Turning the Tables? Status and Stability in the International System

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Abstract

What does it mean for a state to change its status, or relative position, in the international community? While existing scholarship finds that states pursuing status-enhancing strategies are rewarded with increased status as individual states, status is not conferred in a vacuum. We develop a theory of status that takes into account its multi-level nature. Status-changing behavior affects individual (the state), relational (the state relative to another state), and systemic (states outside the transaction) status. We demonstrate how focusing on any single level of status may blind observers to changes along other dimensions and fundamentally alter the conclusions we draw about status-changing activity. In an online information experiment, we find that directed actions by low-status states against high-status states increase the individual and relative status of low-status states in comparison to high-status. Strikingly, respondents adjust the individual status of third-party states in order to maintain the same hierarchical ranking. Our results suggest that, while individual state actions may impact individual and relational status, the international hierarchy remains stable. We extend our framework in reanalysis of existing studies, including two replication analyses, to demonstrate the value of multi-dimensional status analysis.

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1 Introduction

Political scientists agree that status is a key feature of international politics. It serves as both a means and an end to states' political objectives. As such, politicians and their citizens are "plainly obsessed with investing in, seizing, and defending" their international status because it provides social, material, and psychological benefits (Renshon, 2017, 1). The desire for states to elevate status in the eyes of domestic and foreign public opinion constrains key foreign policy decisions (Goldsmith & Horiuchi, 2012; Powers & Renshon, 2021; Viskupič, 2020). It leads states to invest in status-enhancing actions like acquiring nuclear weapons, joining international organizations, and hosting the Olympics (Hafner-Burton & Montgomery, 2006; Larson & Shevchenko, 2010), sometimes at the expense of other political goals (Barnhart, 2016).

While status matters, its precise definition is contested. One common feature within competing conceptions of status is the idea that status is relational. Status denotes rank, or standing, and a change in one actor's status can lead to a change in "at least one other actor's status" (Renshon *et al.*, 2018, 375). If an event destabilizes perceptions of status for one party in an international transaction, it should also impact the status of the second party by comparison. The same transaction might also have system-wide ripple effects on the larger international ecosystem if the identity and meaning of groups change (Brooks *et al.*, 2015; Gray, 2013). This makes the outcome of interest not just how one state changes its status but also how it does so relative to others. To date, the majority of experimental work has tested the former, finding that when states engage in status-enhancing activities, their individual status rises (Carnegie & Dolan, 2020; Dreher *et al.*, 2020; Powers & Renshon, 2021). We argue that the next step in status research is to understand the latter, focusing on the relational and systemic impacts of status-changing events.

We develop a framework for understanding status shifts across multiple dimensions. In a meta-analysis of existing experimental work on status, we demonstrate that different definitions scholars' choose for status are associated with finding significant results for information about status-changing activities. We further demonstrate discrepancies in the way status is

currently defined and measured. We propose methodological changes to measuring status that are well-tuned to capturing the theoretical nuances of status, primarily by capturing status outcomes across multiple definitions for multiple actors in the international arena.

In this paper, we specifically focus on cases where we are most likely to simultaneously witness the public updating their beliefs about states in isolation (individual status), in relation to each other (relative status), and in relation to other, uninvolved states in the international system (systemic status). More specifically, we demonstrate the tension between status as an individual-level attribute and a relational- or systemic-level attribute using the case of foreign aid. While most aid relationships tend to reinforce existing hierarchies, a burgeoning literature has demonstrated the use of foreign aid as a tool to disrupt these hierarchies and increase status, particularly for rising powers such as China (Asmus *et al.*, 2021; Dreher *et al.*, 2020; Eichenauer *et al.*, 2021; Jones, 2018; Mattingly & Sundquist, 2021). Donor states are viewed with "superiority and power" (Kuusik, 2006, 57), whereas recipients of foreign aid are perceived as less developed and less powerful (Carnegie & Dolan, 2020). Therefore, advancement (regression) from a country that receives (donates) foreign aid to one that donates (receives) foreign aid increases (decreases) a nation's international standing. Serbian president Aleksandar Vučić illustrates this point in his statement that,"China moved from a developing country receiving international aid to a superpower" (N1 Belgrade, n.d.). We investigate whether these status implications occur at the individual, relative or systemic level.

Building on a real-world example of changing aid activity during the COVID-19 pandemic, we evaluate the effects of aid relationships on international status in an online information experiment that accounts for the multidimensional nature of status perceptions in our measurement strategy (Fiske *et al.*, 2002; Herrman, 2013). We find that aid activity affects respondents' perceptions of international respect; however it does not affect their evaluation of international influence. In line with our expectations, we also establish that individual, relational, and systemic status are empirically distinct. Donors are rewarded with *individual* gains in respect while the *individual* respect of recipients is unchanged. However, aid recip-

ients do lose status *in relation* to the aid donor. Strikingly, third-party states (outside the transaction) also experience an increase in their *individual* respect that offsets any *relational* change in comparison to donors. In other words, respondents offset any potential changes in international hierarchy by adjusting the ratings of third-party countries that are outside the bilateral transaction. They shift the rating of other states in the international ecosystem so that there is no overall *systemic* effect. Respondents ensure that hierarchical ordering does not change for donors, recipients, or third-parties.

We then test the bounds of our framework and results by reanalyzing two existing studies (Carnegie & Dolan, 2020; Mattingly & Sundquist, 2021) and replicating our results in two separate survey experiments. These reanalyses and replications demonstrate that our framework provides useful nuance for discussions of status by extending beyond the individual level and taking into consideration whether state actions actively change relative and systemic status.

Our results have several implications for how publics understand status changes in the international system. First, theoretically, we develop a new framework of status that includes multiple levels of analysis (individual, relative, and systemic). While these attributes have long been a part of status definitions, this paper is the first, to our knowledge, to theorize the relative and system-level impacts of status changes directly. We pair this theoretical innovation with a methodological one. By allowing respondents to rate multiple countries within and outside of a status-changing transaction, we match each conceptualization of status change with an appropriate empirical measure. Our findings suggest that the assimilation of new information on status creates ripple effects across the international ecosystem. Specifically, the status quo bias of the international system is so strong that it affects how people understand individual status, even for states uninvolved in the status-enhancing interaction. Second, we disaggregate the common dimensions of status into two broad component parts: respect and influence. By measuring status along these two dimensions, we test how different conceptions of status may respond differentially to the same status-changing events. We find evidence that status is not a monolith. Respect is more easily manipulated by symbolic

status-altering events than influence. Finally, this paper contributes to a growing body of literature that shows status is not only driven by military considerations but also by economic ones (Brutger & Rathbun, Forthcoming; Carnegie & Dolan, 2020; Duque & Houser, 2021; Powers & Renshon, 2021).

2 Status (In)stability in the International System

Status matters; however, its usage varies. In part, this is due to status' close ties to IR concepts like reputation and credibility. It's also due to the fact that both publics and political scientists recognize status' multi-dimensionality (Larson & Shevchenko, 2010; Powers & Renshon, 2021). Within this landscape, there is some agreement that status is "standing, or rank, in a status community" (Renshon, 2017, 4). This is associated with reputation, a belief about an actor's traits, such as their resolve, informed by their past behavior (Dafoe *et al.*, 2014; Jervis, 1989; Schelling, 1960). Reputations are essential to assessing credibility (Renshon *et al.*, 2018). What separates status from these other variables is its inherent positionality. Status is dependent on mutual recognition and is therefore considered a second-order belief about what others believe the standing of a state is in relation to a comparison group (Dafoe *et al.*, 2014). In a globalized world, status must be conferred by a general international community consisting of both elite and mass actors, who often share foreign policy preferences (Kertzer, 2020). As Carnegie & Dolan (2020, 498) note status is a "consensus concept" with a wide international audience. This is echoed by prior work which finds that the mass public values statues, is capable of evaluating status implications, and rewards both domestic and foreign leaders for status gains (Carnegie & Dolan, 2020; Powers & Renshon, 2021; Viskupič, 2020). The public's desire for status shapes leaders' foreign policy decisions (Goldsmith & Horiuchi, 2012; Rhamey & Early, 2013).

We focus specifically on how status conveys a state's place in the international hierarchy. Status can imply identity (i.e. membership in a group like major powers) and can be rank-based (i.e. position in a hierarchy), in which which actors of lower standing defer to

the interests of actors with higher standing (Pratt, 2018). Importantly, states value status and seek to improve their position in the international system (Frank, 1985). Psychological and constructivist perspectives argue that status can provide intrinsic benefits which inflate self-importance and give governments "a sense of belonging" (Kelley, 2017, 39). In rational-strategic theories, status provides instrumental benefits where deference yields material benefits such as FDI or trade concessions (Tomz, 2012). Similarly, stereotype-content models, common in the psychology literature, find that the most critical dimensions in evaluating an actor (individual or state) are warmth and competence (Fiske *et al.*, 2002). Warmth maps onto the intrinsic value of status while competence aligns more with status' instrumental value. Both intrinsic and instrumental uses of status provide incentives for states to invest in status-enhancing behaviors.

Given definitional ambiguity, we conduct a meta-analysis of the experimental status literature to better understand how scholars have previously conceptualized and measured status. Full results, based on 15 different treatments across seven papers with 25 different measures of status, are available in Appendix A4. Table 1 displays selected questions from included studies along with our classifications of the type of status asked about by the authors. Though there are many dimensions upon which status can be evaluated (Larson & Shevchenko, 2010; Powers & Renshon, 2021), we conceptualize status along two overlapping dimensions, respect and influence, which map on to the concepts of intrinsic and instrumental status, respectively. We also categorize the outcome as eliciting either first-order or second-order beliefs about status. The variety of status outcome questions in the existing literature suggest that authors may not be measuring the same concept when contributing to discussions on status (Slough & Tyson, n.d.).

Indeed, we present a visual representation of our meta-analysis by outcome category (Figure 1) and emphasize three points. First, while many scholars define status positionally, experimental designs only capture changes in status for a single state. Only two designs, Mattingly & Sundquist (2021) and Carnegie & Dolan (2020) measure outcomes for two or

Paper	Outcome	Concept	Order
Powers & Renshon (2021)	How do you think the president's actions in this situation would affect the military and economic power of the United States in the eyes of foreign political leaders around the world?	Influence	Second
Powers & Renshon (2021)	How do you think the president's actions in this situation would affect the status or prestige of the United States in the eyes of foreign political leaders around the world?	Respect	Second
Morse & Pratt (2021)	The US government has the skills to achieve its foreign policy objectives.	Influence	First
Carnegie & Dolan (2020)	How do you think India's actions would have affected the international community's (i.e. international organizations, world leaders) opinion of it?	Respect	Second
Carnegie & Dolan (2020)	How do you think [India/Country X]'s actions would have affected the U.S.'s opinion of it? (Less highly, more highly, would not change opinion)	Ambiguous	Second
Viskupič (2020)	Composite Index: 1. I respect Country A 2. I admire Country A 3. Country A is honorable 4. Country A deserves prestige 5. (Reverse coded) I do not hold Country A in high esteem 6. Country A has high moral credit	Respect	First

Table 1: *Status measurement in literature:* Select examples of status-measurement questions in existing scholarship. Authors' classification of question type and order of belief in last two columns.

more states.[1] Second, outcome measures reference different dimensions of status. While some invoke status directly, others ask about influence, power, prestige, or approval. For simplicity, we group these into two broad categories: respect and influence. Finally, we find that 44% of the studies in our meta-analysis report significant results; this proportion rises to 54% when considering only respect-related status outcomes. Together, this suggests that there is a lack of both consensus in and congruence among status definitions and measurements. How we define status is likely to affect the answers we get (Kramon & Posner, 2013). The strong prevalence of null effects across status experiments points to the need for a better understanding of when, for whom, and on what dimensions status updates.

The 15 different treatments in our meta-analysis, ranging from foreign aid transactions to the use of torture, also suggest that states possess multiple strategies to augment their status. While some states improve their status by emulating higher-ranked actors, for instance by copying democratic values (Bush, 2011) or joining elite clubs, others seek to compete against high-ranked opponents or creatively re-frame their negative attributes as positive ones (Larson & Shevchenko, 2010). While we do not investigate why or which status-conferring events occur, this paper addresses the identified gap between concept and measurement. We argue that, when status disruptions occur, status changes may be observed at multiple levels of the international system. In particular, we highlight that status can be conceptualized as individual, relational, or systemic and that each conceptualization needs to be matched to more precise measures.

2.1 Conceptualizing Status

The empirical status literature has primarily focused on individual-level status changes. When states engage in status-enhancing activities, their individual status value increases. For example, Carnegie & Dolan (2020) find that Americans perceive an increase in India's status when India refuses foreign aid. Powers & Renshon (2021) test the effect of four

[1]This design feature allows us to reanalyze these studies in Section 6 under the status framework we develop below.

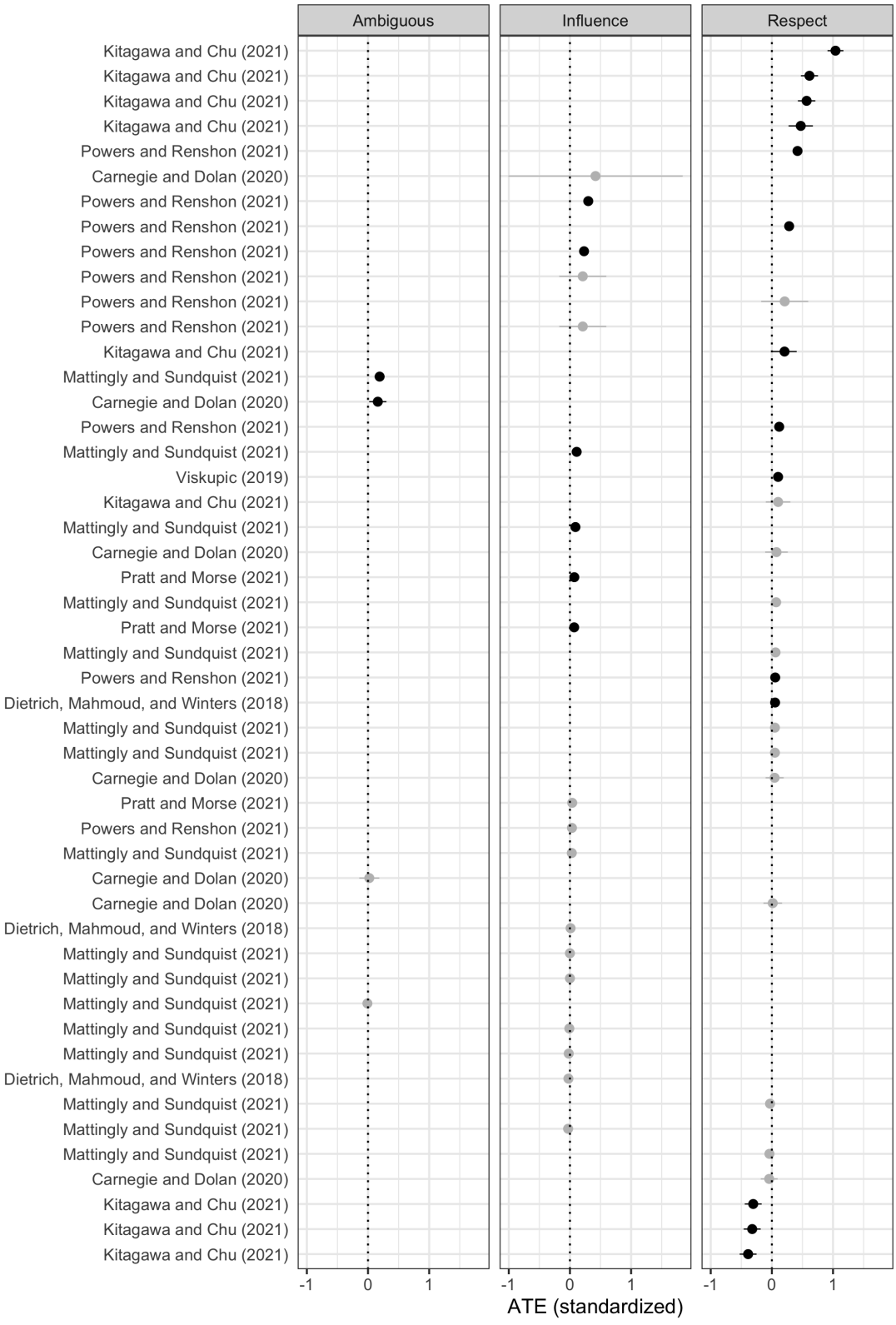

Figure 1: *Meta-analysis of experimental status literature by status concept*

different international scenarios on leader approval in the US and find that international outcomes that present the US as a high-status state lead to higher approval ratings for the leader, with approval ratings mediated by status concerns. When a high-status (low-status) state behaves in a way consistent with holding high (low) status, their status remains high (low). However, when a high-status (low-status) state behaves in a manner consistent with low (high) status, their status decreases (increases). This conception of status as an individual attribute is depicted in Figure 2, which shows how status changes before and after a status-conferring event. A state's individual status increases if $\mathbf{A}_2$ -$\mathbf{A}_1 > 0$.

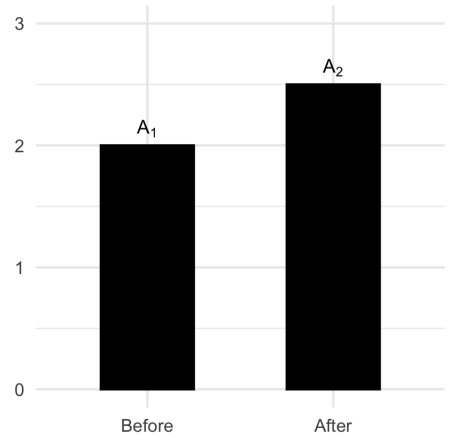

Figure 2: *Individual status change*

Status is also relative. A status change in one state may change the status of another state by comparison. As previous work suggests, a high-status act should *increase* the acting state's status and a low-status act should *decrease* the acting state's status. However, in a bilateral transaction, a change in status for the acting state should affect the status of the other party. In other words, if status is understood as zero-sum, a gain in Country A's status will come at the expense of Country B. Even if status is understood as positive-sum and Country A's status-enhancing actions do not result in a change in the individual value of status for Country B, the *relative* status, or closeness, between the two countries' status will still change. For example, Brutger & Rathbun (Forthcoming) show that Americans are concerned about trade outcomes that leave the US relatively behind in comparison to its

trading partner, despite a gain in absolute trade.

We argue that relative status changes should be observed in clear bilateral relationships. Relational change could manifest as either a change in the rank ordering of two countries or a change in the perceived closeness of two countries. The direction of relational change, whether the status gap increases or decreases, will also depend on the starting position of both countries.[2] In Figure 3.I, the status of the first state (A) increases ($\mathbf{A}_2$ -$\mathbf{A}_1 = 0.5$) while the status of second state (B) decreases ($\mathbf{B}_2$ -$\mathbf{B}_1 = -0.5$). The *individual* status of B has decreased and the *relative* status of B has decreased in comparison to A. This world aligns with status as an individual and relative characteristic. In Figure 3.II, A's status increases ($\mathbf{A}_2$ -$\mathbf{A}_1 = 0.5$) while B's status remains the same ($\mathbf{B}_2$ -$\mathbf{B}_1 = 0$). The *individual* status of B is unchanged, but the *relative* status of B has decreased in comparison to A. Here, the public updates their perceptions of the status of the first state individually and relatively, but only updates their perception of second state status relatively. If we were to only examine individual changes in state status, we would miss the difference between these two concepts. In Figure 3.III, both A and B see an increase in status ($\mathbf{A}_2$ -$\mathbf{A}_1 = 0.5$; $\mathbf{B}_2$ -$\mathbf{B}_1 = 0.5$). If both states increase their *individual* status by the same magnitude, their *relative* closeness remains the same. B's individual status gains actually maintain relative status.

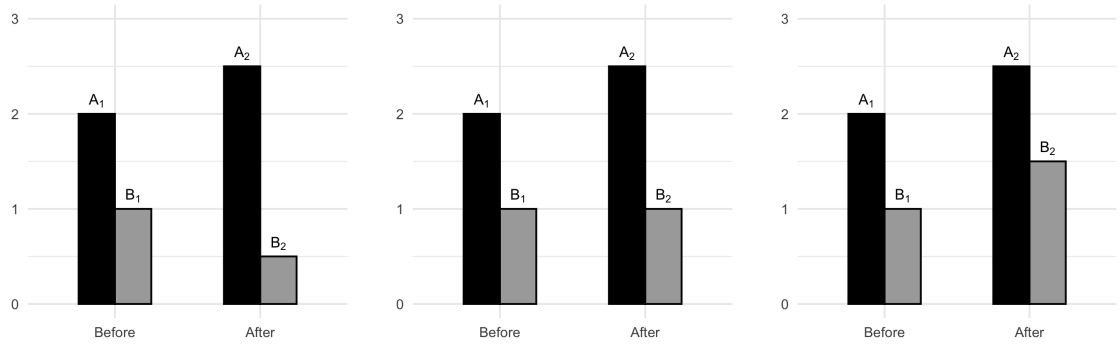

Figure 3: *Relational status change*

Finally, the status of states uninvolved in a status-changing event could also change. The

[2]We model State A as higher status and discuss changes that increase the gap between A and B. If we modeled State A as lower status, the same changes would lessen the status gap.

straightforward claim that states engaged in bilateral transactions should see their status change when those transactions disrupt expectations of state behavior can be expanded to a system-level analysis. States do not act, and status is not evaluated, in a vacuum. Indeed, states attempt to increase their status by behaving like the type of state that already has high status or belongs to a high-status group of states. When a state changes their status, the group to which they belong may also change or sub-hierarchies may be formed to differentiate between types of members (i.e. founding members vs. new members). For example, Ukraine gave up its nuclear weapons in part to become a member of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in order to clearly distinguish itself from the Soviet Union and "enhance the state's international prestige"(Sagan, 1996, 81). However, in making the transition from Soviet satellite state to member of the Western-led NPT, Ukraine's new status as a member of a Western organization may have changed the meaning of the group.

Yet, status changes to the international system may or may not result in updating about the status of third-party states because no additional information is provided about these states. It remains an empirical question. For example, Chinese aid efforts in Africa increase approval of China in the eyes of African aid recipients. However, Dreher *et al.* (2020) find that other countries outside the transaction do not see their individual approval decline as a result of Chinese aid.

Figure 4 represents several variations of how systemic changes in status could look for multiple states, including those uninvolved in the status-changing event (C). In Figure 4.I, we replicate the scenario depicted in Figure 3.I in which A sees an increase in individual status ($\mathbf{A}_2$ -$\mathbf{A}_1$ = 0.5) and B a decrease ($\mathbf{B}_2$ -$\mathbf{B}_1$ = -0.5). The third party (C) sees no change in individual status ($\mathbf{C}_2$ -$\mathbf{C}_1$ = 0). Even though it was uninvolved in the transaction, its status *relative* to A decreases and *relative* to B increases. Additionally, despite seeing no change in its *individual* status, C is now the second-ranked state in this facsimile of an international system. In Figure 4.II, A's status increases ($\mathbf{A}_2$ -$\mathbf{A}_1$ = 0.5) while the status of B and C remain the same ($\mathbf{B}_2$ -$\mathbf{B}_1$ = 0; $\mathbf{C}_2$ -$\mathbf{C}_1$ = 0). The *relative* status of B and C has decreased in comparison to A, but the *individual* status and rank of B and C has remained

the same. In Figure 4.III, the status of A and C both increase by an increment of 0.5 ($\mathbf{A}_2$ -$\mathbf{A}_1 = 0.5$; $\mathbf{C}_2$ -$\mathbf{C}_1 = 0.5$) while the second state's individual status remains the same ($\mathbf{B}_2$ -$\mathbf{B}_1 = 0$). The *relative* status of A and C, then, remains unchanged despite an increase in the *individual* status of both states. However, due to the decrease in *relative* status for B, C has managed to change its rank despite retaining the same *relative* closeness to A.

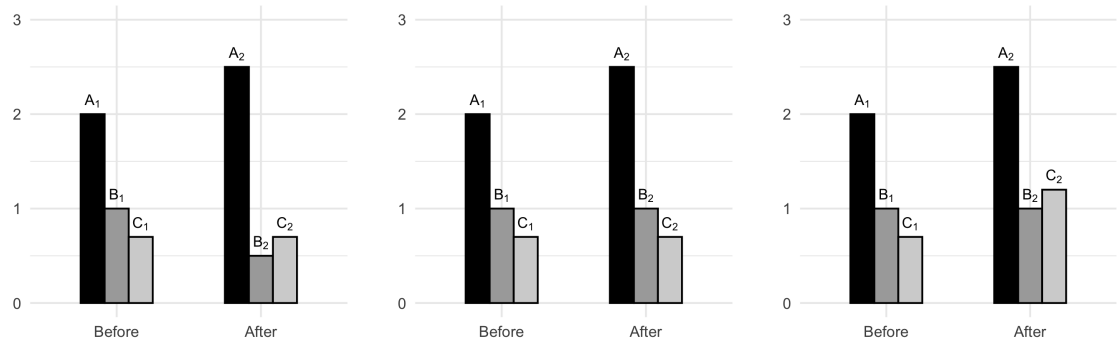

Figure 4: *Systemic status change*

In a systemic conception of status, the signal sent by status-altering behavior by one state could be informative about the status of other states in the international system (by changing the meaning of group membership, for example). Alternatively, it may result in no updating about the relative status of other actors because these other actors' actions have not changed. The system-wide implications of status changes remain an open and under-explored question.

3 Status and Foreign Aid

To evaluate all three types of status change simultaneously, we examine cases of role reversals in foreign aid. We focus on cases in which a lower-status state takes action (provides aid) to improve its status, while a higher-status state takes action (accepts aid) that should diminish its status.

Foreign aid usually operates within a clear status hierarchy. Most aid transactions per-

petuate the status quo as the same donors give aid to the same recipients for prolonged periods of time, thus creating group identities for donors and recipients (Schraeder *et al.*, 1998). Foreign aid's inclination towards stability makes studying status change an empirical challenge. However, changes to existing aid relationships provide publics with new information which must then be integrated into perceptions of status. Importantly, while other status-enhancing behaviors, such as hosting the Olympics, do not explicitly generate comparisons between countries, foreign aid is a transaction. The disruption of foreign aid patterns alters expectations about the status of at least two parties.

Foreign aid donors are typically attributed the characteristics of "superiority and power" (Kuusik, 2006, 57). First, if status is conferred by physical attributes, donor status indicates an economic surplus. The ability to generate state revenue that exceeds domestic needs has typically been achieved by high-income, high-status states. Second, vast literatures on foreign aid confirm that aid is given strategically (McKinley & Little, 1977; Kuziemko & Werker, 2006) and often to manipulate the policy positions of its recipients (Bueno de Mesquita & Smith, 2007; Dreher *et al.*, 2008). Foreign aid is a social contract, akin to relational hierarchy, where donors provide necessary funds in order to offset the recipient's required policy concessions (Lake, 2009). Third, providing aid can also provide moral superiority. Aid demonstrates a dedication to helping the world's poor, improving international audiences' perception of the donor (Goldsmith *et al.*, 2014). While these reasons are neither mutually-exclusive nor empirically-distinguishable in the context of this paper, it's clear that aid has status implications which donor countries care about. For example, Dietrich *et al.* (2018) find that Bangladeshis improve their perceptions of the US when they are informed about US aid projects. A growing literature also traces changes in approval of China in response to Chinese aid giving (Blair *et al.*, 2019; Jones, 2018; Eichenauer *et al.*, 2021; Mattingly & Sundquist, 2021; Dreher *et al.*, 2020). In a direct example of status competition, Asmus *et al.* (2021) find that India increases its aid allocations to locations where China has recently experienced public opinion gains.

In contrast, recipients of foreign aid are viewed with "inferiority and powerlessness"

(Kuusik, 2006, 57). First, receiving aid implies that a given state lacks the capacity to provide what its domestic population requires. Not accepting foreign aid boosts perceptions of the competence of potential recipient governments (Carnegie & Dolan, 2020). Second, in the aid-for-policy-concessions framework, recipients of foreign aid are pulled by the strings of their benefactors (Bueno de Mesquita & Smith, 2007). By virtue of this contract, they sacrifice foreign policy autonomy in exchange for the aid they receive. Third, cultural and historical factors play an important role in maintaining the lower group identity of aid recipients. Developing countries, and even formerly developing countries, are subject to paternalistic arguments from donor states that they cannot handle their own affairs and deserve a lower place in the international system (Baker, 2015). We note that additional aid may be status-enhancing for aid-dependent countries. Conditional on already receiving aid (and therefore abdicating claims to foreign policy autonomy and self-sufficiency), more and higher-quality aid can confer higher-status on countries and recipient governments by signalizing strategic value of the recipient to the donor state, higher-quality institutions, and greater ability to procure additional funding (Bermeo, 2018; Bush & Zetterberg, 2021; Dolan, 2020). However, in this project, we focus on the stylized dichotomy between being an aid recipient and being an aid donor rather than intra-aid-recipient status conferral.

In this framework, aid donation is status-enhancing. So why wouldn't all states use foreign aid to enhance their status? Government resources are finite and there is an important tradeoff between foreign and domestic allocations. Publics are aware of this tradeoff, and both overestimate how much the average government spends on foreign aid and prefer domestic over foreign spending (Cheng & Smyth, 2016; Milner & Tingley, 2013). This implies a political budget constraint that impedes potential new donors, even those who have the resources, from using foreign aid as a status-enhancing strategy. For example, while India is eager to reframe itself as a donor, domestic poverty means that "the transfer of resources to other countries... would be unpopular" (Price, 2004, 10).

In this paper, we build on established literatures that have previously demonstrated aid's connection to status (Blair *et al.*, 2019; Carnegie & Dolan, 2020; Dietrich *et al.*, 2018; Jones,

2018; Eichenauer *et al.*, 2021; Kuusik, 2006; Mattingly & Sundquist, 2021; Dreher *et al.*, 2020). However, we do not adjudicate between potential mechanisms through which aid confers status.[3] Instead, we focus on status actions that should actively confer or deny status to *both* parties in a given aid transaction. This scope condition allows us to examine individual-level changes in status as well as, potentially, relational and systemic changes. As Appendix A4 shows, existing experimental work frequently finds null effects of aid information on individual status. Therefore, we may be more likely to detect effects when an aid transaction provides new information about both sides of a transaction, allowing publics to update their perceptions about multiple states.

Our argument about status-enhancing effects for aid donors is a general one. Information about both emerging and existing donors has been shown to increase their individual status. For emerging donors, primarily China, the status literature has focused on aid activity to long-time recipient states in sub-Saharan Africa (Blair *et al.*, 2019; Dreher *et al.*, 2020; Jones, 2018), Latin America (Eichenauer *et al.*, 2021), and Southeast Asia (Custer *et al.*, 2018; Mattingly & Sundquist, 2021). We know from Dietrich *et al.* (2018) and Blair *et al.* (2019) that even well-established donors such as the US receive boosts in approval after donating foreign aid to established recipients.

However, on the other side of the transaction, states that do not already receive aid cannot credibly accept aid under most circumstances. For example, the US doesn't accept development aid. High-income, high-status states primarily accept aid in the wake of natural disasters or financial crises. Thus, role reversals from donor to recipient will be more rare and most likely to occur in emergency conditions. For example, foreign aid poured into Greece during the Eurozone crisis, Japan following the Fukushima nuclear disaster, and France following the fire at Notre Dame. Importantly, the United States turned down foreign aid following Hurricane Katrina because it was worried about how that action would be perceived The US government denied aid from both traditional (i.e. Canada) and untraditional (i.e. Cuba) sources to hide its "ineptitude" and "incompetence" (LA Times, 2007).

[3]In their work on reputation, Morse & Pratt (2021) find that the multiple justifications of violations of international law produce the same effect on public opinion.

As in Churchill's adage,"never let a good crisis go to waste," crisis situations are an opportunity for power grabs and status change (Katzenstein & Seybert, 2018). We therefore apply our scope conditions to public status reversals during COVID-19, where foreign aid was one of many status-seeking activities states pursed during the pandemic. The disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 crisis on traditional Western donors in early 2020 led many of these countries to roll back their aid programs. Non-Western donors took this opportunity to offer humanitarian assistance to a diverse pool of recipients, including traditional high-income, high-status states. For example, the US government was sharply criticized for accepting foreign assistance from the Kremlin in April 2020. Russia was quick to tout its planeload of ventilators and medical supplies destined for New York City as "humanitarian aid" and the US media ran with this message using headlines such as "Putin Sends Military Plane with Coronavirus Aid to Help US" and "Russia sends Virus Aid to the US" (Rudnitsky, 2020; Troianovski, 2020). The acceptance of this aid was highly controversial, and political commentary highlighted that "it is an uncomfortable and humbling spot for the U.S. to find itself in – the world's richest and most powerful country, one that plays an outsize role in global security issues and international affairs, suddenly turned supplicant." (Shesgreen & Hjelmgaard, 2020). Aware that the optics of aid acceptance were negative, the US State Department tried to clarify that the medical equipment was a purchase rather than charity. However, substantial conversations continued about how much of the medical equipment was paid for by the US versus Russia and whether there was a grant element involved in providing medical equipment below market rates. We use this example, as well as those listed above, to demonstrate the external validity of our theoretical expectations of status changes in response to untraditional foreign aid transactions. It also motivates our experimental design.

Our first set of hypotheses is derived directly from the existing status and foreign aid literatures. Aid should increase the status of donors and decrease that of recipients. It should have no effect on third-party states.

When status is measured as an individual-level attribute:

H1a	Donor	$\Delta+$
H1b	Recipient	$\Delta-$
H1c	Third-party	$\Delta 0$

On a bilateral level, we focus on role reversals and assume an initially lower-status donor and higher-status recipient. Therefore, aid should increase the relative closeness between donor and recipient status. This can be achieved whether or not recipients see an individual change in their status.

When status is measured as a relative attribute:

		Individual	Closeness to donor
H2a	Donor	$\Delta+$	
H2b	Recipient	$\Delta 0/-$	$\Delta+$

At the system level, third-party states may or may not see changes in individual or relative status. If the *relative* status of third-party states is unaffected by the aid transaction, we should actually see an increase in their *individual* status (in order to maintain equal closeness between themselves and the donor state). If the relative status of third-party states is affected by the aid transaction, we should see no change in the their individual status. The direction of change for the relative effect will depend on where the third-party's status initially stands in relation to the donor; a low (high) status donor's increase in status will result in an increase (decrease) in closeness between third-party and donor. We also leave open the possibility that, depending on the magnitude of status changes, the international hierarchy (or rank ordering) of states could change.

When status is measured as a system-level attribute:

		Individual	Closeness to donor
H3a	Third-party	$\Delta+$	$\Delta 0$
H3b	Third-party	$\Delta 0$	$\Delta +/-$

4 Experimental Design

We test our hypotheses with an online information experiment, preregistered at EGAP, administered by Lucid on 1,532 US respondents on June 1, 2020. Lucid's sample is nationally-representative by age, gender, ethnicity and region and we show balance across treatment and control conditions in Appendix A1.3.[4].

Our choice of a US sample offers external validity, advantages to measurement, and a population for whom the treatment is likely to be salient. First, the US' role as a superpower makes the opinion of its citizens important to atypical donors seeking to improve their status (Goldsmith & Horiuchi, 2012). China for instance, has invested in Confucius institutes, student exchanges, and other forms of public diplomacy to improve its image among Americans (Custer *et al.*, 2018; Shambaugh, 2015). India has also sought to "improve India's image in American minds" (Blarel, 2012, 13). States target status-enhancing activities to the American mass public.[5]

Second, the US sample offers analytical leverage for our theoretical expectations about atypical recipients because Americans consistently rate the US a high-status country. As we ask a US audience to rate the US and four other states, perceptions of US status are measured by a domestic rather than international audience. As public opinion data in Appendix A5 show, countries' own publics have consistent and positive ratings of their own favorability while international audiences may be more likely to shift their opinions over time. High attachment to US status by Americans biases against finding a decrease in status for the recipient state. Importantly, if said decrease occurs, high US status at baseline leaves significant room for respondents to update status negatively.

Finally, US citizens generally believe that the US spends a disproportionate amount of its own budget on foreign aid (Milner & Tingley, 2013). Respondents in the US also believe that aid increases status (Carnegie & Dolan, 2020). In our status-reversal treatment, the

[4]We also demonstrate that our results are robust to attention checks in Appendix A2 in line with recent findings by Aronow *et al.* (2020) on Lucid's decline in sample quality in 2020.

[5]Kertzer (2020) also notes that elites and the mass public share foreign policy preferences and update their opinions in the same way in response to information.

US moves from an overgenerous donor to an aid recipient. This substantial role reversal allows us to sidestep potential issues of respondent numerical-illiteracy and provides ample space for updating status beliefs. Status beliefs are particularly important to the US public; Restoring America's place in the world has been a theme of Obama's 2008, Trump's 2016, and Biden's 2020 campaign. A large status reversal in the realm of foreign aid, which American recognize as a form of influence and believe the US provides in abundance, should be a salient, status-altering treatment for a US sample.

We note that our theory is not US-centric and there are clear shortcomings to the use of a US sample, including bias against finding significant results due to American perceptions of superiority and the reinforcement of Western perspectives in the study of international relations. We see this initial study as a way to validate our theory in a convenient and internationally-salient sample of respondents and strongly urge future research to consider replicating our status analyses in other populations. In Section 6, we reanalyze the data of two survey experiments conducted in non-US samples to demonstrate that our theory travels outside of the US.

While we cite several examples of foreign aid receipt by high-status states in Section 3, we base our experimental treatments on the real delivery of Russian medical supplies to the US and its coverage in the national press. Respondents are randomly assigned to read a hypothetical excerpt of a news article about aid acceptance or are directed straight to the outcome measures. For respondents who learn of the US' aid acceptance, we further randomize the donor country (UK, China and India). The treatment wording for the UK condition appears as follows. All treatment wordings are provided in Appendix A1.1:

> *[LONDON] – The [British] government announced that it would be sending a cargo plane full of medical supplies to the United States. The [British] aid is intended to help the US in its fight against the growing coronavirus pandemic.*

The vignette is realistic; However, the acceptance of a single cargo plane with medical supplies is a small act. Yet, the single plane that arrived from Russia on April 1st, 2020 made

headlines for days. We choose language that approximated how the public was informed about this specific event, but are careful to avoid any political commentary. Our treatment, a diplomatic statement about a single donation, is a comparatively-weak prime.

We choose to manipulate hypothetical donor states in our treatment conditions in order to evaluate multiple donors simultaneously. While the case of Russian aid motivates our treatment, we cannot pair the Russian example with other donations. This would manipulate hypothetical and real examples across treatment conditions, which would result in a bundled treatment. While hypothetical cases might introduce additional challenges to our study if respondents don't find the example plausible, we believe this offers a conservative estimate of the treatment effect. We choose to include China as a hypothetical donor country because China has played the largest role in distributing virus-specific aid and its foreign aid activities have been framed as a threat to US interests. However, as the virus originated in China, aid could be perceived as a strategy to absolve China of perceived blame. Therefore, we also include India as another relatively low-income, less-expected donor of foreign aid that is on better diplomatic terms with the United States and unassociated with the virus' origin. While referencing specific countries is inherently a bundled treatment, we can be more confident in our results if aid provision elevates status in the same way for both countries. Finally, we theorized that aid provided by long-time donors is unlikely to provide new information with which to update perceptions of status. We include the United Kingdom as a placebo.

4.1 Measuring Perceptions of Status

In line with the results of our meta-analysis, we operationalize status as comprised of two main concepts. Respondents are asked to think about how much *respect* and how much *influence* over world politics countries have.[6] We ask "How much respect do other countries have for the following countries?" and "How much influence do each of the following countries

[6]The wording of both questions is based on Carnegie & Dolan (2020), who in turn rely on the psychology literature. See Pettit & Lount (2010).

have over world politics?" We ask respondents to rate each country from 1 (least respected) to 100 (most respected). These questions prompt respondents to think about second-order opinions – not how they personally see the United States or other comparison countries, but how they think the United States and other countries are seen by others. Based on our meta-analysis, respect may be more malleable than influence.

In addition to capturing different dimensions of status, our design allows us to evaluate status at multiple levels of analysis: individual, relative, and systemic. Regardless of which treatment respondents receive, they are asked about the respect and influence of five different countries: the US, the UK, India, China, and Germany.[7] While the first four countries represent the recipient and donor countries in our vignettes, we include Germany as a high-status anchor. We intended for inclusion of this high-status third-party state to mitigate ceiling effects for the directly-experimentally-manipulated countries. Therefore, each respondent rates individual (both countries in the transaction), bilateral (both countries in the transaction relative to each-other), and system-wide (three non-manipulated countries) effects.

Finally, our question wording allows us to measure status changes in several ways. We first analyze country's individual status *rating* on a 1-100 scale. To measure relative status, we also analyze the closeness of status ratings for country pairs by subtracting the individual value of status for one country from each other country. We also use the rating information to code each respondent's hierarchical *ranking* among the five countries. As we theorize, it is possible for a country's rating to change without affecting its rank.[8]

5 Results

How and for whom does status change? We address these questions in several ways. First, we examine the differences in baseline and treatment effects for different dimensions of status:

[7] We randomize both the ordering of our respect/influence outcomes and the ordering of countries within each outcome.

[8] To validate our outcomes, we replicate existing experimental studies using relative and systemic status measures. See Appendices A4.1 and A4.2.

respect and influence. Second, we present our results for the effect of information about unusual aid relationships on the status *rating* received by a given country (on a scale of 1-100). We refer to these ratings as the individual value of status for a country. Finally, we turn to our results for relative status, which we present in two ways. We provide results for the effect of information on the relative closeness between two countries and on the *ranking* of a given country compared to other countries in the international system.

5.1 Respect is not influence

While respect and influence are two dimensions of the same theoretical concept, we find that respondents conceive of respect and influence as different phenomena when rating state status. Figure 5 displays the ratings of influence and respect by respondents in the control condition. We draw particular attention to the differences in the distribution of responses for China and the US. Respondents are more likely to perceive of China as an influential state, rather than a respected state. The same is true for the US, where median influence is 81 compared to 73 for respect.[9]

We examine the treatment effects of information about the aid transaction for both the respect and influence outcomes. While we discuss the substance of these results in full in Sections 5.2-5.4, we draw attention here to the significant treatment effects for the respect outcome and the insignificant effects for the influence outcome. Figure 6 displays coefficients for the treatment effects of information about different donors (India, China, and the UK) on perceptions of a given country's respect and influence. Each horizontal panel represents the individual rating of a country, with separate results estimated for each donor treatment. For example, the top left box shows average treatment effects for Chinese, Indian and British aid donations on perceptions of Chinese influence.

These results align with our meta-analysis and psychological models that relate respect to warmth and influence to competence. Warmth is less costly and easier to demonstrate over the short term than competence. Importantly, our treatment is quite small – one

[9]See Appendix A6 for additional tests of the difference between respect and influence.

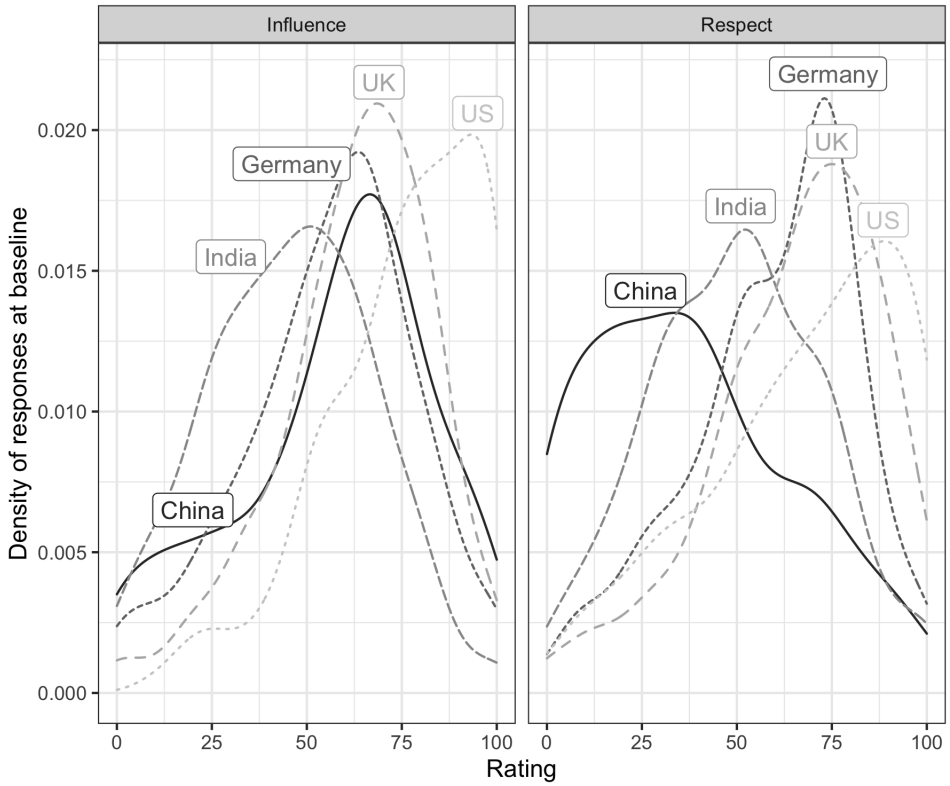

Figure 5: *Respect and Influence at Baseline:* Density plots of ratings of country respect (right) and influence (left) by respondents in the control condition.

plane of medical supplies to the US during a pandemic. Yet, we see striking changes in the respect ratings attributed to countries sending this hypothetical plane. Influence does not increase in response to the same stimuli. A one-time transaction may not provide sufficient new information about long term competence and the ability to continue providing aid in the future. This pattern reflects an understanding of respect that is more malleable than influence.

5.2 Individual status change

Turning to our main results, we focus on the right panel of Figure 6. The coefficient plot shows the average effect of our donor treatments for the respect ratings (1-100) of China, India, the US, the UK, and Germany. We first explore how unusual aid transactions affect perceptions of individual status (**H1a-c**) before turning to relative status.

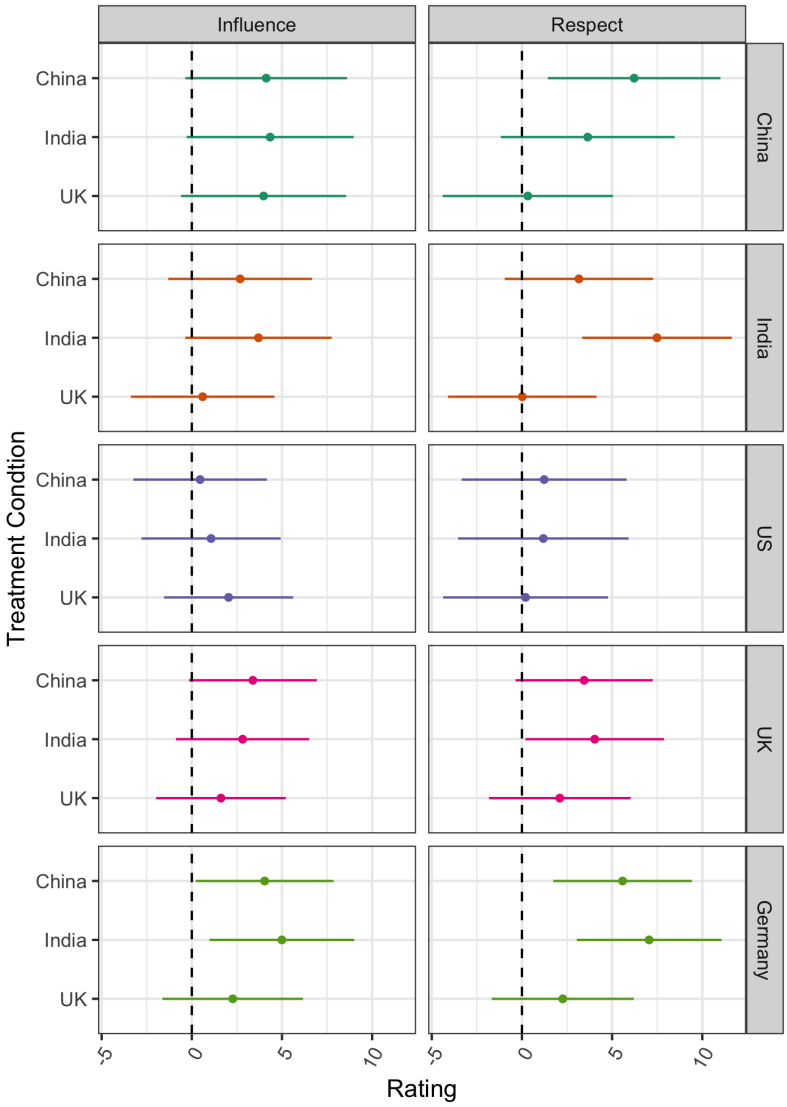

Figure 6: *Average treatment effect on respect and influence ratings:* Left panel displays average effect of treatment on countries' influence ratings. Right panel displays ATE on respect ratings. Point estimates and robust 95% confidence intervals displayed.

In accordance with **H1a**, China's individual respect increases when respondents read about Chinese aid to the US (6.22, $p = 0.01$); the same pattern occurs with India (7.49, $p = 0.004$). However, the UK's respect rating does not increase with information about British aid (2.10, $p = 0.29$). It's possible that respondents may not update their perceptions of the UK because they already believe the UK to be the type of country that provides aid. Relatedly, it is possible that because the respect ratings of the UK are already high, respondents also face a ceiling effect.

We do not find evidence that respondents *decrease* the respect rating of the US in response to information about the US receiving aid from India (1.18, $p = 0.62$), China (1.23, $p = 0.59$), or the UK (0.2, $p = 0.93$). Contrary to **H1b**, status, as proxied by respect, is *not* a zero-sum game in which status gains for one country necessarily result in *individual* status losses for another when we analyze country status in isolation. These results suggest that, at least in the case of small, symbolic aid donations, recipients are not punished with lower status.

We also examine the system-level effects of treatment on individual respect ratings (**H1c**). While examining the impact of Chinese aid to the US on respect for China and the US may seem obvious, it is less obvious how this relationship should affect countries that are unrelated to the transaction. When China gives aid the the US, the respect rating for Germany also increases significantly (0.59, $p = 0.04$). The same pattern occurs for information about Indian aid, in which Germany (7.05, $p = 0.006$) and the UK (4.03, $p = 0.04$) both receive boosts in their respect ratings.[10] The treatment does not mention third-party states, so these results speak to the system-level effects for countries outside of the aid transaction.

We posit that this phenomenon is an example of status stability in international hierarchies. While it may be reasonable to expect China and India's status to increase as a result of sending a plane of medical supplies to the US, this action should not affect perceptions of status in Germany and the UK. Rather, one potential explanation for this unexpected ratings boost is a cognitive attempt to maintain the same relative distance between established high-status countries and lower-status countries. Therefore, a respondent may not be updating their beliefs about Germany when Germany is attributed a higher rating in this scenario. Instead, the respondent may have changed the value of respect for Germany precisely because they received no additional information about Germany's role in the status-altering event and need to preserve the relative distance between the other states. This is precisely what we test in the following section.

[10]The UK also sees a boost in respect rating from the China treatment condition (3.45, $p = 0.08$). This finding provides additional suggestive evidence that the UK's respect rating behaves in a manner similar to Germany's. Both India and China also see suggestive status increases from the others' treatment condition (India: 3.16, $p = 0.13$; China: 3.65 , $p = 0.13$)

5.3 Relative status change

Next, we examine relative changes in status between country pairs (**H2a-b** and **H3a-b**). Tables 2, 3, and 4 display bilateral status interactions between each possible pair of donor, recipient and third-party countries. The individual respect rating in each column country is subtracted from the individual respect rating in each row country. The top left cell of each table, for example, represents US respect minus UK respect. Negative values denote an increase in closeness (decrease in distance) between the UK and the US; positive values are a decrease in closeness (increase in distance).

Table 2 shows suggestive evidence that Chinese aid donations decrease the respect gap between the US and China ($p = 0.117$) and the US and Germany ($p = 0.104$). Recall that, in Figure 5, the US is usually given a higher individual rating than China or Germany, so increased closeness reflects a loss in relative US status. When China and Germany experience individual status gains from Chinese aid, the US' lack of individual change translates to a *relative* status decline. Similarly, in Table 3, we find strong evidence that Indian aid donations decrease the gap between the US and Germany ($p = 0.047$) and the US and India ($p = 0.03$). As in the China treatment condition, the India treatment increases the closeness between donor and recipient (**H2b**) at the expense of the US. This is consistent with Figure 3.II, where country B experiences no change in individual status but sees a decline in relative status.

Why does the US's status relative to Germany decrease when Germany is uninvolved in the aid transaction? This remarkable finding provides evidence for the idea that the US is losing relative status even if its individual status is unchanged. Germany, on the other hand, gains individual status *in order* to maintain the same relative status compared to China and India. While this behavior may seem a complex calculation, there are clear corollaries in political psychology. For example, consider the phenomenon experienced by people of color in high-status positions, such as doctoral programs, in which their white peers insinuate that they are only present due to affirmative action. Despite the fact that both white peers and people of color belong to the same institution, white peers may artificially create reasons to

continue to perceive people of color as lower-status by insinuating that they do not belong in this institution. In the Germany-China-India examples, respondents may rate India and China as higher-status when these states give aid, but may also perceive Germany as higher-status than India and China and thus continue to attribute even-higher status to Germany. Changes in Germany's status, as well as the lack of change in the US's status, explain why the closeness between the US and Germany increases even though Germany is uninvolved in the transaction. This is most similar to the illustrative example in Figure 4.III.

Surprisingly, we also find evidence that Indian aid increases the closeness between the UK and Germany ($p = 0.106$) and the UK and India ($p = 0.089$). We do not draw conclusions about the specific psychological processes that drive these particular results. Future political psychology work should examine why some states lose relative status while others maintain relative status in circumstances where neither party is involved in a bilateral transaction. One potential explanation could be that the UK is rated above Germany, China, and India in the control condition, meaning that German respect is closer to Indian and Chinese respect before experimental treatment. Respondents may be unwilling to let Germany's status dip below that of India's and therefore attribute the state higher respect to maintain that rank. In contrast, the UK is safely above China and India and its rank status is not threatened by these small changes.

	UK	China	Germany	India
US	−2.046 (2.536)	−4.989 (3.179)	−4.470 (2.753)	−1.827 (2.864)
UK	-	−2.935 (2.764)	−2.425 (1.766)	0.209 (2.205)
China		-	0.524 (2.566)	3.099 (2.500)
Germany			-	2.655 (2.166)
India				-

Table 2: *Relative change for China treatment:* Relative change in status for each country compared to each other country. OLS results for the distance in absolute status between the each row minus each column. Light grey indicates significance at the 12%, medium grey at 10%, dark grey at 5%. Robust standard errors in parentheses.

Finally, Table 4 shows no change in relative status for any combination of states when the UK provides aid. This is consistent with the idea that the UK treatment is not causing

	UK	China	Germany	India
US	−2.494 (2.567)	−2.274 (3.267)	−5.594** (2.814)	−6.111** (2.829)
UK	-	0.367 (2.854)	−3.017 (1.865)	−3.635* (2.137)
China		-	−3.319 (2.549)	− 3.802 (2.536)
Germany			-	−0.445 (2.109)
India				-

Table 3: *Relative change for India treatment:* Relative change in status for each country compared to each other country. OLS results for the distance in absolute status between the each row minus each column. Light grey indicates significance at the 12%, medium grey at 10%, dark grey at 5%. Robust standard errors in parentheses.

	UK	China	Germany	India
US	−1.735 (2.543)	−0.200 (3.198)	−2.105 (2.844)	0.020 (2.758)
UK	-	1.684 (2.767)	−0.370 (1.890)	1.795 (2.221)
China		-	−1.860 (2.524)	0.431 (2.478)
Germany			-	2.211 (2.150)
India				-

Table 4: *Relative change for UK treatment:* Relative change in status for each country compared to each other country. OLS results for the distance in absolute status between the each row minus each column. Light grey indicates significance at the 12%, medium grey at 10%, dark grey at 5%. Robust standard errors in parentheses.

respondents to update their perceptions of international status.

5.4 Rank status change

Lastly, to better understand the relationship of unusual aid events to the international system, we conduct a final test of our relative status hypotheses (**H2a-b** and **H3a-b**). We look at the effect of treatment on the hierarchical ranking of states inside and outside the aid transaction. To do so, we transform each respondents' rating of individual states into a relative rank – the highest-rated state by an individual receives a rank of 1 while the lowest-rated state receives a rank of 5. Table 5 then displays the effect of treatment on the relative value of respect using an ordered probit regression, which is the most appropriate model for the analysis of ordinal dependent variables where the distance between observations is not uniform. (Jackman, 2000). Robustness tests can be found in Appendix A3.

	Dependent variable:				
	US	UK	Germany	China	India
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
China	−0.121	0.049	−0.054	0.091	0.018
	(0.082)	(0.079)	(0.079)	(0.078)	(0.083)
UK	0.038	0.068	−0.039	0.030	−0.099
	(0.080)	(0.076)	(0.076)	(0.075)	(0.080)
India	−0.047	−0.016	−0.004	0.038	0.018
	(0.082)	(0.078)	(0.078)	(0.078)	(0.082)
Observations	1,532	1,532	1,532	1,532	1,532
Note:					*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 5: *Respect rankings:* Ordered probit regression results reported with robust standard errors.

Compared to our rating results (both individual and relative), we see no movement in rank status as a result of any treatment. Donors do not increase in rank. Recipients do not decrease in rank. There are also no system-wide implications for rank status. How do

these null results for hierarchical rank square with the results for individual and relational ratings? These results are consistent with a stable international hierarchy that does not respond substantively to small status shifts, such as a single plane load of medical supplies. Indeed, we posit that respondents ensure consistent status rankings in the international system by artificially-inflating individual status ratings.

6 Replications

Our original survey experiment illustrates how our status framework can illuminate how status-altering activity is limited in its effect on public opinion. However, several threats to external validity challenge our substantive findings. The US sample limits our analysis to a single superpower with a populace unknowledgeable about foreign affairs. By asking about US status for this population, we also may bias against finding changes in the international system due to sociotropic concerns of respondents. Additionally, our information treatment was a very small nudge; a plane full of medical supplies is unlikely to have any impact on the course of the pandemic in the US and can be considered a symbolic gesture. It is unlikely that such a small treatment would impact public opinion under conditions of less uncertainty than the beginning of the pandemic (Bisbee & Lee, 2021; Katzenstein & Seybert, 2018). To address these concerns, and to demonstrate the applicability of our framework to the general literature, we reanalyze two existing survey experiments from Mattingly & Sundquist (2021) and Carnegie & Dolan (2020). We also replicate our study two additional times; once with an exact replication and again with the same design but different vignettes. We find that our framework adds important nuance to the interpretation of existing studies, extends to other informational contexts (in our second replication), and allows us to understand when different types of status-changing activity will not be effective due to changes in political contexts.

6.1 Reanalysis of status experiments

We reanalyze two survey experiments conducted in the last five years. Both survey experiments test the impact of aid on international status: Mattingly & Sundquist (2021) examine the effect of public diplomacy statements about Chinese aid on Indian opinions towards China and the US while Carnegie & Dolan (2020) identify how India's rejection of aid in the wake of a tsunami affects US perceptions of India's and other states' statuses. Our replication of Mattingly & Sundquist (2021) shows how relative status measures challenge the conclusions one would arrive at by examining only individual status. We also find that our reanalysis of Carnegie & Dolan (2020) shows a benefit to measuring individual status as well as rank order in order to understand why systemic rankings of states in the international system remain stable. Neither survey asks respondents to rate the status of their own country, alleviating the possibility that status-stability is driven entirely by sociotropic concerns of respondents.

6.1.1 Relative status

To validate our relative status measures, we replicate Mattingly & Sundquist (2021) to test for the relative difference in status changes for the US and China given information treatment in an Indian population sample. Mattingly & Sundquist (2021)'s primary study examines individual status gains (proxied by outcomes: *Attitudes towards [Country] people*, *Attitudes towards [Country] government*, *India should have cooperative policies with [Country]*, and *[Country] has handled COVID-19 well*). Their two treatment conditions are social media statements about Chinese aid to the Indian Red Cross and the World Health Organization or examples of Chinese diplomacy known as "wolf warrior" tactics which are traditionally more combative diplomatic statements, in this case against the US. These treatments are evaluated against a control of innocuous social media content.

As Figure 7 shows, for the foreign aid treatment, Chinese status increases individually along three dimensions (attitudes toward government, cooperative policies towards China, and China's handling of COVID-19) and compared to the US along one of these dimensions

(China's handling of COVID-19). China's status is unmoved, individually or relatively, when it engages in "wolf warrior" diplomacy. The US's individual status is stable across all treatments and outcomes. These results demonstrate the importance of our theoretical framework. While status increases *individually* for the status-enhancing actor (China) along three dimensions, it increases *relative* to other states (the US) on only one dimension. This information experiment is an example of the type of status changes we highlight in Figure 3.III in our main text.

FIND WAY TO HIGHLIGHT SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES

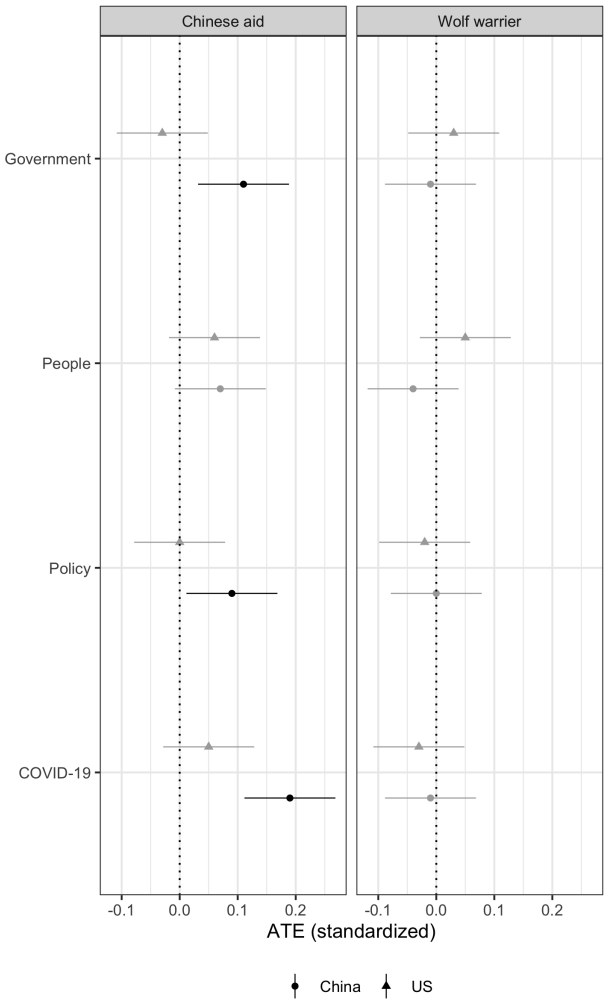

Figure 7: *Mattingly & Sundquist (2021) Replication with Relative Effects*

6.1.2 Systemic status

We also replicate Carnegie & Dolan (2020) to test for the systemic or ranking difference in status changes for India and other states given information treatment in a US population sample. The authors identify systemic status gains by asking respondents to rank states in the international system using the following outcome measure:

> Below is a list of several countries, including India. Please rank the following countries in terms of how much international status (respect, prestige) they have among the other countries in the world. To change the order of the list, use your cursor to drag and drop the items. Please order the list so that the country with the most status is at the top of the list, the country with the second most status is next, and so on.

We report the findings for each state Carnegie & Dolan (2020) asks respondents to rank.[11] Figure 8 displays the distribution of rankings for each state in the control and treatment condition. In line with our main results, Carnegie & Dolan (2020) find no changes in systemic rankings as a result of treatment.

Carnegie & Dolan (2020) do find that the status of India increases in response to the aid rejection treatment in a separate question. However, because the status of other countries (Germany, China, Kenya, Indonesia, Venezuela, and Haiti) is not evaluated, we do not know from this experimental design whether the lack of change in systemic ranking of states is due to the compensatory mechanism we find or because the change in India's status does not increase enough to constitute a system-rank change, as in Mattingly & Sundquist (2021).

6.2 Replications of main results

We conduct two replications of our main results. The first directly replicates our experimental design a month after our initial survey while the second uses the same experimental design with alternative vignettes. We find that our individual, relative, and systemic results do not

[11] Carnegie & Dolan (2020) report ranking results for India in their paper.

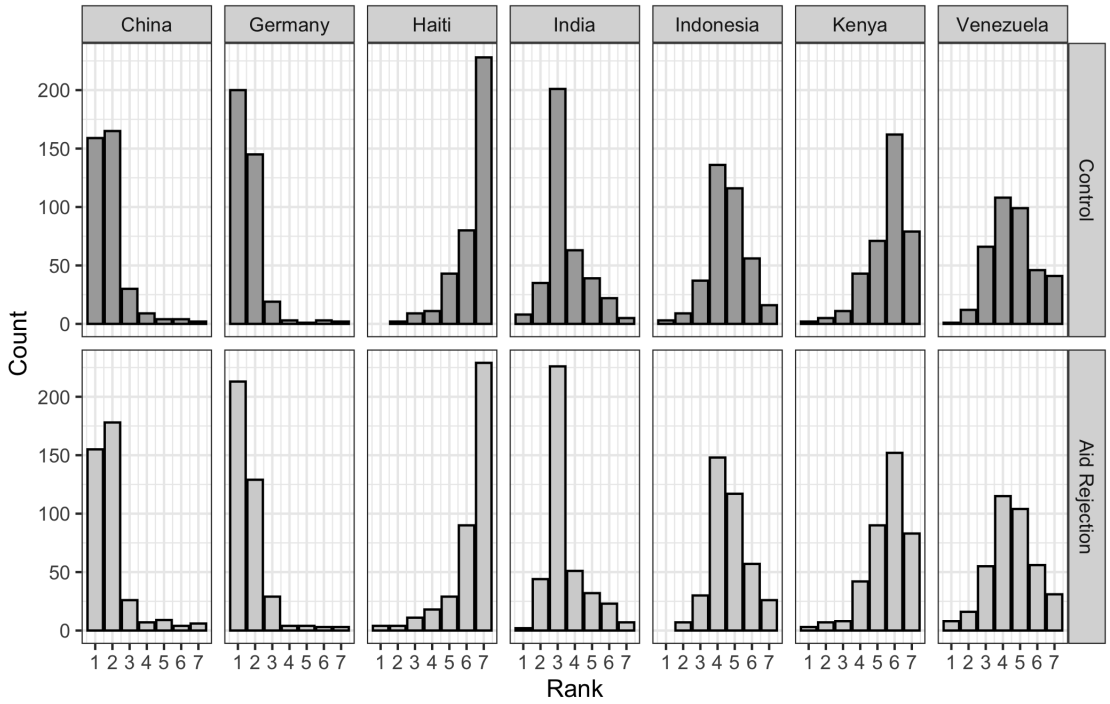

Figure 8: *Carnegie & Dolan (2020) Ranking Effects of Treatment*

	Dependent variable: Rank of [Country]						
	India	Germany	China	Kenya	Indonesia	Venezuela	Haiti
Aid Rejection	−0.046	0.046	0.087	−0.032	0.120	−0.078	−0.096
	(0.082)	(0.067)	(0.077)	(0.085)	(0.080)	(0.097)	(0.082)
Observations	758	758	758	758	758	758	758
Adjusted R^2	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Note:							*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 6: *Carnegie & Dolan (2020) Replication with Systemic Ranking Effects*

hold in the first replication but that our second replication displays the same patterns as our main results.

6.2.1 Replication 1

The exact replication of our initial experiment, conducted on June 29, 2020 on a sample of 1221 Americans via the survey platform Lucid, failed to replicate our main findings.

Americans do not significantly adjust the individual or relative status of any of the outcome countries while systemic status is altered only between India and the UK (the latter increases in respect when India gives aid to the US, the former decreases). Full results of the study can be found in Appendix A.10 . These surprising results suggest that the salience of our treatment differs in the temporal context in which the second experiment was fielded. Importantly, our failure to replicate these results demonstrates the importance of salient information treatments in regards to status. Just as our meta-analysis shows clear disparities in the ability of information treatments to alter influence outcomes, our failed replication shows the limits of non-salient information treatments to alter respect outcomes. These results should caution researchers against expecting significant status changes even at the individual state level for treatments not well-matched to the contexts in which survey experiments are fielded (Slough & Tyson, n.d.).

6.2.2 Replication 2

We replicate the design of our initial experiment while using different vignettes that inform respondents of the hypothetical US acceptance of election monitors from the UK or South Africa in the lead-up to the 2020 national elections. The experiment was fielded in the pre-election Cooperate Congressional Election Survey on a high-quality, nationally-represented sample of 747 Americans during the period of September 29, 2020 to November 2, 2020. Full design specifications and results can be found in Appendix A.10 .

We expect that information of the reception of election monitors in the US will cause the US public to update negatively about the US's status while updating positively about the status of the states sending election monitors. Right-wing websites warned in the run up to the 2016 presidential election that "A swarm of hundreds of United Nations-linked "international election monitors," many of them hailing from nations ruled by repressive dictatorships, will descend on the United States this year to supervise and "monitor" America's elections."[12] However, while pre-2020 election research shows that a majority of Americans support the

[12] https://thenewamerican.com/un-linked-elections-monitors-to-oversee-u-s-election/

presence of international election monitors[13], the reasons Americans list for their necessity are the malfunctioning of US electoral institutions and fears that their votes will not count. Thus, Americans may associate the presence of election monitors with the presence of a problem with US elections, thereby causing individuals to perceive the US as having lower status. In contrast, sending election monitors to another country can be viewed as increasing the status of the sending country by virtue of its commitment to democracy (Bush, 2011).

We find that the presence of election monitors does not affect the individual status of the US, but does increase the status of South Africa when South Africa sends election monitors. The relative status of South Africa also improves relative to China and the US. As in our main results, while the US's individual status is unmoved, its relative status decreases. We also find the same compensation mechanism with regard to the individual status of Germany, a state uninvolved in the election-monitoring transaction, which sees an increase in its individual status and its status relative to the US. Also in line with our main results, we find no changes in the ranking of states as a result of information treatments and no changes in response to the UK treatment.

This second replication study shows the external validity of our theory in a non-aid context. We also note that the success of this study and failure of our first replication study demonstrate the contextual factors that may constrain public's ability to respond to status information. The same state action at different times may not result in the same perceived changes (or lack thereof) in status. Status-changing events, then, are context-dependent and may not be consistent across different populations and times. This poses a particular challenge for status-hungry states who must adjust status-changing tactics or risk costly actions for little to no benefit.

[13] https://theconversation.com/as-concerns-mount-over-integrity-of-us-elections-so-does-support-for-i

7 Conclusion

In this paper, we examine the multidimensional and systemic nature of status. While previous work has focused on how status might change for an individual country as a result of its actions (Carnegie & Dolan, 2020; Renshon, 2017), we find evidence that status changes are also relational (affecting the relative comparison between transacting parties) and systemic (affecting countries outside of the transaction). Our findings have substantial implications for how we study international status.

First, our results demonstrate that status hierarchies are stable, even if individual states' status is malleable. A state may improve its own status by engaging in status-enhancing activities, but it does not necessarily improve its status relative to states in the larger international system. The status quo bias in international hierarchy is strong. Second, our delineation of individual, relational, and systemic effects demonstrates the need for clear and careful assumptions about the level at which status change occurs. Focusing on changes in individual status ratings may hide stability in rankings, while focusing on relative status rankings may mask updating in individual ratings. Developing richer theoretical arguments and more rigorous empirical tests that distinguish both the level of analysis and appropriate comparison group will move the field of status studies forward. Third, we demonstrate how the operationalization and measurement of status impacts the conclusions we reach. Status is perceived as a multidimensional concept by survey respondents (Powers & Renshon, 2021). The same event can move different dimensions of status in different directions. In our work, we identify clear changes in one dimension of status, respect, but no significant changes in another, influence. While we demonstrate multidimensionality on two dimensions (respect vs. influence), future research should be attuned to other status dimensions and whether they respond in similar or dissimilar ways to external stimuli.

Additionally, we demonstrate both the possibilities and limits of our framework with reanalyses of existing studies and replication studies in different contexts. Both the successful and failed applications of our framework illustrate the importance of context for status-changing events to result in status changes in perceptions. In our meta-analysis, re-analyses,

and replications, we also point to the importance of scientific transparency and reporting null results to move the field forward. By understanding when we do not see effects of different information on different types of status in different contexts, we can better develop frameworks for understanding when people do update their perceptions of status.

Finally, our status framework lays the groundwork for future work on the conditions under which specific status-enhancing acts are employed, by whom, and to what effect. By limiting our analysis to foreign aid, we create space for future work to examine how other domains of status-changing actions may generate different effects. While a significant body of scholarship has focused on the role of status-seeking behavior in war, we highlight how other, economic, forms of international activity also drive status acquisition (Renshon, 2016; Wohlforth, 2009). We encourage others to understand how states choose which status actions to engage in. Do all actions generate status in the same way? Do countries have "foreign aid status" that differs from "trade status," or does status aggregate across multiple dimensions? How might states employ status differently depending on their foreign policy goals and relevant comparison community of states? Our theory sets forth a robust research agenda on how, and at what level, status operates in the international system.

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A.1 Survey experiment

The survey protocol for this survey experiment was submitted to the relevant Institutional Review Board (IRB) Human Subjects Committee prior to launching the survey experiment and was granted an exemption under federal regulation 45 CFR 46.104 (2)(ii). The informed consent protocol were designed in line with the APSA Principles and Guidance for Human Subjects Research. We do not include any deceptive material, intervene in political processes, or collect sensitive and/or personally identifiable information.

We recruited participants via the platform Lucid, which implements an automated marketplace to connect research participants to researchers. Participants, all US-based, were paid $1 per completed interview.

Below is the text of our consent protocol. Respondents were required to give affirmative consent before proceeding to the survey experiment.

> You are invited to participate in a research study that will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. You will be asked to answer some questions about yourself and your preferences.
>
> There are no known or anticipated risks to you for participating. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You are free to decline to participate, to end participation at any time for any reason, or to refuse to answer any individual question without penalty or loss of compensation. The researcher will not know your name, and no identifying information will be connected to your survey answers in any way. The survey is therefore anonymous.
>
> If at any time you have questions or concerns about the survey or your rights or welfare as a research subject, contact [Author name] at [Author email]. If you would like to talk with someone other than the researchers to discuss problems or concerns, to discuss situations in the event that a member of the research team is not available, or to discuss your rights as a research participant, you may contact the [Author's university] Human Subjects Committee, [phone number], [email]. Additional information is available at [Link to statement of research participant's rights at Author's university].
>
> If you would like to participate, simply click the 'I agree to participate' box below, then click the $\rightarrow\rightarrow\rightarrow$ button to start the survey.

A.1 .1 Vignettes

The format of the treatment, including the description of the aid arriving in a cargo plane, is based on the real delivery of medical supplies to the United States from Russia. The vignette reflects actual foreign aid acceptance by the United States and provides a floor effect of this information on public opinion. Actual news articles from the New York Times and USAToday have much stronger language regarding the acceptance of aid by the US.

1. No information

2. LONDON - The British government announced that it would be sending a cargo plane full of medical supplies to the United States. The British aid is intended to help the US in its fight against the growing coronavirus pandemic.

3. DELHI - The Indian government announced that it would be sending a cargo plane full of medical supplies to the United States. The Indian aid is intended to help the US in its fight against the growing coronavirus pandemic.

4. BEIJING - The Chinese government announced that it would be sending a cargo plane full of medical supplies to the United States. The Chinese aid is intended to help the US in its fight against the growing coronavirus pandemic.

5. DELHI - The Indian government announced that it would be sending a cargo plane full of medical supplies to the United States. The Indian aid is intended to help the US in its fight against the growing coronavirus pandemic. India has been a long time recipient of US foreign aid, and remains a developing country.

6. BEIJING - The Chinese government announced that it would be sending a cargo plane full of medical supplies to the United States. The Chinese aid is intended to help the US in its fight against the growing coronavirus pandemic. China has been a long time recipient of US foreign aid, and remains a developing country.

A.1 .2 Outcome measures

Variable	Question text	Responses
Approval	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the US's decision to accept aid?	1 (strongly disagree) - 7 (strongly agree)
Future Acceptance	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The US should continue to accept foreign aid in the future.	1 (strongly disagree) - 7 (strongly agree)
Respect	How much respect do other countries have for the following countries? Please rank each country from 1 (least respected) to 100 (most respected): US, UK, China, India, Germany (order randomized).	0 (least respected) - 100 (most respected)
Influence	How much influence do each of the following countries have over world politics? Please rank each country from 1 (least influence) to 100 (most influence): US, UK, China, India, Germany (order randomized).	0 (least influence) - 100 (most influence)

A.1 .3 Balance tables

	China (N=363)		Control (N=375)		India (N=369)		UK (N=425)	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Age	44.6	17.3	44.0	18.4	47.0	18.6	44.7	17.9
Female	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Education (1-8)	4.0	2.0	4.3	2.0	4.4	2.0	4.3	2.1
Income (1-24)	8.0	7.2	7.6	6.5	7.8	6.6	8.2	6.9
Political Ideology (1-10)	3.9	1.7	4.0	1.6	4.1	1.8	4.0	1.8
Nationalism (1-15)	10.7	2.9	10.5	2.8	11.0	2.8	10.9	2.8
Political attention (1-5)	3.6	1.3	3.6	1.2	3.6	1.2	3.6	1.2

Figure 9: Covariate balance table

A.2 Attention checks

We report results for the sample of respondents who are most likely to have been attentive survey-takers. Table 7 presents our main results for the subsample of participants who took more than six minutes to answer the survey questions (above the first quartile of respondents). Table 8 presents our main results with the subsample of respondents who spent between six and twenty minutes on the survey (between the first and third quartiles). Our results are not only robust to dropping inattentive respondents, but become more precise.

	Dependent variable:				
	US	UK	Germany	China	India
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
China	1.599	3.730*	5.239***	5.893**	3.696*
	(2.385)	(1.996)	(2.017)	(2.483)	(2.133)
UK	−0.212	2.848	1.980	−0.223	−0.216
	(2.422)	(2.068)	(2.079)	(2.456)	(2.125)
India	0.967	4.905**	6.486***	3.612	8.317***
	(2.487)	(1.988)	(2.097)	(2.499)	(2.146)
Constant	67.511***	65.289***	59.863***	37.581***	49.004***
	(1.741)	(1.480)	(1.475)	(1.761)	(1.506)
Observations	995	991	993	990	987
R^2	0.001	0.006	0.012	0.009	0.021
Adjusted R^2	−0.002	0.003	0.009	0.006	0.018
Note:					*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 7: *Respect rating:* Dropping bottom quartile of respondent times.

	Dependent variable:				
	US	UK	Germany	China	India
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
China	−0.067	4.151	7.100***	5.514*	4.135
	(2.970)	(2.641)	(2.657)	(3.208)	(2.797)
UK	−3.126	2.072	3.142	−0.127	−0.642
	(3.091)	(2.762)	(2.749)	(3.179)	(2.817)
India	−0.721	6.055**	9.247***	6.140*	9.688***
	(3.121)	(2.643)	(2.779)	(3.277)	(2.792)
Constant	69.236***	63.813***	56.840***	36.722***	47.438***
	(2.217)	(1.993)	(2.009)	(2.301)	(1.999)
Observations	644	642	644	642	640
R^2	0.002	0.009	0.021	0.011	0.027
Adjusted R^2	−0.002	0.004	0.016	0.006	0.022
Note:					*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 8: *Respect rating:* Dropping bottom and top quartiles of respondent times.

A.3 Ordinal probit robustness

Figure 10 displays the raw data on country ranks for the respect outcome in a histogram. Visually, this plot suggests that ranking is relatively constant across treatment conditions, consistent with our ordered probit model.

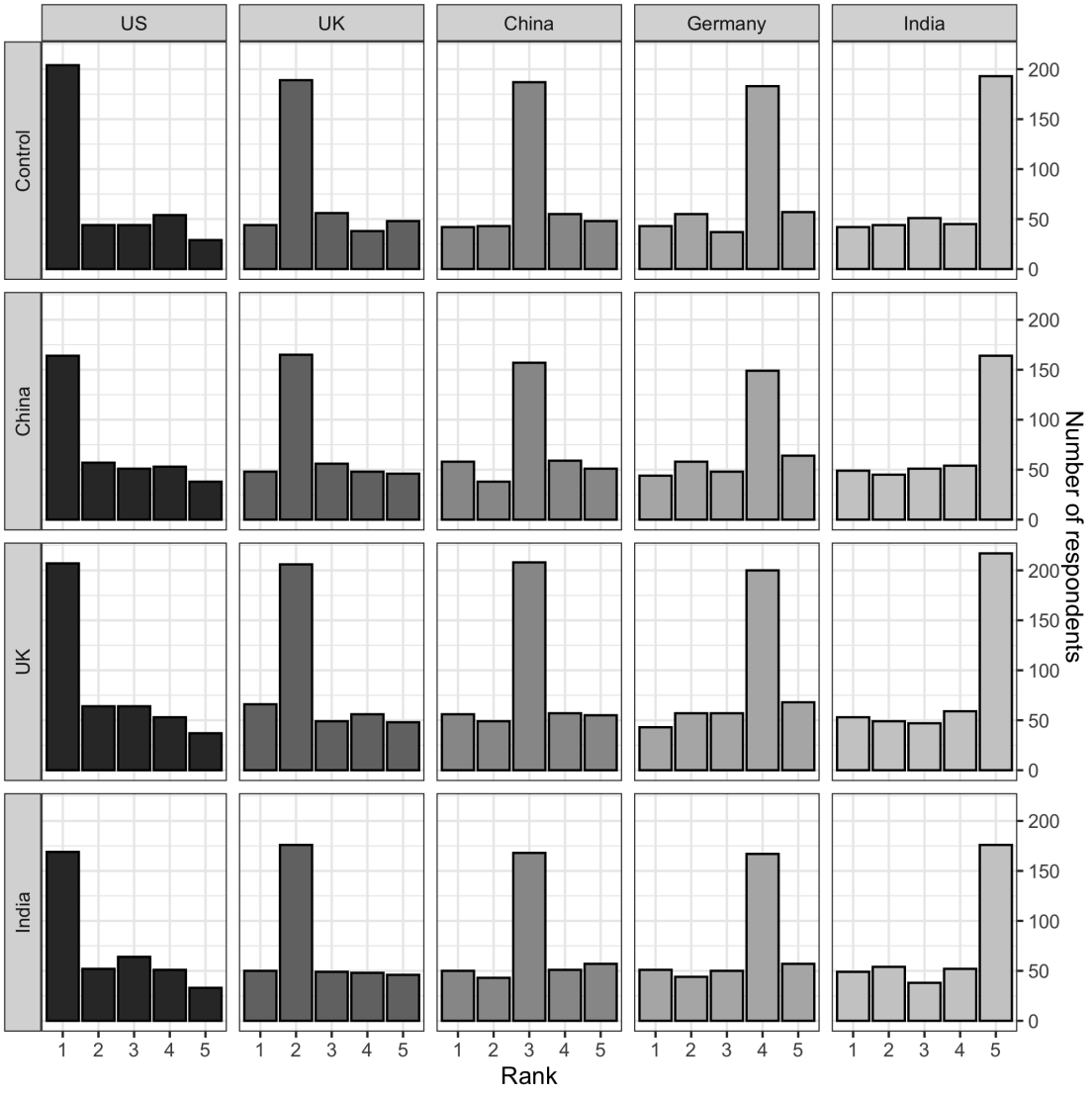

Figure 10: *Histogram of country rank by treatment condition:* Country ranks are displayed in columns, treatment conditions are displayed in rows. Color corresponds to country.

We report Wilcoxon rank sum tests for the ordinal probit models within-country (across treatments) in Table 9. The Wilcoxon rank rum test is a two-sided nonparametric test of the differences in distribution of two independent groups of ordinal variables. In Table 9, the distribution of each treatment populations (reported under "Model") is compared to the baseline condition (control). Under the null hypothesis, the distributions of both populations are equal.

Country	Model	Effect size	Z-score	p-value
US	China	0.49	-2.20	0.03
	UK	0.25	-1.13	0.26
	India	0.43	-1.92	0.05
UK	China	0.11	-0.51	0.61
	UK	0.21	-0.93	0.35
	India	0.00	-0.00	1.00
China	China	0.07	-0.31	0.76
	UK	0.14	-0.62	0.53
	India	0.01	-0.05	0.96
Germany	China	0.12	-0.55	0.58
	UK	0.06	-0.25	0.80
	India	0.13	-0.58	0.57
India	China	0.34	-1.54	0.12
	UK	0.03	-0.12	0.91
	India	0.26	-1.15	0.25

Table 9: *Wilcoxon rank sum test with continuity correction:* All models reported in comparison to control. Effect size, z-score, and p-value reported for each model and each country.

For the UK, China, India, and the UK, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected in any treatment condition. However, for the US, we can reject the null hypothesis of equal distributions for the China and India treatment conditions ($p = 0.03$, $p = 0.05$). These results suggest that bilateral transactions can change international hierarchies within the transaction pair, but not for the larger international arena. For these same treatments, neither the UK nor Germany (both countries outside of the transaction pair) see a change in rank. When put into conversation with our rating results for individual status changes, we see that individual increases in status for Germany, China, the UK, and India in the India and China treatment conditions maintain the relative status of these countries. The US's rating is maintained (there is no change in the absolute value of its rating), but, relative to other states, its rating decreases. The Wilcoxon rank sums test estimates an effect size of 0.49 and 0.43 for the China and India treatments, respectively, which can be characterized as a moderate effect on the rank of the US.

A.4 Meta-analysis

Our meta-analysis consists of papers with experimentally-manipulated treatments designed to observe public opinion outcomes related to international status. Search criteria for these papers included "international status experiment", "international prestige experiment", "international approval experiment", "international influence experiment", and "international respect experiment". We citation-mined and forward-citation-mined each selected work to identify additional papers. Several papers related to the concept of international status were not included because status was the treatment condition (status threats, for example) rather than the outcome. Status-adjacent outcome, such as preferences for foreign aid allocation,

were not included. No field experiments with international status outcomes were identified.

The included studies are (Carnegie & Dolan, 2020; Dietrich *et al.*, 2018; Kitagawa & Chu, 2021; Mattingly & Sundquist, 2021; Morse & Pratt, 2021; Powers & Renshon, 2021; Viskupič, 2020). Figure 11 presents results for the subset of studies that examine status and foreign aid.

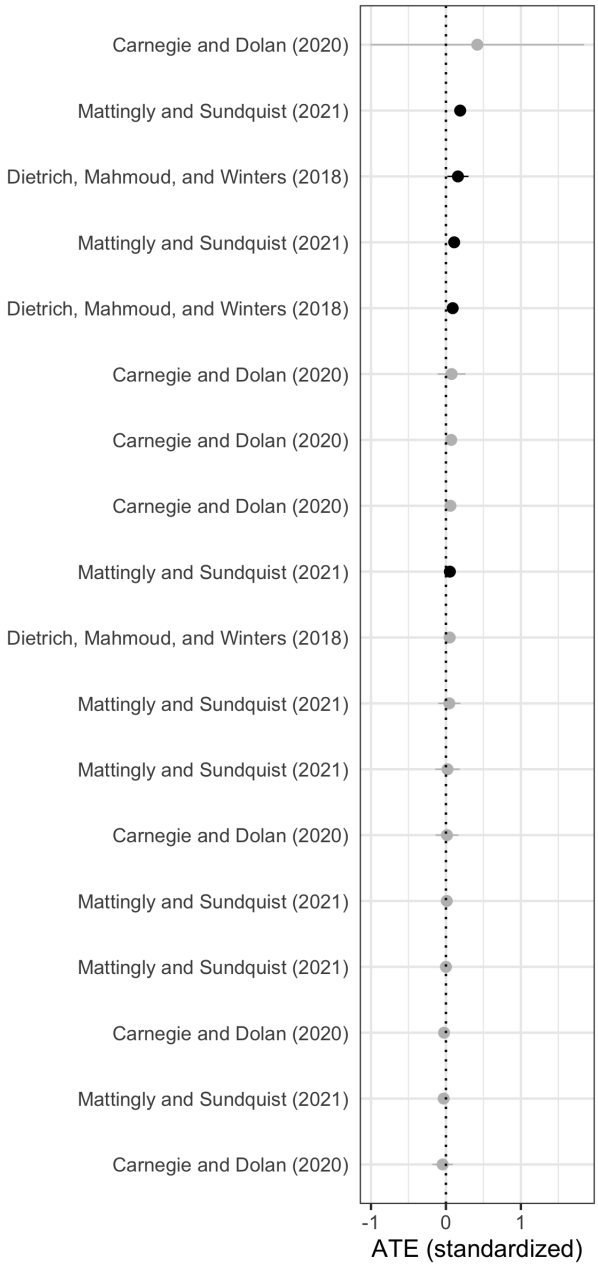

Figure 11: *Meta-analysis results: Aid treatments only*

A.5 Home bias

As public opinion data shows, countries' own publics have consistent and positive ratings of their own favorability while international audiences may be more likely to shift their opinions over time. The following is from a Pew research poll that asks respondents in several different countries to rate their favorable perceptions of the US and China.[14] Notably, the Chinese sample views China as more favorable and the American sample views the US as more favorable.

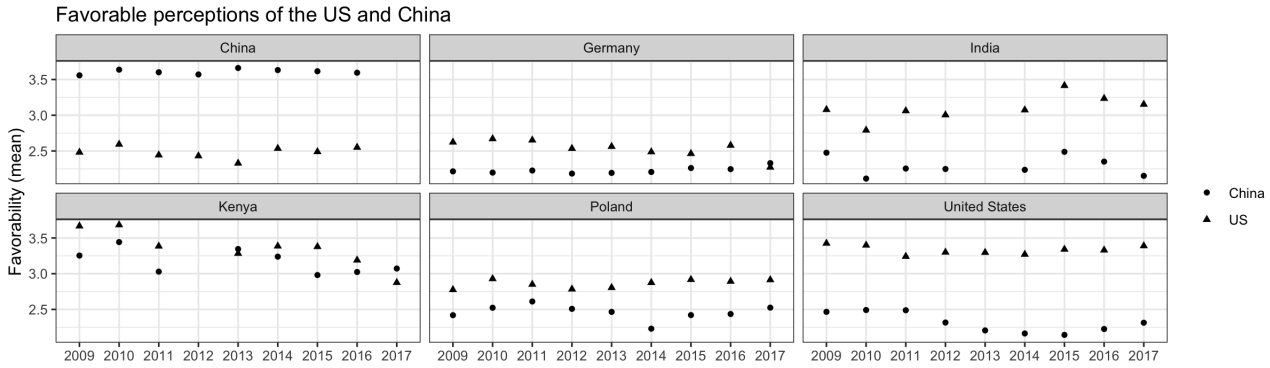

Figure 12: *Favorable Perceptions of the US and China*

[14]PEW Global Attitudes & Trends Datasets 2009-2017

A.6 Comparing respect and influence

Country	Influence		Respect		Difference	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
China	60.5	26.3	40.7	27.8	19.7	38.0
Germany	58.9	22.3	63.5	22.9	-4.30	32.4
India	47.5	23.7	52.5	24.2	-4.56	33.7
UK	64.7	20.9	68.0	22.1	-2.99	30.9
US	76.6	21.7	68.2	26.8	8.15	34.1

Table 10: *Influence, Respect, and Difference between the two by Country*

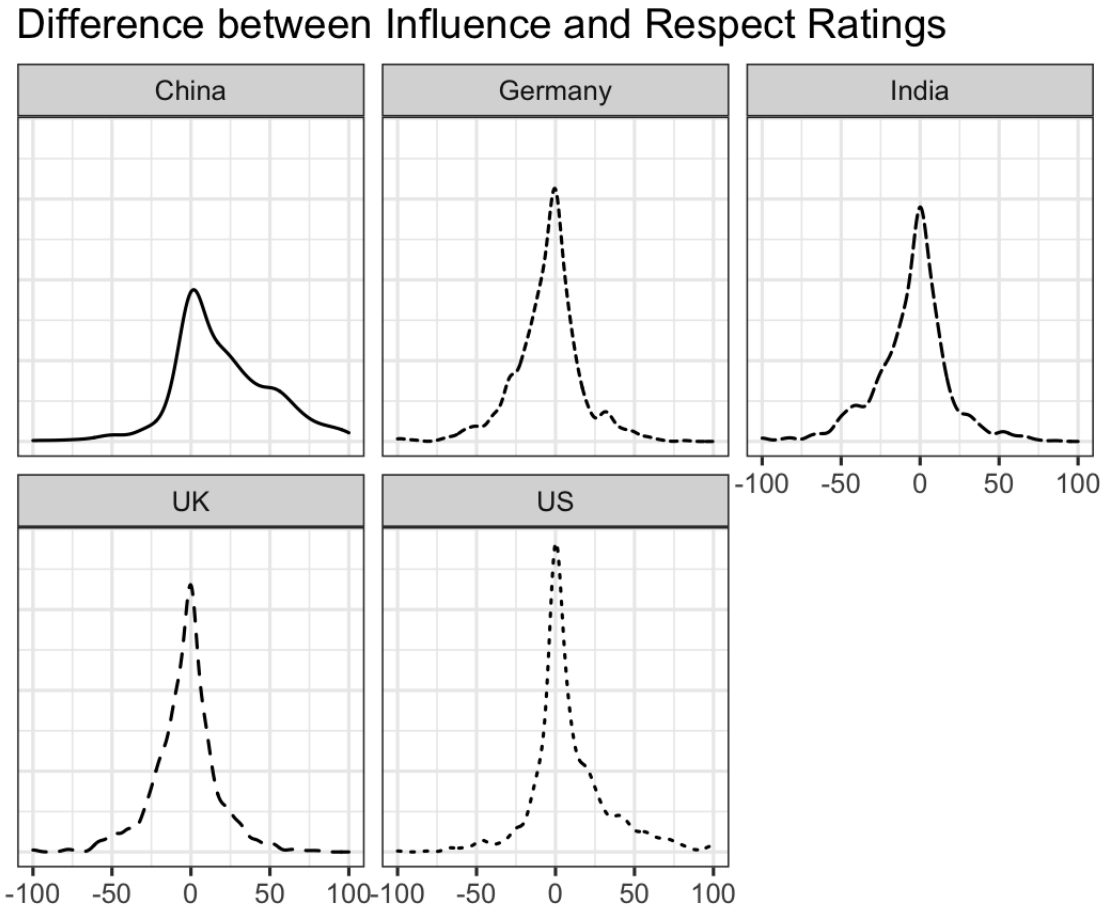

Figure 13: *Density of difference between influence and respect rating, by country*: Influence rating minus respect rating.

A.7 Support for aid acceptance

We are also interested in citizens' general support for the US' acceptance of COVID-19 specific aid. In our pre-analysis plan we hypothesized that citizens support for aid acceptance would vary with the donors' identity. If US citizens are concerned about aid's status implications, they should be more supportive of aid from traditional donors than from new or non-western donors who are previous recipients. To investigate these alternative implications, we ask to what extent they agree or disagree with the US' decision to accept aid. We also ask whether the US should continue to accept foreign aid in the future. The results are presented below.

Because our outcome measure asks about support for a hypothetical decision, the question was not asked to the control group. Instead the first figure plots the mean level of agreement with the US' decision to accept aid by donor country. Citizens are most likely to support accepting aid from the United Kingdom, followed by India and China. While this matches our expectations, it is important to note that only the difference in support between the UK and China is significant. Even in the Chinese treatment, the mean level of support is positive and consistent with "somewhat agree."

The second figure presents respondents' support for the US' acceptance of future aid, this time relative to the no information control group. Once again, respondents are most willing to accept future aid from the United Kingdom; However, the differences between the country treatments are not significant. Additionally, all three treatments, including China, are significantly more supportive of aid than the control group. This implies that when the US accepts aid for COVID-19, from both traditional and new donors, citizens are more likely to support continued aid acceptance in the future.

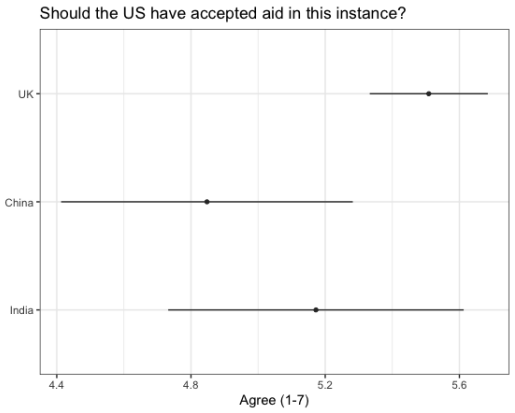

Figure 14: *Aid acceptance by treatment condition*

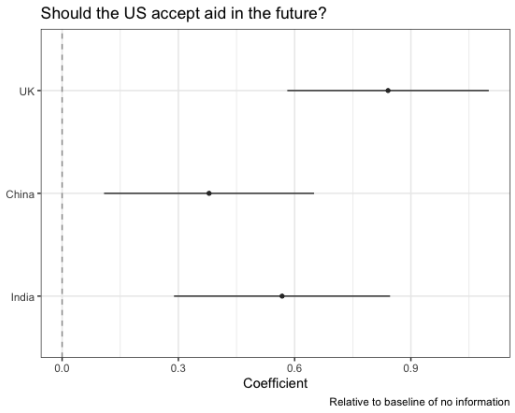

Figure 15: *Aid acceptance in the future by treatment condition*

A.8 Treatment effects

All treatment effects of accepting aid

	Control		India			China			UK		
Model	Mean	SD	Coef	SE	P-val	Coef	SE	P-val	Coef	SE	P-val
India China UK											
China Influence (1 -100)	57.320	1.674	4.3432	2.362	0.065	4.124	2.288	0.071	4.343	2.362	0.081
India Influence (1 -100)	45.750	1.408	3.6953	2.071	0.074	2.680	2.033	0.187	3.695	2.071	0.767
US Influence (1 -100)	75.637	1.329	1.0679	1.970	0.587	0.460	1.889	0.807	1.067	1.970	0.263
UK Influence (1 -100)	62.737	1.311	2.8171	1.885	0.135	3.387	1.807	0.061	2.817	1.885	0.378
Germany Influence (1 -100)	56.000	1.463	4.9922	2.047	0.148	4.041	1.951	0.038	4.992	2.047	0.253
China Respect (1 -100)	38.142	1.728	3.6476	2.458	0.137	6.221	2.441	0.010	3.647	2.458	0.892
India Respect (1 -100)	49.815	1.482	7.4860	2.115	0.000	3.157	2.098	0.132	7.486	2.115	0.994
US Respect (1 -100)	67.510	1.684	1.1872	2.412	0.622	1.233	2.332	0.596	1.187	2.412	0.931
UK Respect (1 -100)	65.562	1.434	4.0351	1.960	0.039	3.448	1.940	0.075	4.035	1.960	0.294
Germany Respect (1 -100)	59.757	1.437	7.0527	2.046	0.000	5.581	1.962	0.004	7.052	2.046	0.259

All treatment effects of accepting aid with background covariates*

	Control		India			China			UK		
Model	Mean	SD	Coef	SE	P-val	Coef	SE	P-val	Coef	SE	P-val
China Influence (1 -100)	61.109	4.577	4.354	2.346	0.063	4.270	2.234	0.055	3.766	2.317	0.104
India Influence (1 -100)	55.744	3.995	3.802	2.071	0.066	2.997	2.005	0.134	0.210	2.004	0.916
US Influence (1 -100)	69.449	3.621	0.407	1.948	0.834	0.439	1.864	0.813	1.736	1.805	0.335
UK Influence (1 -100)	59.174	3.538	2.745	1.852	0.138	3.528	1.759	0.044	1.410	1.795	0.431
Germany Influence (1 -100)	53.356	3.793	4.979	1.987	0.012	4.255	1.905	0.025	2.218	1.951	0.255
China Respect (1 -100)	60.154	4.525	4.541	2.415	0.060	6.392	2.423	0.008	0.266	2.367	0.910
India Respect (1 -100)	53.715	4.011	7.661	2.117	0.000	3.522	2.092	0.092	-0.252	2.103	0.904
US Respect (1 -100)	61.856	4.315	0.159	2.315	0.945	1.039	2.280	0.648	-0.844	2.274	0.710
UK Respect (1 -100)	58.456	3.830	4.002	1.901	0.035	3.866	1.921	0.044	2.338	1.968	0.234
Germany Respect (1 -100)	59.148	3.889	7.341	2.021	0.000	5.894	1.929	0.002	2.165	1.978	0.273

*Background covariates: age, education, income, gender, ethnicity, political party, and political attention.

A.9 Former recipient prime

Our experiment was designed to test public support for accepting aid and perceptions of the respect and influence of other countries. We theorized that when citizens are aware that the donor state is a longtime recipient of foreign aid, the negative effects of aid acceptance for a donor-cum-recipient should be heightened. While previous donor or recipient status behavior might be bundled with specific country references, we included an additional experimental treatment, informing respondents of donors' past actions. We thus add the following phrase: "[Control/India/China] has been a long time recipient of US foreign aid, and remains a developing country." with half of the respondents in the Indian and Chinese conditions randomly receiving the prime. We chose not to add a former behavior prime for the United Kingdom in order to preserve external validity.

The following tables present our results.[15] Priming respondents that India and China were former recipients had null effects on all of our outcome measures. These null effects suggest that information that these countries are former aid recipients is likely bundled into respondents' understanding of the countries. The status prime, then, does not effect outcomes because the information does not cause respondents to update their perceptions of India and China.

	China	US	UK	India	Germany
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Prime	0.828	0.149	1.518	2.874	0.756
	(2.457)	(2.360)	(1.867)	(2.124)	(1.975)
N	521	524	521	520	524
R^2	0.0002	0.00001	0.001	0.004	0.0003

$^{*}p < .1$; $^{**}p < .05$; $^{***}p < .01$
OLS estimates with robust standard errors in parentheses.

Table 11: Respect rating by country and status prime

	China	US	UK	India	Germany
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Prime	2.915	−2.338	0.138	0.855	−0.374
	(2.272)	(1.970)	(1.837)	(2.106)	(1.917)
N	521	523	521	521	523
R^2	0.003	0.003	0.00001	0.0003	0.0001

$^{*}p < .1$; $^{**}p < .05$; $^{***}p < .01$
OLS estimates with robust standard errors in parentheses.

Table 12: Influence rating by country and status prime

[15] Treatment only. Results are robust to including demographic controls. Results available from the authors upon request.

A.10 Replication studies

The survey protocol for both survey experiments was submitted to the relevant Institutional Review Board (IRB) Human Subjects Committee prior to launching the survey experiments and was granted an exemption under federal regulation 45 CFR 46.104 (2)(ii). The informed consent protocol were designed in line with the APSA Principles and Guidance for Human Subjects Research. We do not include any deceptive material, intervene in political processes, or collect sensitive and/or personally identifiable information.

We recruited participants via the platform Lucid, which implements an automated marketplace to connect research participants to researchers. Participants, all US-based, were paid $1 per completed interview.

Below is the text of our consent protocol. Respondents were required to give affirmative consent before proceeding to the survey experiment.

> You are invited to participate in a research study that will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. You will be asked to answer some questions about yourself and your preferences.
>
> There are no known or anticipated risks to you for participating. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You are free to decline to participate, to end participation at any time for any reason, or to refuse to answer any individual question without penalty or loss of compensation. The researcher will not know your name, and no identifying information will be connected to your survey answers in any way. The survey is therefore anonymous.
>
> If at any time you have questions or concerns about the survey or your rights or welfare as a research subject, contact [Author name] at [Author email]. If you would like to talk with someone other than the researchers to discuss problems or concerns, to discuss situations in the event that a member of the research team is not available, or to discuss your rights as a research participant, you may contact the [Author's university] Human Subjects Committee, [phone number], [email]. Additional information is available at [Link to statement of research participant's rights at Author's university].
>
> If you would like to participate, simply click the 'I agree to participate' box below, then click the $\rightarrow\rightarrow\rightarrow$ button to start the survey.

Before each vignette, respondents first read, "You will now read a hypothetical headline and excerpt from news coverage about the United States."

The outcome questions for [Study 1][Study 2] were as follows:

- *Respect*: How much respect do other countries have for the following countries? Please rank each country from 1 (least respected) to 100 (most respected): [US, UK, China, India, Germany][US, UK, China, South Africa, Germany] (order randomized). Scale: 0 (least respected) - 100 (most respected)

- *Influence*: How much influence do each of the following countries have over world politics? Please rank each country from 1 (least influence) to 100 (most influence): [US, UK, China, India, Germany][US, UK, China, South Africa, Germany] (order randomized). Scale: 0 (least influence) - 100 (most influence)

A.10 .1 Study 1

The first replication study was fielded on June 29, 2020 on a sample of 1221 Americans quota-sampled to census margins. Demographics are available from the authors upon request. Study vignettes exactly mirror the main survey.

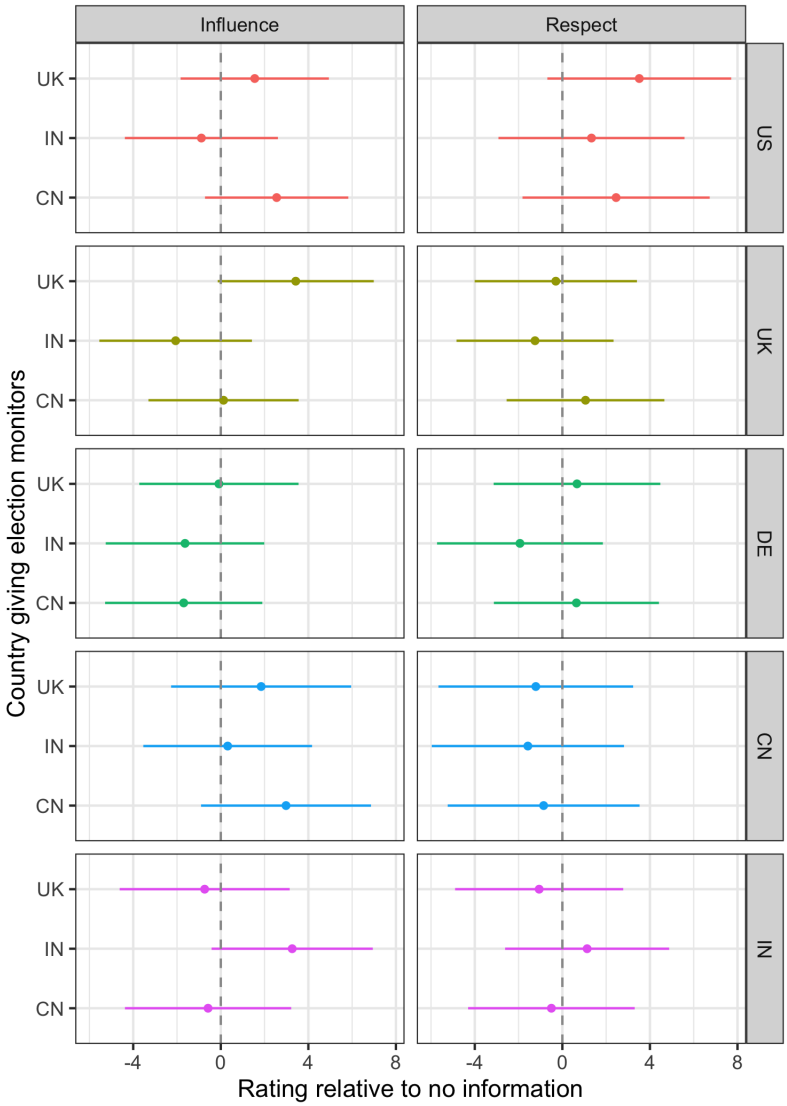

Figure 16: *Replication status*: Left panel displays average effect of treatment on countries' influence ratings. Right panel displays ATE on respect ratings. Point estimates and robust 95% confidence intervals displayed.

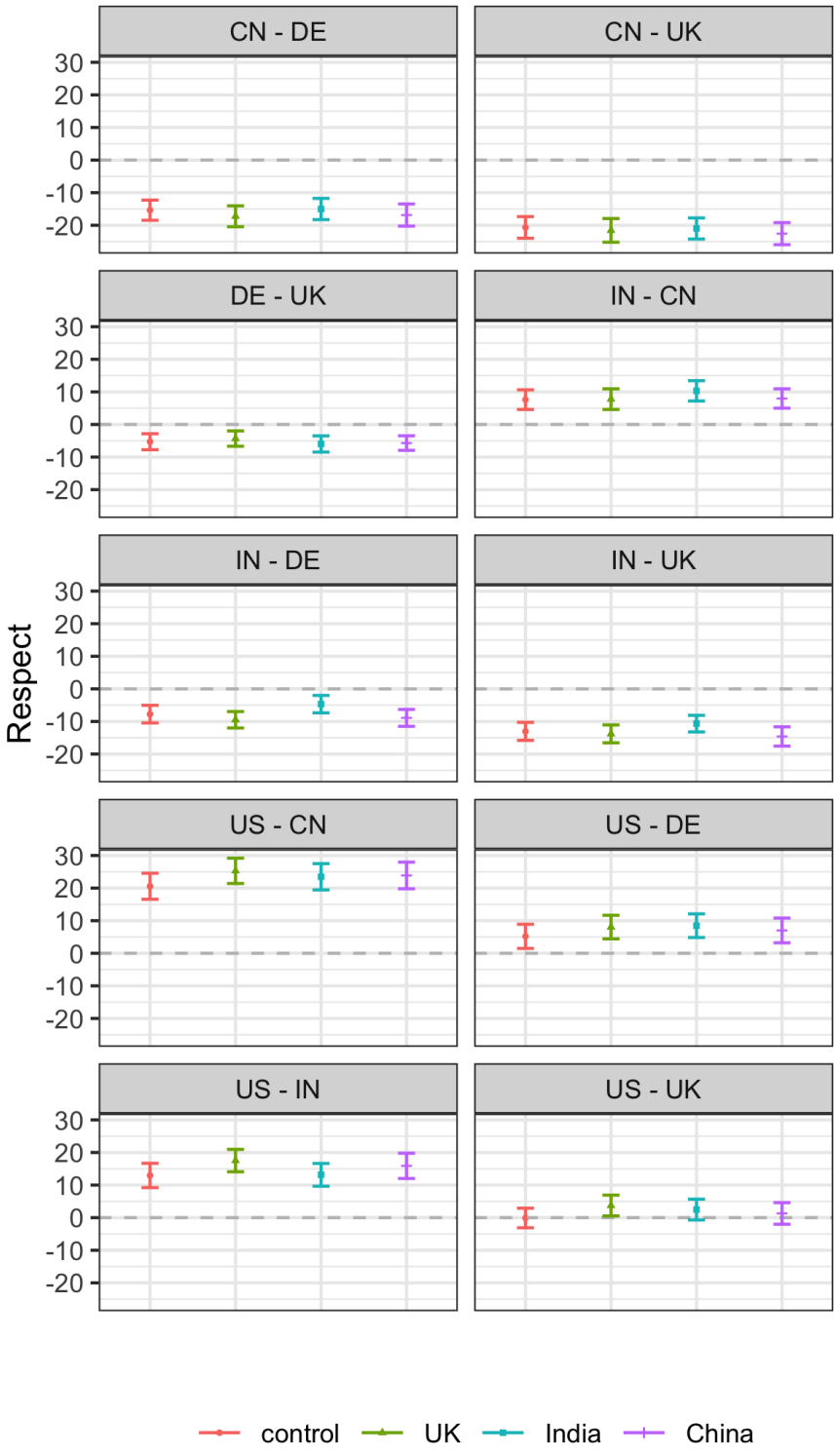

Figure 17: *Replication relative status*: Means and 95% confidence intervals for difference in respect status for outcome dyads. Each point represents the first state's status minus the second state's status in a given treatment condition. Differences between control and treatment (aid from the UK, India, or China) are significant if their confidence intervals do not overlap.

	Dependent variable:				
	US	UK	DE	CN	IN
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
UK	−0.137	0.120	−0.057	0.065	0.040
	(0.090)	(0.087)	(0.086)	(0.091)	(0.086)
India	−0.113	0.179**	0.108	0.001	−0.156*
	(0.089)	(0.086)	(0.085)	(0.090)	(0.086)
China	−0.092	0.001	−0.015	0.046	0.071
	(0.089)	(0.086)	(0.085)	(0.090)	(0.086)
Observations	1,218	1,218	1,218	1,218	1,218
Note:					*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 13: *Replication respect rankings*: Ordered probit regression results reported with robust standard errors.

A.10 .1.1 Replication: COVID-19 Vulnerability

We compare these replication results to our findings for subsamples of the main survey results by vulnerability to COVID-19 in Figure 18

Respondents with lower perceptions of their personal vulnerability to the virus are less likely to reward new donors with a higher status. While we cannot speak specifically to the longevity of status effects, these results highlight the importance of salience, which has previously played an important role in the disaster aid literature. The resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement and citizens' general wariness to continue COVID-19 precautions in the long term, may suggest that the receipt of foreign assistance had only a small window of political salience. Only when an issue is salient can status be manipulated through actions tied to this issue.

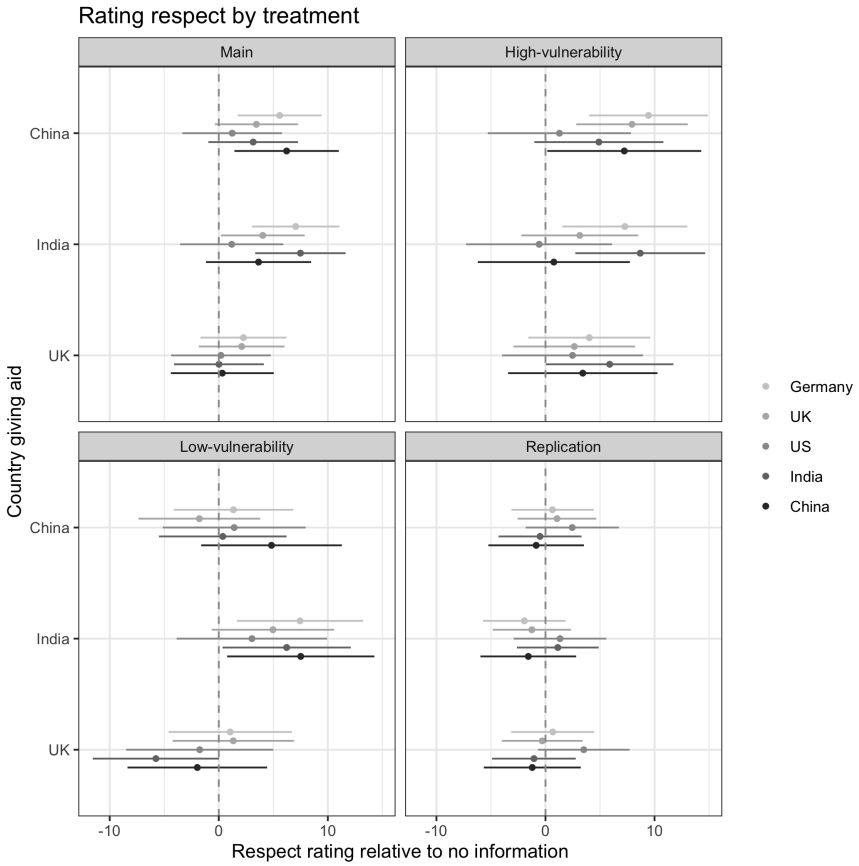

Figure 18: *Results by sample population:* Results from four respondent populations: main, main (high-vulnerability only), main (low-vulnerability only), and replication.

A.10 .2 Study 2

The first replication study was fielded from September 29 to November 2, 2020 on a sample of 747 Americans in Cooperative Congressional Election Survey. Demographics are available from the authors upon request.

Vignettes:

1. No Information
2. UK Proposes Sending Election Monitors to the US to Monitor the 2020 Presidential Election July 24, 2020

   [LONDON] – The United Kingdom has raised the idea of sending dozens of its own election observers to monitor the implementation of new COVID-19 related voting procedures in US presidential and congressional elections this November.
3. South Africa Proposes Sending Election Monitors to the US to Monitor the 2020 Presidential Election July 24, 2020

   [JOHANNESBURG] – South Africa has raised the idea of sending dozens of its own election observers to monitor the implementation of new COVID-19 related voting procedures in US presidential and congressional elections this November.

	Dependent variable:				
	US	UK	DE	CN	SA
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
UK	0.038	−0.084	0.032	0.093	−0.109
	(0.096)	(0.093)	(0.094)	(0.097)	(0.093)
SA	0.095	−0.040	−0.067	0.086	−0.134
	(0.099)	(0.095)	(0.097)	(0.100)	(0.096)
Observations	747	747	747	747	747
Note:					*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 14: *Election monitor respect rankings*: Ordered probit regression results reported with robust standard errors.

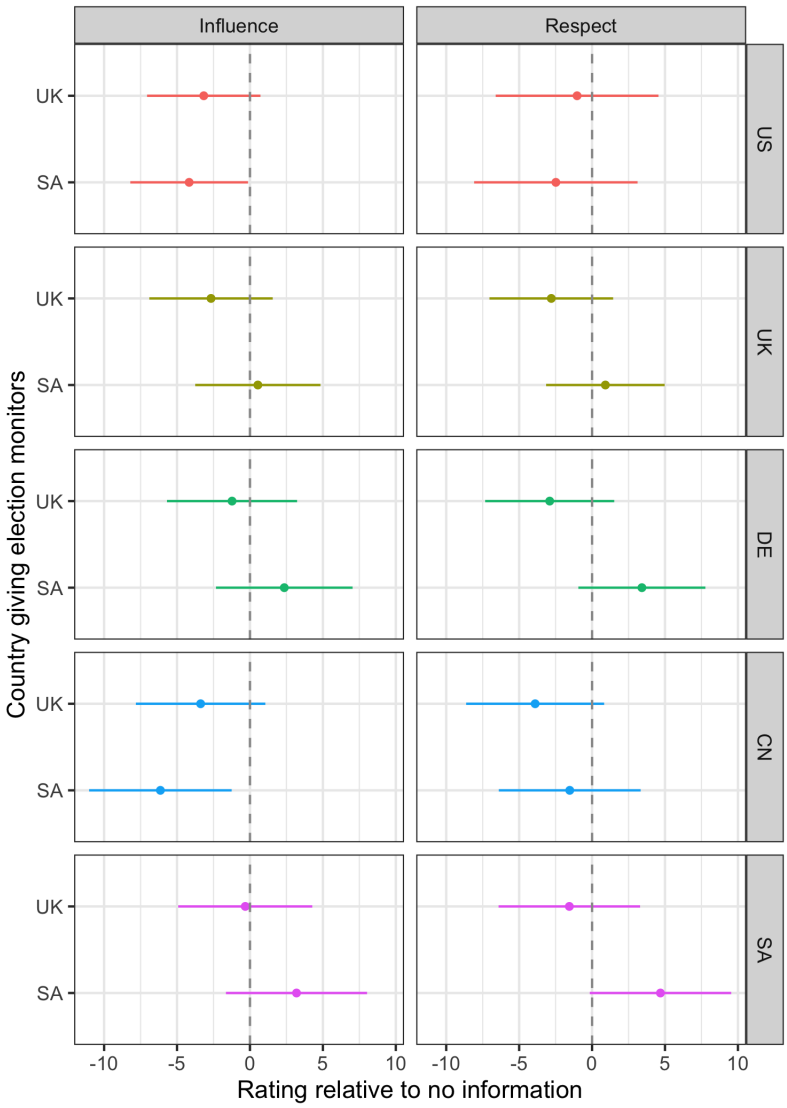

Figure 19: *Election monitors status*: Left panel displays average effect of treatment on countries' influence ratings. Right panel displays ATE on respect ratings. Point estimates and robust 95% confidence intervals displayed.

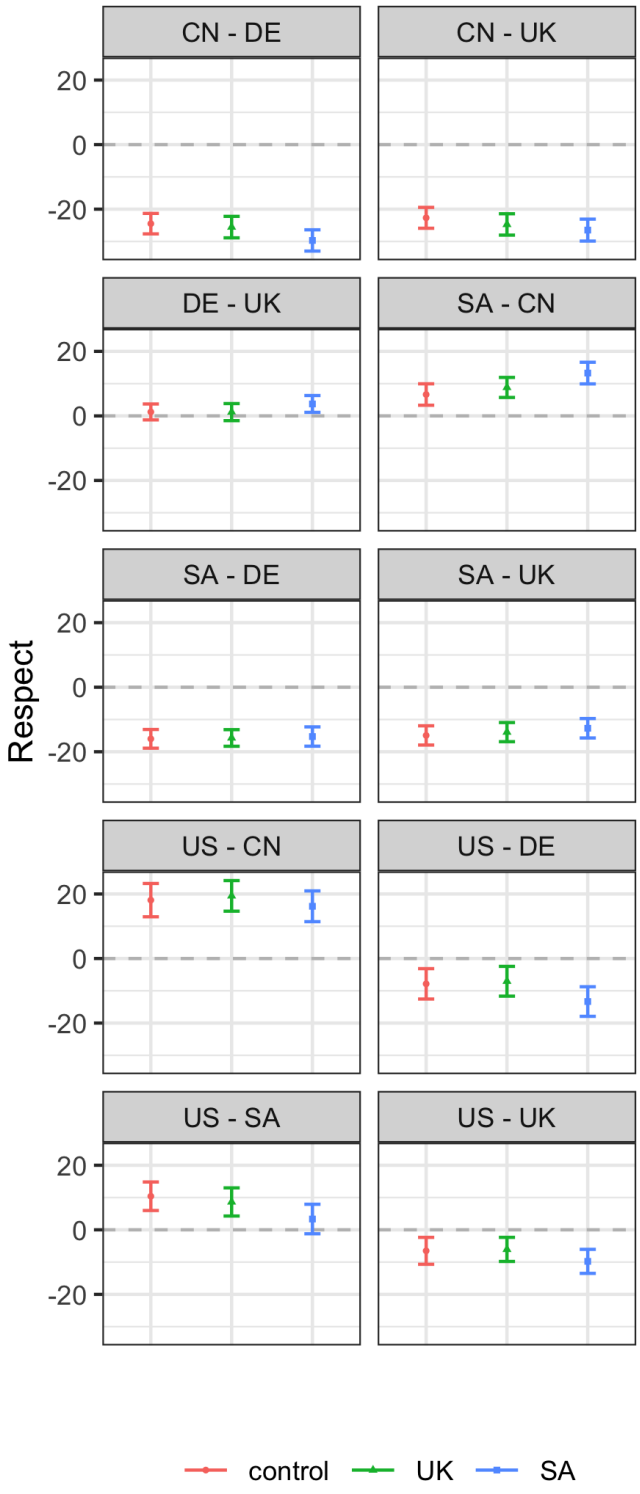

Figure 20: *Election monitors relative status*: Means and 95% confidence intervals for difference in respect status for outcome dyads. Each point represents the first state's status minus the second state's status in a given treatment condition. Differences between control and treatment (election monitors from the UK or South Africa) are significant if their confidence intervals do not overlap.

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