capabilities fell below the threshold after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Yet, its community based status attribution did not diminish. Equally important, other members of the major power club continued to recognize it as one of their own, allowing it to join the G-8 while its membership as a veto power in the UN Security Council went uncontested. Meanwhile, it has been increasing its military capabilities[[43]](#footnote-43) and its global activities. Its ability to keep its membership illustrates in part that it may be in the interest of other club members to keep certain states in the club rather than face the conflicts resulting from a member’s exit. We suspect however that the Russian route is only available to states with long-standing membership and a strong commitment to maintaining their status. States such as India likely require the longer route to membership akin to Chinese entrance into the club.

There are substantial theoretical implications for whether or not the major power club will grow or shrink in the near future. Structural theorists for instance, emphasize the size of the club as well as the distribution of capabilities within it as a predictor of competition, conflict, alliance formation, etc. (Waltz 1979). Should current major power aspirants gain membership in the club over the next few decades, the number of major powers could grow to nine. At no point in recent times has the club been so large, and it is well beyond the number of major powers that structural theories generally associate with multipolarity.

It is unclear from these theories if such a large club leads to extreme forms of the international politics pathologies typically resulting from multipolarity. Given the traditional association between large numbers of major powers, uncertainty, and conflict, such a system may be replete with opportunities for misperceptions, unstable coalitions, tension and, potentially war. Managing relations between members of the club could fall to the strongest in the group, but if Thompson’s (2011) perspective is accurate, the increasing disjuncture between U.S. military and economic capabilities, coupled with a growing list of its foreign policy failures, may ill equip it to do so. Yet trying to do so may produce counterbalancing dynamics, and not just of the “soft balancing” type.

Structural theories are less helpful in specifying conditions under which—short of major power wars or fundamental systemic disturbances—the club of major powers shrinks, and the resulting consequences for international politics. A focus on major power status attribution, including self-attribution, in-group attribution, and status strategies (Larson and Shevchenko 2010) employed by states in danger of falling out of the club may be vital in explaining alternative consequences for international politics.

Structural theories estimate the size of the major power club on the basis of capabilities alone. A focus on status considerations moves us beyond capabilities, and suggests that the type of competition usually associated with multipolarity may take non-traditional forms. The changes to conflict and cooperation from a larger club, for instance, will depend in part on whether new members enter the club as overachievers or underachievers. Likewise, it may be possible to manage transitions out of the club with creative status maintenance strategies. As these states jockey for status, seeking more of it or avoiding exit from the club, status competition may take place in the context of global and regional organizations and in issue-areas that are usually outside of the concerns of structural theories.

The post-WWII and post-Cold War eras have seen dramatic changes in military, transportation, and communication technology along with dramatic changes in the global economy. The level of destructiveness of modern weaponry and the level of integration among the current major powers’ economies are such that their leaders are unlikely to see major power war as the appropriate means to evaluate the hierarchy. Furthermore, despite dramatic progress on the part of China, the gap in military power between the US and its closest competitors is too wide for other status-inconsistent major powers to consider open military competition as the most viable avenue toward status consistency. Even the most aggressive military competitors of the US see the acquisition of certain defense and dual-use technologies as means toward additional prestige rather than ways of overtaking the US in military power.[[44]](#footnote-44) For example, China has been explicit in signaling that she sees especially economic institutions as the realms in which she desires to be attributed status (Deng, 2011). While we cannot divine how far into the future these trends will persist, it appears that the focus on status and status inconsistency generates predictions that differ substantially from traditional structural perspectives. The approach invites a broader reinterpretation of “standard” expectations about major powers, the size of the major power club, and international politics.

**References**

Arbetman, Marina and Jacek Kugler. 1995. “The Politics of Inflation: An Empirical Assessment of the Emerging Market Economies,” in Willett, Burdekin, Sweeney, and Wihlborg, *Establishing Monetary Stability in Emerging Market Economies.*

Arbetman-Rabinowitz, Marina. 2009. “2009-TRC.” *TransResearch Institute*.

Arbetman-Rabinowitz, Marina and Kristin Johnson. 2008. "Relative Political Capacity: Empirical and Theoretical Underpinnings." Presented at the 2008 annual meeting of the International Studies Association, New York, NY.

Azar, Edward E. 1980. “The Conflict and Peace Data Bank (COPDAB) Project.” Journal

of Conflict Resolution 24(1):143–52.

Badie, Bertrand. 2011. “French Power Seeking and Overachievement.” In Volgy, Corbetta, Grant and Baird, *Major Powers and the Quest for Status in International Politics: Global and Regional Perspectives*. New York: Palgrave.

Basrur, Rajesh. 2011. "India: A Major Power in the Making." In Volgy, Corbetta, Grant and Baird, eds. *Major Powers and the Quest for Status in International Politics: Global and Regional Perspectives*. New York: Palgrave.

Bond, Doug, Joe Bond, Churl Oh, J. Craig Jenkins & Charles Lewis Taylor. 2003. “Integrated data for events analysis: An event typology for automated events data development.” *Journal of Peace Research* 40:733–745.

Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce, Alastair Smith, Randolph M. Siverson, and James D. Morrow. 2003. *The Logic of Political Survival*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Cline, Kirssa, Patrick Rhamey, Alexis Henshaw, Alicia Seziak, Aakriti Tandon, and Thomas J. Volgy. 2011. “Identifying Regional Powers and Their Status,” in Volgy, Corbetta, Grant and Baird, *Major Powers and the Quest for Status in International Politics: Global and Regional Perspectives*.

Corbetta, Renato. “Status and Capabilities: The ‘Power’ of Major Power States.” Presented at the 2006 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Philadelphia, PA, August 31-September 3, 2006.

Corbetta, Renato, Thomas J. Volgy, Keith A. Grant, and Ryan G. Baird. 2008. “So Who Gets into the Club? The Attribution of Major Power Status in International Politics.” Presented at the Workshop #8 of the European Consortium for Political Research’s Joint Sessions, Rennes (France), and the Peace Science Society (International) North American Conference, Claremont, CA.

Deng, Yong. 2008. *China’s Struggle for Status: The Realignment of International Relations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

East, Maurice A. 1972. “Status Discrepancy and Violence in the International System: An Empirical Analysis,” in James N. Rosenau, Vincent Davis and Maurice A. East, eds., *The Analysis of International Politics: Essays in Honor of Harold and Margaret Sprout.* New York: The Free Press.

Forman, Shepard, and Derk Segaar. 2006. “New Coalitions for Global Governance: The Changing Dynamics of Multilateralism.” *Global Governance* 12: 2005-226.

Galtung, Johann. 1964. “A Structural Theory of Aggression.” *Journal of Peace Research* 1:95-119.

Gilpin, Robert. 1981. *War and Change in World Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Goldstein, Joshua. 1991. “A conflict-cooperation scale for WEIS events data.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 36:369–385.

Grant, Keith A., Ryan G. Baird, Renato Corbetta, and Thomas J. Volgy. 2010. “Status Matters: Exploring Variations in Major Power Status Attribution.” Presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association, New Orleans.

Herz, Monica. 2011. "Brazil: Major Power in the Making?" In Volgy, Corbetta, Grant and Baird, eds., *Major Powers and the Quest for Status in International Politics: Global and Regional Perspectives*. New York: Palgrave.

Hymans, Jaques E. C. 2002. “Applying Social Identity Theory to the Study of International Politics: A Caution and an Agenda.” Presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association, New Orleans.

King, Gary and Will Lowe. 2003. “An Automated Information Extraction Tool for International

Conflict Data with Performance as Good as Human Coders: A Rare Events Evaluation Design.” *International Organization* 57:617–642.

Kugler, Jacek and Douglas Lemke. 2000. "The Power Transition Research Program", in Midlarsky, M., ed. *Handbook of War Studies II*. AnnArbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Larson, Deborah Welch, and Alexei Shevchenko. 2003. “Shortcut to Greatness: The New Thinking and the Revolution in Soviet Foreign Policy.” *International Organization* 57: 77-109.

Larson, Deborah Welch, and Alexei Shevchenko. 2010. Status Seekers: Chinese and Russian Responses to U.S. Primacy,” *International Security* 34:63-95.

Levy, Jack S. 1983. *War in the Modern Great Power System*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky.

Mercer, Jonathan. 1995. “Anarchy and Identity.” *International Organization* 49:229-252.

Mercer, Jonathan. 1996. *Reputation and International Politics*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press,

Midlarsky, Manus. 1975. *On War: Political Violence in the International System*. New York: Free Press.

Morton, Jeffrey S., and Harvey Starr. 2001. “Uncertainty, Change and War: Power Fluctuations and War in the Modern Elite Power System.” *Journal of Peace Research* 38:49-66.

Nayar, Baldev Raj, and T.V. Paul. 2003. *India in the World Order: Searching for Major-Power Status*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Organski, A.F.K. amd Jacek Kluger. 1980. *The War Ledger*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Rhamey, J. Patrick, Kirssa Cline, Sverre Bodung, Alexis Henshaw, Beau James, Chansuk Kang, Alesia Sedziaka, Aakriti Tandon, and Thomas J. Volgy. 2010. “Diplomatic Contact Database (DIPCON), v1.1.” Online: [www.u.arizona.edu/~volgy/](http://www.u.arizona.edu/~volgy/)

Seabra, Pedro. 2010. “ECOWAS and the Brazilian Foothold in Asia.” IPRIS Viewpoints (September).

Singer, David J. 1988. “Reconstructing the Correlates of War Dataset on Material Capabilities of States, 1816-1985.” *International Interactions* 14: 115–32.

Strange, Susan. 1989. “Toward a Theory of Transnational Empire.” In Czempiel, Ernst Otto, and James N. Rosenau (eds), *Global Changes and Theoretical Challenges: Approaches to World Politics for the 1990s*. Lexington: Lexington Books.

Sylvan, David, Corinne Graff and Elisabetta Pugliese. 1998. “Status and Prestige in International Relations.” Presented at the Third Pan-European International Relations Conference, Vienna, Austria, September 16-19.

Thompson, William R. 2011. "The United States as Global Leader, Global Power, and Status Consistent Power?" In Volgy, Corbetta, Grant and Baird, eds. *Major Powers and the Quest for Status in International Politics: Global and Regional Perspectives*. New York: Palgrave.

Thucydides. 1951. *Complete Writings: The Peloponnesian Wars*. New York: Modern Library. [Trans. Richard Crawley, adapted by Suresh Bald, Willamette University.]

Volgy, Thomas J., and Alison Bailin. 2003. *International Politics and State Stren*gth. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.

Volgy, Thomas J., Zlatko Sabic, Petra Roter, and Andrea Gerlak. 2009. *Mapping the New World Order*. Wiley.

Volgy, Thomas J., Renato Corbetta, Keith A. Grant, and Ryan G. Baird. 2011a. *Major Powers and the Quest for Status in International Politics: Global and Regional Perspectives.* New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

Volgy, Thomas J., Renato Corbetta, Keith A. Grant, and Ryan G. Baird. 2011b. “Major Power Status Attribution: Conceptual and Methodological Issues,” in Volgy, Corbetta, Grant and Baird, *Major Powers and the Quest for Status in International: Global and Regional Perspectives*.

Volgy, Thomas J., Elizabeth Fausett, Renato Corbetta, Keith A. Grant, and Ryan G. Baird. 2010. “Searching for Status in all the Right Places?” Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Standing Group on International Relations, Stockholm.

Volgy, Thomas J., and Stacey Mayhall. 1995. “Status Inconsistency and International War: Exploring the Effects of Systemic Change.” *International Studies Quarterly* 39:67-84.

Wallace, Michael D. 1971. “Power, Status, and International War.” *Journal of Peace Research* 1:23–35.

Wallace, Michael D. 1973 “Status, Formal Organization and Arms Levels as Factors Leading to the Onset of War, 1820-1964,” in Bruce M. Russett, ed., *Peace, War, and Numbers*. Beverly Hills: Sage.

Waltz, Kenneth N. 1979. *Theory of International Politics.* New York: McGraw-Hill.

Wasserman, Stanley and Katherine Faust. 1994. *Social Network Analysis: Methods and Applications*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Wohlforth, William C. 2009. “Unipolarity, Status Competition, and Great Power War.” *World Politics* 61: 28-57.

Wohlforth, William and David C. Kang. 2009. “Hypotheses on Status Competition.” Presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Toronto.

**APPENDIX A: Major Power Club Membership and Status Consistency, Five Year Intervals, 1951-2005.\***

**Club Members**

**Years US USSR/Russia UK France Germany Japan PR of China**

1951-55 SC SU ns SU ns ns ns

1956-60 SC SU ns SU ns ns ns

1961-65 SC SU SU ns ns ns ns

1966-70 SC SU SU SU ns ns ns

1971-75 SC SU ns SO ns ns ns

1976-80 SC SU SU SO ns ns ns

1981-85 SC SO SU SO ns ns ns

1986-90 SC SO SU SO ns ns ns

1991-95 SC SO SU SC ns SO SO

1996-2000 SC SO SC SC SU SC SO

2001-2005 SC SO SU SU ns SU SO

SC = status consistent ; SU = status underachievers; SO = status overachiever; ns = not in club

**APPENDIX B: Regions and Regional Powers, 1985-2005**.[[45]](#footnote-45)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **East Africa** | **South Africa** | **West Africa** | **North/Central America** | **South America** | **East Asia** | **South Asia** | **Europe** | | **Maghreb** | **Middle East** | **Oceania** |
| Djibouti | Angola | Burkina Faso | Antigua | Argentina | Brunei | Afghanistan | Albania | Malta | Algeria | Bahrain | **\*Australia** |
| Eritrea | Botswana | Benin | Bahamas | Bolivia | Cambodia | Bangladesh | Andorra | Moldova | Tunisia | Egypt | Fiji |
| Ethiopia | Burundi | Cape Verde | Barbados | **\*Brazil** | **\*\*China** | Bhutan | Armenia | Monaco | Morocco | Iran | Kiribati |
| Somalia | Comoros | Cote d’Ivoire | Belize | Chile | Indonesia | **\*India** | Austria | Netherlands |  | Iraq | Marshall Islands |
| Sudan | Congo | CAF | Canada | Paraguay | **\*\*Japan** | Maldives | Belarus | Norway |  | Israel | Micronesia |
| Yemen | DR Congo | Chad | Colombia | Uruguay | Laos | Nepal | Belgium | Poland |  | Jordan | Nauru |
|  | Kenya | Gambia | Costa Rica |  | Malaysia | Pakistan | Bosnia | Portugal |  | Kuwait | New Zealand |
|  | Lesotho | Ghana | Cuba |  | Myanmar | Sri Lanka | Bulgaria | Romania |  | Lebanon | Papua New Guinea |
|  | Madagascar | Guinea | Dominica |  | Palau |  | Croatia | \*\*Russia |  | Oman | Solomon Islands |
|  | Malawi | Guinea-Bissau | Dominican Rep. |  | Philippines |  | Cyprus | San Marino |  | Qatar | Tonga |
|  | Mauritius | Liberia | Ecuador |  | North Korea |  | Czech Rep. | Serbia |  | Saudi Arabia | Tuvalu |
|  | Mozambique | Libya | El Salvador |  | South Korea |  | Denmark | Slovakia |  | Syria | Vanuatu |
|  | Namibia | Mauritania | Grenada |  | Singapore |  | Estonia | Slovenia |  | U.A.E. | Samoa |
|  | Rwanda | Mali | Guatemala |  | Taiwan |  | Finland | Spain |  |  |  |
|  | Seychelles | **\*Nigeria** | Guyana |  | Thailand |  | **\*\*France** | Sweden |  |  |  |
|  | **\*South Africa** | Senegal | Haiti |  | Vietnam |  | Georgia | Turkey |  |  |  |
|  | Swaziland | Sierra Leone | Honduras |  |  |  | **\*\*Germany** | **\*\*UK** |  |  |  |
|  | Uganda | Togo | Jamaica |  |  |  | Greece | Ukraine |  |  |  |
|  | Tanzania |  | Mexico |  |  |  | Hungary |  |  |  |  |
|  | Zambia |  | Nicaragua |  |  |  | Iceland |  |  |  |  |
|  | Zimbabwe |  | Panama |  |  |  | Ireland |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  | Peru |  |  |  | Italy |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  | St. Kitts |  |  |  | Latvia |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  | St. Lucia |  |  |  | Liechtenstein |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  | St. Vincent |  |  |  | Lithuania |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  | Trinidad |  |  |  | Luxembourg |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  | **\*\*United States** |  |  |  | Macedonia |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  | Venezuela |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

\* Denotes regional power

\*\* Denotes both global power and regional power

1. Tabuchi, Hiroko. "China Passes Japan as Second-Largest Economy." *New York Times*, August 15, 2010. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. In addition to overlapping memberships in the clubs of major powers and regional powers, states are also found in the global power club (Thompson, 2011), the elite power club (Morton and Starr 2001), the nuclear powers club, the P5 Club, the rising powers club, the OECD club, and the BRIC club. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. For a short summary of the range of empirical findings connecting the status of major powers with varied forms of conflicts and interactions in international politics, see Corbetta et al. 2008. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Examples include Mercer 1995; Hymans 2002; Larson and Shevchenko 2003, 2010; and Sylvan, Graff and Pugliese 1998. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Although, as we note below, we disagree with previous measures used to identify what constitutes major power “status”. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. According to our analysis, the only two states that have managed to keep the scope of their policies relatively narrow while flirting with major power status—Germany and Japan—have had to revise their posture considerably after achieving entrance into the club (Volgy et al. 2011b). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. And unsurprisingly, generating substantial criticism from the community of states when intervention destabilizes a region. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. For the importance of major power status considerations in Indian domestic politics, see Nayar and Paul (2003); for France, see Badie (2011).9 For instance, the U.S. pressured states to increase the status of its allies and to minimize the status of communist states during the height of the Cold War. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Some are attributed major power status when they are no longer (a halo effect); some are denied their status while becoming a great power (latency effect). See the historical examples of Italy (Kennedy 1987: 206) and Austria-Hungary (Sylvan et al. 1998). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. We assume this to be so for two reasons: they would benefit from more status and will be more aggressive in claiming it; and unlike overachievers, they have the wherewithal (capabilities) to act more aggressively. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Overachievers include both states with increasing (China) and declining capabilities (Russia). Policy makers operating in the realm of potential losses (consistent with prospect theory) may take more risks than those who are gaining. Those risks, however, would be most likely taken in their own regions where there may be potential, direct security threats or challenges to their regional leadership role (e.g., Russian confrontation with Georgia). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Military size is measured by military spending; military reach is military spending divided by the size of the armed forces; economic capacity is represented by the size of the economy (GDP); economic reach is trade divided by global trade. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. We use events data, from COBDAB (Azar 1980), WEIS (Goldstein 1991), and IDEA (Bond et al. 2003, King and Lowe 2003), and apply to them the Goldstein scale, separating into dimensions of conflict and cooperation. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Being a major power entails great breadth and leadership (Levy 1983). Implicit in such traits is substantial foreign policy independence from other major powers. Capability-rich countries without an independent foreign policy are unlikely to be attributed major power status by the community of states (note Japan’s lack of major power status prior to 1989, noted in Volgy et al. 2011b). [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Annual foreign policy profiles are formed by constructing a matrix of the mean foreign policy activity between two states, based on intensity-weighted international events data. Each directional entry in the matrix represents the central tendency of interactions from the row state towards the column state. The full row can be thought of as a country’s foreign policy profile. We measure the structural equivalence of states based on these foreign policy profiles, reporting the extent to which foreign policy profiles are similar (Wasserman and Faust 1994). The measure of foreign policy similarity can be interpreted as a correlation coefficient, ranging from complete dissimilarity (-1) to identical (1). [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. See Volgy et al. (2011a) for specifics regarding definitions of "unusual" capabilities, reach, activities, foreign policy portfolios and measurement procedures. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Diplomatic contacts data are from COW’s diplomatic exchange data (<http://www.correlatesofwar.org/>), and DIPCON DATA (<http://www.u.arizona.edu/~volgy/data.html>). State visits are extracted from the three events data sources noted above. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. COW for instance designates the PRC as a major power starting in 1950; yet measures of capabilities and status attribution indicate that it barely registered as even a regional contender until well after the end of the Cultural Revolution in the mid-1970s (Grant et al. 2010). For further differentiation between the two measures, see Corbetta et al. 2008, and Grant et al. 2010. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Procedures used to establish substantial face validity for the data generated are found in Corbetta et al. 2008. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. COW MIDs data, at: <http://www.correlatesofwar.org/COW2%20Data/MIDs/MID310.html>. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Lest one suspect that the logit models in Table 1 are endogenous, recall that the scale we use to assess unusually high conflict and cooperative behavior is derived from annually aggregated events data, different from data measuring individual instances of intervention in MIDS, with low correlations between conflict events and MID occurrence. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. The models were also estimated using MIDs initiation as the dependent variable, yielding similar results. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. For analysis of FIGOs, and the appropriate database, see Volgy et al. 2009. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. The leap from regional to the global major power status club should be shorter and easier for states that have already emerged as major powers within their respective regions. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Australia is the only other regional power that demonstrates substantial capabilities for inter-regional activity, but it lags far behind India and Brazil. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Comparing potential members to older, more established members of the club is an unrealistic yardstick of comparison for aspirants. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. As Figure 5 notes, much of India’s activity is confined to its meta-region and not globally. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Projections were generated using regression with a simple time counter as an independent variable. Based on the data from 1991-2007, a predicted value was generated for each year through 2050. Similar projections were run with models including the differenced dependent variable to test for the presence of autoregressive dynamics within the data. These ARIMA models, however showed no evidence of the existence of a significant autocorrelation structure. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. We assume that there is a range of political extraction available to governments that can be identified given their observed extraction in relation to the material capabilities present in the domestic sphere (Organski and Kugler 1980). We have preliminarily tested this notion, using Arbetmann and Kugler’s (1995) political extraction measure, and found most states in and near the major power club, had a relatively stable range of extraction capabilities. We are grateful to Jacek Kugler for sharing the most recent data. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. In one case the rate of change on one indicator is negative (Brazil’s state visits). We assume in this case that increasing political extraction has the effect of proportionally decreasing the rate at which decline occurs. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. We created additional scenarios of stronger major power responses, but as Figure 8 demonstrates, these are not necessary. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. This measure of efficiency is determined by

    using a formula where actual extraction is the observed revenue of the state (World Bank data), and predicted extraction is the predicted amount of revenue each state should collect given the resources at their disposal (Arbetman-Rabinowitz and Johnson 2008). Within the formula, each predictive indicator represents sectors of domestic society from which the government can be expected to extract resources. Efficient governments exceeding their expected resource extraction receive an RPE measure greater than 1.

    Failure to incorporate the efficiency of governments in extracting resources can lead to highly misleading results. For example, in the latest iteration of the COW CINC scores, China possesses greater capabilities than the United States. However, the CINC scores fail to incorporate the extent to which the Chinese government can use resources and population at its disposal. GDP modified by RPE is strongly related to variation among states in the number of annual foreign policy events in the IDEA data, outperforming unmodified GDP and CINC scores. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. The economic recession of 2008-09 may have had a differential impact on states, with Western powers shrinking while China and India continue to grow and perhaps India accelerating into the major power club as a consequence of Western stagnation. Our first and second scenarios indirectly assess this argument by freezing growth in major power activity. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. The COW designations suggest that exogenous shocks and major wars are largely responsible for changes in the club. A closer scrutiny of the time series suggests that major powers’ capabilities tend to grow or decline linearly with remarkable consistency while exogenous shocks appear at the conclusion of such linear trends (e.g., Austrian exit after WWI; Chinese and Japanese entrance after the Cold War). [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. The actual projection models and the data utilizing them are available from the authors on request. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. States embedded in rivalries may emerge faster into the club, stimulated by the need to respond to myriad security issues. However, rivalries may also limit focus to the region, anchoring the state there, rather than global environment. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Substantial conflicts between India and Pakistan are integrated in our historical data used to forecast, including their 1999 conflict. The events we describe here, however, would yield security concerns above and beyond those events, and especially if Pakistan destabilizes. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. For instance, despite support for Iran, following the latest round of UN sanctions, Russian authorities cancelled a substantial contract to provide sophisticated air defense systems to Iran (“Russia Cancels $800 million Air Defense Contract with Iran,” Bloomberg, October 7, 2010). [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. India’s ability to extend its global range is still hampered by a foreign service that contains fewer diplomats than New Zealand or even tiny Singapore (“India in Africa: Catching Up.” *The Economist*, May 28, 2011:7) [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Morgan Stanley at: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/36081710/Morgan-Stanley-India-and-China-New-Tigers-of-Asia-Part-III-20100813>; the National Intelligence Council’s at: <http://www.foia.cia.gov/2025/2025_Global_Governance.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Andrew Jacobs, “China Softens Tone in Japan Dispute,” *New York Times*, September 28, 2010. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. By 2010 its military spending exceeded that of both the UK and France, and was the third highest among all states. Its military spending as a percentage of its GPD exceeds all but the U.S. among major powers (SIPRI, 2011). [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Note China’s efforts to showcase a new generation of stealth planes and the subsequent debate concerning whether they constitute a threat against American F-22 Raptors ("Chinese Stealth Fighter Makes First Test Flight," *Associated Press*, January 11, 2011). [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Data retrieved from Cline et al. 2011. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)