Can Transparency Strengthen the Legitimacy of International Institutions? Evidence from the UN Security Council

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Abstract

Can transparency enhance the legitimacy of international institutions? As transparency has become a widely applied procedural standard in international politics, a range of institutions have implemented transparency reforms under the presumption that increased transparency can elicit support among relevant audiences. This paper evaluates whether increased transparency in the UN Security Council leads to enhanced legitimacy perceptions among UN member states. The paper first traces the history of Security Council reform since 1990 and draws on interviews with diplomats and observers to describe a transparency reform the Council enacted in 2006. Next, the paper uses longitudinal content analysis to empirically probe the legitimation effects of that transparency reform. The empirical analysis is based on an original dataset of 4303 legitimacy statements made by UN member states in annual UN General Assembly debates over the periods 1990-2006 and 2006-2018. The findings cast doubt over the potential of transparency reform to improve the Council's legitimacy; and instead suggest that increasing the direct participation of the wider UN membership may be a more viable legitimation strategy. This article contributes to existing international legitimacy literature by providing empirical evidence on the relationship between transparency and legitimacy; and by demonstrating which institutional features that affect the perceived legitimacy of the Security Council.

Keywords
Institutional design, international organizations, legitimacy, transparency, UN Security Council

Introduction

Transparency has become one of the most frequently discussed and applied legitimacy standards in international institutions; and a range of institutions—from the IMF to NATO—have adopted different types of transparency reforms (Tallberg et al., 2013). While often tailored toward dissimilar audiences, a core feature of transparency reforms is that they reduce information asymmetries between actors participating directly in decision-making and non-participants that have an interest in the decisions that an institution reaches. From a legitimacy perspective, increased transparency can help international institutions elicit support among a given audience by providing more oversight over procedures, which is both a precondition for directly influencing decision-making and for holding those in power to account.

Hence, previous empirical literature has shown that transparency can enhance legitimacy across different political settings (De Fine Licht, 2014; Dickson et al., 2015). However, while normative theorists have argued that opening up international institutions is crucial for their legitimacy (Buchanan & Keohane, 2006; Scherz & Zyssets, 2020), existing literature offers scant empirical evidence on whether transparency reforms can lead to increased perceptions of legitimacy among relevant audiences in this context. This article contributes to the growing literature on international institutions' legitimation strategies (Gronau & Schmidtke, 2016; Tallberg & Zürn, 2019; Rocabert et al., 2019) by assessing the relationship between transparency and legitimacy in the UN Security Council (UNSC). I trace discussions of UNSC reform in the UN General Assembly (UNGA) since 1990 and show how transparency has featured prominently in debates over the legitimacy of the Council. I then test empirically whether a transparency reform that was enacted in 2006 leads to increased perceptions of the Council as a legitimate authority among UN member states.

The main hypothesis of this article is that transparency reform leads to enhanced perceptions of the Council as a legitimate authority by UN member states. The empirical analysis is based on an original dataset of 4303 legitimacy statements made by UN members in annual UNGA debates over the periods 1990-2006 (pre-reform) and 2006-2018 (post-reform). Contrary to my expectation, the data from these debates show that UN members' perceptions of procedural legitimacy decrease after the introduction of the transparency reform. While the reform leads to a substantial reduction in transparency criticism and a slight increase in states' perceptions of participation, the increased salience of other procedural legitimacy issues in the post-reform period add up to a negative legitimacy effect overall. The results hold when controlling for the effect of institutional outcomes over time, which is the main alternative explanation. I suggest three explanations for why legitimacy decreases. First, transparency reform does not rectify the more fundamental legitimacy issues of the Council's unrepresentative membership composition and the Permanent Members' veto powers. Second, a set of procedural issues that emerge after the transparency reform generates new legitimacy challenges for the Council. Third, increasing the transparency of Council working methods generates procedural trade-offs such as posturing and decreased interactivity.

This article is structured as follows. Section two provides a theoretical argument on how transparency can generate legitimacy in international institutions. Section three describes the

data and methods. Section four discusses the importance of transparency in the UNSC's working methods and analyzes UN members' perceptions of the legitimacy of the Council in the period 1990-2005. Section five describes the transparency reform that was implemented in 2006. Section six analyzes UN members' perceptions of the legitimacy of the UNSC in the period 2006-2018 and evaluates the effects of the reform. Section seven tests the alternative explanation that legitimacy is driven by institutional outcomes. Finally, a concluding section summarizes the main findings and discusses their implications.

Transparency as a legitimation strategy

The literature on the legitimacy of international institutions can be divided into a normative and an empirical strand, as with the concept of legitimacy more generally. In the normative sense, an institution's legitimacy is evaluated with reference to a set of external criteria and is said to be legitimate when it operates in a manner that corresponds with these (Scherz & Zysset, 2020). In the empirical sense, on the other hand, legitimacy refers to a (widely) shared perception among a relevant audience that an institution has the right to rule (Hurd, 2018).

This article focuses on empirical legitimacy and understands legitimacy as a quality an international institution obtains when it is perceived as a justified authority by its member states (Hurd 2018). While empirical legitimacy literature has predominantly examined the legitimacy perceptions of other audiences than states—e.g. citizens (Bernauer et al., 2019) or elites (Schmidtke, 2019)—this analysis concentrates on states as the relevant audience because these are the actors that are most directly affected by the transparency reform examined here.[1]

International institutions can presumably benefit in various ways from widespread legitimacy perceptions among their member states: Legitimacy can provide an institution with a 'reservoir' of support that can be drawn on in the absence of coercion and self-interest (Easton, 1975); it can generate a particularly strong compliance pull with the decisions of institutions (Franck, 1995); it can have consolidating effects on institutions by generating more stable and long-lasting rules (Hurd, 1999); and, finally, it can produce practical benefits in terms of financial and political cost reductions (Welsh & Zaum, 2013). Conversely, erosion of legitimacy can potentially reduce or hamper institutional authority and generate pressure for institutional reform (Lenz & Viola, 2017).

Perceptions of an institution as legitimate emanate from congruence between states' expectations for how an institution is *supposed* to function, on one hand, and the institution's *actual* organizational features and performance on the other (Lenz & Viola, 2017). Conversely, a discrepancy between states' expectations and actual institutional functioning will lead to a decline or deficit in legitimacy. Since legitimacy deficits potentially can hamper the authority and performance of institutions, UNSC legitimacy literature has pinpointed various legitimacy deficits that this institution supposedly operates under, and proposed legitimation strategies for how these could be rectified (e.g. Johnstone, 2008; Scherz & Zyssets, 2020; Wilson, 2019). In general, these legitimation strategies can be understood as proposed institutional changes that

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[1] The reform is primarily aimed at UN members (see UNSC, 2006).

are aimed at both improving the standing of institutions and making institutional authority more acceptable to institutional member states (or other audiences) (Hurd, 2018).

Existing literature refers to myriad sources that international institutions can rely on to generate perceptions of legitimacy, giving rise to different legitimacy classifications and strategies (Dellmuth, Scholte, & Tallberg, 2019). This article distinguishes between two main sub-categories of legitimacy: procedural legitimacy and outcome legitimacy.

Procedural legitimacy refers to a perception that an institution is justified with reference to its decision-making structures, processes, or procedures. For example, in 2002, Ghana applauded the Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee for showcasing a 'shining example of transparency' (UNGA, 2002), and in 2012 Korea Republic commended the Council for having undertaken 'notable efforts to enhance the participation of the wider membership in its work.' (UNGA, 2012). Transparency and participation are two key principles in the procedural legitimacy literature (Keohane, 2011; Scherz & Zysset, 2020); others include (but are not limited to) deliberation, accountability, representation, impartiality, expertise, and voluntary consent in decision-making (Buchanan & Keohane, 2006; Caney, 2006; Johnstone, 2008; Scherz & Zyssets, 2020).

Outcome legitimacy emerges when an institution is viewed as justified by a given audience based on the outcome(s) it produces (Dellmuth et al., 2019).[2] Outcome legitimacy encapsulates the performance of an institution, including the content of policies adopted; their implementation trajectories; and their contribution to the underlying problem they are meant to address (Tallberg et al., 2016). Through a lens of outcome legitimacy, the Council can be viewed as legitimate or illegitimate based on whether it adopts resolutions and takes actions that effectively contribute toward its mandate of maintaining international peace and security. For example, the Council's peacekeeping mission to Côte d'Ivoire can be perceived to be a success in that regard, while its lack of timely action to prevent the 1994 genocide in Rwanda is often described as one of its greatest failures (Bosco, 2009).

The two legitimacy categories above give rise to various legitimation strategies that international institutions can employ to enhance their legitimacy among a given audience. Strengthening the transparency of decision-making is one such strategy, which belongs to the procedural legitimation category. Transparency is a widely applied procedural standard, and in recent years numerous international institutions have implemented different transparency measures under the presumption that transparency can ameliorate their legitimacy (Tallberg et al., 2013).

In an ideal sense, institutional transparency can be understood as the timely access of stakeholders to all relevant information at low or no costs. The absence of this information is commonly portrayed as a principal-agent problem, wherein an actor (the principal) has

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[2] My definition of outcome legitimacy is synonymous with what Dellmuth et al. 2019 call 'performance' legitimacy.

entrusted another actor (the agent) to perform a given task (Hirschmann, 2020). The principal-agent relationship contains an information asymmetry to the agent's advantage, relating to both how and why decisions are reached (De Fine Licht et al., 2014). Increasing transparency can reduce uncertainty about the agent's intentions, reasons, and procedures; which in turn can enhance the principal's confidence in delegating powers to the agent (ibid.).

Under information asymmetry, increased transparency can enable both accountability and participation in decision-making. First, the provision of pertinent information enables principals to assess whether they are content with the way decisions are reached by agents (Hirschmann, 2020). By increasing their understanding of the reasons and processes behind decisions principals can more easily sanction agents for not conforming to expected standards of behavior. Transparency is thus widely regarded as a prerequisite for accountability (Buchanan and Keohane, 2006; Hirschmann, 2020). Second, increased transparency can empower uninformed principals to meaningfully participate in and exert influence over the decision-making of an institution. For example, open meetings can ensure that principals have a say in agenda-setting and formal consultations. Enhanced information provision also enables more effective lobbying and negotiations through informal channels. Hence, transparency can help securing a sense of participation even in the absence of formal voting powers or direct representation in an institution such as the Council (Hurd, 2008). Finally, normative IR literature also posits that transparency can lead to enhanced deliberation and increased impartiality in debates (Caney, 2006).

While existing literature offers scant evidence on the empirical effects of transparency on states' legitimacy perceptions, surveys and experiments on individuals have identified largely positive effects of transparent procedures—including on organizational performance, people's perceptions of legitimacy, level of trust, willingness to accept decisions, participation in procedures, and general level of satisfaction (Cucciniello et al., 2017; De fine Licht et al., 2014; Dickson et al., 2015; Van der Cruijsen & Eijffinger, 2010). Although the beneficial effects of transparency are likely contingent on institutional context, the salience of information for principals, and/or the type of transparency measures taken (Buchanan & Keohane, 2006; Lindstedt & Naurin, 2010), most existing transparency literature posits a positive relationship between transparency and perceptions of legitimacy (De Fine Licht et al., 2014).

If institutional transparency can generate enhanced legitimacy perceptions, there are two main reasons why the transparency measures that the Council enacted with Presidential Note 507 (UNSC, 2006) could lead to enhanced legitimacy perceptions among the wider UN membership. First, the relationship between the UNSC and the UNGA is characterized by high information asymmetry. The transparency of decision-making procedures is a uniquely salient factor in the UNSC because of the Council's un-egalitarian membership structure wherein 15 states (five permanent and ten elected members) are given the powers to take decisions on issues of international security on behalf of all UN member states. This structure produces significant information asymmetries between the Council members (the 'agent' in the principal-agent framework) and the UNGA membership (the 'principal'), which a high number of UN member

states have consistently lamented over time.[3] Given that the limited membership structure of the Council prevents the general UN membership from directly partaking in Council decision-making, it is crucial for non-Council members that have an interest in the Council's work to receive timely and relevant information about its decision-making. Increasing the transparency of the Council's decision-making could both provide the general UN membership with enhanced understanding of the rationale behind Council decisions and—as the Note also includes several measures for enhanced interaction (UNSC, 2006)—allow non-Council members to exercise more influence over Council proceedings.

Second, the transparency measures enacted with Presidential Note 507 (UNSC, 2006) is the most comprehensive reform of its kind that the Council has enacted. While the Security Council has occasionally also taken other incremental steps to improve its working methods (Sievers & Daws, 2014), Note 507 is unique in that it involved numerous procedural changes that were both accompanied by a high degree of implementation and affected all UN members with an interest in the Council.[4] In the UNSC context, therefore, Note 507 represents a 'most-likely' case (Levy, 2008), i.e., a reform for which the posited impact of transparency on legitimacy perceptions is most likely to be observed.

Hence, if transparency reform is a viable legitimation strategy for the Council, we should observe positive changes in states' legitimacy perceptions following the implementation of the Note 507 transparency reform of 2006. Specifically, since transparency is a *procedural* legitimation strategy, I expect that:

> Hypothesis: The 2006 transparency reform of UNSC working methods leads to increased perceptions of procedural legitimacy among UN member states.

Since transparency is theoretically linked to several principles of procedural legitimacy, I expect transparency reform to affect not only perceptions of transparency, but also perceptions of procedural legitimacy more broadly. By testing whether increased transparency generates legitimacy in the UNSC, this article makes two distinct contributions. First, this article contributes to existing accounts of the legitimacy of the UNSC. Empirical UNSC legitimacy literature has described the Council's legitimation practices (Welsh & Zaum, 2013); examined the degree to which the Council is perceived as a legitimate authority among UN member states (Binder & Heupel, 2015); and measured how the Council performs from an outcome-based perspective on legitimacy (Frederking & Patane, 2017). However, while normative legitimacy scholars have frequently made the case for Council reform (e.g. Scherz & Zysset, 2020), existing Council literature has not yet evaluated the empirical legitimacy effects of such reform: that is, whether Council reform affects UN member states' perceptions of the Council as a rightful authority. Second, this article also contributes more generally to the growing literature on international institutions' legitimation strategies (Gronau & Schmidtke, 2016; Tallberg & Zürn, 2019; Rocabert et al., 2019) by assessing the potential of transparency as a legitimation

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[3] See empirical analysis section.
[4] In contrast to transparency measures aimed at specific groups of states, such as Troop-Contributing Countries.

strategy in the context of a major international institution. While existing literature on international legitimacy has debated how international institutions could respond to legitimacy deficits, most of this literature's normative prescriptions have hitherto not been empirically assessed.

Empirical strategy

This article uses longitudinal content analysis to assess whether there are systematic differences between UN member states' perceptions of the legitimacy of the UNSC before and after Presidential Note 507 was adopted. The empirical strategy follows the logic of an interrupted time-series design, wherein multiple observations (legitimacy statements) are collected before and after a treatment is introduced (Reichardt, 2019)—in this case, the 2006 transparency reform. I compare states' perceptions of the legitimacy of the Council in the pre-reform period (1990-2005) to their legitimacy perceptions in the post-reform period (2006-2018), and attribute differences in legitimacy perceptions to the transparency reform.

The internal validity of this research design rests on the assumption that the transparency of the UNSC's decision-making procedures is the only legitimacy-related factor that changes from the pre-reform period to the post-reform period (Morgan & Winship, 2015). While my design cannot eliminate the risk of omitted-variable bias, I employ two main strategies to isolate the effect of the transparency reform. First, I use long time periods as control- and treatment groups, so as to minimize the likelihood that changes in legitimacy are caused by exogenous factors. The logic is that the effect of all exogenous factors that may affect states' perceptions of legitimacy will average out over time. Using long time-periods as control- and treatment groups helps to smooth out peaks and troughs in the UNSC's legitimacy, including cyclical changes or natural variation (Reichardt, 2019), and ensures that one particular institutional crisis or success does not bias the results. Supplementary Material IV reports robustness tests on the choice of time periods, demonstrating that my findings hold under different alternative time periods specifications. Second, to minimize the risk that changes in legitimacy perceptions are caused by substantive Council outcomes—which existing literature has proposed to be the chief relevant alternative explanation (Dellmuth et al., 2019)—I evaluate the correlation between substantive Council outcomes and legitimacy over time (see Section 7).

To establish states' perceptions of the legitimacy of the UNSC, I conducted a manual content analysis of verbatim records of the annual UNGA debates of the UNSC's report to the Assembly. In these debates—the only institutionalized forum for direct interaction between the UN membership and the UNSC—UN members evaluate the substantive work and procedures of the Council over the reporting period and express what aspects they are satisfied and concerned with. They also discuss the issue of Council reform.[5] I use the resulting evaluative statements as proxies of legitimacy perceptions: positive statements confer legitimacy, while negative statements withhold legitimacy (Binder & Heupel, 2015). Since, in these debates, a wide range of states express their evaluations of the UNSC in a similar context over time,

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[5] See Supplementary Material I for information about the two agenda items that are coded in the debates.

analyzing the verbatim records of the debates is a useful method for generating data on UN member states' legitimacy perceptions of the Council (ibid.). I coded the records of all 27 debates that were held over the period 1990-2018, a total of 80 documents.[6]

The coding generated a database of 4303 legitimacy statements, made by 117 UN members. The statements are categorized according to the source they refer to (procedural/outcome) and the sentiment they express (positive/negative). The full codebook, including coding instructions and sub-indicators, is provided in Supplementary Material I. Supplementary Material II provides additional details on how the codebook was developed, and discusses the measurement validity and reliability of the content analysis.

To allow longitudinal comparison, the same set of states are included in the analysis of changes between the pre-reform and post-reform periods: The only selection criterion is that a state has expressed a legitimacy statement in both periods. The empirical analysis focuses on changes in *legitimacy scores*, computed as the proportion of positive legitimacy statements of total statements. I use two-tailed *t* tests to evaluate whether legitimacy scores significantly change.

Finally, I also conducted semi-structured interviews with 17 diplomats (representing different states), 2 observers, and 1 former long-time UN official involved in the work of the Council. The purpose of these interviews was two-fold: first, to gain an in-depth understanding of how the transparency reform has changed the working methods of the Council, and, second, collect a representative set of states' views on Council working methods and on the issue of Council reform. Supplementary Material III provides the interview guide and additional information about the interviews.

The legitimacy of the UNSC 1990-2005

In 1945, the UN Charter established a General Assembly with universal membership and mandate to discuss 'any questions' within its broad scope; and a Security Council with restricted membership and executive authority tasked with 'maintaining international peace and security'. The five great victors of World War II—China, France, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and the USA—were each given the prerogatives of permanent Council membership and the right to veto substantive Council decisions. These Permanent five members were joined by six elected members until 1965, when the number of elected members was increased to ten. That fifteen-member structure (five Permanent and ten Elected Members) persists until the present.

This article analyzes the legitimacy of the post-Cold War Council, beginning in the year 1990. As Figure 1 shows, the post-Cold War Council is significantly more assertive than the Cold War Council in terms of passing resolutions. Prior to 1990 the strained relationship between Eastern and Western Permanent Members led to a difficult climate of cooperation: in the period 1946-1989, the Council only passed 14.5 resolutions on average per year; and 20% of proposed

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[6] There was no debate in 1992. UNGA's 46th session covered 1991-1992; the 47th covered 1992-1993.

resolutions were vetoed. Subsequently, from 1990 – 2019 the Council has quadrupled its output, producing on average 62 resolutions per year, with only 2% of resolutions vetoed.
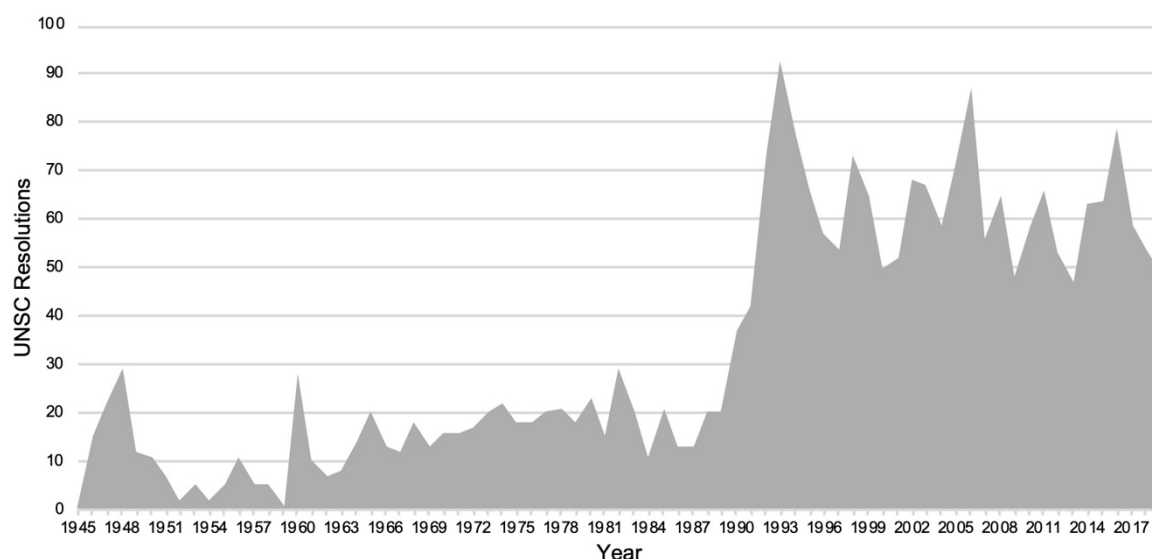

Figure 1. Yearly UNSC resolutions 1945-2018

Additionally, the post-Cold War Council has adopted an increasing share of Chapter VII decisions. Chapter VII of the Charter refers to the Council's coercive measures—including sanctions (art. 41) and the use of force (art. 42)—and is generally invoked when Council members want to signal that a resolution is to be understood as mandatory to implement (Sievers & Daws, 2014). Hence, Chapter VII measures interfere more aggressively in domestic affairs than the other means at the Council's disposal (e.g., the conciliatory measures listed in Chapter VI). While, over the period 1946-1989, the Council only adopted 22 Chapter VII resolutions in total, 42 such resolutions were passed in 2016 alone (UN, 2019).

In sum, the UNSC quickly took on a quantitatively and qualitatively more important role in maintaining international peace and security after 1990. Overall, my legitimacy data from annual UNGA debates suggest that most UN members viewed the more assertive Council favorably: Over the period 1990-2005, 60% of all legitimacy statements in my dataset (outcome and procedural) confer legitimacy on the Council.[7] Yet, Figure 2 reveals substantial procedural legitimacy variation over the period.[8] While the Council's procedural legitimacy score is low at the outset of the period, it increases and stabilizes in the mid-1990s. Following a peak in 2002, the legitimacy score decreases with 20 percentage points until 2005.

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[7] This legitimacy score is significantly higher than the one reported by Binder and Heupel (2015). The difference is likely attributable to methodological differences in the coding rules; the corpuses of debates selected for coding; and the number of sub-categories in the coding schemes.

[8] The graph excludes years 1990-91 because of a much lower volume of legitimacy statements in those years than the rest. In 1992, there was no annual debate.

Procedural legitimacy score
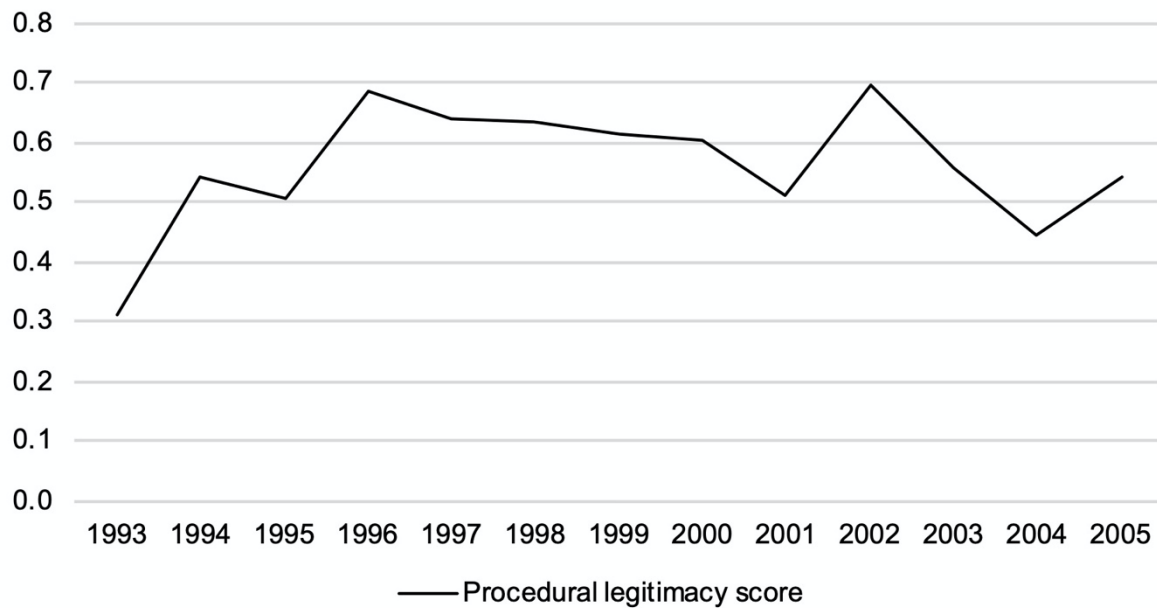
Diplomats convey that the early 1990s was a particularly frustrating period for the UN membership because of a negative transparency trend in the Council's working methods.[9] As the Council transformed from a body that met occasionally into one that was nearly constantly in session, Council members resorted increasingly to informal consultations and private meetings (SCR, 2018a). While, during the Cold War, the Council had largely deliberated and negotiated in public, now UN members suddenly had to work hard to find out what was going on in the Council (SCR, 2007). For example, when Kuwait was invaded by Iraq in 1990, Kuwaiti diplomats were not informed about how the Council planned to respond to the illegal invasion. One diplomat recalls trying to obtain information about the work of the Iraq Sanctions Committee: 'When they met, we had to wait for them outside—wait two or three hours—and then beg them for information about what happened and what issues they discussed.'[10]

The Kuwaiti experience was not unique: the inverse trends of increased pervasiveness in the Council's outputs and decreased transparency in its working methods led to grumbling among many UN members, which felt that the principle of sovereign equality, as defined in the Charter's Article 2, was being disavowed (Weiss, 2003). Further, Article 24 stipulates that the Council acts 'on behalf' of the UNGA; it could therefore be argued that UN member states had a right to know what was going on behind closed doors in the Council, especially those states contributing with troops to the Council's rising number of peacekeeping missions.

In addition to the lack of transparency, another growing concern among UN members was the Council's composition. The Council's composition has to date only been amended once, in 1965, when the number of Elected Members was expanded from six to ten. In 1992-93, many UN members—including protagonists such as Germany, Japan, and the African Group—again began contending that the Council needed reform of its composition in order to improve its legitimacy (Bosco, 2009). Their common goal was enhanced representation. From 1945 to

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[9] Interviews 2, 3.
[10] Interview 3.

1992, the UN membership had increased from 51 to 183 states (Bourantonis, 2005); yet the permanent membership of the Council still counted zero African countries and only one Asian.

Hence, pressure begun accumulating for the Council to change both its working methods and composition. Resultingly, the formal process of reforming the post-Cold War Council was initiated in 1993, when the UNGA established an *Open-Ended Working Group on the Question of Equal Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council* charged with considering 'all aspects of the question of increase in the members of the Security Council, and other matters related to the Security Council' (UNGA, 1993). Concomitantly, the Council instituted its own *Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions.* Since 1993, these have been the two most important fora for discussions of UNSC reform.

Reform of the Council is divided into the clusters of i) compositional reform—that is, changes to the Council's membership structure—and ii) working methods reform, which relates to the Council's day-to-day procedures. Since compositional reform requires an amendment of the UN Charter, UNGA's *Open-Ended Working Group* has been the main forum for negotiations on compositional reform. Similarly, Article 30 of the Charter states that the Council is responsible for its own rules of procedure: The *Informal Working Group* has therefore dealt with working methods reform. Importantly, compositional reform needs to be adopted in the UNGA by two-thirds of all UN members and a stamp of approval from the UNSC Permanent Members. Working methods reform, on the other hand, only needs to be adopted internally by 9 out of 15 Council members; it is hence the lower-hanging fruit of the two reform types.

That point became clear throughout the 1990s, as negotiations in the *Open-Ended Working Group* proved extraordinarily difficult. While most UN members agreed that the Council's composition was inadequate, no consensus could be achieved on possible remedies. From 1993 up until 2005, a range of reform proposals—e.g. the 2+3 proposal, the Ezulwini Consensus, and the Razali plan—suggested various compositional formulas for a reformed Council (Bourantonis, 2005). Yet, no proposal got close to securing the necessary two-thirds majority in the UNGA.

The combination of low institutional transparency and no compositional reform led to substantial procedural legitimacy criticism in the Council over the period 1990-2005. Table I, showing the number of legitimacy statements in the two legitimacy categories over the period, reveals that the Council's outcomes are evaluated more positively than its procedures by UN members over the period. Further, the absolute numbers show that member states refer significantly more to the Council's procedures than outcomes when evaluating the legitimacy of the Council: procedural statements account for 75% of all legitimacy statements. While this finding to some degree reflects the structure of agenda items in the UNGA debates[11], the high

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[11] The annual reports are debated in conjunction with the question of Council reform (see Supplementary Material I). While the annual reports tend to generate both procedural and outcome discussions, the debates over reform are predominantly procedural.

number of procedural statements nonetheless underscores the relative importance that member states attach to the working methods and composition of the Council.

Table I. UNSC sources of legitimacy 1990-2005

Positive statements		Negative statements		Legitimacy score
Confer procedural legitimacy	1221	Withhold procedural legitimacy	942	0.56
Confer outcome legitimacy	483	Withhold outcome legitimacy	208	0.70
Sum	1704		1150	0.60

For the purposes of this article, the northeast corner of Table I—showing the number of statements that evaluate the procedures of the Council negatively—is of particular relevance because it quantifies the procedural legitimacy deficit that motivates the Council to undertake transparency reform in 2006. Over the period 1990-2005, my data show that UN members criticized the procedures of the Council 942 times. To assess which specific aspects of the Council's procedures are viewed most negatively, Figure 3 below disaggregates the procedural criticism into sub-categories that emerged in the data.
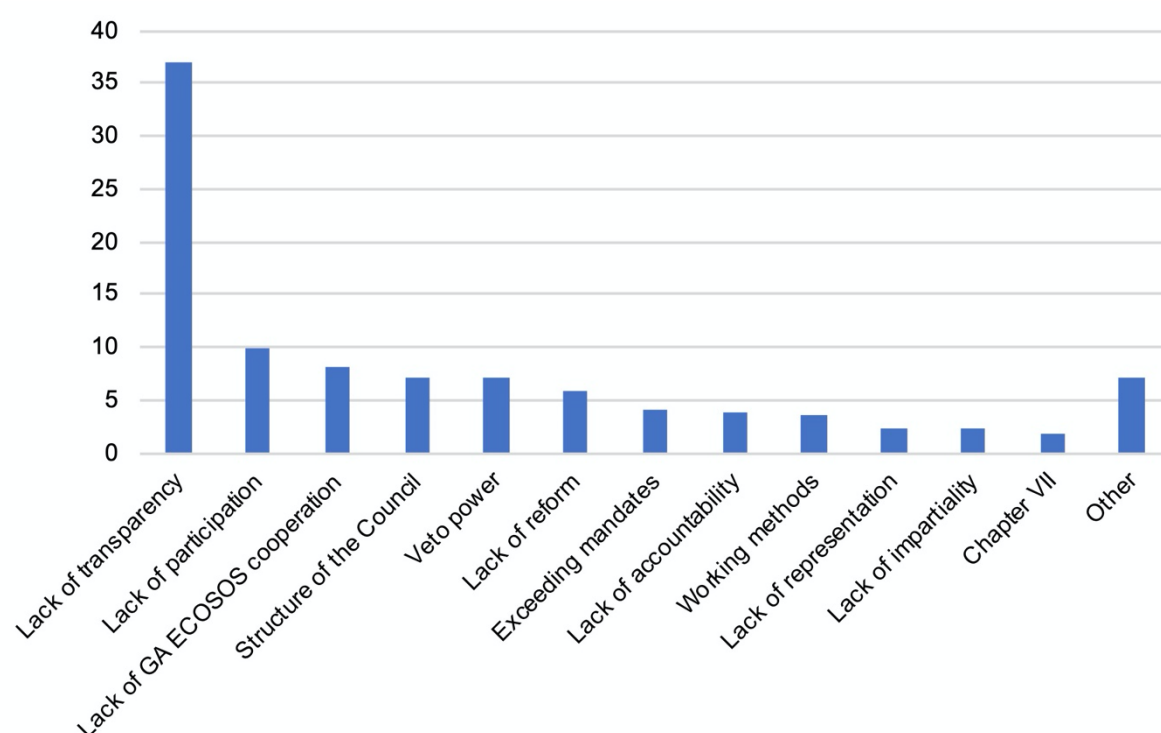

Figure 3. Distribution (%) of negative procedural legitimacy statements 1990-2005

Figure 3 shows that lack of Council transparency is the most important source of negative procedural legitimacy statements, accounting for close to 40% of all such statements. Other notable sources of negative procedural statements include lack of participation; the lack of Council cooperation with the General Assembly (GA) and/or Economic and Social Council

(ECOSOS); the (membership) structure of the Council; the Permanent Members' veto powers; and lack of reform.[12]

The transparency of the Council is a multifaceted issue because the Council has a wide repertoire of working methods and practices, the uses of which vary according to variables such as what issues are discussed, which states are serving, and who is leading the Council as its monthly President. However, one common frustration among diplomats during the 1990s was that they were not kept in the information loop when consequential Council decisions were taken. For non-Council members, the difficulty of obtaining elementary information such as what issues the Council was discussing effectively hindered such countries from impacting the decision-making of the Council (SCR, 2018a). Illustratively, one diplomat recalls that 'even the agenda of the Council was not circulated on beforehand, so countries did not know what was going on.'[13]

The lack of information was particularly frustrating for non-Council members because of the Council's increased sway after 1990. Council decisions are mandatory to implement for all UN members, and certain types of resolutions, e.g., sanctions and counterterrorism resolutions, can be costly to enact. Non-Council members therefore increasingly took the stance that they should be entitled to follow the processes behind such decisions (Wenaweser, 2015).

Around year 2000, negotiations in the *Open-Ended Working Group* were at a stalemate. In 1997, the group's work had culminated in the so-called Razali proposal for comprehensive reform, which proposed five new permanent seats without veto powers, four new non-permanent seats, as well as myriad working methods improvements, including a limit on the use of the veto. However, while the plan was positioned as a compromise of the most promising reform proposals, it failed to garner the necessary support both in the UNGA and among all of the Permanent Members except France (Bourantonis, 2005; Nadin, 2016).

The Razali plan laid bare that the general UN membership had irreconcilable differences on the issue of compositional reform. Consequently, discussions on Council reform begun to increasingly focus on working methods (Sievers & Daws, 2014). Given the compositional reform conundrum, working methods reform appeared as a promising 'quick fix' to the Council's legitimacy challenges—at least for a number of states that were not heavily invested in changing the Council's composition. Broadly, three different groups of states eyed a possibility for shifting the territory of reform debate from composition toward working methods: first, the Permanent Members, which have an interest in keeping the Council's composition unchanged, and hoped that working methods reform could diffuse the pressure for compositional reform; second, medium-sized countries that could see regional rivals get a permanent seat after compositional reform but were unlikely to get a seat themselves (e.g. Argentine, Italy, Pakistan); and, third, small states that so rarely are elected to the Council that

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[12] Details about which types of legitimacy statements that these categories comprise can be found in the codebook (Supplementary Material I).
[13] Interview 2.

a compositional reform would not notably affect their chances of serving. Illustratively, a Liechtensteiner diplomat recalls that:

> I came to the conclusion that enlargement is […] for a small state like us, not that important. That […] the working methods are more important. Because it does not matter how the Council is enlarged […]. It is not going to increase our chances to serve on the Council significantly. Plus, […] if we were to serve every thirtieth year, it would not make a difference. So, what is interesting for us is the other twenty-eight years. Because we have to implement all decisions that the Council adopts, and we are very interested in an effective Security Council. And so, this is why we started working more on working methods issues.[14]

The next significant development in the reform debate came at the UN Millennium Summit in 2000, where the UNGA pledged to intensify efforts to 'achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects' (UNGA, 2000). Encouraged by this declaration, several groups of states begun developing their visions of what 'comprehensive reform' would entail. Three groups drafted their reform proposals as UNGA Resolutions: the United for Consensus group, the G4 countries, and the African Group (Nadin, 2016). The target year for adopting the proposals was 2005, which would be the year of the high-level UN World Summit that many states had begun to see as the definite 'reform event' of the UN (Wenaweser, 2015).

Nonetheless, in the run-up to the 2005 Summit, compositional reform again proved unattainable. The three main reform groups opposed their counterparts' proposals, effectively undermining each other's chances of achieving their objectives (Bourantonis, 2005). Further, none of the proposals managed to secure the Permanent Members' unanimous support. Yet, while the UN membership again failed to unite around a compositional reform formula, most UN members agreed on the necessity of working methods reform of the Council. Hence, world leaders formulated a recommendation in the Summit's outcome document, that the Council '[…] increase the involvement of States not members of the Council in its work, as appropriate, enhance its accountability to the membership, and increase the transparency of its work' (UNGA, 2005).

The transparency reform: Presidential Note 507 of 2006

The World Summit's call for more transparency in the Council's working methods gave impetus to proponents of working methods reform, and in 2006, the Council decided to charge its *Informal Working Group* with overhauling Council working methods (Sievers & Daws, 2014). After months of negotiations, the group recommended several measures to the Council, which eventually adopted Presidential Note 507 (UNSC, 2006). The Note listed a number of measures for enhancing the transparency of working methods and improving interaction with the wider UN membership.

Prior to 2006, the Council's Provisional Rules of Procedure from 1946 constituted the only written compilation of the UNSC's working methods. In practice, however, the Council's working methods had evolved significantly since 1946, without being codified in specific

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[14] Interview 1.

documents (SCR, 2018a). In general, the Permanent Members favor low codification, because it provides them with 'flexibility to respond effectively' to the relevant security conflicts of the day.[15] For Elected Members and non-Council members, however, the lack of codified working methods was perceived as a transparency problem, hindering them both from obtaining relevant information and effectively impacting Council decision-making (Wenaweser, 2015).

Note 507 is a transparency reform—in the sense that it reduces information asymmetries between principal and agent—in two distinct ways. First, the Note compensates for the discrepancy between the Provisional Rules of Procedure and actual practice of the Council.[16] It provides non-members and elected Council members with a set of codified rules of procedure, which helps these countries navigating how the Council works and enables them to effectively participate and take advantage of the various practices available. Hence, compiling and codifying the Council's working procedures is a significant transparency measure by itself.[17]

Second, the Note contains 63 measures for improving the Council's working methods, and a high share of the measures are related to the accessibility of information from the Council. For example, the Note calls for increased recourse to open meetings; increased number of briefings by Council members to non-members; improved documentation, including streamlined nomenclature; publication of activities and decisions and circulation of reports; and publicizing the agenda of the Council at its website (UNSC, 2006). Hence, a long-time UN official credits Note 507 with bringing about a 'huge increase in transparency' for the Council.[18] More specifically, my interviews suggest that the Note served to introduce at least nine specific changes in working methods, listed in Table II below: [19]

Table II. Changes in UNSC working methods resulting from Note 507
1. Circulation and updating of the programme of work
2. Circulation of UNSC draft resolutions to non-Council members
3. Elected members invited to attend Council meetings prior to starting date of their terms
4. Opening of process for distributing chairmanships of UNSC subsidiary bodies
5. Council Presidents conduct regular briefings to non-members
6. Public meetings increased
7. Reports of the Secretary-General circulated to Council members and in a timely manner
8. Streamlined forecasts of the monthly work of the Council
9. Wrap-up sessions increased

Legitimation effects of the transparency reform in the UNSC

Notably, most of the changes outlined above are directly related to the transparency of Council working methods. Given that the lack of Council transparency constitutes the largest source of procedural legitimacy criticism among UN member states in the pre-reform period (see Figure

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[15] Interview 9
[16] Interviews 3, 17
[17] Interviews 1, 4, 9.
[18] Interview 17.
[19] Interviews 2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 11, 13, 17.

3), Presidential Note 507 emerges as a potentially promising legitimacy-enhancing strategy based on the data. Yet, over the post-reform period, I find that the overall legitimacy score (procedural and outcome) of the Council *decreases* 10 percentage points on average compared to the period 1990-2005. Beyond the average score, however, Figure 4 reveals that the 2006 transparency reform is associated with a positive procedural legitimacy trend that subsided over time: the procedural legitimacy score increases markedly from 2007 to 2011, before decreasing again.[20]

Figure 4. The UNSC's procedural legitimacy score 1993-2015

Table III shows that both legitimacy categories decrease in the post-reform period: procedural legitimacy decreases by 7 percentage points (p=0.00) and outcome legitimacy by 16 (p=0.03). Importantly for this article, the decline in the Council's procedural legitimacy contradicts the hypothesis that transparency reform increases the procedural legitimacy of the Council.

Table III. The UNSC's sources of legitimacy 2006-2018

Positive statements	Sum	Negative statements	Sum	Legitimacy score	Leg. score change
Confer procedural legitimacy	530	Withhold procedural legitimacy	553	0.49	-0.07 (p=0.00)
Confer outcome legitimacy	198	Withhold outcome legitimacy	168	0.54	-0.16 (p=0.03)
Sum	728		721	0.50	-0.10 (p=0.00)

Why does procedural legitimacy decrease in the post-reform period? To examine which procedural sub-categories that produce the negative procedural legitimacy effect, Figure 5 plots the distribution of negative procedural legitimacy statements on sub-categories in the pre- and post-reform periods (Supplementary Material V provides the corresponding distribution for positive statements). The Figure shows that the relative importance of the category 'lack of

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[20] Years 1990, 1991, and 2017 are excluded here because of particularly low numbers of legitimacy statements in those years (see publicly available datafile). No debates took place in 1992 and 2016.

transparency' decreases substantially (-17 percentage points) over the post-reform period. In other words, the reform leads to a significant decline in transparency criticism. However, the corresponding figure for positive statements also shows a similar substantial decline in *positive* transparency statements (-19 percentage points; see Supplementary Material V). On balance, perceptions of transparency do not significantly change from the pre-reform period to the post-reform period (Supplementary Material VI); which means that changes in perceptions of transparency do not cause the overall negative effect.
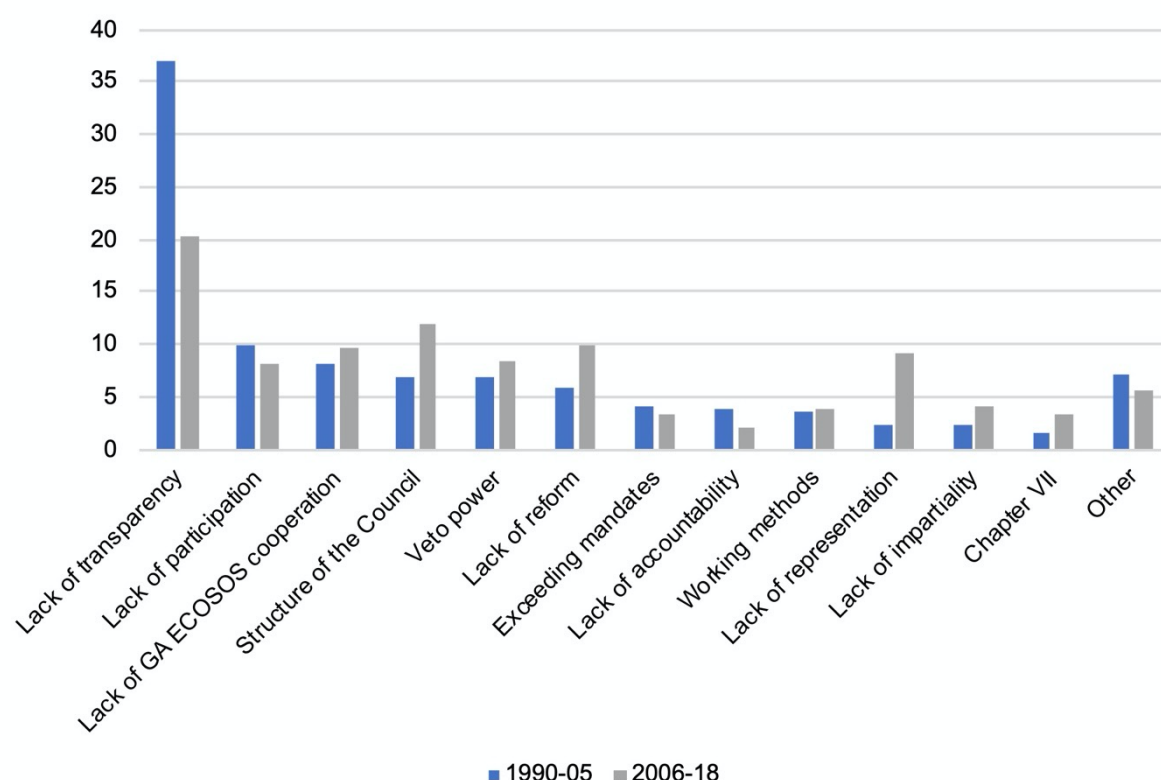

Figure 5. Distribution (%) of negative procedural legitimacy statements 1990-2005 and 2006-2018

Instead, the overall decrease in procedural legitimacy score owes to other procedural issues growing in relative importance after the reform. I propose three main explanations for why the procedural legitimacy score decreases. The first explanation is that the delegitimating effects of no compositional and veto reform overshadow the legitimating effects of transparency reform. Illustratively, Figure 5 shows that negative statements concerning the structure of the Council, the Permanent Members' veto powers, and 'lack of representation', become relatively more important negative procedural legitimacy sources in the post-reform period. Changes in these categories all contribute to the decline in procedural legitimacy. Illustratively, for a German diplomat, working methods reform comes with a 'danger of complacency' because it shifts away the focus from compositional reform.[21] The view that working methods reform supplants compositional reform efforts also helps explain why states' legitimacy perceptions

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[21] Interview 11

decrease more generally: none of the 17 diplomats I interviewed agreed with the notion that working methods reform can replace the need for compositional reform of the Council.

Yet, if we exclude all negative statements pertaining to the composition of the Council, the veto power, and lack of representation in the pre-and post-reform periods, my data still show a 4% decrease in procedural legitimacy score.[22] A second explanation for the negative effect is the increased importance of workings methods issues that are not addressed in Note 507. My interviews indicate that two such issues are particularly important for a wide range of UN member states.[23] First, the balance between the Council and other UN organs (particularly the UNGA), which is a long-standing issue. The main criticism here is that the Council takes on an increasingly wider range of tasks, leaving the other main UN organs to diminish in importance. Second, the penholding system, which refers to the practice of which states that 'hold the pen' when drafting UNSC outcomes. Whereas Elected Members often have an interest in drafting decisions on specific issues, an informal practice emerged around 2010 whereby nearly all Council outcomes on specific conflict-related situations have been penned by either France, the UK, or the USA (see SCR, 2018b).

Third, in line with Stasavage (2004), some interviewees indicate that the increased transparency of the Council has engendered posturing and decreased interactivity.[24] For example, in public meetings, representatives often read out pre-prepared statements and re-state positions that are already common knowledge. Nevertheless, not all transparency measures necessarily generate trade-offs. In interviews, diplomats generally appreciated efforts that increased the *internal* transparency of the Council vis-à-vis the UN membership, such as briefings by the Council President and circulation of draft resolutions. On the other hand, transparency measures that were more geared toward *external* audiences—such as public meetings and broadcasting of sessions—generated more opposition. For some diplomats, external transparency measures entail time-consuming preparations for meetings in which everyone reads out pre-written statements that are primarily meant to satisfy domestic audiences.[25]

Finally, the only clear legitimacy-enhancing effect of the reform is its leading to a slight improvement in perceptions of participation (see Figures 5 and S1), in line with the theoretical expectation that transparency can enable principals to have a greater say in decision-making even in the absence of changes to direct control mechanisms such as formal representation or voting powers.

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[22] My dataset contains 154 negative statements relating to these sub-categories in the pre-reform period and 163 in the post-reform period (see publicly available datafile). Removing these gives a pre-reform procedural legitimacy score of 0.61 and a post-reform score of 0.57.
[23] Interviews 2, 3, 5, 7, 10, 13.
[24] Interviews 2, 6, 7, 9.
[25] Interviews 2, 4, 6, 7, 9.

Alternative explanation: The effect of outcomes

Can the negative relationship between transparency reform and legitimacy be explained by differences in substantive UNSC outcomes over time? While this article has focused on the relationship between procedures and legitimacy, theories of outcome legitimacy would suggest that variation in substantive outcomes—i.e., the performance of an institution in relation to its mandate—is a more important factor than procedures for explaining changes in states' legitimacy perceptions (Dellmuth et al., 2019). In the current context, the negative legitimacy trend may be caused by differences in substantive UNSC outcomes over the two time periods analyzed. If the relationship between outcomes and legitimacy differs between the pre-reform and post-reform periods, the findings in the empirical analysis may be biased by differences in outcomes.

The Council's outcome performance can be understood as the degree to which it succeeds in its mandate of maintaining international peace and security (Cronin & Hurd, 2008). In that sense, the Council both produced important outcomes and failed to do so in the pre-and post-reform periods (see e.g., Bosco, 2009). If the UNSC's performance in managing international peace and security—or lack thereof—affect states' legitimacy perceptions, variations in substantive outcomes over the time periods may affect the results. Specifically, if the negative procedural legitimacy effect identified in the analysis above is caused by variations in Council outcomes, we would expect that the effect of UNSC outcomes on states' procedural legitimacy perceptions is stronger in the post-reform period than in the pre-reform period.

To test the alternative explanation, I regress the outcomes of UNSC meetings on the procedural legitimacy scores of the Council in each year the Council meets. While analyzing the outcomes of Council meetings has clear limitations, e.g., the approach does not consider the implementation or impact of policy decisions, these outcomes (or 'policy outputs') nonetheless constitute one dimension of performance (Tallberg et al., 2016). In the following, I use the outcomes of meetings as the unit of analysis, and pair these outcomes with the legitimacy score of the Council in the year of a given meeting. Frederking & Patane (2017) provide a database on the outcomes of all Council meetings in the period 1989-2016 (N=5057), with variables covering, inter alia, decisions produced, topics discussed, and actions taken by the Council. The OLS models below (Table IV) regress 23 of these outcome variables on the UNSC's procedural legitimacy score.[26] For a description of the independent variables, see Frederking & Patane (2017). The first model covers the pre-reform period 1990-2005. The second model covers the post-reform period 2006-2016.[27] The dependent variable is the Council's procedural legitimacy score of the year that a given meeting was held. Since the data are longitudinal, I adjust standard errors for heteroskedasticity and autocorrelation.

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[26] The regressions are robust to several different specifications and inclusion of different outcome variables. Multicollinearity is low in both models; and excluding the variables with elevated Variance Inflation Factors does not alter the main results.

[27] While my legitimacy data cover 1990-2018, Frederking and Patane's outcome data only extend to 2016.

Table IV. OLS regressions: UNSC outcomes and procedural legitimacy score

	Dependent variable:	
	Procedural legitimacy score	
	OLS	
	Years: 1990-2005	**Years: 2006-2016**
Constant	0.515[**] (0.023)	0.518[**] (0.022)
Action: Charter-related function	-0.028 (0.016)	-0.0002 (0.010)
Action: Address Subsidiary Body	-0.001 (0.004)	-0.008[*] (0.004)
Decision: Presidential statement	-0.005 (0.012)	-0.003 (0.015)
Decision: Resolution	-0.030 (0.018)	0.018 (0.011)
No decision: Resolution vetoed	-0.032 (0.046)	0.043 (0.038)
No decision: Resolution insufficient votes	-0.015 (0.066)	-0.077[**] (0.024)
Topic: Weapons of mass destruction	0.013 (0.029)	0.033[*] (0.015)
Topic: Military use of force	0.040[**] (0.014)	-0.014[*] (0.007)
Topic: Terrorism	0.037[**] (0.014)	-0.010 (0.009)
Topic: Human Rights	0.021 (0.011)	0.010 (0.008)
Topic: Humanitarian Law	-0.010 (0.009)	0.015[*] (0.008)
Topic: Democracy	0.005 (0.010)	0.008 (0.010)
Topic: Transnational crime	0.019 (0.042)	0.060[**] (0.012)
Topic: Thematic issues	0.016 (0.014)	-0.015 (0.012)
Topic: Regional conflicts	-0.011 (0.015)	-0.027 (0.014)
Action: Chapter VI mediation	-0.001 (0.014)	-0.023 (0.014)
Action: Threat to int'l peace and security	-0.005 (0.012)	-0.003 (0.013)
Action: Chapter VII authority	0.004 (0.014)	-0.015 (0.016)
Action: Soft resolution	0.001 (0.014)	-0.034[*] (0.014)
Action: Authorize use of force	0.003 (0.015)	-0.019 (0.016)
Action: Discuss/authorize sanctions	-0.001 (0.010)	-0.005 (0.010)
Action: Discuss/authorize peacekeeping	0.004 (0.013)	0.002 (0.009)
Action: Authorize regional organization to act	0.001 (0.007)	0.006 (0.008)
Observations	2,335	2,264
R^2	0.063	0.035
Adjusted R^2	0.053	0.025
F Statistic	6.713[***] (df = 23; 2311)	3.492[***] (df = 23; 2240)

Note:	[*]$p<0.5$; [**]$p<0.01$; [***]$p<0.001$

The model shows that several outcome factors are significantly associated with the Council's procedural legitimacy score, and that the correlates of procedural legitimacy score differ between the two periods. However, as outlined in the empirical strategy section, the logic of using long time periods for the content analysis is that the effects of different exogenous factors on legitimacy should average out over time. While the regressions show that different outcomes are correlated with procedural legitimacy in different ways over the two periods, the important question to evaluate the validity of the analysis is whether the *total* effect of the different outcomes differs between the two periods. Hence, the central metric is the coefficient of determination (R^2) in the two models. Importantly, although several outcomes correlate with procedural legitimacy, all the outcomes included here only account for ≈6% of the variation in procedural legitimacy score in the pre-reform period and ≈3.5% in the post-reform period. In sum, this result indicates that the total effect of outcomes on procedural legitimacy is slightly

weaker in the post-reform period. If the alternative explanation were true, we should have observed the opposite tendency—that outcomes could account for *more* of the variation in the dependent variable in the post-reform period. In sum, while this analysis is merely correlational and only captures the output dimension of UNSC outcome performance, the slightly weaker association between meeting outcomes and procedural legitimacy in the post-reform period indicates that the negative procedural legitimacy effect is not caused by changes in this dimension of UNSC outcome performance.

Conclusion

The UN Security Council has been one of the most influential and potent international institutions since the end of the Cold War. However, its broad powers have generated controversy, and the legitimacy of the Council has consistently been contested among different audiences. Consequently, a sizeable literature has proposed various ways in which the Council should reform. Moreover, the Council itself has proactively sought to enhance its own legitimacy, through the reform efforts of groups of states.

There are two main channels for reforming the Council: compositional reform and working methods reform. This article has analyzed the effects of a transparency reform of the Council's working methods on UN member states' legitimacy perceptions. While working methods reform proponents have argued that increasing the transparency of working methods could be a more feasible solution to enhance the legitimacy of the Council than compositional reform (e.g., Scherz & Zysset, 2020; Sievers & Daws, 2014; Wilson, 2019), my data from UNGA debates 1990-2018 show that the 2006 transparency reform enacted with Note 507 has led to an overall decline in UN member states' perceptions of procedural legitimacy. On the upside, the reform has led to a substantial decrease in transparency criticism and a slight increase in states' perceptions of participation. Yet, the UNSC's failure to address a range of other procedural legitimacy issues—including the Council's composition and the Permanent Members' veto powers—adds up to a negative legitimacy effect in sum.

Overall, these findings indicate that transparency reforms *can* positively affect perceptions of legitimacy, but also that increased transparency is not a panacea to procedural legitimacy deficits. Importantly, increased transparency does not in itself alter the distribution of direct procedural control over an institution. In the current case, this mattered for legitimacy perceptions because a wide range of UN member states sought a reform that would give them increased direct influence, compared to which the transparency reform that was implemented contained relatively weak changes to the Council's procedures. The finding that states increasingly lament the Council's unrepresentative composition in the post-reform period speaks to the importance of the fundamental principle of sovereign equality for states, which includes the idea that all states are entitled to participate in the generation of international rules and laws (Reus-Smit, 1999).

Since the transparency reform examined here is the most comprehensive of its kind that the Council has undertaken, the findings likely represent the upper bounds of what transparency can do for the legitimacy of the Council. Notably, the reform both contained a high number of

salient transparency measures that had previously been demanded by UN members, and saw a high degree of implementation; it hence complied with central scope conditions for effective transparency (Buchanan and Keohane, 2006; Lindstedt & Naurin, 2010). Yet, the increased salience of the unrepresentative design of the Council precluded overall positive effects. If transparency cannot compensate for fundamentally unrepresentative design structures, the negative effect of the transparency reform examined here may travel to other institutions with formal or semi-formal great power dominance, such as the International Monetary Fund, G20, World Bank, or World Trade Organization. On the other hand, institutions wherein direct control is more equally distributed *a priori*—such as the UN climate negotiations—may exhibit more positive effects of transparency reforms.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge that the current analysis is unable to compare the effects of reform with the counterfactual state of affairs. In other words, the negative legitimacy effects of reform do not preclude the possibility that the reform prevented a deeper legitimacy crisis that could have occurred in its absence. At the 2005 World Summit, state leaders pledged to reform both the composition and working methods of the Council. What would have happened if the Council had failed to deliver on both of these fronts? Given the impasse of compositional reform negotiations, proponents of the 2006 transparency reform may have achieved what they hoped for.

Bio
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Replication statement
The dataset, codebook, and do-files for the empirical analysis in this article, along with the online appendix, are available at https://www.prio.org/jpr/datasets/. All analyses were conducted using R and MS Excel.

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Supplementary material I. Coding instructions and codebook for content analysis

General coding instructions

1. The first step in the coding procedure is identifying which parts of the UNGA debates records that should be coded or not. In the UNGA debates, only text under the agenda items "Report of the Security Council" or "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters" are coded. For most years, these two items are considered in conjunction (see Sievers and Daws 2014, p.588). Occasionally, however the two items are discussed separately. Under these agenda items all sections are coded, except statements by Presidents of the General Assembly (who chairs the debates) and the President of the Security Council (who introduces SC report to GA).

2. After locating the relevant sections that are to be coded, the next step is to look for legitimacy statements within that section. A legitimacy statement is characterized by a UN member state expressing a sentiment toward the Security Council. A coding unit is therefore generally characterized by three components at minimum: a country, a sentiment and a reference to the Council. For example: "Cuba values the procedures of the Security Council." (constructed example). Note that sometimes, there will be no legitimacy statements in the designated sections of a document. If so, no coding is undertaken.

3. Sentiment is generally characterized by a verb or adjective that expresses either support or dissatisfaction. The codebook below contains lists of sentiment verbs and adjectives that the coder should look for. However, it should be noted that occasionally a country may express sentiment without using verbs or adjectives. Legitimacy statements are coded in such cases also, as long as it is possible to identify a sentiment in the statement.

4. Sentiments are divided into two categories: positive or negative. Since all coding units have to contain a sentiment, all coding units are classified as either positive or negative.

5. After deciding on whether the coding unit expresses positive or negative sentiment, the coder should assess whether the coding unit contains a justification. A justification is any information that the country expresses as a reason for its sentiment.

6. If the country expresses a justification for the sentiment, the coding unit is coded as either "procedural" or "outcome"; see codebook for details.

7. Legitimacy statements without a specific justification are not coded for the current analysis.

Quasi-sentences and natural sentences

The coding unit is a quasi-sentence, which is defined as one identifiable message or argument. In the documents coded for this analysis, states often express one unique message or argument per sentence. In these cases, one quasi-sentence equals one natural sentence. The general rule for the coder is therefore that one legitimacy statement equals the length of a natural sentence. This is the case for the vast majority of the legitimacy statements coded for this analysis. However, there are exceptions to that rule. One natural sentence may comprise several legitimacy statements, and occasionally several sentences jointly comprise one legitimacy statement. The paragraphs below describe when to split natural sentences into two or more coding units and when to combine two or more natural sentences into a coding unit.

When to split a natural sentence into two or more coding units

A natural sentence is divided into two or more coding units if it contains more than one unique argument. Unique arguments are most often separated by either punctuation (e.g. commas or semicolons) or conjunctions (e.g. "and"). A general rule is that if it makes sense to split up the sentence into a meaningful bullet point list, the sentence likely contains several legitimacy statements (Werner, Lacewell, and Volkens 2015). Note, however, that even though punctuation or conjunctions *can* indicate that a sentence should be split up to several legitimacy statements, there is no automaticity. The rules for dividing up natural sentences are as follows. A natural sentence is divided into two or more legitimacy statements if:

- The sentence contains two or more unique sentiments, or
- The sentiment refers to two or more unique sources of legitimacy.

This rule means, for example, that one sentiment and two sources of legitimacy are coded as two legitimacy statements, and that one source of legitimacy and two sentiments are coded as two legitimacy statements.

When to code two or more natural sentences as one coding unit

Sometimes, a coding unit consists of more than a single sentence. The important thing to look for is a sentiment and the justification or source for that sentiment. Consider the following quote:

> "We appreciate the assessments that have been prepared by the successive Presidents of the Council in recent months. These documents are useful instruments in helping us to understand better what is happening." (Mexico, A/52/PV.38)

The first sentence in the coding unit above contains a positive sentiment ("appreciate"). However, it is not possible to understand simply from that sentence what causes the positive sentiment, since the sentence does not contain any justification. However, the second sentence elaborates on the first: the documents are important for "helping us to understand better what is happening". Hence the coding unit is given the codes: positive, procedural.

When to not code separate legitimacy statements

There are two main rules for when separate legitimacy statements should not be coded:

1. Repeated messages are not coded as separate legitimacy statements. Repeated messages are defined as legitimacy statements that comprise the same sentiment *and* the same legitimacy source repeated two or more times without any intervening text. For example: "We commend the continuing trend towards greater transparency in the Council's work and note with appreciation the increasing openness of the Council." (Romania, 2004, A/59/PV.29). That legitimacy statement is repeated because "transparency" and "openness" are synonyms.
2. Examples are not coded as separate legitimacy statements. If an actor lists examples to illustrate an argument, these examples are not coded.

What counts as a "sentiment"?

Sentiment is here defined as an evaluative statement. Since this study is about states' perceptions of the legitimacy of the Security Council, only states' evaluative statements of the Council are coded. Evaluative statements comprise various types of words and formulations. They can be adjectives, adverbs, verbs, or nouns, in both simple and compound form. The essential point is that there is some sort of evaluation of the Council. There are four rules for when to code sentiment or not:

1. Only sentiment that expresses a clear and direct evaluation of the Council is coded. In general, neutral words such as "we note that…" or "we observe that…" are not sentiments by themselves. Hence sentences beginning with such neutral expressions are not coded. However, expressions of this kind can be coded if they are combined with adjectives or adverbs. For example: "we regrettably observe that…", or "we note that the repugnant practice of the veto is still in place."

2. Counterfactual conditional *sentiment*, e.g. "it *would be good* if the Security Council could be more transparent", is not coded. Since "good" is a positively laden word, it's not straightforward to decide whether such constructions can be interpreted as negative legitimacy statements. Note that, this rule does not exclude the possibility of coding legitimacy statements that are a part of counterfactual conditional sentences, as long as a clear sentiment is expressed (e.g. "it would be good if the Council abstained from using its *undemocratic* veto powers" would be coded because "undemocratic" indicates a clear negative sentiment).

3. Repeated sentiments within the same coding unit are not coded separately. Two or more synonymous or quasi-synonymous sentiments that refer to the same source of legitimacy are only coded as one legitimacy statement. Take the following sentence: "Senegal shares the view of the majority of States that the right to veto is inequitable, discriminatory and anachronistic." (Senegal 2004, A/59/PV.26). That sentence is only coded as one legitimacy statement, although it contains three negatively laden adjectives. The reason is that the adjectives all describe a similar negative sentiment toward the right to veto. This is an example of repeated sentiment.

4. If there is any doubt on whether a statement contains a sentiment or not, the statement is not coded.

Explanation of codebook

The distinction between procedures and outcomes is grounded in whether a legitimacy statement refers to how decisions are reached or to the content of decisions themselves: procedural statements refer to any aspect of the process or methods that the Council uses to arrive at decisions, while outcome statements refer to the legitimacy of the Council's decisions in relation to its mandate of maintaining international peace and security. The column "Description" guides the choice of coding into specific sub-categories, while "Dictionary" shows the most prevalent words in a given sub-category. In other words, the description of the category gives instructions for what a statement in a given sub-category must contain. The dictionary gives a non-exhaustive overview of which keywords and terms that a given sub-category actually contains according to my coding. The dictionary is hence meant to help identify different sub-categories of legitimacy statements, but not override rules provided in the description.

Table S1. Codebook.

Coding categories and indicators	Description	Dictionary (non-exhaustive)
Part A: Positive statements	Evaluative statements that express positive evaluations of the UN Security Council.	"Adequate"; "appreciate/appreciation"; "appropriate"; "commend"; "content"; "encouraging/encouraged"; "important"; "impressive"; "improved/improvement"; "pleased"; "positive"; "progress"; "relevant/relevance"; "remarkable"; "respect"; "satisfaction/satisfied"; "significant"; "strong"; "succeed/success/successfully"; "support"; "useful"; "welcome"
A.2. Outcome legitimacy	Evaluative statements that express positive evaluations of the UN Security Council's outcome performance and the outputs produced.	
a. Actions or resolutions	Evaluative statements that express positive evaluations of the UN Security Council's actions or resolutions produced.	"Action; "activity"; "decision"; "issue"; "measure"; "resolution [number x]"; "respond/response"
b. African conflicts	Evaluative statements that express positive evaluations of the UN Security Council's handling of, or involvement in, African conflicts.	"Africa", "[African country x]"; "[UNSC mission to country x in Africa]"; "[UNSC action regarding country x in Africa]"
c. Asian conflicts	Evaluative statements that express positive evaluations of the UN Security Council's handling of, or involvement in, Asian conflicts.	"Asia", "[Asian country x]"; "[UNSC mission to country x in Asia]"; "[UNSC action regarding country x in Asia]"
d. Broad scope of issues	Evaluative statements that express positive evaluations of the UN Security Council's handling of, or involvement in, issues that are "broader" than traditional security concerns.	"Expansion of the concept of security"; "broad set of issues"; "non-military threats"
e. Compliance	Evaluative statements that express positive evaluations of the UN Security Council's ability to induce compliance with its decisions or resolutions.	"Compliance"; "implementation"
f. Conflict prevention	Evaluative statements that express positive evaluations of the UN Security Council's engagement in conflict prevention.	"Conflict prevention"; "prevention"; "prevention of conflict"
g. Conflict resolution	Evaluative statements that express positive evaluations of the UN Security Council's engagement in conflict resolution.	"Addressing conflict [x]"; "conflict resolution"; "regional conflicts"; "resolution of conflict [x]"; "contain conflict [x]"

h.	Counterterrorism	Evaluative statements that express positive evaluations of the UN Security Council's counterterrorism efforts.	"11 September 2001"; "combat terrorism"; "counterterrorism"; "counterterrorism committee"; "fight terrorism"; "terrorism"
i.	Effectiveness	Evaluative statements that express positive evaluations of the UN Security Council's effectiveness.	"Effective"
j.	European conflicts	Evaluative statements that express positive evaluations of the UN Security Council's handling of, or involvement in, European conflicts.	"Europe", "[European country x]"; "[UNSC mission to country x in Europe]"; "[UNSC action regarding country x in the Europe]"
k.	Humanitarian issues	Evaluative statements that express positive evaluations of the UN Security Council's engagement with humanitarian issues.	"Humanitarian"
l.	Latin American conflicts	Evaluative statements that express positive evaluations of the UN Security Council's handling of, or involvement in, Latin American conflicts.	"Latin America", "South America"; "Central America"; "Caribbean" "[Latin American country x]"; "[UNSC mission to country x in Latin America]"; "[UNSC action regarding country x in Latin America]"
m.	Maintenance of peace and security	Evaluative statements that express positive evaluations of the UN Security Council's ability to "maintain peace and security", which is the Council's defined mandate in the UN Charter.	"Mandate"; "maintenance"; "peace and security"; "provisions of the Charter"; "peace"; "security"
n.	Middle East conflicts	Evaluative statements that express positive evaluations of the UN Security Council's handling of, or involvement in, conflicts in the Middle East.	"Middle East"; "[African country x]"; "[UNSC mission to country x in the Middle East]"; "[UNSC action regarding country x in the Middle East]"
o.	Non-proliferation and arms control	Evaluative statements that express positive evaluations of the UN Security Council's efforts in non-proliferation and arms control.	"Arms control"; "missile"; "non-proliferation"; "nuclear"; "proliferation"; "weapons"
p.	Peacebuilding	Evaluative statements that express positive evaluations of the UN Security Council's peacebuilding efforts.	"Peacebuilding"; "peace-building"; "Peacebuilding Commission"
q.	Peacekeeping	Evaluative statements that express positive evaluations of the UN Security Council's peacekeeping efforts.	"Peacekeeping"; "peacekeeping operation"; "peacekeeping mandate"; "peace-keeping"; "peace operation"
r.	Protection of civilians	Evaluative statements that express positive evaluations of the UN Security Council's efforts to protect civilians in conflict.	"Children"; "civilians"; "women"; "children and women"; "women and peace"
s.	Sanctions	Evaluative statements that express positive evaluations of the UN	"Sanctions"; "Sanctions Committee"

		Security Council's use of sanctions.	
A.3. Procedural legitimacy		Evaluative statements that express positive evaluations of the UN Security Council's decision-making procedures and working methods.	
a.	Accountability	Evaluative statements that express positive evaluations of the UN Security Council's ability to act on behalf of, and report its activities to, the General Assembly, as defined in Articles 15 and 24 of the UN Charter.	"Accountability/accountable"; "annual report"; "Article 15"; "Article 24"; "on behalf of";
b.	Arria-formula meetings	Evaluative statements that express positive evaluations of the UN Security Council's use of Arria-formula meetings.	"Arria-formula meetings"; "Arriaformula meetings"; "Arria meetings"
c.	Cooperation with regional organizations	Evaluative statements that express positive evaluations of the UN Security Council's cooperation with regional organizations.	"African Union/AU"; "Economic Community of West African States/ECOWAS"; "European Union/EU"; "regional institutions"; "regional organizations"
d.	Deliberation	Evaluative statements that express positive evaluations of the UN Security Council's practices related to deliberations and dialogue.	"Deliberate/deliberation"; "dialogue"; "exchange of ideas"; "exchange of views"; "interactive/interactivity"
e.	Expert briefings	Evaluative statements that express positive evaluations of the UN Security Council's practice of holding expert briefings.	"Briefings by [person x] or [institution x]"; "briefings from UN officials"; "envoys"; "expertise"; "expert briefing"; "special knowledge"
f.	Field missions	Evaluative statements that express positive evaluations of the UN Security Council's practice of conducting field missions or field visits to investigate any dispute or situation which might threaten international peace and security.	"Ad-hoc mission"; "fact-finding"; "fact-finding mission"; "field mission"; "field visit"; "mission"; "special mission"; "visit"
g.	GA/ECOSOS cooperation	Evaluative statements that express positive evaluations of the cooperation, interaction, or relationship between the UN Security Council and the General Assembly (GA) or the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOS).	"Economic and Social Council/ECOSOS"; "general membership"; "General Assembly/GA"; "interaction"; "/larger/wider United Nations membership"; "relationship"
h.	Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Matters	Evaluative statements that express positive evaluations of the Council's "Informal Working Group on Documentation and	"Informal Working Group"; "Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Matters"

		Other Procedural Matters".	
i.	Note 507	Evaluative statements that express positive evaluations of UN Security Council's Presidential Note 507.	"507"; "S/2006/507"; "S/2010/507"; "S/2017/507"; "presidential note on working methods"; "working methods note"
j.	Office of the Ombudsperson for the Sanctions Committee	Evaluative statements that express positive evaluations of the Office of the Ombudsperson for the Sanctions Committee.	"Ombudsperson"
k.	Open-ended working group	Evaluative statements that express positive evaluations of the relationship between the UN Security Council and the "Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council", which is a group created by the General Assembly. Note: coding for this indicator should only occur when a state discusses the way that the Security Council has interacted with the group or the group's proposals. No coding should occur when a state discusses the internal affairs or progress of the group in itself, including the so-called "intergovernmental negotiations", since the Open-ended Working Group originates in the General Assembly and not the Council.	"Open-ended working group"; "Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council"
l.	Participation	Evaluative statements that express positive evaluations of UN member states' opportunities to participate in the UN Security Council's decision-making procedures. This indicator captures various practices related to inclusiveness and states' opportunity to express their views in the decision-making of the Security Council. Note: one-way communication practices (communication from the Security Council to	"Consultations"; "engagement with the wider membership"; "include/inclusive/inclusiveness"; "input"; "friends of the Secretary-General"; "group of friends"; "interaction between members and non-members"; "involve/involving/involvement"; "open meeting"; "open session"; "opportunities for input"; "participate/participation"; "public meeting"; "public debate"; "resolution 1353"; "troop-contributing countries"; "views of member states"; "views of non-members"; "voice"

		the general membership) are coded as "transparency", while two-way communication practices (communication between the Council and the general membership) are coded as "participation".	
m.	Private meetings	Evaluative statements that express positive evaluations of the UN Security Council's practice of conducting private meetings.	"Private meeting"
n.	Provisional rules of procedure	Evaluative statements that express positive evaluations of the UN Security Council's rules of procedure.	"Provisional rules of procedure"; "rules of procedure"
o.	Sanctions committee	Evaluative statements that express positive evaluations of the work of the UN Security Council's sanctions committee.	"Sanctions committee"
p.	Structure or composition of the Council	Evaluative statements that express positive evaluations of the structure or composition of the UN Security Council	"Composition"; "structure";
q.	Subsidiary bodies	Evaluative statements that express positive evaluations of the work of the UN Security Council's Subsidiary bodies.	"Subsidiary body"; "subsidiary organ"
r.	Thematic debates or issues	Evaluative statements that express positive evaluations of the UN Security Council's practice of conducting thematic debates.	"Thematic debate"; "thematic issue"; "theme"
s.	Transparency	Evaluative statements that express positive evaluations of the degree of transparency and/or openness in the UN Security Council's work. This indicator captures various practices related to how informed the general membership is of the Security Council's work, including the reporting practices of the Security Council to the General Assembly. Note: one-way communication practices (communication from the Security Council to the general membership) are coded as "transparency", while	"Access/accessible"; "announce/announcement"; "briefings"; "communication"; "document/documentation"; "information"; "Journal of United Nations"; "monthly assessments"; "open/openness"; "orientation"; "programme of work"; "report/reporting"; "summary"; "transparent/transparency"; "wrap-up sessions"

		two-way communication practices (communication between the Council and the general membership) are coded as "participation".	
t.	Veto power	Evaluative statements that express positive evaluations of the permanent members' right to veto.	"Prerogative or privilege of Permanent Member(s)"; "veto"; "veto power"
u.	Working methods	Evaluative statements that express positive evaluations of the working methods or procedures of the UN Security Council.	"Decision-making"; "method(s) of work"; "practice(s)"; "procedure(s)"; "work"; "working method [x]; "working methods"
v.	Wrap-up sessions	Evaluative statements that express positive evaluations of the UN Security Council's practice of conducting wrap-up sessions.	"wrap-up meeting; "wrap-up session"
Part B: Negative statements			"Anachronistic"; "concern/concerned"; "deficient/deficit"; "disappoint/disappointed/disappointment"; "[x] does not meet expectations"; "fail/failure"; "inability"; "ineffective"; "inequitable"; "injustice"; "lack of"; "outdated"; "paralysis/paralyzed"; "regret/regrettably"; "secrecy"; "unacceptable"; "unfortunate/unfortunately"; "unjust"; "unsatisfactory"
B.2. Outcome legitimacy		Evaluative statements that express negative evaluations of the UN Security Council's performance and the outcomes produced.	
a.	Actions or resolutions	Evaluative statements that express negative evaluations of the UN Security Council's (lack of) actions or resolutions.	"Action; "activity"; "decision"; "inaction" "issue"; "measure"; "resolution [number x]"; "respond/response"
b.	African conflicts	Evaluative statements that express negative evaluations of the UN Security Council's handling of, or (lack of) involvement in, African conflicts.	"Africa", "[African country x]"; "[UNSC mission to country x in Africa]"; "[UNSC action regarding country x in Asia]"
c.	Asian conflicts	Evaluative statements that express negative evaluations of the UN Security Council's handling of, or (lack of) involvement in, Asian conflicts.	"Asia", "[Asian country x]"; "[UNSC mission to country x in Asia]"; "[UNSC action regarding country x in the Asia]"
d.	Broad scope of issues	Evaluative statements that express negative evaluations of the UN Security Council's handling of, or involvement in, issues that are "broader" than traditional security concerns.	"Expansion of the concept of security"; "broad set of issues"; "non-military threats"
e.	Compliance	Evaluative statements that express negative evaluations of the UN Security Council's ability to induce	"Compliance"; "implementation"

		compliance with its decisions or resolutions.	
f.	Conflict prevention	Evaluative statements that express negative evaluations of the UN Security Council's (lack of) engagement in conflict prevention.	"Conflict prevention"; "prevention"; "prevention of conflict"
g.	Conflict resolution	Evaluative statements that express negative evaluations of the UN Security Council's (lack of) engagement in conflict resolution.	"Addressing conflict [x]"; "conflict resolution"; "regional conflicts"; "resolution of conflict [x]"; "contain conflict [x]"
h.	Counterterrorism	Evaluative statements that express negative evaluations of the UN Security Council's (lack of) engagement in counterterrorism efforts.	"11 September 2001"; "combat terrorism"; "counterterrorism"; "counterterrorism committee"; "fight terrorism"; "terrorism"
i.	Effectiveness	Evaluative statements that express negative evaluations of the UN Security Council's effectiveness.	"Effective"
j.	European conflicts	Evaluative statements that express negative evaluations of the UN Security Council's handling of, or (lack of) involvement in, European conflicts.	"Europe", "[European country x]"; "[UNSC mission to country x in Europe]"; "[UNSC action regarding country x in the Europe]"
k.	Humanitarian issues	Evaluative statements that express positive evaluations of the UN Security Council's (lack of) engagement with humanitarian issues.	"Humanitarian"
l.	Latin American and Central American conflicts	Evaluative statements that express negative evaluations of the UN Security Council's handling of, or involvement in, Latin American conflicts.	"Latin America", "South America"; "Central America"; "Caribbean" "[Latin American country x]"; "[UNSC mission to country x in Latin America]"; "[UNSC action regarding country x in Latin America]"
m.	Maintenance of peace and security	Evaluative statements that express negative evaluations of the UN Security Council's ability to "maintain peace and security", which is the Council's defined mandate in the UN Charter.	"Mandate"; "maintenance"; "peace and security"; "provisions of the Charter"; "peace"; "security"
n.	Middle East conflicts	Evaluative statements that express negative evaluations of the UN Security Council's handling of, or involvement in, conflicts in the Middle East.	"Middle East"; "[African country x]"; "[UNSC mission to country x in the Middle East]"; "[UNSC action regarding country x in the Middle East]"
o.	Non-proliferation and arms control	Evaluative statements that express negative evaluations of the UN Security Council's efforts in non-proliferation and arms control.	"Arms control"; "missile"; "non-proliferation"; "nuclear"; "proliferation"; "weapons"
p.	Peacebuilding	Evaluative statements that express negative evaluations of the UN	"Peacebuilding"; "peace-building"; "Peacebuilding Commission"

		Security Council's peacebuilding efforts.	
q.	Peacekeeping	Evaluative statements that express negative evaluations of the UN Security Council's peacekeeping efforts.	"Peacekeeping"; "peacekeeping operation"; "peacekeeping mandate"; "peace-keeping"; "peace operation"
r.	Protection of civilians	Evaluative statements that express negative evaluations of the UN Security Council's efforts to protect civilians in conflict.	"Children"; "civilians"; "women"; "children and women"; "women and peace"
s.	Sanctions/sanctions committee	Evaluative statements that express negative evaluations of the UN Security Council's use of sanctions.	"Sanctions"; "Sanctions Committee"
B.3. Procedural legitimacy			
a.	Chapter VII	Evaluative statements that express negative evaluations of the UN Security Council's adoption of chapter VII resolutions.	"Article 41; "article 42; "Chapter VII"
b.	Closed meetings	Evaluative statements that express negative evaluations of the UN Security Council's practice of holding closed meetings.	"Closed doors"; "closed meeting"
c.	Cooperation with regional organizations	Evaluative statements that express negative evaluations of the UN Security Council's (lack of) cooperation with regional organizations.	"African Union/AU"; "Economic Community of West African States/ECOWAS"; "European Union/EU"; "regional institutions"; "regional organizations"
d.	Implementation of working methods reform	Evaluative statements that express negative evaluations of the UN Security Council's (lack of) implementation of working methods reform.	"implementation of Presidential Note 507 or S/507"; "implementation of working methods practice [x]"
e.	Lack of accountability	Evaluative statements that express negative evaluations of the UN Security Council's ability to act on behalf of, and report its activities to, the General Assembly, as defined in Articles 15 and 24 of the UN Charter.	"Accountability/accountable"; "annual report"; "Article 15"; "Article 24"; "obligation to report"; "on behalf of"
f.	Lack of consensus	Evaluative statements that express negative evaluations of the UN Security Council's ability to reach consensus in decision-making procedures.	"Consensus"
g.	Lack of deliberation or interactivity	Evaluative statements that express negative evaluations of the UN Security Council's practices related to deliberations and dialogue.	"Deliberate/deliberation"; "dialogue"; "exchange of ideas"; "exchange of views"; "[meting x is a] formality"; "interactive/interactivity"; "pro forma"; "quality of discussions"; "ritual/ritualistic"
h.	Lack of democracy	Evaluative statements that express negative evaluations of the UN Security Council's degree of democracy in	"Democratic"; "democratization"; "non-democratic"; "undemocratic"

		decision-making procedures	
i.	Lack of GA/ECOSOS cooperation	Evaluative statements that express negative evaluations of the cooperation, interaction, or relationship between the UN Security Council and the General Assembly (GA) or the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOS).	"Autonomy of the Security Council"; "autonomous entity"; "competence"; "encroach on GA/ECOSOS"; "issue [x] falls within the purview of the GA/ECOSOS; "jurisdiction of GA/ECOSOS"; "GA/ECOSOS is disadvantaged/ignored/marginalized"; "relations or relationship between GA/ECOSOS and Security Council"
j.	Lack of impartiality	Evaluative statements that express negative evaluations of the UN Security Council's ability to act impartially in maintaining international peace and security.	"Bias"; "discriminate/discrimination"; "double standards"; "lack of impartiality"; "lack of independent review"; "lack of uniform standard"; "one-sided"; "selectivity"
k.	Lack of participation	Evaluative statements that express negative evaluations of UN member states' opportunities to participate in the UN Security Council's decision-making procedures. This indicator captures various practices related to inclusiveness and states' opportunity to express their views in the decision-making of the Security Council. Note: one-way communication practices (communication from the Security Council to the general membership) are coded as "transparency", while two-way communication practices (communication between the Council and the general membership) are coded as "participation".	"Consultations"; "contribute"; "engagement with the wider membership"; "exclude/exclusive/exclusiveness"; "include/inclusive/inclusiveness"; "input"; "friends of the Secretary-General"; "group of friends"; "interaction between members and non-members"; "involve/involving/involvement"; "non-inclusive"; "open meeting"; "open session"; "opportunities for input"; "participate/participation"; "preclude"; "public meeting"; "public debate"; "resolution 1353"; "troop-contributing countries"; "views of member states"; "views of non-members"; "voice"
l.	Lack of reform	Evaluative statements that express negative evaluations of the UN Security Council's ability to adapt or reform. Note: this category is reserved for statements that refer to "lack of reform" in general. Specific types of reform have separate coding categories: Lack of *structural* or *compositional* reform is coded in the category "Lack of structural	"Progress"; "real change"; "reform"; "substantive change"

		reform", while lack of *working methods* reform is coded as "Lack of working methods reform".	
m.	Lack of representation	Evaluative statements that express negative evaluations of the UN Security Council's representativeness.	"Country [x] or continent [x] is not represented in the Council"; "historic injustice"; "not represented/representative"; "underrepresented"; "unrepresented/unrepresentative"
n.	Lack of structural reform	Evaluative statements that express negative evaluations of the UN Security Council's ability to reform its composition or membership structure.	"Compositional reform"; "increase in membership"; "membership reform"; "reform of the composition/structure of the Council; "structural reform";
o.	Lack of transparency	Evaluative statements that express negative evaluations of the degree of transparency and/or openness in the UN Security Council's work. This indicator captures various practices related to how informed the general membership is of the Security Council's work, including the reporting practices of the Security Council to the General Assembly. Note: one-way communication practices (communication from the Security Council to the general membership) are coded as "transparency", while two-way communication practices (communication between the Council and the general membership) are coded as "participation".	"Access/accessible/inaccessible"; "analytical/analysis"; "announce/announcement"; "briefings"; "communication"; "document/documentation"; "lack of information"; "in the dark"; "Journal of United Nations"; "lack of openness"; "lack of transparency"; "orientation"; "monthly assessments"; "no explanation"; "opaque"; "programme of work"; "report/reporting"; "summary"; "transparent/transparency"; "uninformed"
p.	Lack of working methods reform	Evaluative statements that express negative evaluations of the UN Security Council's ability to adapt or reform its working methods or procedures.	"change in working methods"; "improvement in working methods"; "procedural reform"; "working methods reform"
q.	Non-compliance with Charter	Evaluative statements that express negative evaluations of the UN Security Council's compliance with the UN Charter.	"Abuse of power"; "Charter"; "contravene/contravention + Charter"; "constitutional mandate"; "exceed mandate"; "ignore/ignored Charter"; "interference"; "non-compliance with Charter"; "not in keeping with the Charter"; "outside mandate"; "privileges that are found nowhere in the Charter"; "sovereignty"
r.	Provisional rules of procedure	Evaluative statements that express negative evaluations of the UN Security Council's	"Provisional rules of procedure"; "rules of procedure"

		provisional rules of procedure.	
s.	Structure or composition of the Council	Evaluative statements that express negative evaluations of the structure or composition of the UN Security Council.	"Composition"; "membership"; "membership structure"; "oligarchy"; "Permanent Member(s)"; "the Council is controlled by [Permanent Member state(s) x]"; "structure"
t.	Thematic debates	Evaluative statements that express negative evaluations of the UN Security Council's practice of holding thematic debates, or lack thereof.	"Thematic debate"; "thematic issue"; "theme"
u.	Veto power	Evaluative statements that express negative evaluations of the Permanent Members' right to veto.	"Prerogative or privilege of Permanent Member(s)"; "veto"; "veto power"
v.	Working methods	Evaluative statements that express negative evaluations of the working methods or procedures of the UN Security Council.	"Decision-making"; "method(s) of work"; "practice(s)"; "procedure(s)"; "work"; "working method [x]; "working methods";

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Supplementary material II. Validity and reliability of the content analysis

In the methods section of the main text of this article, I discussed the validity of the empirical strategy at large. However, designing the manual content analysis also involved a set of more specific methodological choices that have consequences for the overall results. I will in the following discussion focus on *measurement validity* in the content analysis—that is, whether my operationalization of legitimacy constitutes a sound measure of that concept—and *reliability*, which I here understand as the replicability of the findings in the content analysis (Adcock & Collier 2001).

Importantly, the validity of the content analysis rests on an assumption that states' latent preferences can be approximated through quantitatively assessing their expressed evaluations of the UN Security Council (UNSC) (Egami et al. 2018). One potential threat to the measurement validity of this approach is that states' rhetoric in UN General Assembly (UNGA) debates may not necessarily reflect their 'true' preferences, but instead strategic political goals. First, discussions between states in the UNGA may involve posturing toward different audiences, including civil society groups or domestic electorates. Further, in institutional debates, states often face little or no constraints on what they say and may choose to prioritize the political issues that are most pressing for them at a given moment. Finally, states may engage in 'cheap talk'—for example by pledging to some political goal without necessarily intending to devote resources to pursue it actively. In sum, states' potential pursuit of strategic political goals in institutional debates may obfuscate the true preferences of state representatives. If so, the evaluative statements that these representatives make in UNGA debates may contain 'noise' that negatively affects the measurement validity of the coding procedure.

On the other hand, institutional debates such as the UNGA debates coded here are important fora for states to freely express their evaluations and exchange views of the functioning of international institutions. Hence, extant empirical legitimacy literature has shown that analyzing institutional documents can constitute a valuable source for drawing inferences about states' perceptions of the legitimacy of international institutions (Binder & Heupel 2015; Creamer & Godzimirska 2016). Compared to other means of inferring states' preferences through observational data, such as voting behavior (Voeten 2000), exit from institutions (Borzyskowski and Vabulas 2019), or compliance with institutional decisions (Stiansen 2019), analyzing states' expressed positions in debates may provide a more accurate picture of preferences; this is because statements in debates are subject to lower external constraints than voting, exit, or compliance (Baturo et al. 2017; Binder and Heupel 2021). For example, it is less politically costly for a UNSC member to express its discontent with the Council's performance than actively voting against proposed resolutions. Juxtaposed with other (de)legitimation strategies, publicly supporting or criticizing an institution is unlikely to result in repercussions such as immediate economic costs, sanctions from other states, or domestic electoral backlash.

States that seek to exert influence over how an institution such as the UNSC works also have incentives to express their true beliefs in institutional debates in order to signal what aspects of the institution they are particularly content or discontent with. By expressing support for the UNSC, a state can signal to other member states and the institution's secretariat that it deems the institution to provide a valuable practice or function—for example, that the UNSC's peacekeeping missions are effective—which may influence other states to support that same goal or help empower the institution to continue pursuing that function. Conversely, by publicly criticizing the UNSC, a state can challenge a particular function or practice with the aim of

spurring institutional change (Binder and Heupel 2021). Corroboratively, an automatic text search shows that UN member states debating the performance of the UN Security Council in annual General Assembly debates mention the word 'reform' 1634 times over the period 2001-05: a clear call for institutional change.

Hence, while states' political goals may occasionally conflict with their true latent preferences—which could potentially introduce noise to the measurement of legitimacy perceptions—states have equally good reasons to express their true intentions in the documents that I analyze. This is why scholars have previously used these and similar documents to infer states' perceptions of the legitimacy of international institutions (Binder and Heupel 2015; Creamer and Godzimirska 2016; Binder and Heupel 2021). Further, the manual coding procedure enables me to distinguish states' evaluations of the UNSC from other types of statements and thus avoid coding any text that is not strictly relevant, which is beneficial for the measurement validity of the analysis. Finally, since this study conducts content analysis before and after reform it is important to note that there is no particular reason to expect that the degree of noise in the data should change over time.

Broadly, the results of the content analysis are valid to the extent that they meaningfully and consistently capture states' references to the two legitimacy categories (procedural and outcome) in the corpus of documents, and reliable if a different coder would obtain similar results by following the coding instructions. These two priorities can come into conflict when constructing the coding scheme of a content analysis, especially when the text to be analyzed is syntactically complex. To counteract this possibility, the coding rules should capture as many legitimacy statements as possible to maximize the validity of the analysis, but also be kept as simple as possible in order to minimize the potential for human error in interpreting the rules.

I developed the coding rules both deductively and inductively. First, I defined the twofold legitimacy scheme described in the main text of the article deductively, drawing upon existing international legitimacy literature, with the aim of generating a coding scheme that could capture a wide range of different legitimacy statements. Before conducting the content analysis, I pre-validated these categories by reading sets of randomly selected UNGA debates records and assessing whether legitimacy statements overall corresponded with the twofold coding scheme. The vast majority of legitimacy statements could be classified as either 'procedural' or 'outcome', indicating that the classification is exhaustive. However, in order to ensure that the coding categories were also mutually exclusive, I created more specific coding rules. When conducting the content analysis, I inductively developed more specific sub-indicators based on states' discourse in the UNGA debates. These sub-indicators, listed in the codebook, specify the types of arguments that should be classified into the two main legitimacy categories. By formulating indicators that would help a different coder to classify the same legitimacy arguments into the same categories, this strategy should contribute toward the reliability of the coding scheme.

In manual content analysis, the *coding unit* is the smallest meaningful construction that is counted in the coding. In this analysis, I unitize text before assigning each unit a legitimacy code. One important coding rule is that the coding unit in this analysis is a *quasi-sentence*, defined as one identifiable message or argument. It stands in contrast to natural sentences, which may contain several arguments (Däubler et al. 2012). I parse natural sentences that contain several legitimacy statements into quasi-sentences in order to enhance the measurement validity of the analysis. In the coded texts, countries occasionally refer to several legitimacy categories within a sentence. In these cases, instead of 'forcing' the whole sentence into a

broader category, I divide the sentence into the number of distinct legitimacy statements that can be identified. This strategy is particularly useful in cases where a country refers both to procedures and outcomes—or both confers and withholds legitimacy on/from the Council—within a single sentence. Hence, using quasi-sentences as the coding unit enables the analysis of as many legitimacy statements as possible, and allows for coding on more fine-grained legitimacy categories than if the coding unit was natural sentences. On the other hand, my strategy also avoids the pitfall of coding too many legitimacy references in a sentence and stretching that sentence's identifiable meaning. This means, for example, that if a word (e.g., 'transparency') is mentioned, say, two times in a sentence, it still only counts as one legitimacy reference, given that the meaning is the same whether it is one or two words conveying the same sentiment. In sum, using quasi-sentences as the coding unit should be beneficial for the measurement validity of the content analysis.

However, while parsing text into quasi-sentences is the dominant approach in contemporary political science literature that employs manual content analysis[28], it also leaves more leeway to the coder's judgement and is therefore a more unreliable means of unitizing the text than using natural sentences (Däubler et al. 2012). To minimize the reliability risk from using quasi-sentences, I specified a set of detailed rules in the coding instructions (see Supplementary Material I) for deciding when legitimacy statements do not correspond with natural sentences. Furthermore, the coding instructions also provide examples of unitization from the coded data, in order to promote the replicability of the unitization procedure.

Importantly, in the current analysis, quasi-sentences and natural sentences correspond in the vast majority of legitimacy statements. Nevertheless, since manual content analysis comes with reliability risks—including the unitization procedure—I conducted an inter-coder reliability test of the coding procedure. I asked a research assistant to code legitimacy statements in a randomly drawn UNGA debate and measured inter-coder reliability by computing Krippendorff's Alpha (Hayes and Krippendorff 2007). Krippendorff's Alpha was 0.78, meaning that 78% of the coding performed corresponded with my own coding.[29] The reliability test revealed that, when two different coders identified a legitimacy statement, there was no disagreement on how to code the statement: 100% of the statements that both coders coded corresponded on the level of procedural vs outcome legitimacy. However—in line with extant criticism against quasi-sentences as coding units (Däubler et al. 2012)—there was some disagreement on *when* to code, i.e. what constituted a legitimacy statement or not. Thus, following the reliability test, I clarified the coding instructions further in order to more precisely delineate the bounds of a legitimacy statement. In sum, however, the 0.78 score in the limited-scale reliability test indicates that the coding procedure is reliable and that the overall results are likely to replicate if the coding scheme is used by other analysts.

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[28] See e.g. the Comparative Manifestos Project (Volkens, Bara, and Budge 2009) which is the most comprehensive application of manual content analysis in political science to date.

[29] This score indicates high reliability, especially when considering that time constraints did not permit training of the research assistant before the coding (which would likely have resulted in higher scores).

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Supplementary material III. Interview guide.

1. How long have you worked at [mission/organization], and what are your primary responsibilities?
2. What is your country's position on the working methods of the Security Council?
3. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you currently with the working methods of the Security Council, and why?
4. In your opinion, could the working methods of the Security Council be improved? If so, how?
5. To what extent does your country support the measures outlined in Presidential Note 507 of 2006? Why/why not?
6. In your opinion, what are the most significant elements in Note 507?
7. In your opinion, what impact has Note 507 had on the way the Security Council organizes its work? Why?
8. To what extent can working methods reform replace the need for structural (compositional) reform of the Council?
9. In your opinion, are there any downsides to Note 507 or working methods reform of the Security Council?

Information on interview subjects: The interviewed diplomats were selected on the principle of maximizing representativeness: the interviewees include diplomats from Permanent UNSC Members; current and previously Elected Members; and countries from the UN General Membership. The diplomats held positions as Permanent Representatives to the UN, Deputy Permanent Representatives, Political Coordinators, and Counsellors; and represented Australia, Brazil, France, Germany, Indonesia, Kuwait, Liechtenstein, Mexico, Norway, Peru, Rwanda, Slovenia, Ukraine, United Kingdom, USA, an anonymized Western state, and an anonymized Permanent Member state. The two observers represented an NGO and a think tank.

Table S2. List of interviews.

Interview number	Interview subject	Location	Date
1	Liechtensteiner diplomat	New York	01/04/2019
2	Brazilian diplomat	New York	11/04/2019
3	Kuwaiti diplomat	New York	22/04/2019
4	Anonymized NGO representative	New York	25/04/2019
5	Peruvian diplomat	New York	01/05/2019
6	Anonymized Permanent Member state diplomat	New York	02/05/2019
7	Slovenian diplomat	New York	02/05/2019
8	Norwegian diplomat	New York	06/05/2019
9	British diplomat	New York	07/05/2019
10	Rwandan diplomat	New York	08/05/2019
11	German diplomat	New York	08/05/2019
12	Mexican diplomat	New York	09/05/2019
13	Indonesian diplomat	New York	10/05/2019
14	French diplomat	New York	15/05/2019
15	Anonymized Western state diplomat	New York	21/05/2019
16	Ukrainian diplomat	New York	22/05/2019
17	UN Secretariat official (former)	New York	23/05/2019
18	Anonymized think tank representative	New York	24/05/2019
19	Australian diplomat	New York	29/05/2019
20	United States diplomat (former)	Washington, DC	31/05/2019

Supplementary material IV. Robustness test

When evaluating the effect of the 2006 transparency reform, there are several possibly valid time scales to use as control- and treatment groups. For the main analysis, I coded all UNGA debates after 1990, and relied on the periods 1990-05 as control group and 2006-18 as treatment group. I chose 1990 as the starting year of the period due to the significant changes that the Council underwent with the end of the Cold War (described in the main text of the article). Further, I chose to include all years with available data in the analysis—as opposed to a given interval—for two main reasons. First, as explained in the empirical strategy section of the main text, maximizing the number of legitimacy statements (and actors; not every state makes a legitimacy statement every year) helps minimize the potential effect of exogenous factors that potentially could bias the findings. Second, I did not have any specific reason to select one shorter time-interval over another (e.g. a three- vs five-year interval). Since, in researching the reform, I did not identify a specific justification for selecting a given shorter interval, I found it most principled to avoid selecting a shorter interval. The robustness tests of different time intervals below show that my choice of time periods leads to conservative estimates. Overall, the effects of the reform are less pronounced for longer intervals. Importantly, for all the intervals shown below, the reform has a negative effect on procedural legitimacy score.

One-year interval			
Period	Pre-reform (2005)	Post-reform (2006)	Difference
Procedural legitimacy score	0.54	0.38	-0.16

Two-year interval			
Period	Pre-reform (2004-05)	Post-reform (2006-07)	Difference
Procedural legitimacy score	0.49	0.34	-0.15

Three-year interval			
Period	Pre-reform (2003-05)	Post-reform (2006-08)	Difference
Procedural legitimacy score	0.51	0.37	-0.15

Four-year interval			
Period	Pre-reform (2002-05)	Post-reform (2006-09)	Difference
Procedural legitimacy score	0.56	0.42	-0.14

Five-year interval			
Period	Pre-reform (2001-05)	Post-reform (2006-10)	Difference
Procedural legitimacy score	0.55	0.46	-0.09

Eight-year interval			
Period	Pre-reform (1998-05)	Post-reform (2006-13)	Difference
Procedural legitimacy score	0.58	0.49	-0.08

Supplementary material V. Distribution of positive procedural legitimacy statements

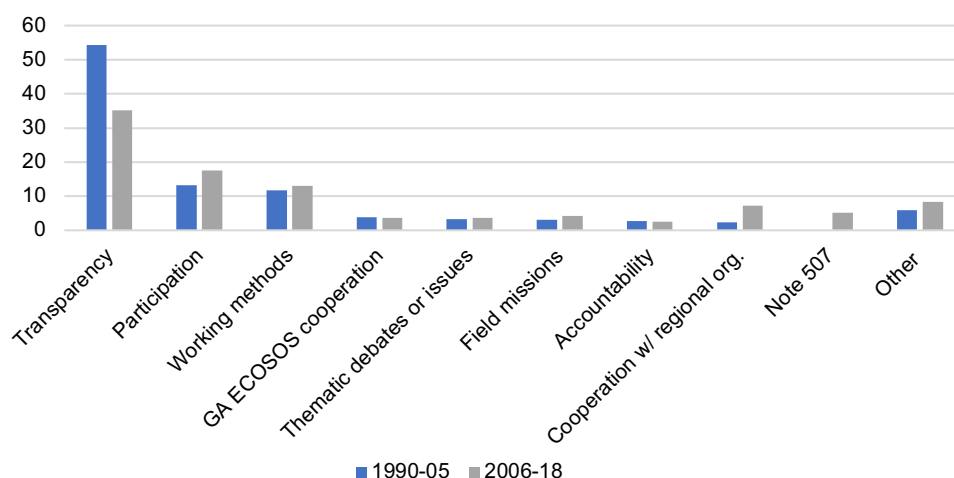Figure S1. Distribution of positive procedural legitimacy statements

Table S3. Pre-post reform changes in perceptions of transparency and participation

Procedural sub-category	Pre-reform legitimacy score	Post-reform legitimacy score
Transparency	0.66	0.66 (0.62*)
Participation	0.63	0.67

The legitimacy scores in Table S3 show pre-post reform changes in the balance between positive and negative transparency and participation statements. The underlying numbers used to calculate the scores can be found in the publicly available datafile.

*Note: for the post-reform period calculation of transparency's legitimacy score in Table S3, I included references to "Note 507" (shown as a separate category in Figure S1) since this is the transparency reform. If references to Note 507 are excluded, the post-reform legitimacy score of the transparency category is 0.62—indicating a 4% decrease in perceptions of transparency.