It's who you are and what you do
Stereotypes and Status Gains in IOs

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Abstract

Why are some states so capable of gaining prestige while others struggle so much to be recognized? Existing research often links status attribution to states' material capabilities, sports achievements, and diplomatic recognition. However, the mechanisms of status-seeking and attribution within IOs remain underexplored. I argue that IOs create an ecosystem where states' stereotypical ascribed status simultaneously enables and constrains their marginal status gains. While baseline status is necessary for achieving marginal gains, being at the top of the hierarchy reduces the likelihood of receiving further recognition. Using relational data on co-sponsorship obtained from UN draft resolutions, my findings suggest that (contrary to expectations) Middle Powers—rather than Great Powers—are more likely to gain prestige because they are easily recognized and do not carry the stigma of playing power politics. At the same time, small countries face resource constraints in garnering status and tend to emphasize group identities over individual ones. These systemic conditions reinforce themselves and are path-dependent; states that are viewed as prestigious tend to garner even more status, thereby limiting other states' chances of achieving similar recognition.

Introduction

When asked about prestigious states at the UN, most diplomats mention Singapore and Liechtenstein. Others unambiguously mention Norway, Sweden, Cuba, Egypt, and South Africa. Referring to some of these countries, a diplomat said: "You may not agree with them, but they are very mannered, well-prepared, and reasonable." Why do some small and medium-sized states enjoy higher status recognition than great powers in international organizations (IOs)? Why do some states enjoy less status than expected? In this article, I depart from materialist conceptions of status to propose a nuanced theory of hierarchies of standing in IOs: The euphemized notion

of sovereign equality and universal membership in IOs fosters an environment where middle-sized countries are encouraged to pursue and achieve elevated prestige through visible performance. At the same time, microstates and great powers face limitations in doing so.

States engage in symbolic investments to achieve or maintain their desired status; they build opera houses, get military arsenals, mediate in international conflicts, or act as good international citizens. Recent research has shown, however, that status goes beyond states' attributions and efforts: it is contingent on recognition, or "an effective claim to social esteem in terms of privileges" (Duque 2018, 581). In other words, new money does not necessarily buy club membership. From this perspective, *ascribed status* equates to a state's social capital, which may (or may not) correlate to baseline material capabilities and international performance. In contrast, *achieved status* refers to the activities that states undertake to enhance their status, including changes in their attributes and capabilities. From this, we can learn which states are more likely to *achieve* status as a function of their *ascribed* status.

Recognition is an intersubjective process linked to dominant stereotypes. Stereotypical expectations, highly correlated with states' attributes and club membership, limit or enhance marginal status gains that result from international interactions. For example, powerful states are more likely to be perceived as acting selfishly, limiting their ability to increase their marginal status. Middle-range powers are more likely to obtain support by acting as good citizens while leading the causes of the masses without the suspicion of playing power politics. Lastly, small and microstates often lack the resources to have their unique identities recognized or get swamped in a catch-all category, which further hinders their ability to accrue status. These patterns are simultaneously reinforced by social dynamics (e.g., the more great powers interact in the international system, the more suspicious they become of acting in a self-serving manner,

thereby reducing their marginal status gains). At the same time, recognition is enhanced by reciprocal patterns: states that recognize others are likely to obtain recognition in return. Finally, there are latent dynamics of social closure whereby recognition is enhanced by group membership or regional affiliation: states are likely to recognize those that their partners recognize.

To investigate how the *ascribed status* limits or enhances status gains, I focus on co-sponsorship patterns in the six committees of the UN General Assembly (UNGA). Seeking sponsorship is a request for recognition, as countries that successfully legitimize their claims through collective action increase their standing in the group's eyes. On the other hand, the act of offering sponsorship reflects that the other is recognized as someone who has the authority to champion a particular cause. Both seeking and giving sponsorship are voluntary acts of deference because, although they can be coerced with money or threats, states strive to project an image and positionality based on who they sponsor with. With this data, I employ inferential network analysis to examine the relationship between states' *ascribed status* in the international system and the status they can *achieve* in IOs. Moreover, I estimate endogenous social patterns that strengthen the recognition structure in the co-sponsorship network.

The UNGA offers a solid test for studying marginal prestige gains because countries operate on a daily basis, creating a dense network of interactions. Additionally, the sponsorship process is somewhat exogenous to a country's baseline attributes; it is more likely that countries' lavish expenditures, scientific development, a nuclear arsenal, or hosting of diplomats influence activities at the UNGA than the other way around. In other words, a country does not achieve great power status by having many sponsors. Moreover, in universal membership IOs, most countries are represented by permanent missions, creating an opportunity to enhance their status

through the smart use of diplomatic assets, as demonstrated in the literature on countries that 'punch above their weight'. In sum, I argue that the microcosm of IOs is favorable to states whose *ascribed status* is neither low nor high.

The paper is organized as follows: the first section discusses existing theories on status seeking and attribution in international relations. Next, I examine the relationship between status attribution in IOs. In the third section, I propose a status (in)consistency theory in IOs to explore the connections between *ascribed status* and *achieved status*. The fourth section includes an estimation of Additive and Multiplicative Effects (AME) of UNGA co-sponsorship data to analyze how material and network factors influence status seeking and attribution. I conclude with a discussion of the results.

Status seeking and status attribution in international relations

Either for instrumental purposes, intrinsic needs of belonging and self-realization, or security needs (Götz 2021), countries pursue status in different arenas of the international system. Ranging from membership in exclusive groups, such as the Club of Great Powers, to that of "good citizens," status is an overarching concept that describes the hierarchies formed by the complex interactions of actors within the international system. In different conceptualizations of status, the literature converges on the view that status is stratified and positional, social, and related to identities (MacDonald and Parent 2021). Status is stratified and positional because it concerns relative positions within a hierarchy or group membership. It is social because it is a phenomenon in which more than one actor is present, and involves "consensually valued dimensions" (Lorenzi-Cioldi 2017). As such, status is not just the recognition of one state by another state, but the beliefs of "many actors… about what many other actors also believe"

(Renshon 2016, 519). Finally, status relates to identity because status holders use their identity to verify their status in the eyes of the beholder (Clunan 2014).

Despite the somewhat homogeneous definitions of status in the literature, research agendas vary in their focus on the attributes that translate into status. Because the literature on status-seeking primarily highlights the competition among great powers, the mechanisms of military might and economic capabilities take precedence in these studies[1]. Material capabilities are more salient in great and rising powers because the distribution of military, technological, and economic resources is limited to a few states. In turn, these capabilities are the collectively recognized markers that define who enjoys great power membership and who could potentially join the club.

From an actor-oriented perspective, literature drawing on social identity theory (SIT) analyzes various mechanisms of "agentic" attributes related to states' performance and status. From creating rankings of compliance with international standards (Snyder 2020) to naming and shaming in international fora (Kim 2024), SIT contends that states can engage in social competition, mobility, and creativity to seek status, where the latter two are more akin to subordinate states. For instance, literature on status deficits suggests that war victories are attributed to status; therefore, status dissatisfaction is believed to drive conflict[2]. Social mobility involves adopting the values and practices of dominant groups to gain entry into elite clubs (Larson 2017). States (often) compare themselves to their "superiors," or the set of practices thereof, with the aim of "making sense of the 'self'… through identifications with 'the other.'"

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[1] see: Larson and Shevchenko (2003,2010,2019); Larson, Paul, and Wohlforth (2014); Wohlforth (2009); (2014); Volgy (2011)

[2] See the foundational works of Wallace (1971), Ray (1974), Midlarsky (1975). More recent developments analyze the conditions under which countries seek status through conflict: When states' relative share of hegemonic resources decreases (Volgy and Mayhall 1995; Wohlforth 2009), when the opportunity to target a lower-ranked or peer arises (Renshon 2016; 2017), to defy a specific subordinate relation (Wolf 2019; 2022)

(Bilgic and Pilcher 2023, 9)[3]. Social creativity entails the reevaluation of a previously negative attribute or finding a new one in which the lower-status group performs well ."Groups strive for positive distinctiveness—to be not only different but better" (Larson and Shevchenko 2010, 68)[4]. More recent developments have analyzed the relational ontology of status beyond attributes and specific behavioral strategies, that is, the effects of mutual and group relationships in status attribution. These works claim that status is (also) attributed via reciprocity and social closure (the friend of my friend is my friend), making status attribution a phenomenon that goes beyond symbols and behaviors of status (Kinne 2014; Duque 2018). In this sense, states enhance their status gains through network (relational) effects. In other words, (a) a state's high status leads to more status, (b) recognizing others' status yields more recognition in return, and (c) States are more inclined to recognize others that are already recognized by their friends or allies (Kinne 2014; Duque 2018; Zhang 2025). However, we can learn more about marginal status gains by examining how, in addition to social network dynamics, a state's *ascribed status* limits enhance its social recognition.

Status attribution and stereotypes

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[3] The main focus of this strand of literature is emulation practices. For example, Russia and China have previously attempted to 'Westernize' their institutions to enhance their status (Larson and Shevchenko 2019a), Norway competes with lower-ranked countries for its 'good citizenship' status in preserving the international order.(Wohlforth et al. 2018). Wood and Cox (2021) suggest that the lack of international distinctiveness incentivizes leaders to engage in campaigns to boost national pride, or at least make foreign imitation less conspicuous. Bush and Zetterberg (2021) found that many autocracies have adopted gender quotas to improve their international standing.

[4] In this category, states grant status to other states that perform well in the Summer Olympics (Rhamey and Early 2013), host massive events (Van Der Westhuizen 2021), or invest in the space race or maritime expeditions (Musgrave and Nexon 2018). By adopting an identity based on their soft power traits rather than material capabilities, Russians improved their international stance (Larson and Shevchenko 2003; 2010).

"In theory, the standard of 'civilization' was colorblind. In practice, however, the standard was deeply racist, exemplified by the fact that most countries that the Europeans barred from the club were non-white."(Røren 2024, 6)

Stereotypes provide information about what a group is and does, and their *ascribed status* (Brandt and Reyna 2011; Hamilton 1979; Wittenbrink et al. 1997). This information serves to justify humans ' views of the social order and their responses to the group. Drawing from social psychology literature, this article defines *stereotypes* as broad generalizations made about a group of countries (Reyna 2000; Tajfel 1981; Fiske et al. 1999). Just like stereotypes may reflect positive ("Nordic countries act as good citizens of the international system"), or negative beliefs about the behavior of countries ("Great powers act in a self-interested way"), they may also be a reflection of their attributes and culture, ("the Third World is underdeveloped"), or ("Brazil is not a serious country"). While stereotypes are not necessarily accurate representations of groups, they serve as a guide to understanding a country's *ascribed status* and predicting how it will behave.

Existing research has found that individuals rely on attributional stereotypes to determine other people's status under three conditions: First, when there is an eliciting event (e.g., a corruption scandal in a non-democratic country). Second, when there is an impetus to attribute stereotypes ("all non-democratic countries are corrupt "), and third, when the stereotype is prioritized as a heuristic to justify one's belief system and reinforce the cognitive bias towards others (Brandt and Reyna 2011). As a result, the attributional information provided by stereotypes becomes a validating response to enhance pre-existing beliefs based on how cohesive a group is perceived ("some Global South countries are underdeveloped" as opposed to "all Nordic countries are good citizens"), or how attribution information from stereotypes informs

pre-existing beliefs ("if Nordic countries are good citizens, other European state should share some of that attribute"). These stereotypes, therefore, create structural incentives and constraints for actors' ability to accrue their recognized status.

In international relations, scholarship has focused on states' anxiety triggered by their ontological (in)security (Zarakol 2010; 2017; Kim 2024; Bilgic and Bilgin 2012; Bilgic and Pilcher 2023). However, as Kim (2024) argues, states are not always status-conscious; their ontological insecurity may be a consequence of a repeated stereotype in which states accept the stigma associated with their *ascribed status*. While studies on ontological (in)security provide insights into why countries engage in status seeking, it remains unclear how stereotypical preconceptions influence their chances of success in obtaining marginal status gains.

There are multiple markers of status and group dynamics that make it very difficult to establish an objective ranking. In some cases, decision-makers may rely on key economic indicators, such as GDP, GDP per capita, and the Human Development Index, or on university rankings, to gauge others' standing. In other cases, they rely on status-signaling activities, including military parades, hosting international events, and constructing tall buildings. Nevertheless, it is not feasible for a practitioner to have readily available information on all countries to produce a judgment on the standing of an unknown country. Decision-makers likely attribute status based on widely known reputations, salient characteristics, and, when those are absent, on the stereotypes of the primary group to which countries belong. Take the example of France, which was attributed a permanent seat in the UN Security Council based on the recognition it enjoyed as a friendly European state, rather than its then-extant material capabilities (Duque 2018), or Brazil's treatment as a non-serious country despite its vast material resources and international outreach (Buarque 2023).

Therefore, just as in human groups, a country's stereotypical *ascribed status* limits or enhances its potential to *achieve* further status gains. For example, Marat (2010) argues that despite the Kazakh government's extensive efforts to present the country's image as that of a market economy, these efforts have largely failed due to the stigma of being an underdeveloped country. Pardesi (2015) argues that while India has made claims and efforts to be seen as a great power, both scholars and the international community have often resisted granting it that recognition outright, instead portraying it as a regional power, a middle power, or a "great power in the making." In other words, acquiring status attributes is not enough to become prestigious, as scholarship on status has widely argued; the social process underlying marginal status gains is largely explained by the stereotypical beliefs others hold about the status-seeker (Duque 2018).

Drawing from Volgy (2011), I argue that the international system offers different incentives for countries' potential to obtain marginal status, and that this potential is primarily defined by the *ascribed status* of states based on their stereotypical standing in the hierarchy and behavior. In this sense, there are two groups of countries that enjoy different stimuli and constraints. *Status overachievers* are status seekers who are more likely to obtain marginal status gains, while *status underachievers* are limited in doing so.

In this categorization, countries with *ascribed* great power status are more likely to become *status underachievers* because, based on their stereotyped expected behavior, they are perceived as being selfish, thereby reducing their ability to be granted additional status. Small countries and microstates are also likely to fall under this category because their "uniqueness" is not salient enough to secure significant marginal status gains. On the other hand, some middle powers are more likely to become *status overachievers* because they do not carry the stereotypical burden of playing power politics, and they are more easily recognized than

microstates because they are more salient in world politics. To study how stereotypes shape the likelihood that status-seeking states succeed, I analyze the case of co-sponsorship in the UNGA.

Case: The UN as a Source of Marginal Status Gains

From the theatrical rants of heads of state during UNGA sessions to admission to exclusive clubs, countries engage in IOs to signal status to various audiences, including domestic public opinion, governments operating in capitals, non-governmental organizations, and peers. They seek membership in clubs not only to obtain functional benefits but also to elevate their international standing and generate the willingness to recognize their authority (Davis 2023, 2).

At the UNGA, states seek and are attributed status based on the approval or minimal acceptance of their claims (Danielson and Hedling 2022). Permanent missions use their practical knowledge and creativity in a system of incentives and constraints to reproduce the structure of IOs (Pouliot 2016). In theory, countries with a high standing should be capable of obtaining large marginal status gains because status "provides…more power to create, adapt, and interpret the existing rules of the game in the international system." (Danielson and Hedling 2022, 249)

Although the dense web of interactions in IOs facilitates the diffusion of shared understandings of who is who, the distinctive characteristics of each state or group, what they stand for, and what they oppose, this information needs to be objective and verifiable or at least triangulated to become credible. For example, diplomats in the UN General Assembly refer to the reputation of others, saying, "Country x is very active in…" based on their own impressions, hallway conversations, and word of mouth. However, this reality transcends gossip when facts reveal a reasonable causal mechanism that leads to conclusions about the states' performance, or when a significant number of states socially acknowledge that behavior and recognize such a

state in a stereotypical status tier. As Dafoe et al.(2014) and Renshon (2016) put it, reputation is a first-order belief, or what one actor thinks about another's behavior or characteristic, whereas status is a second-order belief, or what many believe many others believe.

These beliefs stem from the recognition of states 'activities specific to their expertise and interests. For example, the collective recognition of one or more "niche" characteristics marks a threshold between middle and small countries (Wohlforth et al. 2018). Moreover, being close to the object of the claim gives states both expertise and moral authority on a salient issue with broader applicability in global governance. For example, having suffered the consequences of drug trafficking domestically, Colombia and Mexico have been very active in promoting the decriminalization of drugs internationally, which has garnered them recognition as the champions of this specific norm. Likewise, countries obtain recognition through their formal endorsement or rejection of legislation. States become aware of others' stances on global governance issues, even if they do not actively participate in the debate. Endorsing legislation requires sufficient knowledge about the issue in question so that the endorsement is a show of support or at least a signal that the issue does not conflict with the country's foreign policy.

The status-seeker engages in efforts to publicize its claims to make the numbers needed to obtain approval. The results of these efforts become a public list of countries that endorse or reject the claim, producing a map of the state's position in terms of its claim to social esteem. For example, Corbett et al. note that during the Paris Conference of Parties, Small Island Developing States (SIDS) gathered support from countries in Latin America, the Pacific, Europe, and Africa to add a "theatrical air and political muscle [to the group] … at one of the plenary sessions the group walked in together under rousing applause and cheers from various well-primed observers" (2019, 665).

In IOs, the ministries of foreign affairs create a potential for recognition that has to be realized through diplomatic practice (Pouliot 2016). However, some countries have greater potential to gain recognition, depending on what is expected of them, given the stereotypical image stemming from their *ascribed status*. In theory, states are expected to obtain recognition equally thanks to the artificially leveled field that IOs create through rules and procedures. In reality, IOs are neither the equalizer liberal institutionalists claim to be (Pouliot 2016), nor an arena that perfectly mirrors the stereotypes of the international system. First, countries carry the baggage of their stereotypical status, derived from their group affiliation, material capabilities, or existing baseline recognition. These become heuristics for attributing status: great powers should obtain high status, middle powers should be somewhere in the middle, and small states should be accorded low status. However, IOs tell a different story: even if great powers have the *ascribed status* to enjoy the privileges of their position in the international system, this status does not translate into significant gains in *achieved status*. In contrast, a relatively unknown country with a few dozen diplomats can gain more recognition simply by participating in the UNGA. In other words, if gains in *achieved status* are a 6 x 6 feet wall, you need a limited number of people to build it as fast and well as possible, but you will not build quicker or better by employing 200 men.

There are some caveats to the claim that the legislative successes or lack thereof at the UNGA are a show of status gains. Countries participate in various alliances on a wide range of issues, potentially playing different roles: leadership, follower, broker, behind-the-scenes coordinator, among others. These would create a multilayered set of beliefs about that country, in some areas. For example, a country can be highly regarded in one issue area or committee and disappoint in another. Nevertheless, the aggregation of these successes contributes to the

collective construction of second-order beliefs (e.g., a groundbreaking success in a Security Council reform resolution will inform the general status belief about the resolution's advocates).

In other words, I expect receiving recognition at the UNGA to rise with a country's baseline *ascribed status* until it reaches a threshold, after which additional (*achieved*) status reduces the likelihood of further recognition. Moderate-status states should therefore experience the greatest marginal gains, as they are high enough to be visible but not so dominant as to trigger resistance or envy. Graphically, this would represent a rising parabola that peaks and then declines. Therefore, when modeling ascribed status as a quadratic polynomial, the linear term (exponent 1) should be positive and the quadratic term (exponent 2) negative.

Hypothesis 1: *The relationship between a state's ascribed status and its expected received recognition is inverted-U-shaped, with moderate ascribed status states having the highest likelihood of obtaining recognition, whereas low and high ascribed status states face challenges.*

Similarly, status is Pareto-distributed, with a very few states enjoying Great Power recognition, a handful considered Middle Powers, and the vast majority small countries. For secondary states, this translates into large groups of countries that share the tragedy of disproportionately low privileges in the international system, whereas the powerful share this trait with just a few. In IOs with universal membership, power gaps, GDP, or social recognition become metrics for assessing who is in and who is out. Secondary states are less constrained by their attributed stereotype (because their status is not significantly different from most states), and their relatively smaller material gap with other states incentivizes recognition through leadership. In contrast, powerful states are more likely to be discriminated against by the majority based on a power gap. Although many factors incentivize status attribution locally due to shared cultures, borders, and interests, IOs perform the remarkable feat of bringing together

countries of different latitudes and backgrounds, where local differences become secondary to the underlying common destiny of having limited power. Indeed, previous IR research on status has shown that states prefer to attribute status to those who are in their ingroup and similar to them (Mercer 2017; Duque 2018; Røren 2024). While recent literature suggests that there are cases in which low-status states have material incentives to further recognize those of high status (Røren 2025), I expect that, in general, individual countries with lesser *ascribed status* are less likely to recognize individual countries of higher status and vice versa, and that likelihood further diminishes as the gap widens. Nevertheless, when the *ascribed status* gap is perceived in terms of the recognition states get in the international system rather than solely material capabilities, states of higher standing are likely to recognize those of *lower ascribed status*, because the UN microcosm prioritizes diplomatic capital and connections over material capabilities.

Hypothesis 2A: As the gap in *ascribed status* widens, states with lower *ascribed status* are less likely to recognize those with higher *ascribed status*.

Hypothesis 2B: As the *ascribed status* gap based on material capabilities widens, states with higher *ascribed status* are less likely to recognize those with lower *ascribed status*. However, as the status gap based on diplomatic recognition widens, higher-ranking states are more likely to recognize lower-ranking countries.

Finally, endogenous network dynamics further enhance status attribution in IOs. First, groups that enjoy high IO status are likely to receive more recognition due to path-dependent popularity (the more prestigious they are, the more prestige they gain). Group dynamics boost *popularity*: because regional and issue-area groups are very prominent in IOs, their leaders gain path-dependent recognition based on their existing standing and perceived visibility. This could

be explained by three dynamics: group leadership, procedural expertise, and niche diplomacy (Pouliot 2016). This is a natural process of status enhancement, whereby countries seek to associate with those considered prestigious by virtue of their relative positions in large groups such as the Group of 77, the Non-Aligned Movement, or the African Union. Countries are also more likely to secure support for their expertise in issues such as Security Council reform, women's rights, or climate change. The salience of countries in groupings and issue areas becomes a heuristic for deciding whom to associate with and even a simple matter of customary practice. For example, quoting a diplomat stationed in New York, Pouliot (2016, 144) notes that Egypt is a "very influential player" in the African Union, the Organization of the Islam Conference, and the NAM, which allows it "to be one day an African country, the other Arab and then developing ... You have to get Egypt inside; otherwise they become spoilers."

Second, states likely seek status by actively recognizing others (*sociality*). Countries that recognize the initiatives of many states are more likely to further this pattern. This is because sending recognition pays off in higher visibility—for example, when states are first sponsors— and, in turn, leads to future reciprocal recognition. This creates incentives for *status overachievers* in particular to increase the recognition they grant to other states.

Third, countries cluster around formal and informal group memberships because UNGA sponsorship patterns reflect a class-like struggle. Countries tend to organize around similar concerns that reflect their status in the international system. Causes such as the right to development, nuclear disarmament, and peacekeeping operations bring countries with similar material and regional characteristics together, reflecting group-based coalitions spearheaded by status overachievers. Political affinities, ideology, or emulation make states more likely to send and receive support through their shared allies. Moreover, many UN groups often highlight

solidarity in their statements. They collectively support causes such as recognizing Palestine or defending Ukraine's sovereignty, bringing together like-minded countries that cooperate through their shared ally. Moreover, to rise in the hierarchy, some countries emulate the practices of others at the UNGA (Pouliot 2016), which may be a way to compensate for their lack of procedural expertise.

Hypothesis 3: *Recognition in IOs is driven by network dependencies of sociality, popularity, reciprocity, and triads.*

Empirical Strategy: Assessing Status Attribution through the UNGA's Co-sponsorship Network

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) is the world's most universal forum regarding geography and issue areas. Due to its focus on procedures, written records allow the examination of states' relationships across the years. Compared to other IOs, its size and scope make its average patterns applicable to other multilateral organizations. I utilize lists of sponsors of draft resolutions from the six committees of the UNGA to operationalize status attribution. I argue that the number of sponsors listed in resolutions accurately represents status-seeking and attribution, as states employ it to signal their desire to recognize their claims, and other member states utilize it to determine whether or not to endorse those claims (recognition).

IR literature commonly uses voting data to test foreign policy preferences and the strength of relations between countries[5]. However, voting data does not entirely reflect politics at

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[5] UNGA data has been widely used to analyze the formation of alliances and groups. From the early works of vote blocs (Ball 1951; Lijphart 1963; Keohane 1967) to most recent/sophisticated analyses that use s-scores (Signorino and Ritter 1999) and ideal points (Bailey et al. 2017). Voeten's data became a reference point for many analyses as an operationalization of foreign policy preferences as dependent or independent variables, (e.g., Liao and McDowell 2016; Strüver 2017; Stone, Wang, and Yu 2022). However, it is still debated whether ideal points are not sensitive to the biases mentioned (Hug 2021).

the UNGA because more than 70 percent of resolutions are passed without a vote (Seabra and Mesquita 2022). Co-sponsorship provides an opportunity to analyze the deference relations between states, as it is a low-stakes activity that reflects policymakers' voluntary will. Unlike voting patterns, research on UNGA sponsorship has found that states choose to co-sponsor resolutions when they have similar ideological preferences (Finke 2021) and group affinities (Mesquita and Seabra 2020; Takahashi 2021). Co-sponsorship is less likely to be influenced by coercion or threats than votes because it is largely symbolic and does not guarantee the passage of a resolution. Therefore, it is more effective for powerful countries to invest resources in the voting stage of resolutions to secure their desired outcomes. In fact, some countries avoid sponsoring contentious drafts but actively express their support in the voting stage, a sign of a "behind the scenes" coercive diplomacy. Recently, co-sponsorship data has been used as a proxy for status attribution (e.g., Zhang 2025), as it is an accurate representation of voluntary deference because:

1. Being on the record as a co-sponsor indicates an association with other authors of a resolution. Policymakers want their countries' names listed as co-sponsors when they aim to foster or maintain relations with other co-sponsors, which indicates a subtle act of deference.

2. Asking for and sending sponsorship is also a form of voluntary deference because countries seek an array of sponsors (not just the number) that maximizes the probability of legitimizing a claim based on the perceived social esteem that potential co-sponsors enjoy.

3. Literature has identified that states often author or co-sponsor resolutions for propaganda purposes. Their country names are read out loud in the plenary when they sponsor, and they even strategically choose when to sponsor in order to have their names heard (Bailey 1960).

Sponsorship at the UNGA occurs when a country or a group of countries comes up with a draft resolution and decides to table (submit) it for deliberation in one of the six committees of the UNGA (each committee specializes in specific topics). After several hearings and amendments, more countries join draft resolutions, which can then be adopted without a vote if there is silence from non-sponsors or voted on when it is more problematic. The process of adding sponsors occurs after formal and informal proceedings and side meetings, taking an average of 3.47 days from the day of the first draft until the final document is tabled. In some cases, this process has taken up to two years (A/67/L.49 and A/AC.182/L.104)[6]. Because the process in which countries deliberate about the contents of draft resolutions may take days, many potential network dynamics in this process reflect the performance of permanent missions. To garner the largest number of sponsors and maximize the likelihood that a draft document is adopted as a resolution, authors of drafts may resort to different strategies to maximize the number of sponsors (Rai 1977) or to buy or coerce support in the way literature has previously found (through aid, market access, or sanctions)[7].

Once issues are set on the agenda, the six committees of the UNGA are presented with draft resolutions that are discussed and negotiated with other countries, who then decide whether to sponsor the original idea as is or add changes or modifications. Although many negotiations occur under the table, at this stage of the debate, positions are made public, and the success of getting an endorsement consists primarily of the country's standing in the UN and its diplomatic abilities to get the issue marketed to the largest possible number of diplomats and coordinate joint efforts in multiple issue areas.

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[6] Calculated for drafts between 1979 to 2023

[7] In the early years of the UNGA, obtaining massive sponsorship for draft resolutions was not common practice, however, in 1959 diplomats learned that wide support implied more political impact after the resolution "General and complete disarmament" was sponsored by eighty-two nations (Mower 1962).

Data: The UNGA Co-sponsorship Network

I built a longitudinal network dataset from co-sponsorship data following Seabra and Mesquita's (2022) method. Data were obtained from the UN Digital Library from 1999 to 2023, and the estimated period is 2000-2020, as the agenda-setting corresponds to the West-versus-the-rest logics and would likely reflect stable latent positions (triadic dependencies) (Bailey et al. 2017). I made adjustments to best align co-sponsorship data with the action of voluntary deference. That is, when states attribute status based on who seeks them as sponsors and who they send sponsorships to. In social network analysis (SNA) terminology, countries are nodes, and sponsorship is a tie. First, recognition occurs when a country (node) authors or co-authors a draft resolution and receives sponsorship (ties) from another country (node). In principle, the direction of a tie should go from the co-sponsor to the author and not the other way around ($sponsor \rightarrow author$). Second, in cases in which multiple countries participate in the first draft of a resolution, there is a mutual recognition process: Assuming that a country has an idea for a draft, it will try to obtain support from other states ($author(s) \rightarrow first\ sponsors$), and if this support is granted, the author(s) and the rest of the members who are working on a draft get recognition back ($first\ sponsors \rightarrow author(s)$). Once the draft resolution is tabled in each of the six committees, the rest of the countries in the plenary look at the complete list of first sponsors (penholders) and not the country that came up with the original idea; thus, they decide whether they will join as sponsors ($additional\ sponsors \rightarrow first\ sponsors$). Figure 1 shows a simplified version of this process:

Writing of the first draft   *Visible performance: draft 2...n*   *In-degree for this resolution*

			Draft 1	Draft 2	Total
Penholders					
Sponsor zero			2	4	6
Co-sponsor 1			2	4	6
Co-sponsor 2			2	4	6
Additional sponsors					
Co-sponsor 3			NA	0	0
Co-sponsor 4			NA	0	0
Co-sponsor 5			NA	0	0
Co-sponsor 6			NA	0	0

Group of Penholders (3 countries) — Draft resolution is tabled — List of co-sponsors in final the document (7 countries, including the author)
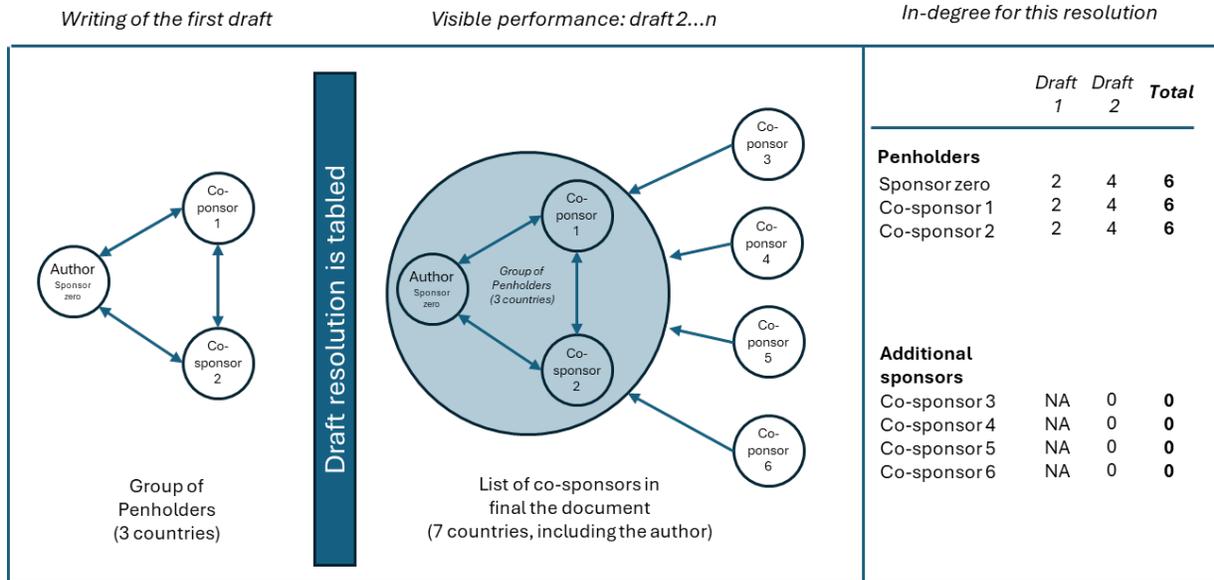
Figure 1: Nodes and ties in the network of co-sponsorship

There are, however, many potential challenges to this approach. First, the author (sponsor zero) could, in theory, take more credit by virtue of being the author. Second, it is likely that joiners of the first draft did not receive an invitation but self-selected into the first draft, making the process a one-way street ($first\ sponsors \rightarrow author(s)$). Although these scenarios are feasible, I argue that my approach is a good fit to assess recognition because in the process of drafting, 1) states are likely to join as sponsors as a result of persuasion on the part of the author or in exchange for a compromise (a two-way street process of recognition), 2) the author has to share the credit with the rest of the first sponsors if the draft becomes successful, making the penholders, and not the author visible, 3) the author may strategically select cosponsors that increase the likelihood of approval, making this stage of sponsorship a reciprocal process, and 4) a state holds the chairmanship of a group in which case it also shares the credit with other members of the group.

Finally, after the first draft is tabled, additional sponsors are counted as incoming (sponsorship) ties to the penholders because they may choose to join based on 1) the content of

the draft resolution, 2) the list of first drafters, 3) how persuasive the first drafters were, and 4) to have their names publicly mentioned as sponsors and associate themselves with the prestige of the penholders.

The aggregation of sponsorship by dyads, even if it is a multilateral process, symbolizes a country's ability to entice voluntary deference. The more the name of a country appears next to other co-sponsors, the more likely it is that those around it recognize it. Therefore, to deal with resolutions produced by country groups such as the Committee of 24, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Group of 77, the RIO Group, and regional groups such as the Arab League, the Group of Latin American States, or ECOWAS, I disaggregated the sponsorship of these groups by their country members for each year.

To add face value to this data generation process in relation to status, I compared the in-degree numbers (total incoming sponsors) for all countries with data gathered by Arias (2023) through a survey of 50 diplomats about the most influential countries at the UNGA. Although most answers pointed at UNSC members, several countries that obtain high numbers of sponsors are also mentioned as influential (Cuba, Brazil, Egypt, India, Mexico), and Europe as a block (most of the lower half in Figure 2). Finally, although the core conclusions of this article will be drawn from the data generation process described above, I will include the calculations using Seabra and Mesquita's (2022) weighted sponsorship approach.

In sum, the data generation process described above will yield a dyadic dataset of sponsorship behavior whereby A sends B sponsorship *n* times in any given year. This will allow the analysis of voluntary deference on the side of those who send the sponsorship and those who receive it. As previously mentioned, both accepting an invitation to sponsor and inviting others to sponsor are acts of voluntary deference for the penholders. Therefore, the data will reflect the

status attribution process when states send sponsorship and when they invite (receive) it. Lastly, sponsorship sent from the second draft onward will only be counted as support for the penholders, because these countries were not invited or chose not to sponsor in the early stages of the draft.
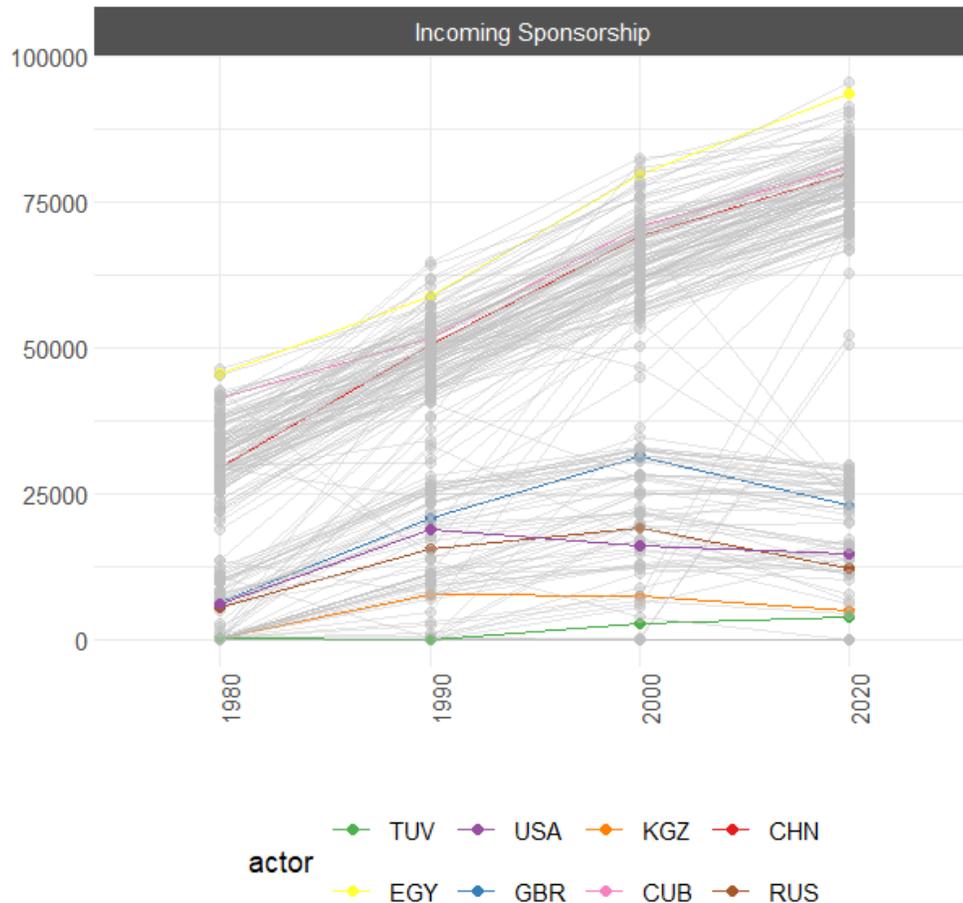

Figure 2: In-degree sponsorship from the 1980s to the 2010s. Middle-sized countries receive more co-sponsorship ties. Small countries and great powers (except China) are less active and receive less incoming sponsorship. Graphic made with the package Netify.

Method

I will use the Additive and Multiplicative Effects (AME) model because the sponsorship network is a longitudinal time series network with weighted ties. The AME model can handle first to third-order dependencies, allowing me to test my three hypotheses. Moreover, the AME

model can incorporate non-binary ties and longitudinal networks (Minhas et al. 2019; Hoff 2021). Using the data generation process explained above, the AME model can explore factors that increase the likelihood that two states sponsor a resolution from both the sender's and receiver's perspectives (e.g., whether richer countries are more likely to send or receive sponsorship). In networks, dyadic variables tend to be correlated with one another. In other words, a state may be more likely to send sponsorship to certain other states but not necessarily to all states. This heterogeneous behavior contributes to the variance across all states. Because these effects share a common node (state), they are likely to be correlated. The AME model includes the Social Relations Regression Model by introducing a row (sender) effect a_i and a receiver (column) effect b_i, known as additive effects.

      Likewise, the co-sponsorship network may exhibit patterns of *triadic closure* (the friend of my friend is my friend), and clustering; it is expected that the relationship between two nodes (states) $i \leftrightarrow k$ is higher than expected if the relationship between $i \leftrightarrow j$ and $j \leftrightarrow k$ is also more substantial than expected. Therefore, the model can also model $y_{i,j}$ as a function of unobserved latent features $\mathbf{u}_i^\top \mathbf{v}_j$, where $\mathbf{u}_i$ represents the latent aspects of i as a sender and $\mathbf{v}_i$ represents the latent aspects of i as a receiver, known as the multiplicative effects. Therefore, the *additive and multiplicative effects* (AME) can be expressed as:

$$y_{i,j} = \beta^\top x_{i,j} + \mathbf{u}_i^\top \mathbf{v}_j + a_i + b_j + \epsilon_{i,j}$$

$$\{(\epsilon_{i,j}, \epsilon_{i,j}): i < j\} \sim \text{i.i.d } N_2\left(0, \sigma^2 \begin{pmatrix} 1 & \rho \\ \rho & 1 \end{pmatrix}\right)$$

      I will use an extension of the "amen" R package that can include repeated measurements of the longitudinal data, which expresses $z_{i,j,t}$, the $(i,j)^{\text{th}}$ element of the matrix, or the number of times that country i sent sponsorship to the country j in year t as:

$$z_{i,j,t} = \beta_d^\top x_{d,i,j,t} + \beta_r^\top x_{r,i,j,t} + \beta_c^\top x_{c,i,j,t} + a_i + b_j + \mathbf{u}_i^\top \mathbf{v}_j + \epsilon_{i,j,t}$$

Where $\beta_d^\top x_{d,i,j,t} + \beta_r^\top x_{r,i,j,t} + \beta_c^\top x_{c,i,j,t}$ represent the explanatory variables at the node

and dyadic levels while $\mathbf{u}_i^\top \mathbf{v}_j$ captures the non-observable third-order dependencies. $a_i + b_j$

represent the sender and receiver's random effects as:

$$\{(a_1, b_1), \cdots, (a_n, b_n)\} \sim \text{i.i.d } N(0, \Sigma_{ab})$$

$$\{(\epsilon_{i,j}, \epsilon_{i,j}) : i \neq j\} \sim \text{i.i.d } N(0, \Sigma_\varepsilon)$$

$$\Sigma_{ab} = \begin{pmatrix} \sigma_a^2 & \sigma_{ab} \\ \sigma_{ab} & \sigma_b^2 \end{pmatrix}$$

$$\Sigma_\varepsilon = \sigma_\varepsilon^2 \begin{pmatrix} 1 & \rho \\ \rho & 1 \end{pmatrix}$$

Here, σ_a^2 (sender variance) and σ_b^2 (receiver variance) capture the heterogeneity of states

when they send sponsorship and when they receive it, and σ_{ab}, the sender-receiver covariance

represents whether countries that sponsor more also attract more sponsorship and vice versa.

Reciprocity of sponsorship is captured by ρ (rho). The AME model also probabilistically

calculates the positions of nodes (states) in the latent space, which is more precise than the

deterministic clustering algorithms commonly used in SNA[8].

The AME model is based on Monte Carlo Markov Chain (MCMC) simulations in

Bayesian statistics. I used 20,000 initialization samples (burn-in) that were discarded to improve

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[8] Although the dependent variable is a count of sponsorship, I use a Gaussian specification in the AME model as an alternative to other alternatives for counted data, such as the Poisson specification. When count values are large enough, log-transformed counts closely resemble a normal distribution. This happens because, as counts grow, the discrete aspect becomes less significant, and the log transformation stabilizes variance while making the distribution more normal. This method is well-known in the econometrics literature (see Wooldridge 2010; Cameron & Trivedi 2013). Additionally, there are multiple computational advantages to this approach. AME models face severe convergence issues requiring millions of iterations. The Gaussian specification typically converges in 10,000-50,000 iterations, making it practically viable. Moreover, the Log transformation naturally addresses overdispersion by compressing the scale of large values. Unlike Poisson models that assume mean=variance, the Gaussian model allows flexible variance estimation. Finally, Log-linear models provide percentage change interpretations that are often more meaningful than multiplicative effects from Poisson models.

model convergence, and a burn-in of 30,000 samples to ensure that all covariates reach a stable

posterior distribution.

Explanatory variables

      Ascribed status: Besides network dependencies, the AME model can fit nodal (state) and

dyadic (bilateral) covariates. The main hypotheses (H1, H1A, and H2) test *ascribed status* at

nodal and dyadic levels. I used the Composite Index of National Capabilities v.6.0 (CINC scores)

from the Correlates of War project as one of the proxies for *ascribed status* as a nodal and dyadic

feature[9]. The CINC index has been used widely in IR literature to assess the role of status on

state behavior. It comprises shared ratios of total population, urban population, consumption of

energy, iron and steel production, military personnel, and defense expenditures. As mentioned in

the theory section, I expect that this relationship is non-linear and that a negative quadratic term

accounts for the decline in recognition when great powers are in the dyads. To ensure the best fit

of this relationship, I conducted different tests using CINC in its raw, raw polynomial,

logarithmic, and logarithmic polynomial[10]. The second proxy for *ascribed status* will be the

calculation of the authority centrality of diplomatic exchanges widely used in status literature[11]

obtained from the University of Denver's Diplometrics project. The Diplometrics "Level of

Representation" variable offers a nuanced measure of diplomatic engagement that surpasses

alternative indicators by combining the degree of focus on a bilateral relationship into a

continuous variable rather than a binary presence/absence of rank. The authority centrality

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[9] Because CINC scores already represent the share of total global capabilities, I do not log this in the main model. I included it in alternative specifications and the results are robust.

[10] Ward (2020) found that changes in the CINC index and diplomat rank, the most commonly used proxy for status recognition, were biased toward great powers. Therefore, a good practice is to test and compare the fit of its logged and polynomial versions with the raw one.

[11] See for example Duque (2018), Renshon (2016;2017), Volgy et al. (2011;2015).

measures how important a node is by being linked to by good "hubs," meaning others see it as a trusted reference. It is a good measure of prestige because it reflects recognition and endorsement from influential actors rather than just raw connectivity.

Endogenous from the network: Sponsorship behavior could result in clustering patterns produced by triads and cycles (sponsoring a friend of my friend), *reciprocity* in return for a previous incoming sponsorship, *popularity* (those with many incoming sponsors tend to get more), and *sociality* (states that sponsor tend to sponsor more). As mentioned in the method section, the AME model captures these network features from the observed sponsorship data.

Controls -diplomatic capital: Sponsorship could likely occur as a result of diplomatic efforts rather than the baseline country's ascribed status. To account for country characteristics of permanent missions in New York, I included the number of years permanent representatives are stationed in their posts, even if intermittently. Arias (2023) argues that diplomats who tend to last longer in their posts, especially from small countries, develop expertise and knowledge to outperform their peers at the UNGA. By the same token, I included the number of personnel listed in the permanent missions by year. This number provides a rough idea of whether countries have the participation of specialized bureaucrats in each of the six committees of the UNGA. These two variables were obtained from the UN Bluebooks and hand-coded. Lastly, I calculated the standard deviation of countries' ideal points over the previous 5 years, using Voeten et al. (2024) to account for the consistency of states' foreign policy positions. I expect that states with defined positions are more likely to carve out a recognized image for their actions. However, those with more volatile positions are less likely to position a country-image that becomes remembered.

Other controls: Because many proposals come from the Group of G77 (Panke 2014; Mesquita et al. 2022)and the EU as a group, I included a proxy for membership in these two groups. Similarly, I included the chairmanship of G77. To control for vote (sponsorship) buying, I include the dyadic flows of development aid obtained from the World Bank's development indicators(Woo and Chung 2018; Dreher et al. 2008; Lektzian and Biglaiser 2023). I also include a dyadic variable for exports from country i to j in current millions of US$ obtained from the World Bank's WITS website to account for trade dynamics that influence alliances (Flores-Macías and Kreps 2013; Brazys and Dukalskis 2017). Additionally, because the purpose of sponsorship may be to honor and ensure an alliance commitment, I include a binary variable indicating whether a country pair is an ally, obtained from the Alliance Treaty Obligations and Provisions (ATOP) dataset. I also control for non-permanent and permanent membership at the UN Security Council as a binary. In particular, non-permanent members are regarded as influential (Braveboy-Wagner 2016, 2024). Lastly, I included other controls traditionally used in IR literature, such as GDP per capita, the dyadic absolute difference of the "Electoral democracy" indicator (v2x_polyarchy) from Varieties of Democracy (see Finke 2021), Militarized Interstate Disputes (MID), and shared membership in IOs from Correlates of War, national language similarity from the Domestic and International Common Language Database (DICL), and dyadic diplomatic visits obtained from Chen (2021).

Results

Figure 3 shows the estimation of the AME model for *ascribed status* covariates (based on the CINC index and diplomatic recognition in its quadratic polynomial version). Because AME is based on MCMC Bayesian sampling, the coefficients are often expressed as confidence intervals. Node-specific variables are listed for the sender (i) and the receiver (j) of sponsorship,

following the data-generation process described above. All variables converged towards the

posterior means (see Figure S3 in supplementary materials), and the variables of interest for the

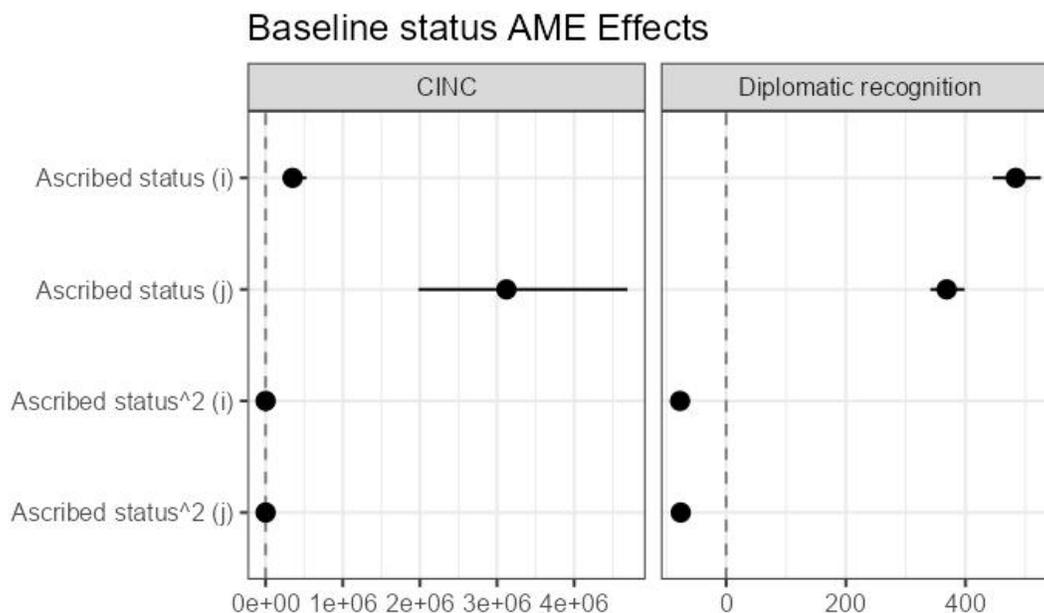sender and receiver are statistically significant.

Figure 3. AME effects of quadratic polynomial ascribed status variables for UNGA co-sponsorship
Notes: 193 countries across all country years (2000-2020). Bars denote 95% confidence intervals based on 30,000
iterations after discarding the first 20,000 (burn-in). Filled circles indicate statistically significant coefficients, and
empty circles indicate insignificant ones.

For the key independent variables (quadratic polynomial form of *ascribed* status), the

signs of the coefficients for these variables correspond with expectations: the linear term is

positive, and the quadratic term is negative, reflecting the inverted "U-shaped" pattern of co-

sponsorship ties and *ascribed status*. In other words, countries' *ascribed status* (proxied as

material capabilities and network centrality in the diplomatic network) fosters recognition at the

UNGA, but those with an excessively high *ascribed status* are less likely to obtain marginal

status gains (Figure 3). To visualize the effects of *ascribed status*, I plotted the expected tie

intensity based on different levels of centrality in the network of diplomatic recognition and the

CINC index (Figure 4). Because the data generation process assumes that states that are the first

sponsors (penholders) mutually receive and send sponsorships, the plots for senders and
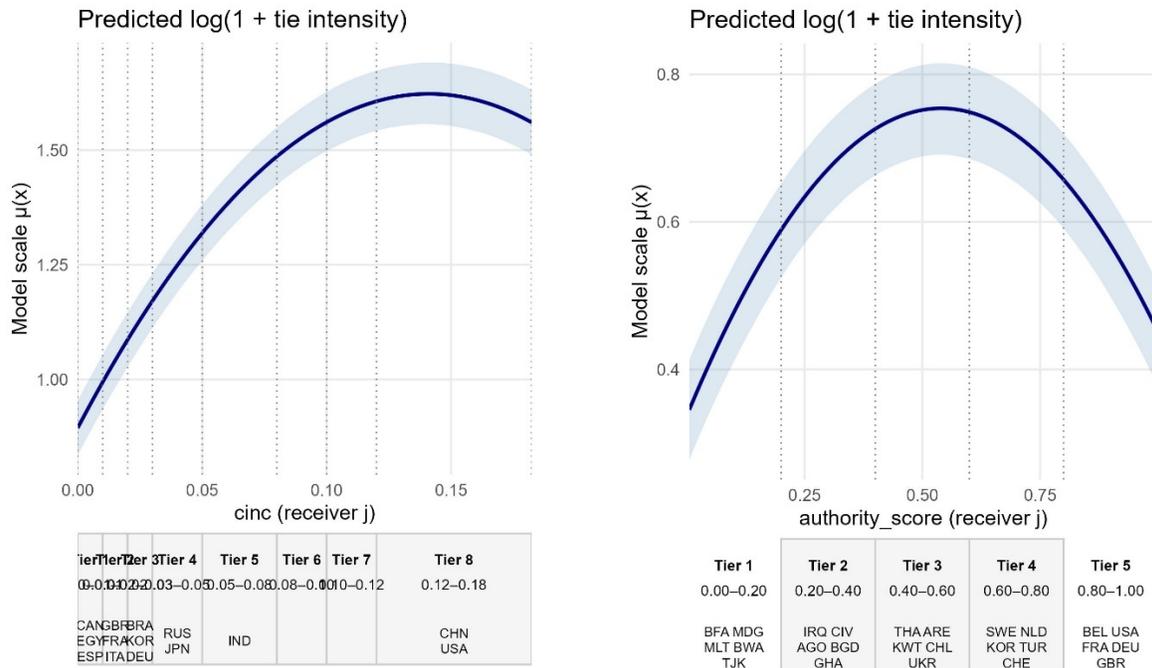
receivers of sponsorship are similar.

Figure 4 Predicted log(1 + tie intensity) as a function of the receiver's baseline status operationalization (authority score of diplomatic exchanges, and CINC scores). The curve shows the expected value of the dependent variable on the model (log) scale, with a 95 percent credible interval. Tiers on the x-axis group countries by their authority or CINC scores, listing the top countries in each range.

In Figure 4, small states located on the left side of the horizontal axis of both parabola

plots are expected to have fewer ties than middle-range states, which are closer to the zenith.

Great powers closer to the plot's right side are likely to see a decline in their expected co-

sponsorship ties. These plots show that for smaller values of *ascribed status*, the curve is less

steep than for higher values, confirming that there is a tipping point at which *ascribed status* is

detrimental to fostering co-sponsorship ties. The model using CINC scores is skewed, with many

countries in the lower tiers and a few in the upper tiers. In this model, only the material-based

status tier of China and the US shows a decline in the propensity to tie. In contrast, the model

using diplomatic exchanges shows the role of middle-sized countries in a more nuanced way:

countries like Thailand, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Chile or Ukraine are at the pinnacle,

and countries that go above that tier start losing the likelihood of forming co-sponsorship ties

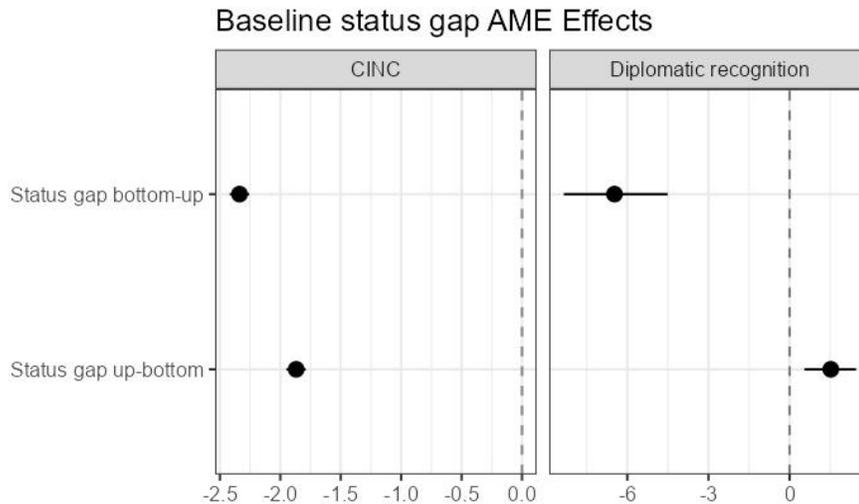(e.g., Sweden, Netherlands, Turkey, Switzerland, Belgium, the US, France).

Figure 5. AME effects of ascribed status gaps for UNGA co-sponsorship
Notes: 193 countries across all country years (2000-2020). Bars denote 95% confidence intervals based on 30,000
iterations after discarding the first 20,000 (burn-in). Filled circles indicate statistically significant coefficients, and
empty circles indicate insignificant ones.

The second set of covariates of interest reflects the gap between ascribed status across the

two operationalizations (CINC scores and the authority score of diplomatic exchanges). The

status gap was disaggregated into (1) the ascribed status gap when the sender has fewer status

than the receiver and (2) when the sender has more status than the receiver (Figure 5). This

reflects that *ascribed status* gaps drive the expected additional status gains/losses of countries.

The wider the CINC gap between two countries, the lower the likelihood that they will recognize

each other. However, for *ascribed status* gaps based on diplomatic recognition, lower-status

states are less likely to recognize additional status gains by higher-status countries. In

comparison, higher-status states are more likely to recognize those of lesser status. This confirms

Hypothesis 2A, which posits that status gaps disincentivize marginal status gains in IOs,

particularly for countries of lower status. The results are more nuanced when the sender has a higher *ascribed status* than the receiver. Based on material capability gaps, higher-status states are less likely to recognize states of lower status. However, based on diplomatic recognition, higher-status states are more likely to recognize states of lower status as the gap widens. This finding further confirms that the UN provides structural conditions for states of lower status to boost their marginal status gains.

Network effects are shown in Figure 6. First, the sender and receiver variance (row and column random effects) are unambiguously larger than zero in all the models and statistically significant. These two variables indicate a "the rich get richer" effect in co-sponsorship, in which those who send sponsorship are more likely to send more, and those who receive sponsorship are more likely to receive more. As previously mentioned, these effects could be explained by the path dependency produced by the incoming ties of prestigious states, which are also enhanced by local prestige (countries that obtain leadership positions in UN groups). These variables of *popularity* and *sociality* are also sensitive to CINC scores. CINC scores are likely highly correlated with *sociality*, which makes these coefficients unstable. Second, the data generation process also makes *reciprocity* visible. For example, in the model of diplomatic recognition, a one-standard-deviation increase in a country's underlying sociality or popularity corresponds to roughly a 20–22 percent increase in the expected number of recognition ties it sends or receives. Countries that are more active in granting recognition also tend to be slightly more recognized themselves, suggesting a small but consistent core of mutually visible actors (sender-receiver covariance). Reciprocity is high ($\rho \approx 0.85$)[12], which corresponds with the data generation process in which the ties of penholders are considered reciprocal.

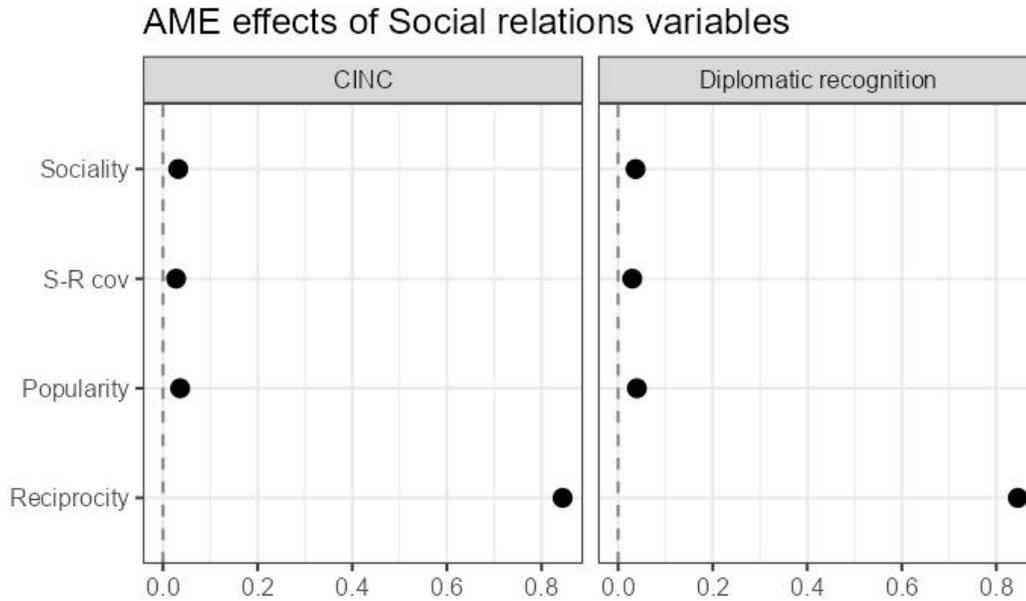[12] As a rule of thumb $\rho = 0.50$ is considered high reciprocity

Figure 6. AME effects of network covariates for UNGA co-sponsorship
Notes: 193 countries across all country years (2000-2020). Bars denote 95% confidence intervals based on 30,000 iterations after discarding the first 20,000 (burn-in). Filled circles indicate statistically significant coefficients, and empty circles indicate insignificant ones. These should be interpreted as how changes in one standard deviation (or variance) in the sender or receiver influence expected ties.

Third, the AME model captures *social closure* (multiplicative) effects in the latent space. Figure 7 is a circle plot that reflects the cosine distance between a subset of states for the diplomatic recognition model. States' positions reflect their stochastic equivalence based on their co-sponsorship patterns. These effects account for non-observable homophily that leads to social closure through *transitivity* and *cycles*. The inner circle represents the receivers of sponsorship, and the outer circle represents the senders. The size of the label shows how defined or "unique" the countries' latent position is (not to be confused with incoming or outgoing ties). Countries' latent positions often match their primary UN grouping and/or regional locations. For example, there is an active cluster of G77 countries in the upper left, comprising many NAM countries. There is a second cluster of Latin American countries in the bottom right, and a group of Western and East Asian allies of the US on the center right. The positions of these countries as senders

and receivers are very similar, indicating that countries tend to sponsor their partners' partners (e.g., if Cuba sponsors Egypt and Egypt sponsors Morocco, it is likely that Cuba sponsors Morocco).
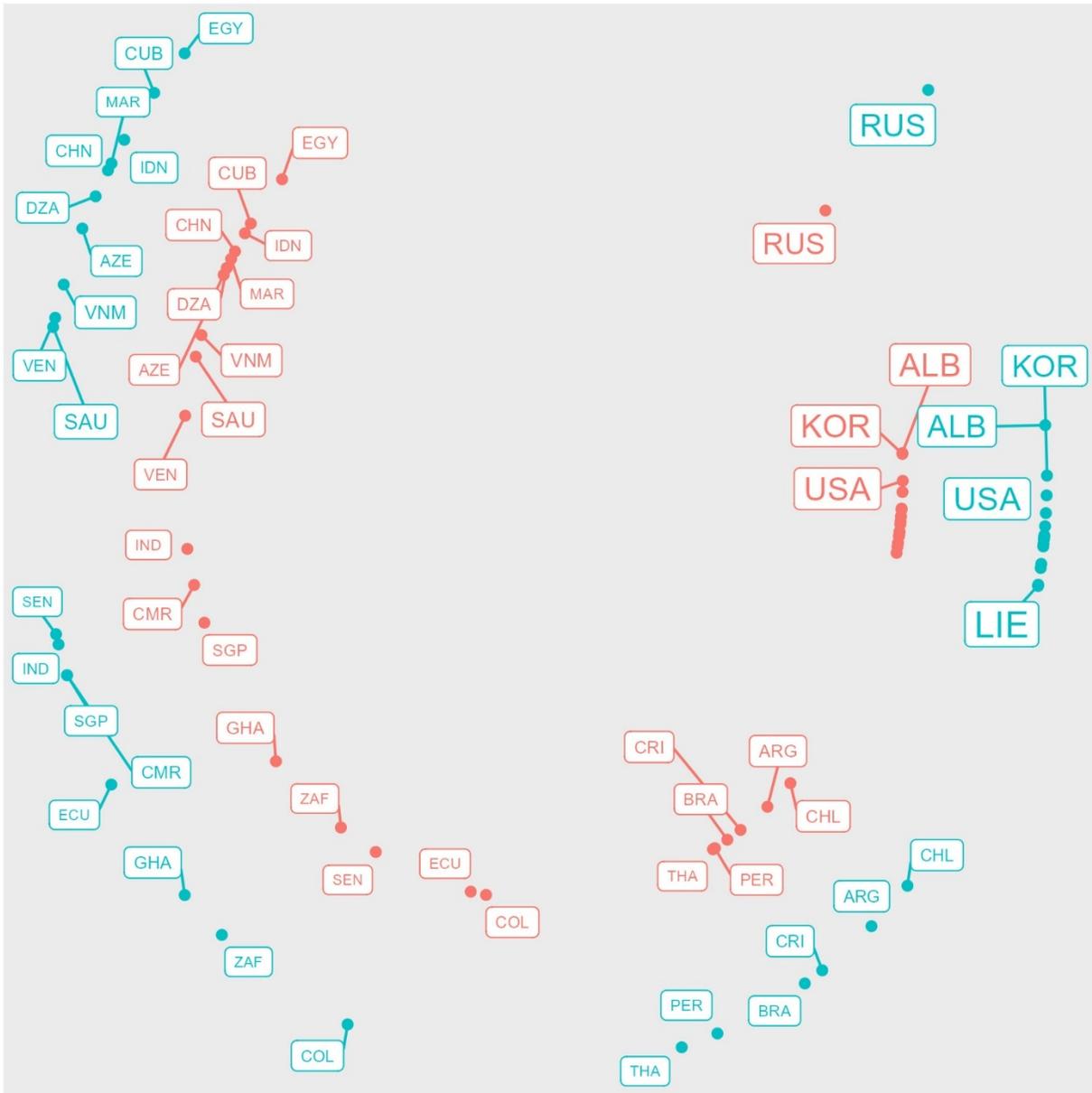
Figure 7. Circle plot of latent sender and receiver effects
Notes: Red nodes show the sender effects and blue nodes indicate receiver effectss. The size of the nodes indicates how "unique" the position of a country is in the latent space.

      The third set of variables pertains to performance at the UN General Assembly, as well as node and dyadic controls (Figure 8). The size of countries' missions, the average experience of their permanent representatives, and the vote consistency in the previous five years are statistically significant in all models. Nevertheless, the variable measuring the manpower of embassies to the UN is negative, suggesting that larger missions are not necessarily more likely to convert these resources into support. Those with experienced diplomats tend to foster more linkages, which confirms Arias' (2023) view that diplomatic capital is a key factor in achieving good performance at the UN. Nevertheless, the variable that measures their consistency in the portfolio of voting positions shows counterintuitive results: not only is this variable statistically significant, but its positive sign also indicates that countries' variability in their foreign policy positions increases their likelihood of obtaining recognition. In other words, the volatility of previous years might enable countries to receive recognition from a broader range of states.
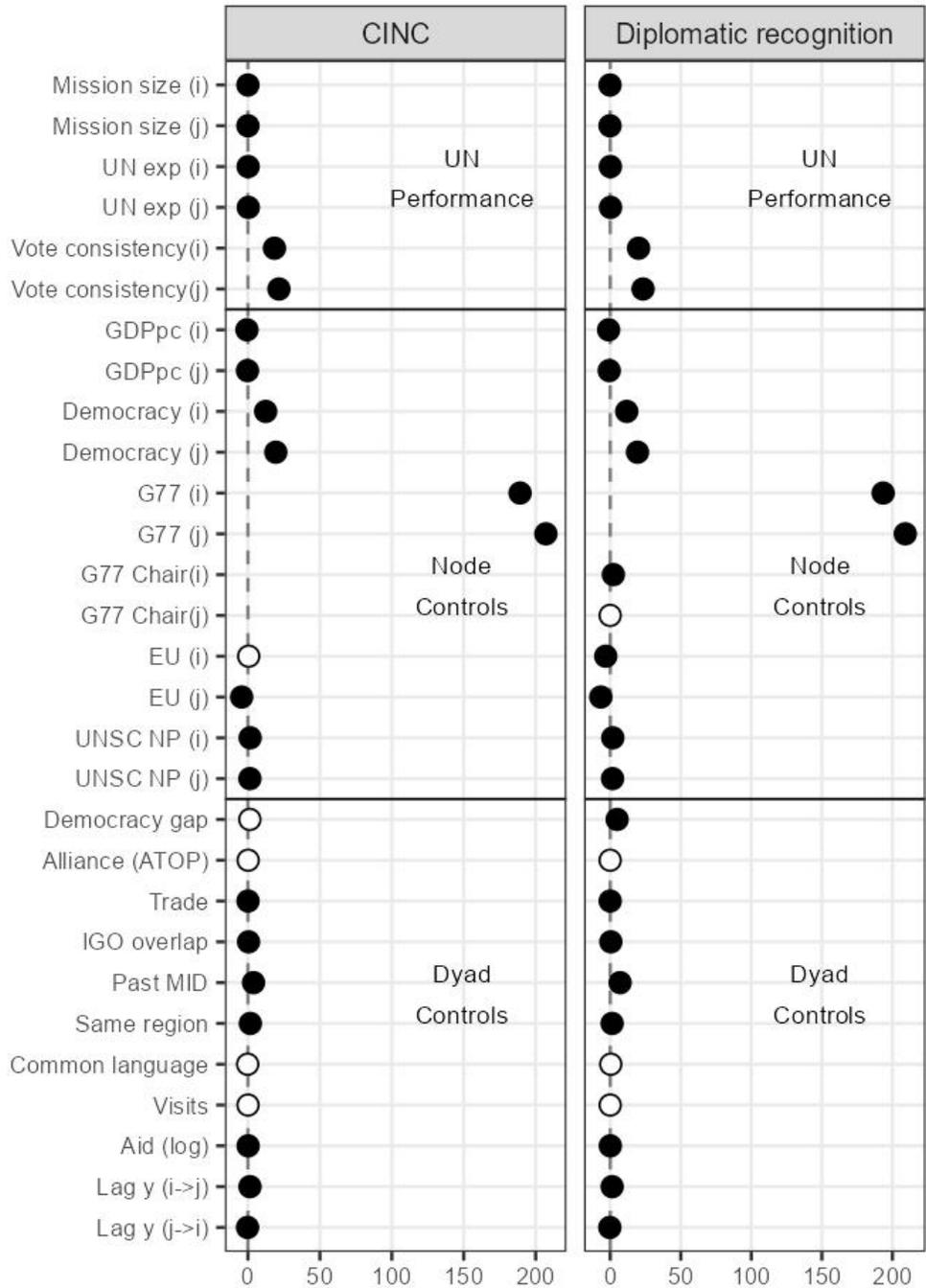
Figure 8. AME effects of UN performance variables and controls for UNGA co-sponsorship
Notes: 193 countries across all country years (2000-2020). Bars denote 95% confidence intervals based on 30,000 iterations after discarding the first 20,000 (burn-in). Filled circles indicate statistically significant coefficients, and empty circles indicate insignificant ones.

In terms of both node and dyadic controls, most covariates are positive and statistically

significant. As previous literature has suggested, higher levels of democracy increase the

likelihood of support at the UNGA (see Finke 2021). The democracy gap, however, indicates that countries with higher gaps do not necessarily cluster together. In terms of groups, belonging to the Group of 77 (G77) and serving as its chair increases the likelihood of sending ties, though this effect is negative for EU countries. These two variables capture the impact of group-based coalition politics, which may obscure the role of other covariates. Other homophilic variables, such as belonging to the same IGOs, being in the same region, are also positive and significant. This is not the case for sharing the same language or having a security alliance. In terms of dyadic interactions, bilateral trade, foreign aid, and previous conflicts foster sponsorship ties.

Lastly, I examine the sender a_i and receiver b_j random effects in Figure 9a and 9b to determine which actors are more and less prone to obtain recognition that would be predicted by incorporating the explanatory covariates and controls discussed in previous sections. For illustration, I compared four groups of countries: Great Powers, Middle Western powers, Non-Western Middle Powers, and a mix of Western and non-Western small countries (these categories are shaded in colors that comprise a 10-90% within-category range). The first model in this trajectory (horizontal axis) consists only of endogenous network dependencies. The second model incorporates *ascribed status* linear variables (CINC ratios and authority scores from diplomatic connections) into the baseline, the third model includes the quadratic version of the *ascribed status* variables, and the fourth includes variables related to performance within the UN.

CINC models

Random Effects by Category

Shaded band = 10–90% within category
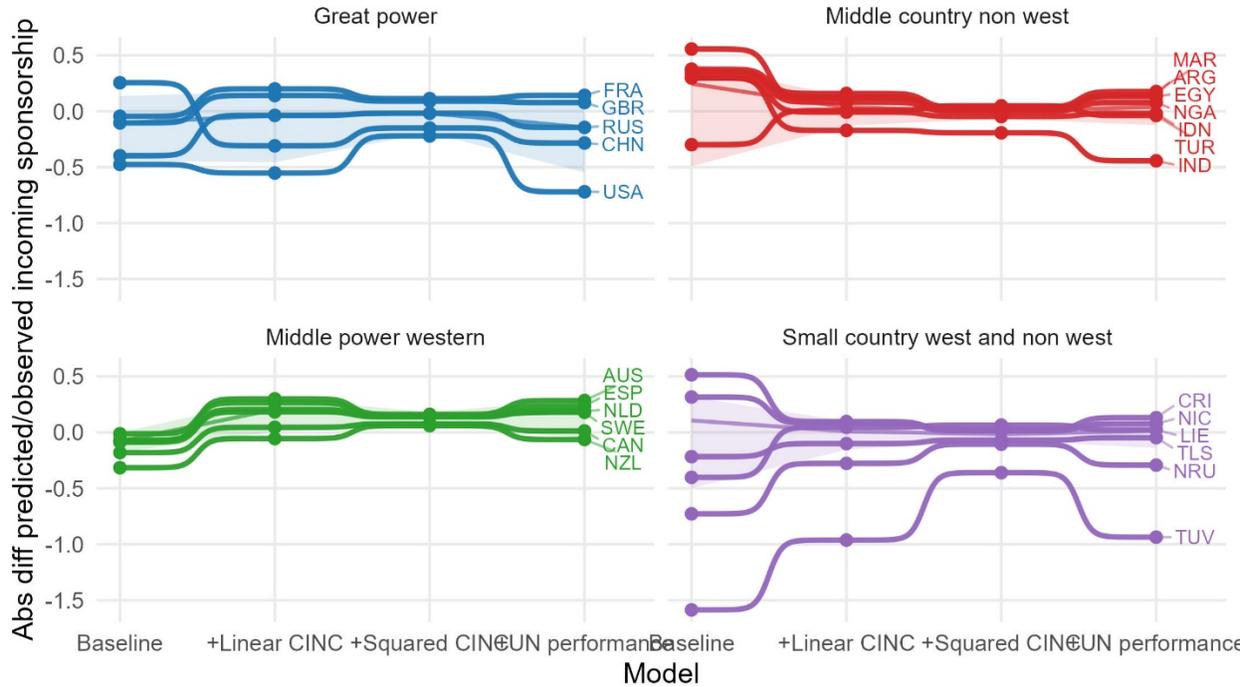
Diplomatic recognition models
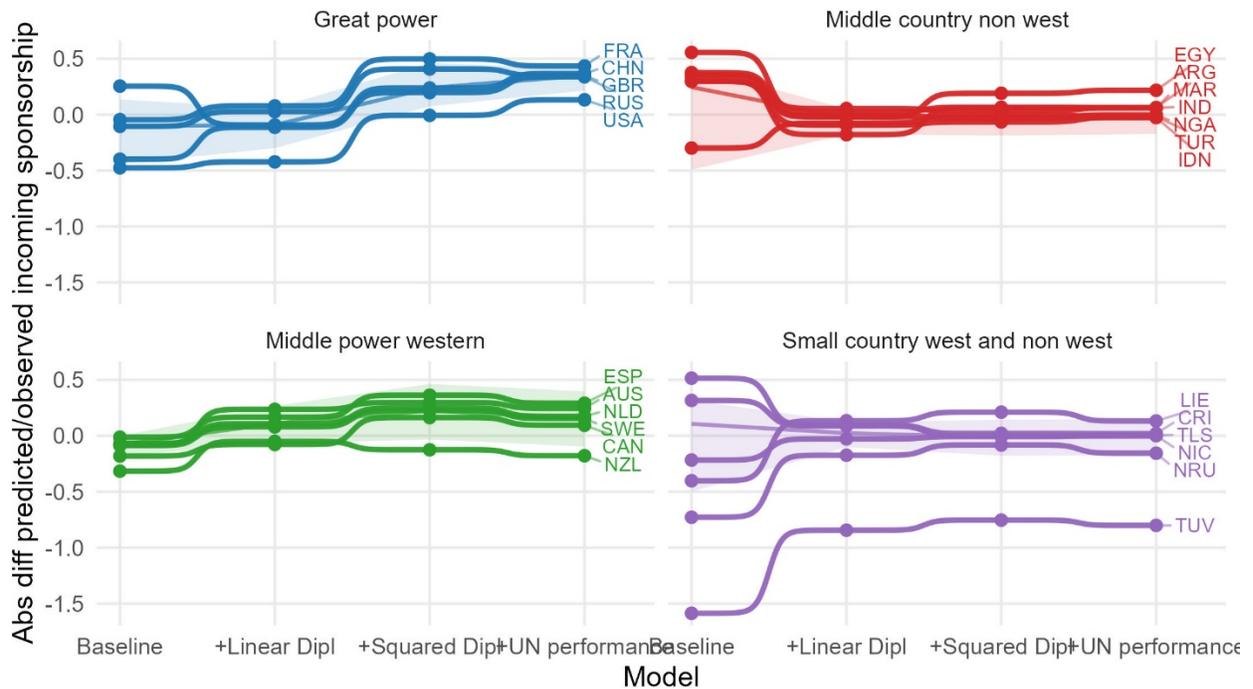
Figure 9. Random effects of selected countries from different status tiers under different controls generated by the AME model.
Notes: These indicate the extent to which the AME model predicts each country's expected incoming sponsorship ties. After controlling for different covariates, some countries remain highly popular.

Great Powers: The baseline model (only network variables) overpredicts the sponsorship ties that great powers would get (upper left plots). Once the model incorporates CINC and UN performance variables, it enhances the prediction, particularly for the US and China. In contrast, the diplomatic variables make the models underpredict the performance of great powers. This means that *ascribed status* based on material capabilities does not translate into marginal gains in status for these countries. In contrast, the variables of diplomatic centrality explain much of their incoming sponsorship. However, there are residual country-specific characteristics that lead them to form ties not explained by the model.

Middle non-Western: For middle non-Western countries (upper-right plots), the marginal status gains these countries obtain are primarily explained by ascribed status variables, suggesting that they obtain recognition commensurate with their baseline status. A few countries, such as Mexico and Egypt, stand out in this category in terms of securing more sponsorship than other non-Western middle-countries.

Middle Western countries (lower-left plots) consistently have more ties than the models predict, even after adding UN performance variables. This suggests that although UN performance variables explain a significant portion of their incoming sponsorship, there are still unobserved characteristics (e.g., the personality of diplomats, bilateral negotiations, and topic expertise) that contribute to their overperformance.

Small countries: Lastly, most of the incoming ties of small countries (lower right plots) are explained by the variables in the model. There are a few "punching above their weight" states, such as Costa Rica, Liechtenstein, and Luxembourg, that possess characteristics that

enable them to overperform even after accounting for their mission size, experience of diplomats, and consistency in their vote positions. These could be related to the personality and connections of their diplomats, their institutionally accumulated procedural knowledge, and other factors.

Model Fit and Robustness Tests

Although I included a large number of variables in the AME model, the covariates only explain potential structural patterns of co-sponsorship at the UNGA. Namely, countries' *ascribed status* condition states' marginal status gains at the UNGA. To explore how well the model explains observable patterns of co-sponsorship, in the supplementary materials, I included different combinations of alternative dependent variables in the co-sponsorship database produced by Seabra and Mesquita (2022), using their weighted formula of ownership and GDP as a proxy for *ascribed status*. Regardless of specification, I find consistently significant coefficients for the material capabilities variables.

Finally, using quadratic terms in the estimation may raise concerns about multicollinearity. To test the viability of the polynomial versus the linear forms of CINC, I compared their goodness of fit across different node, dyadic, and network parameters, using CINC and the log of GDP as dependent variables, which yielded the closest fit for the polynomial forms (see supplementary materials, Tables S1 and S2). Although goodness of fit may not be an adequate indication, a large number of observations (more than 645,000) mitigates multicollinearity, and the standard errors do not change significantly for estimations that include the polynomial forms. In fact, the standard error of most covariates gets reduced in proportion to the size of the coefficient.

Conclusion

This article proposes a theory of structural constraints on marginal status gains, linking traditional measures of status in the international system with the recognition states obtain in IOs. First, countries' interactions in IOs produce new markers of status that interact with their baseline recognition to create a derivative hierarchy for audiences in the capitals, their diplomatic bodies, and NGOs. The IO hierarchy reflects power in the international system only to a certain extent. States obtain their prestige from their position in the international system, which, by all accounts, is correlated with their *ascribed status*. This produces a set of expectations about their performance in IOs, which situates these states in specific roles. Despite their privileges, Great Powers are not recognized as equals in IOs. Seen as outgroupers, their activities raise suspicions about their intentions. In contrast, some small and middle-range countries that lead regional groups and like-minded states obtain significant prestige gains by performing above expectations without being perceived as threatening.

Second, states are more likely to be recognized by their peers, particularly in terms of status measured by diplomatic recognition. Given that only a few countries enjoy disproportionately high status, the gap in material capabilities among most countries is small enough that they can be perceived as in-group members.

Third, the structure of the IO hierarchy is reinforced by states' relations in the network. Visible public performance is a status marker in IOs because it is an objective fact observable by the entire group and provides cues as to what a state is capable of (given its material resources). States that receive high recognition based on their performance are more likely to receive further recognition. There are multiple potential causal links to explain this behavior, such as states' use of niche diplomacy and in-group leadership. Similarly, states are likely to reciprocate recognition

based on performance. The endorsement of one state by another could be motivated by the expectation of future recognition or as a response to prior recognition. Finally, other latent (third-order) dynamics explain recognition, such as the attribution of status to friends of friends, which are likely to be observed in coalition politics in multilateral arenas.

Fourth, assessing status in IOs through an operationalizable metric is exceptionally challenging. Conducting surveys and interviews with diplomats from permanent missions may yield multiple subjective responses that do not accurately reflect the collective nature of their status. Conventional approaches to status use membership in IOs and the establishment of embassies as signs of recognition. These measures, however, can be partly a product of wealth (MacDonald and Parent 2021). I address these difficulties by focusing on co-sponsorship data, which captures states' willingness to obtain status and the recognition they receive for their actions. As demonstrated, material capabilities are an important predictor of recognition. Nevertheless, its interaction with performance in IOs nuances its effects.

Lastly, although it can be argued that states do not necessarily engage in IOs to achieve a higher status but to pursue their interests, the non-binding nature of multilateral legislation makes IOs an arena for performance. States sometimes address relevant issues, but most of the time, they enact symbolic legislation to reinforce their collectively recognized identities.

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Supplementary materials

1. Data Collection

<u>Cosponsorship Dataset</u>

1. Getting the metadata from the UN Digital Library using the following codes: 191__a, 191__r, 791__a, 710__a, 245,269,520,991,991%_e, 650, 089:B02
2. Removed unwanted HRC UN Special Committees, Chairmans, Rapporteurs (21272 records)
3. Sorted AZ and by dates (chronological)
4. Organized the dataset: one draft (L document) thread with up to eight revisions.
5. Obtained data from membership groups G77, G24, ECOWAS, EU, EEC to get disaggregated country information on sponsorship (when sponsorship or authorship is generated as a bloc). Most data came from these organization's websites. G77 came from replication data from:

    > Lees, Nicholas, 2023, "Replication Data for: The Endurance of the G77 in International Relations: South-South Ideology and Voting at the United Nations 1970-2015", https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/Y9C0QC, Harvard Dataverse, V1, UNF:6:K4IW0Pi81AfECF00fN99kw== [fileUNF]

6. With membership information and years, I assigned member states to a thread of drafts matching them to the year the draft was introduced. For example, Mexico withdrew from the G77 in 1994; therefore, in a draft resolution sponsored by the G77 in 1995, Mexico would not be considered.
7. I fixed country names and converted them to ISO3 codes to avoid overlapping names: "Congo" and "Congo Leopoldville". In the case of the United Arab Republic, given Egypt's predominance, I considered the United Arab Republic as EGY instead of Syria or any separate entity.
8. I created a second dataset in which I didn't disaggregate the countries belonging to a group and removed the chair country that submitted/sponsored the draft. (In many cases, drafts are presented by the chair on behalf of a group, e.g., A/65/L.62 Argentina on behalf of G77).
9. For each resulting dataset, I created longitudinal matrices of 189x189x73 to add the total sponsorship sent from country i to country j by year, if country i was a first sponsor.

Data on the size of countries' permanent mission to the UN

1. Downloaded the most recent available version of UN Blue Books (there may be several versions each year) from 1946 to 2023.
2. Consolidated the list of countries in the same way I did for the cosponsorship dataset considering countries that exist in 2023 as a base to identify those that have changed names, have unified, or have ceased to exist.
3. Manually count the numbers of "Mr. Mrs., Sr., Sra., Dr., Col., Prof." among others that indicate the presence of a diplomat in the delegation for each year.
4. Spouses were also counted because the document did not explicitly indicate their role in the permanent mission. Although this may create some bias, all delegations except for Vietnam list their spouses in the Blue Books.
5. Compiled all the data by country/years.

Data on the number of years ambassadors headed a permanent mission to the UN

1. Downloaded the most recent available version of UN Bluebooks (there may be several versions each year) from 1946 to 2023.
2. Consolidated the list of countries in the same way I did for the cosponsorship dataset considering countries that exist in 2023 as a base to identify those that have changed names, have unified, or have ceased to exist.
3. Manually wrote the names of each permanent representative for each country year. (This process had to be manual because the UN Bluebooks often uses different versions of names for the ambassador. For example, it can use the middle name instead of the first name one year, and vice-versa.)
4. Once the list of names by country and year is finished, I sorted them by country and year to see the continuity of each ambassador in his/her post.
5. I counted the cumulation of years of each ambassador in his/her post starting from zero.
6. When there was a change in the ambassador, the count restarted from zero.
7. If the ambassador had been previously on the permanent mission in New York and was reappointed, I continued the count. For example, Kishore Mahbubani served as permanent representative of Singapore from 1984 to 1988 (4 years), and then from 1998 to 2003. The count in 1998 for Singapore started at 4.
8. Finally, I created a dataset with the cumulated years of experience of permanent representatives by country-year.

List of variables and sources

Variable	Alias	Source	Comments
Material power	*i.cinc*	Correlates of War: Singer, J. David. 1988. "Reconstructing the Correlates of War Dataset on Material Capabilities of States, 1816-1985" International Interactions, 14: 115-32.	Contains annual values for total population, urban population, iron and steel production, energy consumption, military personnel, and military expenditure of all state members, currently from 1816-2016
GDP per capita	*i.gdppc*	Obtained from World Bank's World Development indicators	Calculated from GDP in current USD
Authority score	*i.auth*	*d.emb*	Authority centrality calculated from the dyadic diplomatic representation of countries
UNSC non perm members	*i.unsc_non_pi*	UN Digital Library	
UNSC p5	*i.unsc_p5*		U.S., China, Great Britain, France, Russia
Aid/GDP	*i.aidgdp*	World Development Indicators World Bank	Ratio calculated in current US$ millions of dollars
Consistency	*i.consistency5*	Obtained from Bailey, Michael A., Anton Strezhnev, and Erik Voeten. "Estimating Dynamic State Preferences from United Nations Voting Data." The Journal of Conflict Resolution 61, no. 2 (2017): 430–56.	Using UNGA vote ideal points, I calculated the mobile average distribution for the previous five years.
G77	*i.g77*	Lees, Nicholas, 2023, "Replication Data for: The Endurance of the G77 in International Relations: South-South Ideology and Voting at the United Nations 1970-2015", https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/Y9C0QC, Harvard Dataverse, V1	Binary for each year's membership
G77 Chair	*i.g77chair*	Obtained from the Group of 77's website www.g77.org	Binary for each year's chairmanship
EU membership	*i.eu*	European Commission (2019)	Binary for each year's membership
Democracy	*i.democracy*	V-dem Dataset	v2x_polyarchy indicator for each country-year
Size mission UN	*i.size_mission*	UN Bluebooks	See supplemental material 1
Experience yr UNGA	*i.experience*	UN Bluebooks	See supplemental material 2
Distance in democracy	*d.democracy*		Calculated as the absolute difference from v2x_polyarchy
Distance in material power	*d.cinc_major* *d.cinc_minor*	*i.cinc*	Calculated as the absolute difference from Correlates of War CINC. 1) if *i* has lesser CINC than *j* (*d.cinc_major*). 2) if *i* has more CINC than *j* (*d̄.cinc_minor*).
Distance in diplomatic centrality	*d.authority_major* *d.authority_minor*	*i.auth*	Calculated as the absolute difference of authority scores 1) if *i* has lesser authority score than *j* (*d.authority_major*). 2) if *i* has

more authority score than *j* (*d.authority_minor*).

Alliance	*d.atop*	Obtained from the ATOP Project Leeds, Brett Ashley, Jeffrey M. Ritter, Sara McLaughlin Mitchell, and Andrew G. Long. 2002. Alliance Treaty Obligations and Provisions, 1815-1944. International Interactions 28: 237-260.	1 if there is any type of alliance between country i and country j.
Exports (i-j)	*d.trade*	Obtained from WITS World Bank	In million of US dollars. Current values
Diplomatic visits (i-j)	*d.visits*	Obtained from: Chen, Chong, 2021, "Replication Data for: Explaining the Formation and Evolution of Global Diplomatic Networks: New Evidence from Network Analysis of Large-scale Event Data", https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/BGQMIA, Harvard Dataverse, V1	Originally scrapped from GDELT events data and coded 1 if there was any visit between country *i* and country *j* in each year from 1979 to 2020.
Shared IOs	*d.IO*	Obtained from the Intergovernmental organizations dataset of the Correlates of War Project: Pevehouse, Jon C.W., Timothy Nordstron, Roseanne W McManus, Anne Spencer Jamison, "Tracking Organizations in the World: The Correlates of War IO Version 3.0 datasets", Journal of Peace Research.	Aggregated number of IOs shared by dyads by year.
Diplomatic representation (i-j)	*d.emb*	Moyer, Jonathan D., David K. Bohl, and Sara Turner. 2024. "Diplometrics: Diplomatic Representation." https://korbel.du.edu/pardee/content/diplomatic-representation: Frederick S Pardee Center for International Futures. .	Includes an index of dyadic diplomatic representation based on diplomatic hierarchies
Language	*d.lang*	Obtained from Gurevich, Tamara, Peter Herman, Farid Toubal, and Yoto V. Yotov. 2024. "Domestic and International Common Language Database (DICL)." https://www.usitc.gov/data/gravity/dicl.htm.	Consists of a calculation of language similarity based on different indexes of official language and predominant languages domestically
Y(t-1)	*ylag.dyad*		The t-1 adjacency matrix of cosponsorship
Delayed reciprocity	*ytlag.dyad*		The t-1 transposed adjacency matrix of cosponsorship

List of countries

AFG	Afghanistan	CRI	Costa Rica	IRN	Iran	MAR	Morocco	ZAF	South Africa
ALB	Albania	HRV	Croatia	IRQ	Iraq	MOZ	Mozambique	SSD	South Sudan
DZA	Algeria	CUB	Cuba	IRL	Ireland	MMR	Myanmar	ESP	Spain
AND	Andorra	CYP	Cyprus	ISR	Israel	NAM	Namibia	LKA	Sri Lanka
AGO	Angola	CZE	Czech Republic	ITA	Italy	NRU	Nauru	KNA	St. Kitts and Nevis
ATG	Antigua & Barbuda	COD	Democratic Republic of the Congo	CIV	Ivory Coast	NPL	Nepal	LCA	St. Lucia

Code	Country	Code	Country	Code	Country	Code	Country	Code	Country
ARG	Argentina	DNK	Denmark	JAM	Jamaica	NLD	Netherlands	VCT	St. Vincent and the Grenadines
ARM	Armenia	DJI	Djibouti	JPN	Japan	NZL	New Zealand	SDN	Sudan
AUT	Austria	DMA	Dominica	JOR	Jordan	NIC	Nicaragua	SUR	Suriname
AUS	Australia	DOM	Dominican Republic	KAZ	Kazakhstan	NER	Niger	SWZ	Swaziland
AZE	Azerbaijan	TLS	East Timor	KEN	Kenya	NGA	Nigeria	SWE	Sweden
BHS	Bahamas	ECU	Ecuador	KIR	Kiribati	PRK	North Korea	CHE	Switzerland
BHR	Bahrain	EGY	Egypt	KOR	Korea	NOR	Norway	SYR	Syria
BGD	Bangladesh	SLV	El Salvador	KWT	Kuwait	OMN	Oman	TJK	Tajikistan
BRB	Barbados	GNQ	Equatorial Guinea	KGZ	Kyrgyzstan	PAK	Pakistan	TZA	Tanzania
BLR	Belarus	ERI	Eritrea	LAO	Laos	PLW	Palau	THA	Thailand
BEL	Belgium	EST	Estonia	LVA	Latvia	PAN	Panama	TGO	Togo
BLZ	Belize	ETH	Ethiopia	LBN	Lebanon	PNG	Papua New Guinea	TON	Tonga
BEN	Benin	FSM	Federated States of Micronesia	LSO	Lesotho	PRY	Paraguay	TTO	Trinidad and Tobago
BTN	Bhutan	FJI	Fiji	LBR	Liberia	PER	Peru	TUN	Tunisia
BOL	Bolivia	FIN	Finland	LBY	Libya	PHL	Philippines	TUR	Turkey
BIH	Bosnia and Herzegovina	FRA	France	LIE	Liechtenstein	POL	Poland	TKM	Turkmenistan
BWA	Botswana	GAB	Gabon	LTU	Lithuania	PRT	Portugal	TUV	Tuvalu
BRA	Brazil	GMB	Gambia	LUX	Luxembourg	QAT	Qatar	UGA	Uganda
BRN	Brunei	GEO	Georgia	MKD	Macedonia	ROU	Romania	UKR	Ukraine
BGR	Bulgaria	DEU	Germany	MDG	Madagascar	RUS	Russia	ARE	United Arab Emirates
BFA	Burkina Faso	GHA	Ghana	MWI	Malawi	RWA	Rwanda	GBR	United Kingdom
BDI	Burundi	GRC	Greece	MYS	Malaysia	WSM	Samoa	USA	United States of America
KHM	Cambodia	GRD	Grenada	MDV	Maldives	SMR	San Marino	URY	Uruguay
CMR	Cameroon	GTM	Guatemala	MLI	Mali	STP	Sao Tome and Principe	UZB	Uzbekistan
CAN	Canada	GIN	Guinea	MLT	Malta	SAU	Saudi Arabia	VUT	Vanuatu
CPV	Cape Verde	GNB	Guinea-Bissau	MHL	Marshall Islands	SEN	Senegal	VEN	Venezuela
CAF	Central African Republic	GUY	Guyana	MRT	Mauritania	SYC	Seychelles	VNM	Vietnam
TCD	Chad	HTI	Haiti	MUS	Mauritius	SLE	Sierra Leone	YEM	Yemen
CHL	Chile	HND	Honduras	MEX	Mexico	SGP	Singapore	YUG	Yugoslavia
CHN	China	HUN	Hungary	MDA	Moldova	SVK	Slovakia	ZMB	Zambia
COL	Colombia	ISL	Iceland	MCO	Monaco	SVN	Slovenia		
COM	Comoros	IND	India	MNG	Mongolia	SLB	Solomon Islands		
COG	Congo	IDN	Indonesia	MNE	Montenegro	SOM	Somalia		

2. Tables

Table S1 Main estimations in tabular form

	Base_net	Linear_CINC	Square_CINC	All_CINC	Linear_Dipl	Square_Dipl	All_Dipl
Sender							
Dipl centrality (i)					0.537***	1.732***	1.764***
					(0.017)	(0.036)	(0.035)
Dipl centrality2 (i)						-1.502***	-1.477***
						(0.039)	(0.040)
CINC (i)		3.816***	2.651***	8.134***			
		(0.205)	(0.095)	(0.223)			
CINC2 (i)			-9.159***	-27.304***			
			(0.453)	(1.024)			
GDPpc(i)		-0.006***	-0.004***	-0.007***	-0.010***	-0.010***	-0.011***
		(0.001)	(0.000)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Democracy(i)		0.136***	0.041***	0.116***	0.122***	0.092***	0.111***
		(0.009)	(0.004)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)
G77(i)		1.099***	0.361***	1.062***	1.105***	1.102***	1.076***
		(0.006)	(0.002)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)
UNSC NP(i)		0.010***	0.004***	0.015***	0.009***	0.009***	0.018***
		(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)
EU(i)		-0.004	0.000	0.005	-0.034***	-0.042***	-0.032***
		(0.005)	(0.002)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.004)
Mission size(i)				-0.001***			-0.001***
				(0.000)			(0.000)
UN experience (i)				0.001***			0.001***
				(0.000)			(0.000)
Vote consistency(i)				0.169***			0.183***
				(0.007)			(0.007)
G77 Chair(i)							0.022***
							(0.007)
Receiver							
Dipl centrality (j)					0.378***	1.503***	1.544***
					(0.016)	(0.035)	(0.033)
Dipl centrality2 (j)						-1.454***	-1.430***
						(0.040)	(0.038)
CINC (j)		3.940***	3.450***	10.324***			
		(0.203)	(0.093)	(0.221)			
CINC2 (j)			-12.692***	-36.582***			
			(0.430)	(1.018)			
GDPpc(j)		-0.002***	-0.002***	-0.004***	-0.005***	-0.005***	-0.007***
		(0.001)	(0.000)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Democracy(j)		0.196***	0.067***	0.177***	0.187***	0.158***	0.177***
		(0.009)	(0.004)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)
G77(j)		1.160***	0.385***	1.122***	1.162***	1.158***	1.129***
		(0.006)	(0.002)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)
UNSC NP(j)		0.009***	0.003***	0.013***	0.008***	0.008***	0.016***
		(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.003)
EU(j)		-0.052***	-0.021***	-0.045***	-0.071***	-0.079***	-0.069***
		(0.005)	(0.002)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.004)
Mission size(j)				-0.001***			-0.001***
				(0.000)			(0.000)
UN experience (j)				0.002***			0.002***
				(0.000)			(0.000)
Vote consistency(j)				0.195***			0.209***
				(0.007)			(0.007)
G77 Chair(j)							-0.000
							(0.007)
Dyad vars							
CINC gap top down				-0.019***			
				(0.000)			
CINC gap bottom up				-0.024***			
				(0.000)			
Dipl gap bottom up					-0.099***	-0.062***	-0.067***
					(0.009)	(0.010)	(0.010)

Dipl gap top down				0.016***	0.015***	0.015***
				(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Democracy gap	0.051***	0.010***	0.013	0.049***	0.046***	0.048***
	(0.006)	(0.003)	(0.007)	(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.007)
Alliance (ATOP)	0.001	-0.004***	0.001	-0.004	-0.003	-0.000
	(0.003)	(0.001)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Trade	-0.000***	-0.000	-0.000***	-0.000***	-0.000***	-0.000***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
IGO overlap	0.004***	0.001***	0.004***	0.005***	0.005***	0.005***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Past MID	0.052***	0.025***	0.038***	0.065***	0.067***	0.068***
	(0.019)	(0.008)	(0.018)	(0.019)	(0.018)	(0.018)
Same region	0.014***	0.011***	0.016***	0.014***	0.014***	0.013***
	(0.003)	(0.001)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Common language	0.007	0.001	-0.002	0.001	0.003	0.004
	(0.005)	(0.002)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Visits	-0.000	0.000	-0.000	-0.000	-0.000	-0.000
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Aid (log)	0.001***	0.000***	0.001***	0.001***	0.001***	0.001***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Lag y	0.014***	0.068***	0.014***	0.014***	0.014***	0.014***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Delayed recip	-0.003***	-0.010***	-0.003***	-0.003***	-0.003***	-0.003***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Network						
Sociality	0.109***	0.033***	0.010***	0.032***	0.033***	0.036***	0.037***
	(0.012)	(0.004)	(0.001)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
S-R cov	0.110***	0.028***	0.005***	0.028***	0.022***	0.030***	0.030***
	(0.012)	(0.003)	(0.001)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Popularity	0.124***	0.035***	0.012***	0.036***	0.029***	0.040***	0.040***
	(0.014)	(0.004)	(0.001)	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.005)	(0.004)
Reciprocity	0.849***	0.845***	0.785***	0.845***	0.845***	0.844***	0.845***
	(0.041)	(0.007)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.007)	(0.009)	(0.000)

* p-value < 0.10; ** p-value < 0.05 level; *** p-value < 0.01 level. Standard errors in parentheses. AME estimations are usually represented as confidence intervals. However, for the sake of interpretability and comparability, I present the mean of the posteriors and their respective significance based on their standard errors and confidence intervals.

Table S2 Goodness of fit comparison of models including different controls and covariates for diplomatic authority score

	sd.rowmean	sd.colmean	dyad.dep	cycle.dep	trans.dep
Base_net	0.06501541	0.07005832	0.018048	0.125331	0.123888
Linear_CINC	0.05515188	0.05799087	0.018009	0.103162	0.10156
Square_CINC	0.42623219	0.46558358	**0.009893**	**0.029119**	**0.029978**
All_CINC	**0.05442998**	**0.05712854**	0.018081	0.103721	0.10211
Linear_Dipl	0.05627154	0.05923827	0.017966	0.103717	0.102121
Square_Dipl	0.05618751	0.05932789	0.017975	0.103083	0.101478
All_Dipl	0.05585269	0.05886502	0.01797	0.102592	0.100985

Note: Calculated as the mean difference of the yearly estimated posteriors and observed ties for each parameter.

Table S3 Goodness of fit comparing linear, quadratic, and log CINC, AME models

	sd.rowmean	sd.colmean	dyad.dep	cycle.dep	trans.dep
Base_net	0.06501541	0.07005832	0.018048	0.125331	0.123888
Linear_CINC	**0.05515188**	**0.05799087**	0.018009	0.103162	0.10156
Square_CINC	0.42623219	0.46558358	**0.009893**	**0.029119**	**0.029978**

Note: Calculated as the mean difference of the yearly estimated posteriors and observed ties for each parameter.

Table S4 Goodness of fit comparing linear, quadratic, and log authority centrality of diplomatic ties, AME models

	sd.rowmean	sd.colmean	dyad.dep	cycle.dep	trans.dep
Dip Authority Linear	0.05627154	0.05923827	**0.017966**	0.103717	0.102121
Dip Authority Quadratic	0.05618751	0.05932789	0.017975	0.103083	0.101478
Dip Authority Log	**0.05601533**	**0.05917297**	0.017976	**0.102921**	**0.101315**

Note: Calculated as the mean difference of the yearly estimated posteriors and observed ties for each parameter.

Table S5. Alternative model using GDP log polynomial form

Variable	GDP model
Sender	
log(GDP)(i)	0.024***
	(0.002)
log(GDP)^2(i)	-0.003***
	(0.000)
GDPpc(i)	0.008***
	(0.001)
Democracy(i)	0.231***
	(0.009)
G77(i)	1.089***
	(0.005)
UNSC NP(i)	0.010***
	(0.003)
EU(i)	0.064***
	(0.004)
Receiver	
log(GDP)(j)	0.044***
	(0.002)
log(GDP)^2(j)	-0.005***
	(0.000)
GDPpc(j)	0.011***
	(0.001)
Democracy(j)	0.285***
	(0.009)
G77(j)	1.148***
	(0.006)
UNSC NP(j)	0.009***
	(0.003)
EU(j)	0.017***
	(0.005)
Dyad vars	
Gap log(GDP)	0.001
	(0.001)
Democracy gap	0.056***
	(0.007)
Alliance (ATOP)	0.013***
	(0.003)
Trade	-0.000
	(0.000)
IGO overlap	0.004***
	(0.000)
Past MID	0.065***
	(0.019)
Same region	0.008***
	(0.003)
Common language	0.004
	(0.005)
Visits	0.000
	(0.000)
Aid (log)	0.001***

	(0.000)
Lag y	0.014***
	(0.000)
Delayed recip	-0.003***
	(0.000)
Network vars	
Sociality	0.049***
	(0.006)
S-R cov	0.051***
	(0.007)
Popularity	0.068***
	(0.008)
Reciprocity	0.845***
	(0.004)

 * p-value < 0.10; ** p-value < 0.05 level; *** p-value < 0.01 level. Standard errors in parenthesis. AME estimations are usually represented as confidence intervals. However, for the sake of interpretability and comparability, I present the mean of the posteriors and its respective significance based on its standard errors and confidence intervals.
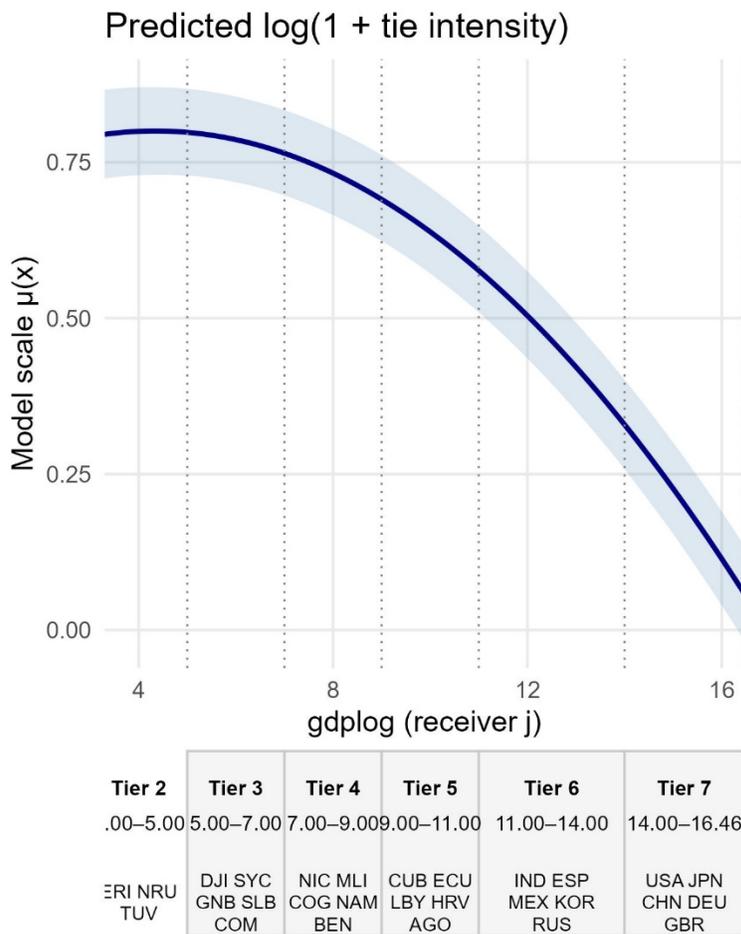
Figure S1.

Predicted log(1 + tie intensity)

	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4	Tier 5	Tier 6	Tier 7
	.00–5.00	5.00–7.00	7.00–9.00	9.00–11.00	11.00–14.00	14.00–16.46
	ERI NRU TUV	DJI SYC GNB SLB COM	NIC MLI COG NAM BEN	CUB ECU LBY HRV AGO	IND ESP MEX KOR RUS	USA JPN CHN DEU GBR

Figure S1 Predicted log(1 + tie intensity) as a function of the receiver's baseline status operationalization (GDP log). The curve shows the expected value of the dependent variable on the model (log) scale, with a 95 percent credible interval. Tiers on the x-axis group countries by their authority or CINC scores, listing the top countries in each range.

Table S6. Alternative model using Seabra and Mesquita co-sponsorship weighted data as a dependent variable and CINC, GDP log, and authority centrality from diplomatic representation as independent variables

Variable	CINC	Dip Authority	GDP
Sender			
CINC (i)	0.592***		
	(0.150)		
CINC^2 (i)	-1.944***		
	(0.701)		
Dipl authority(i)		0.269***	
		(0.022)	
Dipl authority^2(i)		-0.261***	
		(0.025)	
GDP log(i)			0.592***
			(0.150)
GDP log^2(i)			-1.944***
			(0.701)
GDPpc(i)	-0.001	-0.001***	-0.001
	(0.001)	(0.000)	(0.001)
Democracy(i)	0.035***	0.032***	0.035***
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)
G77(i)	0.042***	0.048***	0.042***
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
UNSC NP(i)	0.000	-0.000	0.000
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
EU(i)	0.022***	0.017***	0.022***
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Mission size(i)	0.001***	0.001***	0.001***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
UN experience (i)	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Vote consistency(i)	0.012***	0.015***	0.012***
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)
G77 Chair(i)		-0.045***	
		(0.008)	
Receiver			
CINC (j)	1.031***		
	(0.155)		
CINC^2 (j)	-5.679***		
	(0.668)		
Dipl authority(i)		0.147***	
		(0.022)	
Dipl authority^2(i)		-0.028	
		(0.025)	
GDP log(i)			1.031***
			(0.155)
GDP log^2(i)			-5.679***
			(0.668)

	(1)	(2)	(3)
GDPpc(j)	0.007***	0.006***	0.007***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Democracy(j)	-0.110***	-0.115***	-0.110***
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)
G77(j)	0.042***	0.045***	0.042***
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
UNSC NP(j)	-0.007***	-0.008***	-0.007***
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
EU(j)	0.020***	0.016***	0.020***
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Mission size(j)	-0.001***	-0.001***	-0.001***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
UN experience (j)	-0.001***	-0.000***	-0.001***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Vote consistency(j)	-0.005	0.002	-0.005
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Dyadic variables			
CINC gap top down	-0.003***		
	(0.000)		
CINC gap bottom up	-0.007***		
	(0.000)		
Dipl gap bottom up		-0.053***	
		(0.007)	
Dipl gap top down		0.005	
		(0.003)	
GDP gap top down			-0.007***
			(0.000)
GDP gap bottom up			-0.003***
			(0.000)
Democracy gap	-0.051***	-0.048***	-0.051***
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Alliance (ATOP)	0.079***	0.078***	0.079***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Trade	-0.000	0.000	-0.000
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
IGO overlap	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Past MID	0.003	0.008	0.003
	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)
Same region	0.038***	0.037***	0.038***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Common language	0.089***	0.088***	0.089***
	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)
Visits	0.002***	0.002***	0.002***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Aid (log)	-0.000	-0.000	-0.000
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Lag y	0.000	0.010***	0.000
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Delayed recip	0.001***	0.002***	0.001***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Sociality	0.006***	0.006***	0.006***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
S-R cov	0.000	0.000	0.000
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Popularity	0.020***	0.011***	0.020***
	(0.003)	(0.001)	(0.003)

Reciprocity	0.004***	0.004***	0.004***
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)

. * p-value < 0.10; ** p-value < 0.05 level; *** p-value < 0.01 level. Standard errors in parentheses. AME estimations are usually represented as confidence intervals. However, for the sake of interpretability and comparability, I present the mean of the posteriors and its respective significance based on its standard errors and confidence intervals.

Dependent variable	Model	sd.rowmean	sd.colmean	dyad.dep	cycle.dep	trans.dep
Mesquita and Seabra weighted approach	CINC	0.53473	0.50246	0.46169	0.30546	0.18871
	Dip Authority	0.53484	0.50184	0.46418	0.30637	0.18946
	GDP	0.53473	0.50246	0.46169	0.30546	0.18871
Direct, non-weighted (as in the paper)	CINC	0.05443	0.05713	0.01808	0.10372	0.10211
	Dip Authority	0.05585	0.05887	0.01797	0.10259	0.10099
	GDP	0.05651	0.05967	0.01800	0.10238	0.10077

Note: Calculated as the mean difference of the yearly estimated posteriors and observed ties for each parameter.

3. Figures

Figure S2 Goodness of fit Plots (on CINC and Dip Authority Models).
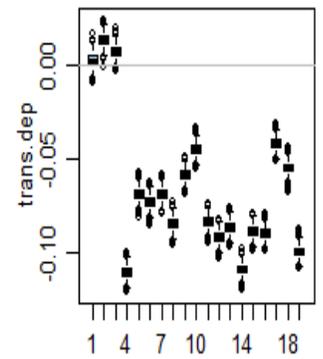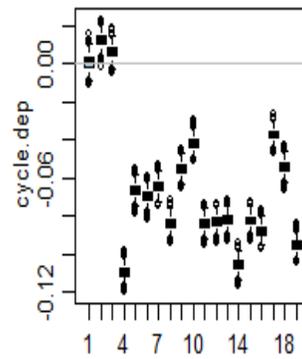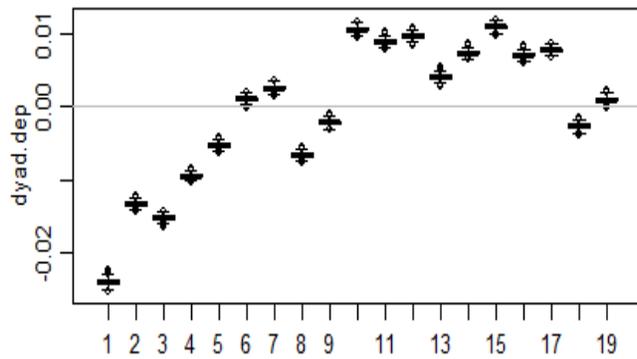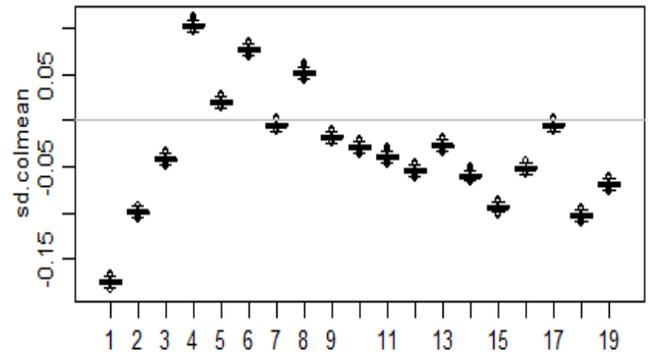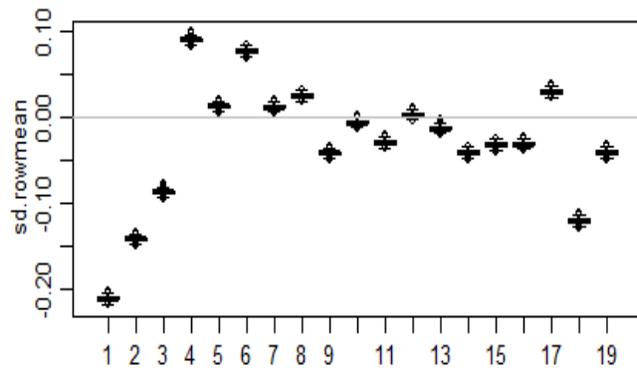
CINC
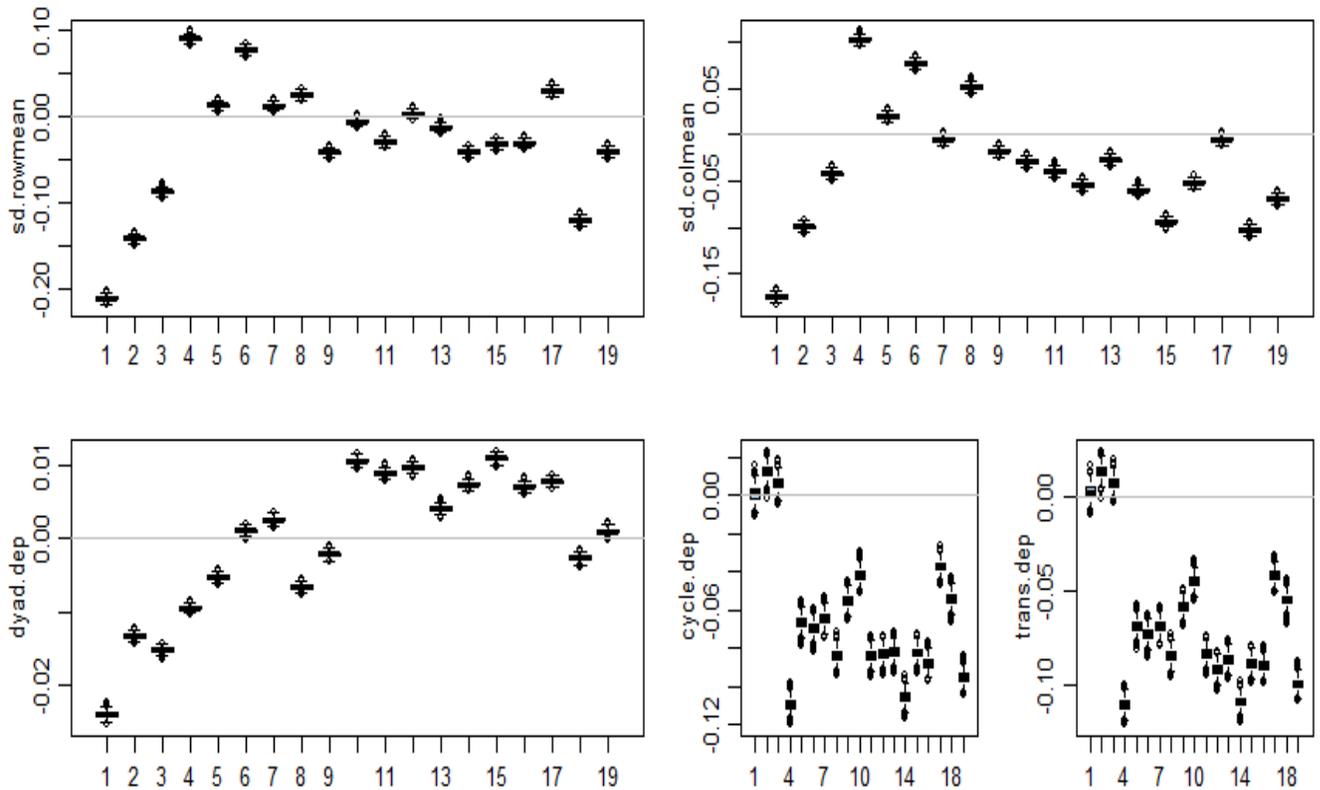
Diplomatic centrality

Figure S3. Trace plots of Covariates. CINC and diplomatic authority centrality