The Political Consequences of Drafting Strategies in International Organizations

November 8, 2021

Abstract

How and why do policymakers adopt distinct drafting strategies in the legislative process? How do different drafting strategies affect political outcomes, such as resolution sponsorship and voting patterns? To address these questions, we examine two drafting strategies – citation and recycling – and consider the tradeoffs in efficiency and legitimacy that negotiators face in employing such tools. We contend that these tradeoffs explain variation in policy outputs across different institutional and topical contexts. We then describe a machine learning approach to measure citation and recycling, which we apply to a novel dataset of all United Nations (UN) resolutions passed from 1946-2018. We find that distinct bodies of law and legal norms have developed in the UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, and that these practices are related to political outcomes. Our research sheds light on the development of policy and norms in international organizations and other legislative contexts.

Word Count: 9,757

Introduction

In September of 2018, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted Resolution 73/108 on the "Question of American Samoa" with respect to self-determination. Shortly afterwards, it adopted a nearly identical resolution – Resolution 73/110 – on the "Question of the British Virgin Islands." Despite the substantive differences between the two cases, the texts of the two resolutions were practically interchangeable, and both included very few citations to resolutions adopted in previous years. In the same year, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) adopted Resolutions 2449 (2018) and 2450 (2018), both on the topic of violence in Syria. However, unlike the UNGA, the UNSC employed completely new language in each resolution. Resolution 2449 (2018) extensively cited resolutions adopted previously.

These examples suggest a broader challenge for policymakers and puzzle for scholars: why did delegates in these two bodies adopt such different drafting strategies? Previous scholarship has examined patterns in drafting strategies in different settings ranging from international courts, to bilateral agreements, to domestic lawmaking (e.g. Allee and Peinhardt 2010; Voeten 2010; Charlotin 2017; Wilkerson, Smith, and Stramp 2015; Linder et al. 2020), yet we lack a theoretical framework to explain the variation in adoption (or lack of adoption) of different drafting strategies in different contexts. What strategic logic can explain a policymaker's choice to selectively cite or recycle language from previous texts, and why does the adoption of such strategies vary across different institutions and topic areas? Finally, how does the adoption of these drafting strategies matter for political outcomes?

We argue that variation in institutional remit and rules can explain variation in drafting strategies. We focus on two drafting strategies: *recycling* existing legal language, and *citing* previously adopted texts. Adopting different drafting strategies, we suggest, involves a tradeoff between flexibility and efficiency. Recycling offers efficiency gains at the cost of specificity, and should be adopted more frequently by delegates in institutions with wide-ranging scope and extensive agendas. On the other hand, citation offers legitimacy and flexibility but few efficiency gains, and should be deployed in institutions where

1

legitimacy concerns are most salient.

Drafting strategies bear not only on the development of law and policy, but also on political outcomes. In international organizations (IOs), for example, the use of citations to a country's previously sponsored resolutions – or those of that country's allies – can signal ideological consistency with a country's foreign policy record, increasing the likelihood that the country will support the matter under consideration. Thus, we theorize that citation practices influence whether a country is likely to sponsor and vote in favor a resolution, implying that drafting strategies have a direct relationship with a resolution's adoption.

We expect that this logic holds in both international and domestic policymaking processes. In this paper, we apply the theory to the UNGA and UNSC, a unique institutional context in which we can examine the effects of institutional rules and norms on drafting strategies, and in which we can probe the connections between these legislative practices and political outcomes. While previous work has examined recycling and citation individually, they have not been studied jointly in the same institutional domain. Further, previous studies of legislative practices have largely examined specific topical and institutional settings. We extend the insights of previous work by allowing topical and institutional features to vary. By examining drafting strategies in the multi-issue context of the UN, and further leveraging differences between sub-institutional units, we can examine the effects of these changes on the development and adoption of law, and test our theoretical expectations on a novel, large-scale dataset, significantly expanding the temporal and topical frontiers of previous work.

In our analysis of all resolutions passed by the UNGA and UNSC since 1946, we find support for our theoretical expectations. We observe that the UNSC, for which legitimacy concerns are highly salient in addressing questions of high politics, cites existing law more frequently when it addresses controversial security issues. The UNGA, where efficiency concerns are primary in confronting a large agenda, employs recycling to a greater degree. Because the institutional dynamics and ambits of these two bodies are highly distinctive, we hypothesize and find that the legislative products of the UNGA and UNSC represent

distinct bodies of law that rarely engage cross-chamber. We also find that drafting strategies have political ramifications: countries are more likely to sponsor and vote in favor of a resolution if it cites one or more resolutions sponsored by that country or by its allies.

Leveraging within-institutional differences allows us to draw robust inferences about the importance of institutional rules and norms, agenda dynamics, and topical remit on the adoption of drafting strategies over time, and on the relationship between these legislative practices and political decision-making. We demonstrate that institutional design has downstream impacts on the process of creating legislation, the content of policy outputs, and the level of political support that these outcomes attract. These findings can help to shed light on variation in drafting strategies across institutional contexts, and help us to understand how and why different institutions develop – or fail to develop – robust legal canons.

Citation and Recycling in International Law

International law has long been studied as an important influence over state behavior. Yet there is substantial variation in the content and form of international law. For example, some international agreements are codified in informal, ad hoc documents and may hold only normative power over states, while others are represented in formalized resolutions or treaties that impose binding obligations (Abbott and Snidal 1998). In some domains, international agreements extensively reproduce the content from earlier texts, while in other areas, dense networks of legal precedent are developed. The drafting strategies chosen by state representatives in international organizations determine this variation. The norms and practices of legislative drafting can encourage delegates to write precise and explicit texts, or to favor more general language.

Two types of drafting strategies employed in international organizations have received substantial attention: *citation* and *recycling.* Citations – explicit linkages to previous decisions or legal texts – serve as a signalling device that indicates the decisions that have influenced the contemporary decision-making process, indicating underlying

legal ideology at work (Voeten 2010; Charlotin 2017, 284). These earlier texts – which we term precedents – serve as examples or guides to be considered in subsequent similar circumstances. Previous legal principles create the "framework for case-by-case interpretation," which is linked to and explained by the same set of clear legal concepts. In a context with a highly developed set of precedent, the application of previous rules to current scenarios is unambiguous. Absent precedent, each case is decided individually, rules are ambiguous, and expectations for state behavior are unclear. References to well-developed precedent can facilitate agreement among heterogenous actors by highlighting previously agreed upon principles, making negotiations more efficient. Demonstrating that a piece of law builds on past decisions can provide political cover to actors negotiating controversial decisions, and can increase the influence and perceived legitimacy of the outcome (Cronin and Hurd 2008; Lupu and Voeten 2012).

Recycling – the use of the same language in a legal document as that employed in earlier legal documents – serves a similar but distinct purpose. Like citations, recycling previously negotiated text can facilitate agreements in contested areas and create efficiencies for legislators and resource-limited states. By reusing the same language developed in previous agreements, states can draw on their understanding of the prior legal document, easing the burden of implementation. Recycled policy arrangements are also low-cost to produce and provide consistency across instruments (Allee, Elsig, and Lugg 2017*b*, 338), though they are also less tailored to particular situations. Recycling of legislative language represents a rational response by legislators and negotiators to limitations on time and negotiating capacity. Formalizing international legal language minimizes transaction costs by recycling existing rules and procedures (Abbott and Snidal 1998). Given that policymakers – including diplomats – are constrained by limited time and personnel resources (e.g. Hall 1998; Jones and Baumgartner 2005; Panke 2013; Allee and Elsig 2019), this efficiency is desirable.

Recycling texts also minimizes the potential number of veto points (Mansfield, Milner, and Pevehouse 2007). The more veto points involved in negotiating a text, the more opportunities are presented for blocking ratification, and the greater transaction

costs. Leaning on previously agreed-upon principles limits opportunities for disagreements between negotiators with heterogeneous preferences. For example, highly similar resolutions on the Israel-Palestine conflict are adopted by the General Assembly every year, reflecting an intensely negotiated statement of principles with sufficient backing to achieve majority support. These negotiated principles serve as a focal point to facilitate agreement (Garrett and Weingast 1993; McAdams 2000). If the specific language is changed, these changes can "blow up" the settled text, requiring intensive negotiation to achieve consensus.

Cognitive biases and heuristics exhibited by boundedly rational policymakers and diplomats also encourage text recycling (Jones and Baumgartner 2005; Poulsen 2015). Previously negotiated texts provide a status quo against which negotiators anchor (Kahneman, Knetsch, and Thaler 1991). Satisficing behavior strongly encourages the reuse of existing templates rather than changes to find an optimal arrangement (Simon 1982). Empirically, early negotiation offers and treaty templates heavily influence later outcomes (e.g. Neale and Bazerman 1992; Korobkin 1998; Galinsky and Mussweiler 2001; Galbraith 2012). In the case of BITs, for example, negotiators frequently adopted the same template agreements even when these were found to be sub-optimal (Poulsen 2015). These cognitive biases are expected to be more prevalent for negotiators with less expertise and experience in a given topic area, which is often the case in generalist representatives in the UNGA (Sunstein 2013).

Examining citation networks and recycling practices have provided fruitful insight into the development of bodies of law by many institutions. Citation networks reveal institutional practices in the World Trade Organization (Charlotin 2017), the courts of the European Union (Lupu and Voeten 2012; Derlén and Lindholm 2015), the International Court of Justice (Alschner and Charlotin 2018) and in the US domestic context (Fowler et al. 2007). Recycling of text across agreements has been examined in the context of PTAs (Allee and Elsig 2019; Allee, Elsig, and Lugg 2017a), as well as in American law (Wilkerson, Smith, and Stramp 2015; Linder et al. 2020). Within issue areas, the amount of citation and recycling varies. Allee and Elsig (2019), for example, find that

within PTAs, rates of text recycling are greater in more established areas such as antidumping, and less in newer areas like environmental protection (Allee and Elsig 2019, 609). However, because such research has been unable to examine variation in citation and recycling across institutional domains, we have been unable to understand the effects of institutional rules and norms on the development of bodies of law. Further, previous work has not yet examined recycling and citation together in the same institutional domain to observe how these strategies may be used as substitutes or complements. We develop a theory about the influence of institutional remit and rules on the adoption of drafting strategies – particularly on citation and recycling – and test this theory in a unique institutional context in which we can examine the effects of institutional rules on drafting strategies and policy outputs.

To be clear, we do not believe that citation and recycling are the only drafting variables available to negotiators. References to broader international principles, external organizations, or inclusion of escape clauses or dispute resolution mechanisms can also affect the legitimacy or efficiency of a text (e.g Rosendorff and Milner 2001; Allee and Peinhardt 2010; Allee and Elsig 2016). However, citation and recycling are readily available and impactful tools which can be used across a wide variety of substantive contexts. As a result, they represent sensible strategies on which to focus.

Institutional Rules and Drafting Strategies in the United Nations

Citation and recycling further many of the same goals in the development of international law. Both practices develop a framework of law that facilitates interpretation and reduces uncertainty about the applicability of legal concepts to new situations. In many cases, one would expect the adoption of citation and recycling to be highly correlated, and to serve as complementary tools to develop bodies of law. However, citation and recycling are distinct tools available to actors negotiating agreements, and may not necessarily move together. When would negotiating actors decide to utilize either recycling or citation, but not both? We argue that variation in institutional remit and rules can explain differential use of citation and recycling. Recycling provides a higher

efficiency gain than does precedent, but also entails a greater cost in specificity in addressing a new situation. Recycling is therefore expected to be adopted more in institutions with wide-ranging scope and extensive agendas. Citation provides greater legitimacy and flexibility, but does not result in a comparable efficiency gain. Our theory posits that citation should thus be expected to be more frequently adopted in institutions with salient legitimacy concerns.

Both citation and recycling are strategies used to develop bodies of law, but the tradeoffs involved in adopting these devices are distinct. For example, citation provides a unique legitimizing function.[1] Explicitly linking a text to previous precedent demonstrates legal consistency, which can persuade relevant audiences to comply with the decision or agreement and demonstrate its soundness (Lupu and Voeten 2012, 417, Charlotin 2017, 282). Citation provides a legitimizing benefit that cannot be obtained by recycling because recycling does not explicitly demonstrate the linkage to earlier bodies of law, while the chain of law is made clear and explicit by the use of citation (i.e. while recycling also employs previously negotiated principles as the foundation for the current outcome, this chain of ideas is not noted in the text, and may not be readily apparent). Citation also provides greater room for flexibility: a citation to a previous legal text can inform the principles and spirit of the current text, while leaving room for tailoring to the unique situation at hand. Because recycling text involves recycling institutional arrangements and policy decisions in addition to arguments, this flexibility is largely sacrificed.

Recycling presents a different set of tradeoffs. Recycling text can be used as a tool for incrementally developing norms, for achieving symbolic goals, and to avoid creating controversy (Panke 2014). A distinct advantage presented by recycling relative to citing previous agreements is a greater time savings. These efficiency gains are particularly salient when agreements are long and complex (Allee and Elsig 2019), when the same issues need to be addressed year after year, and when many negotiating parties are

---

[1] *Legitimacy* is defined as "the normative belief by an actor that a rule or institution ought to be obeyed," (Hurd 2008, 34).

involved. While citation can generate efficiencies in serving as a focal point that can bridge disagreeing perspectives, these parties must still agree on the specific language to be included in the text. In the diplomatic contexts of international organizations, the particulars of language selection can be of paramount importance to negotiators, and thus, the time savings of citation alone are limited.

The distinct costs and benefits associated with recycling and citation lead to differential expectations about patterns of recycling and citation based on institutional domains and rules. In institutional contexts where negotiating actors have salient concerns about perceived legitimacy, these actors should frequently *cite* existing precedent, while negotiating actors in institution with broad and demanding agendas should frequently *recycle* existing language.

While these theoretical expectations about drafting strategies are general across institutional contexts, we test them in the context of the United Nations. The UN offers several advantages. First, the UN is a robust data source, documenting resolutions over the course of seventy-five years. Second, the UN is the most representative of any IO, with the longest serving membership. States engage in repeated interaction year after year in the same institutional environment, creating opportunities for developing legislative practices and protocols. Thus, the UN is an institutional environment where there is a high likelihood of detecting recycling and citation. Third, the matters that the UN addresses in its resolutions are of substantive importance. The UNSC is unique among IOs in its ability to compel state action through hard law, and to authorize the use of force. The UNSC develops international law through its declarative, interpretive, promotive, and enforcement functions (von Einsiedel, Malone, and Ugarte 2015; Malone 2004). While resolutions adopted by the General Assembly (UNGA) do not constitute hard law, they are substantively important. UNGA resolutions recognize international norms, call for the development of legally binding treaties, allocate development aid, and set institutional priorities across a variety of topics. States, therefore, have substantial incentives to invest time and political capital in negotiating resolutions. Fourth, and most importantly, the UN is a multi-issue forum. While previous work on drafting strategies

has extensively examined their development in particular issue areas, the UN provides an opportunity to examine variation in such legislative practices across issue areas. Further, while previous works have investigated sponsorship of (e.g. Mower Jr. 1962; Jacobsen 1969; Rai 1977; Smith 2006*b*; Dijkhuizen and Onderco 2019; Finke 2021) and voting on (e.g. Keohane 1967; Kim and Russett 1996; Alesina and Dollar 2000; Voeten 2000) UN resolutions, they tell us little about how legal features contribute to sponsorship or voting outcomes.

Resolutions adopted in the UN are the products of negotiations between states. To understand variation in legislative practices, we must understand the tradeoffs countries make in adopting different drafting strategies. Our theory predicts that recycling should be employed in institutional contexts when agendas are extensive, making the time-efficiency gains highly desirable. In the UN, this is particularly the case in the General Assembly. In 2021, for example, the agenda of the General Assembly covered 183 items, spanning the "effects of atomic radiation" to the "Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance," to "Agriculture development, food security and nutrition." Because the attention of the UNGA is more spread, delegates are less likely to possess experience or staffing resources necessary to address the issues raised by a given resolution in detail. For example, Panke (2013, 2014) observes the extensive workload for representatives in the UNGA, and that delegations of small states in particular may struggle to keep up with the demanding pace. In such a scenario, relying on previously negotiated language can be a tool of efficiency and resource maximization (Allee and Elsig 2019). By contrast, because the UNSC focuses narrowly on security matters, its agenda is more constrained. For example, in 2020, the UNSC addressed only 36 topics on is agenda, all of which were specific to matters of international peace and security. UNSC representatives are more likely to be experts in the topics raised by a given resolution, and thus lack the same need for efficiency shortcuts, and would be less likely to sacrifice the flexibility and specificity that would be result from recycling preexisting legislative language. We therefore expect to observe higher rates of recycling in the UNGA than in the UNSC.

H_1: **Recycling is higher in the UNGA than the UNSC.**

Our theory also predicts that citation should be observed at higher rates when concerns about perceived legitimacy are salient. In the UN context, legitimacy concerns are particularly high for the UNSC because it renders legally binding decisions, and therefore legitimacy is instrumental to securing compliance (Caron 1993; Tallberg and Zürn 2019, 582). Concerns about the erosion of the legitimacy of the UNSC are salient both for its members and for the general membership of the UN (Hurd 2008; Binder and Heupel 2015). Therefore, the negotiating actors in the UNSC have strong incentives to use citation to previous precedent as a strategy to preserve and enhance the legitimacy of the UNSC to promote its future relevance and authority. Such moves are anecdotally observed to occur frequently, as Cronin and Hurd (2008) describe:

> [the] Council draws from past decision to determine current courses of action and justify expanding the scope of their activities [...] following precedent legitimizes a political action by demonstrating that like cases are judged alike and that judgements are not just predilections or random events. When the Security Council initiatives and action that states may view as overstepping its authority, the existence of even a single precedent is enough to challenge the argument that a particular course of action cannot be taken, inasmuch as it already has been (Cronin and Hurd 2008, 203).[2]

Legitimacy concerns are less salient in the UNGA. Because the resolutions adopted by the UNGA are non-binding, the implications for institutional authority are not as significant when states fail to comply with their directives, and the need to justify a legal basis for adopting these resolutions is not as great. We therefore expect to observe higher rates of citation in the UNGA than in the UNSC.

H_2: **Use of precedent is higher in the UNSC than the UNGA.**

We summarize this logic in Table 1:

Arguably, the most famous example of this phenomenon is the case of UNSC activity on Iraq. A chain of UNSC resolutions on the matter constructed a body of legal

---

[2]See also Malone 2004, 593.

Table 1: Theoretical logic

Goal	Strategy	Expected Use Case
Legitimacy	Citation	High politics (UNSC)
Efficiency	Recycling	Large agenda (UNGA)

precedent, beginning during the Iran-Iraq war in 1980. Early resolutions on Iraq (S-RES-479, S-RE-598) called for a ceasefire in the conflict, and later for troop withdrawals, verification, and supervision of the cease-fire. These early precedents developed a formula that was called upon again in 1990 with S-RES-660, which declared the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait to be a breach of international peace and security and demanded Iraqi troop withdrawal. Follow-up included economic sanctions (S-RES-661), an arms embargo (S-RES-665), and finally an authorization for military action (S-RES-678), all to implement S-RES-660 (Malone 2007, 11, 37-69). By 1998, consensus between the UNSC members began to break down, but this body of legal precedent provided cover to smooth over political disagreements and lent legitimacy to subsequent decisions. These resolutions provided precedetial cover even for S-RES-1441 in 2002, offering Iraq a final opportunity to comply with its disarmament obligations. Directly citing more than ten of the previous resolutions on Iraq, S-RES-1441 provided a path forward between a strongly divided UNSC. Rather than conducting extensive and potentially divisive debates on the matter, Council members were able to refer to previously authorizing resolutions, citing these resolutions directly.

Our theoretical expectations are grounded in the assumption that differences in institutional domains and rules lead to distinct legislative practices. While the agendas of the UNGA and UNSC lead us to expect differential rates of citation and text recycling in these two chambers, the formal mandates of these bodies should also lead to differences in the substance of their work. The UN Charter tasks the UNSC with addressing issues of global security, while allowing the UNGA to address any issue that is not being concurrently worked on by the UNSC. These differences in both substantive mandate and legislative practice are likely to result in distinct and separate legal norms and practices across the chambers. Topical focus reduces the incentives for diplomats to engage in the

work of the other chamber, while differences in legal norms make such cross-chamber interaction more challenging for diplomats to conduct. We expect that this differentiation in purpose and practice should lead to the development of distinct bodies of law in the two chambers, with little cross-over between the two. We expect denser, more developed networks of citation and text reuse within each legislative body than across them.

H_{3a}: **Use of precedent is higher within chamber than across chambers.**

H_{3b}: **Recycling is higher within chamber than across chambers.**

Our final set of theoretical expectations highlight the *political implications* of drafting strategies. Citing a country's previous contributions could invoke a sense of national pride, illustrate that the current resolution aligns with the country's values or foreign policy priorities, or create an obligation for the country to support the current resolution as a matter of ideological consistency. France, for example, employed such a tactic in crafting a UNSC resolution on a cease-fire between Israel and Hamas in 2021, citing previous texts from the United States in an effort to increase the likelihood it would support the resolution (Rubin, Morris, and Miller 2021). These patterns suggest that if a resolution cites resolutions that a country has previously sponsored, that country is more likely to support the resolution currently under consideration. These expectations also hold – although to a lesser magnitude – if the citation is to a prior resolution sponsored by one of that country's allies. In these situations, the relationship between the country and the sponsor of the cited resolution indicate ideological congruence, and that supporting the resolution in question would further the foreign policy goals of a friendly state.

H_4: **Countries are more likely to support resolutions that cite resolution(s) previously sponsored by that country.**

H_5: **Countries are more likely to support resolutions that cite resolution(s) previously sponsored by that country's ally.**

We measure we measure support with two observable behaviors: sponsorship and voting.

Sponsoring resolutions in the UN can be costly, as sponsoring obliges a country to participate in drafting and negotiation sessions, to contract and consult with topical experts, and to expend social capital to cultivate support for the resolution amongst the membership. All of these actions are much more involved forms of cooperation than simply voting in favor of the resolution (Panke 2013; Finke 2021; Charnysh, Lloyd, and Simmons 2015). Therefore, countries are only likely to *selectively* sponsor resolutions. Yet countries have an incentive to sponsor some non-zero number of resolutions in a given year to signal that they are contributing positively to the mission of the UN, which is an important factor for achieving elected position in the UNSC or UNGA organizational leadership (Mower Jr. 1962). Because of this potential costliness, sponsorship can be considered a strong test of our expectations.

Based on a similar rationale, a country that is cited in a resolution is also more likely to vote in favor of adopting that resolution than it otherwise would be. Again, by citing a country's previously sponsored resolutions, the resolution under consideration signals ideological alignment with that country's foreign policy, and can potentially call upon obligations in legal consistency or points of national pride to encourage a vote in favor. Likewise, citations to a country's allies should also be a signal of ideological congruence – although to a lesser magnitude than a citation to the country itself.

We recognize that there is a potential endogeneity problem in studying the relationship between sponsorship and citation: we cannot empirically establish whether the inclusion of a citation led a country to sponsor a resolution, or after agreeing to sponsor a resolution, the country included a citation in the text. In either case, observing a positive association between citation and sponsorship signals the political relevance of the former. Further, by demonstrating that sponsorship and *voting* are positively related – a set of behaviors for which the same strategic logic should hold, and for which the temporal relationship is clearly observable – we are able to have more confidence that the temporal relationship flows from citation to sponsorship.[3]

_____

[3]For space considerations, we include our analysis of the relationship between citation and voting in the main text and our analysis of sponsorship patterns in the Appendix (pg. 6). We find that the same

Data and Estimation

The quantitative analysis of policy outputs in previous work has primarily relied on manual hand-coding. Though studies based on hand-coding have produced valuable insights, such methods are labor-intensive. Relying on manual coding limits the number of agreements that can be examined by researchers, or forces the researcher to simplify their measure to one that can be more objectively and quickly evaluated. Further, focusing on a specific subset of agreements (BITs, for example) does not readily allow for consideration of variation in drafting strategies across different topical areas or different institutional contexts. The development of text-as-data methodologies and their increasing popularity in political science applications presents an opportunity to broaden the horizon of quantitative analysis of legal instruments (Alschner 2019). These tools have begun to be deployed in examining legal networks and legal recycling, in both international law and in domestic contexts (e.g. Allee and Elsig 2019). We apply these methodologies to examine variation in legislative practices on a large scale at the UN.

Data Collection

To study variation in drafting strategies of international agreements, we constructed an original dataset consisting of all UNGA and UNSC resolutions passed since the establishment of the UN. These data are summarized in Table 2. Our data collection work proceeded as follows. First, we scraped all UNGA and UNSC resolutions posted on their respective official websites.[4] These resolutions – one of the key legislative outputs of the UN – are negotiated principally by state representatives at the UN, in consultation with

---

relationship holds in both cases.

[4]See the UNGA and UNSC indices for details. We are only able to observe the final resolution texts – not earlier draft versions. While examining the correspondence between drafts and final resolution texts could answer theoretically interesting questions (for example, see fn. 4), we demonstrate that there is a high level of recycling text from previous year resolution, which suggests that that our data is appropriate for the research questions at hand.

officials in state capitals and the UN Secretariat (Smith 2006a). Second, since older resolutions are posted as scanned images, we then used optical character recognition (OCR) software to convert each document into a plain-text format. This process yielded a dataset consisting of 14,993 UNGA resolutions and 2,331 UNSC resolutions, spanning the time period from 1946-2018, which significantly extends the time period covered by previous studies (e.g. Finke 2021) and allows for the first comparison of UNGA and UNSC activity.

As shown in Figure 1, resolution formats changed substantially over time, ranging from single-column formats with one document per page, to multi-column formats with multiple documents per page, to multi-column formats with parallel French/English text. To address this challenge, we used a series of period-specific regular expressions to remove extraneous text and isolate the actual resolution from the image on each page.[5]

Feature Extraction

To study patterns of drafting strategies in this dataset, we extracted three types of features from each document. First, we extracted all *citations* to other UNGA and UNSC resolutions from each text.[6] As we describe in earlier sections, citations to precedent represent observable evidence of relationships and patterns of influence among the documents that comprise our corpus. Like other elements of document style, resolution formats and citation patterns changed substantially over the time period covered by our corpus (for example, see Figure 1). As a result, we again used a series of period-specific regular expressions to extract citations from each text. We then cross-referenced this list of extracted citations against a master database of resolutions for each point in time, and eliminated all false positive results. We also removed all self-citations. This process left us with a database of 114,943 citations from the UNGA, and 17,938 citations from the UNSC.

Second, using a structural topic model (Roberts et al. 2014), we extracted *topic*

---

[5]For example, translation notes, headers and footers, parallel translation text, procedural language, or trailing language from other resolutions or documents.

[6]A small number of citations refer to other UN bodies such as ECOSOC, which we exclude.

Figure 1: Examples of changing resolution formats in the UNGA.

Note: Sample resolutions from the UNGA, from 1966 and 2005. Alightments are highlighted in yellow/light shading, while citations are highlighted in blue/dark shading.

proportion vectors for each document in our corpus. Unfortunately, the UN does not provide consistent content labels for UNGA or UNSC resolutions across time. As a result, we fit a topic model to the combined UNGA/UNSC resolution corpus to summarize the broad themes present in our dataset.[7] To label the topics produced by our model, we read the top ten highest-probability words and the top twenty documents with the largest proportion of their content assigned to that topic and inductively constructed topic labels. We then extracted the topic label associated with the highest-probability topic for each document, which we used as the primary content label for each document in our corpus. Encouragingly, for 92.5% of citation pairs in our dataset, the topic label of the resolution matched the modal topic label for the resolutions cited by that document. Since these citations were not part of the input data for the topic model we fit, this results suggests that the topic model we estimate is identifying similar topics to those identified by the citations we extract. In the subsequent analysis, we normalize the number of citations in each topic area by the number of resolutions in the topic area to better capture the *rate* of citation within resolutions independent of the number of resolutions adopted.[8]

Finally, we identified instances of *text recycling* in our corpus. As we describe in earlier sections, recycling existing language in legislation demonstrates the presence of established institutional patterns and legal norms in a particular policy domain. To identify instances of text recycling, we broadly follow the strategy employed by Linder et al. (2020). First, using the topic proportion vectors we extracted previously, we calculated pairwise Hellinger similarity values between the topic proportion vectors for each unique

---

[7]After testing several specifications to maximize semantic coherence and exclusivity, as well as manually evaluating the performance of the different models, we select a specification with 50 topics. We employ a spectral initialization and a 10 iteration burn-in period. Prevalence and content of topics are allowed to vary nonlinearly over time, which is critical given that topics on the UN agenda change in prevalence over time (for example, climate change gains in prevalence over time, while colonial conflicts decline).

[8]In the Appendix (pg. 1-7), we show the number of resolutions, citations, alignment, topic proportion, and age of each topic, where age is measured as the first year a resolution on the topic is adopted by either chamber.

pair of documents. For each document, we identified the documents with the top 500 similarity values, and extracted maximally-aligned sequences of text – and corresponding alignment scores – using the Smith-Waterman alignment (SWAlign) algorithm.[9] SWAlign is a sequence alignment algorithm that allows users to identify sequences of shared elements in an ordered list, with user-defined tolerances for gaps or mismatches.[10] Finally, we calculate an adjusted alignment score by weighting each alignment score by the distinctiveness of the tokens contained in each alignment, in order to downweight common, "boilerplate" recycling (Wilkerson, Smith, and Stramp 2015). Alignment scores by each chamber can be seen in Table 2, and topic level alignment scores can be seen in the Appendix (pg. 4.)[11]

Results

Topical Patterns

Figure 2 shows the rate of citation and alignment grouped by the topic area of the more recent resolution. As this plot suggests, rates of citation and recycling vary substantially by topic area, with only a loose relationship to one another. Specifically, we can see that topics on security-related matters tend to be characterized by higher rates of citation than other topic areas. While most topics can be found above the 45 degree axis, security-related topics in particular – including matters such as 'occupation,' 'conflict_africa1,' 'israel,' 'peacekeeping,' and 'peacekeeping_elections' – exhibit the highest citation rates.

---

[9]SWAlign differs from standard plagiarism detection approaches in two respects. First, SWAlign is more scalable than standard plagiarism detection approaches, which is important for larger corpora. Second, due to the scoring mechanism used by the algorithm, SWAlign allows for adaptively-sized gaps and editing differences between texts.

[10]Specifically, we find the optimal local alignment for each document, with alignment parameter set to 2 and mismatch/gap parameters set to -1.

[11]While Panke (2014) considers repetition of UNGA resolutions, our text-based approach provides greater nuance in examining patterns of qualitative repetition at scale.

Procedural matters, incuding topics such as 'courts_law,' 'un_membership,' 'tribunals,' and 'procedure,' tend to be low in both citation and recycling, clustering near the origin. Intuitively, alignment scores are almost never higher than citation rates, as recycling legislative language without including a citation is uncommon. This finding hints at the utility of our citation and recycling measures: patterns in legislative practice may be obscured by examination of counts of resolutions alone, which are passed with roughly constant frequency across different issue areas over time.[12]

Our topic labels also allow us to characterize agenda dynamics more broadly across the main bodies of the UN. Based on the formal remits established by the UN Charter for the UNGA and the UNSC, we should expect the UNSC to address a smaller, more focused set of (security-related) topics: our hypothesis about differential likelihoods of recycling in the UNGA and UNSC is based on this assumption. We find empirical evidence to support this expectation. For each chamber and each topic, we counted the number of resolutions from that chamber whose highest-probability topic label matched the given topic. We then calculated a normalized informational entropy value for these chamber-topic count values.[13] Informational entropy is a standard measure of dispersion for discrete probability distributions, which ranges from 0 (least dispersed) to 1 (most dispersed) (Boydstun, Bevan, and Thomas III 2014; Shaffer 2017).

The results of this comparison support our topical concentration expectation. We observe an informational entropy value of 0.95 for UNGA resolutions, compared with an informational entropy value of 0.75 for UNSC resolutions. Since informational entropy is on a non-linear scale, interpreting the difference between these values is difficult. One way to ease interpretation is to use the "effective topics" transformation, which represents the number of equiprobable topics needed to produce a given entropy value (Shaffer 2017).[14] For the UNGA, this transformation returns a value of 41.1, indicating that UNGA resolutions are almost equally split across all topics. By contrast, UNSC resolutions contain

---

[12]Trends in the number of resolutions over time are explored in the Appendix (pg. 2-7).

[13]Normalized informational entropy is defined as $H(X) = -\frac{1}{ln(n)} \sum_{i=1}^{n} X_i log(X_i)$.

[14]Specifically, the "effective topics" for a topic proportion vector of length n with entropy η is $k = n^\eta$.

18.8 effective topics, indicating that a topic proportion vector containing approximately half the number of equiprobable topics would produce an equivalent entropy value to the one observed. This pattern aligns with the institutional missions of the two chambers, which mandate the UNSC to focus on a narrower set of security-related topics compared with the UNGA's broader orientation, and supports the assumptions underlying Hypothesis 1.

Figure 2: Recycling and citation by topic area
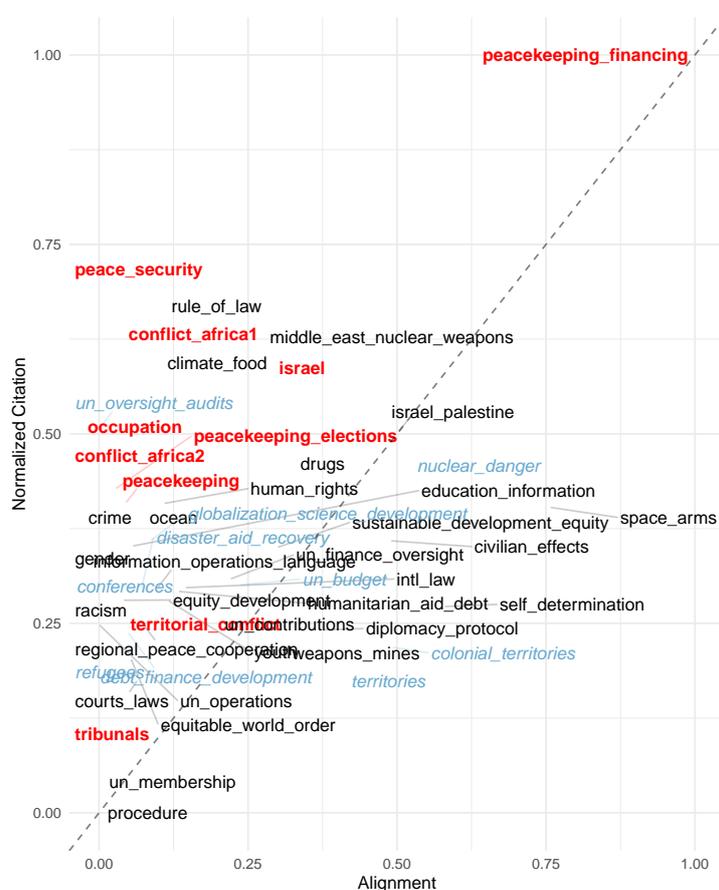
Note: Topics indicated in red/bold are the ten topics most 'owned' by the UNSC, that is, those on which the UNSC passes the most resolutions, while those indicated in blue/italics are the ten topics most 'owned' by the UNGA. Normalized citation and alignment at the 99th percentile are both rescaled to range 0-1.

Table 2: Key findings by chamber

	Number Resolutions	Number Citations	Alignment (97.5 Percentile)
Overall	17324	132881	—
UNGA	14993	114943	139.61
UNSC	2331	17938	60.57

Chamber Differences

In addition to operating on agendas characterized by distinct topical areas and different numbers of topics, the UNSC and UNGA exhibit contrasting legislative patterns and develop largely separate bodies of law. In line with our expectations in Hypothesis 1, UNGA resolutions contain a higher rate of recycling than their UNSC counterparts. The mean adjusted alignment score for UNGA documents with non-zero alignments is 25.6, compared with 20.2 for UNSC documents.[15] Since legal documents often contain technical language or terms of art that are frequently recycled, focusing on average alignment scores may conceal distinct patterns of recycling that emerge when focusing on documents with the highest alignment scores. However, this pattern of higher text recycling in the UNGA as compared to the UNSC remains consistent at all alignment score percentiles. As shown in Figure 3, 95th percentile alignment scores are approximately 72% larger for the UNGA than the UNSC, while 99th percentile alignments - which represent those documents that recycle approximately a paragraph or more of text - are approximately four times higher for the UNGA than the UNSC. This pattern suggests that the UNGA is indeed more likely to recycle language from existing resolutions than the UNGA, as we posit in Hypothesis 1.

We also find that the chambers are distinct in their citation patterns.[16] We ex-

---

[15]This comparison excludes pairs of resolutions whose alignment scores are fixed at zero due to the topic model-based pre-filtering step we describe above.

[16]One notable similarity in citation patterns across both chambers is an increased rates of citation over time (particularly in the UNGA), as well as increasing numbers of citations included in each resolution. Intuitively, this pattern makes sense, as the universe of precedents and thus material to cite increases

Figure 3: UNSC, UNGA infrequently borrow text cross-chamber;

UNGA recycles more
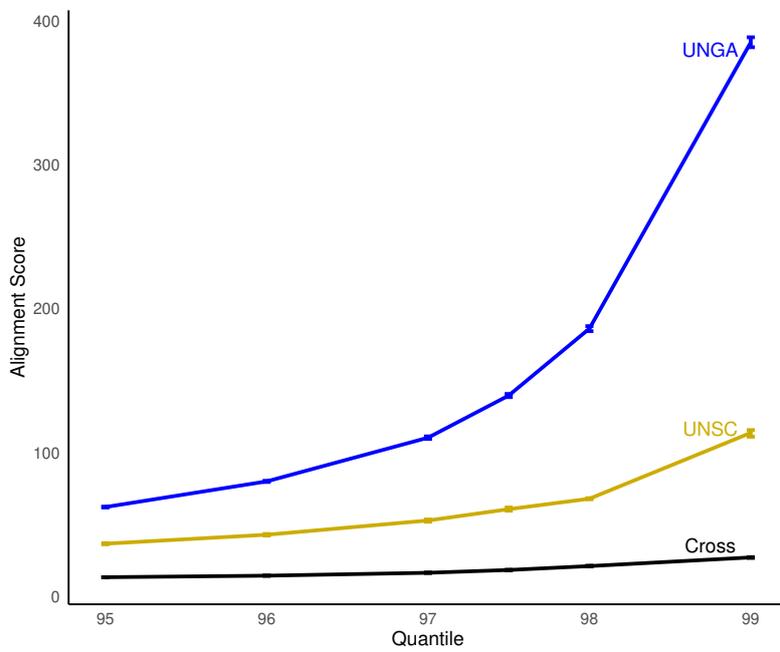
Note: Dots represent quantile values, and lines represent asymptotic 95% confidence intervals derived from a normal approximation of the order statistic confidence intervals.

pected in Hypothesis 2 that the UNSC would use citation more frequently than the UNGA, as the legitimizing function of references to previous precedent would be more important for the UNSC. We find mixed support for this expectation. Overall, we do not observe that the UNSC employs citation more than the UNGA, either in raw counts or at a per-resolution level (Table 2). However, the UNSC has employed more citations per resolution than the UNGA at many points in history, including before 1970 and consistently since 2001.[17] We also observe that on the topical areas where legitimacy concerns are likely to be the most salient – issues of international peace and security – citation rates are higher than they are for other topic areas. As noted in the previous section, security-related topics are generally the topics with the highers rate of citation (and some of the lowest rate of alignment). These topics tend to be 'owned' by the UNSC, by which we mean that they fall within the institutional remit of the UNSC, and are the topics on which the UNSC produces the majority of resolutions. This pattern indicates that while citation rates are generally lower in the UNSC across all measures, citation does in fact appear to be a drafting strategy used by delegates in the UNSC to provide legal cover on salient and controversial issues.

In addition to employing different citation behaviors, we also observe that the UNGA and the UNSC are highly siloed institutions based on their legislative practices. We find that almost all citation occurs within chamber, as we expect under Hypothesis 3a. We calculate a ratio of in-chamber to out-chamber citation, where 1 represents exclusive in-chamber citation and -1 represents exclusive out-chamber citation. For the UNGA, the citation ratio is 0.86, and for the UNSC is 0.98. On average, 95% of a resolution's citations are within-chamber. Both chambers are also more likely to recycle text from same-chamber resolutions than out-chamber resolutions, as we outline in Hypothesis 3b. As Figure 3 shows, cross-chamber adjusted alignment scores are significantly lower across all quantiles than either set of within-chamber scores. Noting the overall tendency towards within-chamber citation, there is substantial variation in cross-chamber citation

---

over time. See the Appendix for more details (pg. 1-7.)

[17]Citation patterns for each chamber over time can be seen in the Appendix (pg. 1-7).

and recycling across topic area. For example, on the topic of "israel", just 70% of the average resolution's citations are within-chamber. This is illustrated in Figure 4, which shows the dense nature of the cross-chamber citation network on the topic.[18]

Figure 4: Israel is a rare example of a dense topical cross-chamber citation network

Vertices: Blue circles = UNGA, Yellow squares = UNSC
Edges: Gray = Within, Yellow large dash = UNGA –> UNSC, Blue small dash = UNSC –> UNGA
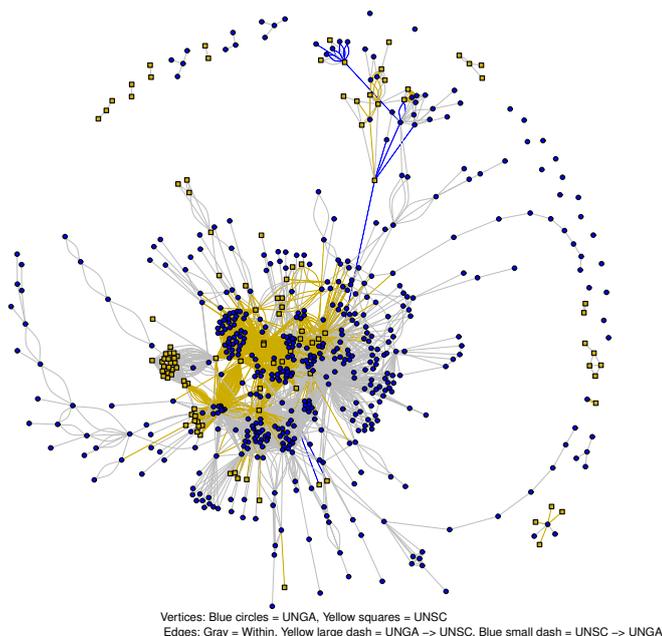
Citation, Sponsorship, and Voting

We have established that the main bodies of the UN exhibit distinct drafting strategies, and further shown that the UNGA and UNSC use citation and recycling in line with the strategic requirements imposed by their respective institutional remits. However, our measures of citation and text reuse can also illustrate connections between legislative practices and *political* outcomes. Specifically, we suggest and find evidence that citations can be a strategic tool to obtain support for a resolution.

As in most legislative contexts, sponsorship and voting decisions in the UN are strategic. Sponsorship and voting choices require countries to expend effort evaluating resolution content and consequences, and can represent a costly position-taking signal to

---

[18]In the Appendix, we show variation in cross-chamber involvement on different topics over time (pg. 6-7).

peer nations (e.g. Charnysh, Lloyd, and Simmons 2015).[19] Across our dataset, the average country sponsors 20% of the resolutions in a given year, which suggests that countries are indeed selective with their sponsorship choices. However, sponsoring and voting for resolutions also allows countries to credit-claim and position themselves as constructive members of the UN, which can be useful when running for elected positions, such as agency heads or rotating seats on the UNSC. Noting these incentives and constraints, we hypothesized that countries should be more likely to support resolutions that cite resolutions previously cited by that country (Hypothesis 4), and that a similar relationship should hold for resolutions that cite resolutions previously sponsored by that country's ally (Hypothesis 5). We proposed to examine support with two behavioral measures: sponsorship and voting. Here, we focus on voting practices; our analysis of sponsorship patterns – the results of which are in line with our hypotheses – can be found in the Appendix (pg. 7-9).

To test our proposed mechanisms, we compare the relationship between citation and voting among UNGA resolutions with similar content. Specifically, we first collect all pairs of resolutions with Smith-Waterman scores above a pre-specified cutoff.[20] For all such pairs, we then calculate a difference in the *number of citations* and *proportion of yes votes* among pair members. We then regress our citation difference measure on our voting measure, with fixed effects for the year of each resolution in the dataset. This design allows us to measure the relationship between citation and voting while keeping the text of the resolutions approximately constant.

As shown in Figure 5, our results support our expectations. For document pairs with similarity values of approximately 0.8-0.9, documents with more citations are significantly more likely to receive additional positive votes. Document pairs with similarity scores above 0.9 are rarer, which limits explanatory power. However, coefficient esti-

---

[19]See previous sections for a fuller discussion of political incentives for sponsorship.

[20]The maximum Smith-Waterman alignment score for documents A and B and per-token match score of 2 is $2 * len(A) * len(B)$. For all document pairs, we normalize all documents by this maximum score, and retain documents that are above the pre-specified cutoff. We vary this cutoff in Figure 5 for robustness.

mates at essentially all similarity cutoffs are positive, and coefficient estimates above 0.95 - where we are most able to hold the text of the resolutions in question constant - are positive and substantively significant. In this range, we estimate that adding an additional citation to a document in the modern UN would yield approximately one additional "yes" vote.[21]

Of course, since UN negotiators likely select citations carefully, we should not expect that adding a random citation would have a large and positive effect on voting outcomes. Rather, the results of this section suggest that UN negotiators may be able to *strategically* identify citations that will cause countries to vote in favor of a proposed resolution. Understanding this selection mechanism is outside the scope of this paper but represents a direction for future research.

Conclusion

We develop a theoretical framework based on the logic of a legitimacy-efficiency tradeoff that allows us to examine patterns in drafting strategies across different topics and institutional contexts over an extensive period of time. We apply this framework to demonstrate several compelling patterns in drafting strategies in the UN and explore their effects on the political outputs of the institution. We find that the UNSC employs citation when it addresses controversial matters of international security, likely because of the legitimacy-enhancing effects of citation. On the other hand, we find that the UNGA, where efficiency gains are greater than legitimacy concerns, more often recycles resolution language. Because of the distinctive rules and norms in each chamber, as well as their different agenda demands, we observe that citation and recycling are more likely to occur within-chamber than across chamber, though there are limited situations where cross-chamber collaboration occurs. Finally, we show that patterns of legislative practice have political ramifications, and that citation practices affect a country's likelihood of sponsoring and voting in favor of resolutions.

---

[21]We show in the Appendix (pg. 10-11) that these results do not depend on the number of total citations in the resolution pairs.

Figure 5: Increased citations increases vote share among similar resolution pairs
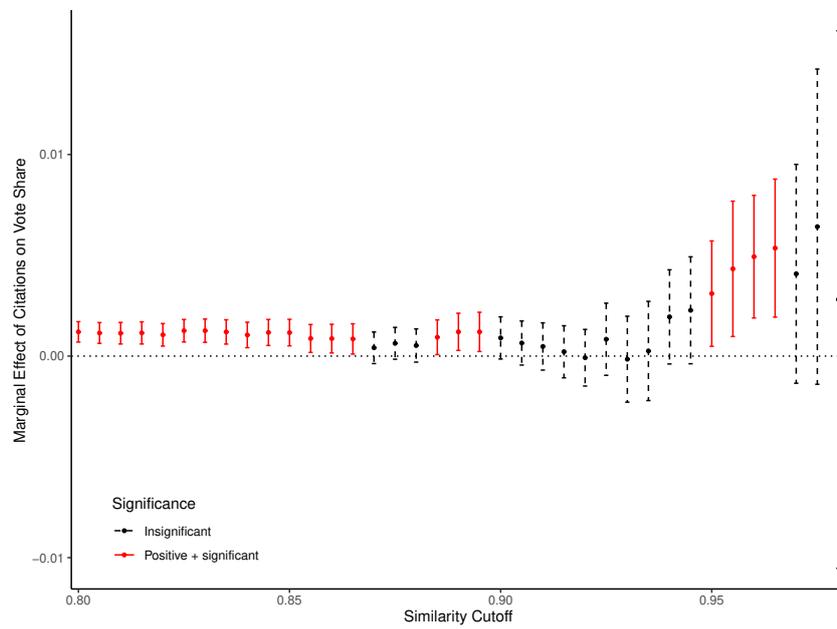
Note: OLS linear regression model. The dependent variable is the difference in proportion of yes votes between pairs of highly-aligned resolutions. The key predictor variable is the difference in the number of citations for each resolution. Each point represents a model fit with all pairs with similarity scores above a given cutoff. Fixed effects included for the year of each resolution in the pair.

Our theoretical contributions help to understand *why* drafting strategies are adopted in different contexts, and *how* the use of such strategies can affect political and legal outputs of legislative bodies. We expect that these findings would hold in other institutional contexts. Generally, legislative outputs should contain more extensive citation networks when the matters at hand are more controversial, while institutions with extensive agendas should be more likely to employ text recycling.

Our novel data contribution of resolution citations and alignments in the UN offer insights that simple resolution counts cannot show. By applying a machine learning approach to an extensive body of international law, we can examine macro-level trends in legislative practice unexplored by previous work. Future work should test these propositions in other institutional contexts to demonstrate the generalizability of our theory, and should extend our analysis to examine relationships between power, geographical proximity, and patterns of drafting strategies, for example, assessing whether citations to resolutions sponsored by a country's neighbors or foreign aid donors increases its likelihood of supporting a resolution. Do the adoption of drafting strategies reflect institutional biases to focus on some issue areas to the exclusion of others, raising potential concerns for institutional legitimacy?[22] These data could also shed light on other political outcomes including compliance, conflict resolution, and funding allocations. Our theoretical framework of legitimacy-efficiency tradeoffs can be used to explain the use of delegation to external institutions or stronger dispute settlement provisions as legitimacy-enhancing features (e.g Allee and Peinhardt 2010; Allee and Elsig 2016), or escape clauses as an efficiency-enhancing feature (e.g. Rosendorff and Milner 2001). Finally, future work should also assess patterns of legislative practice over time to gain insight into potential future developments in legal outputs.

Our analysis of drafting strategies over the history of the UN has illuminated areas in which the member states have successfully developed a set of norms and practices

---

[22]Our data also suggests this may be the case, as the priorities of countries in the Global South such as development and migration exhibit low citation and recycling, while security matters– of import to the great powers and the Global North– are characterized by high rates of citation and recycling.

to facilitate the creation of international law. More broadly, we assess the relationship between the *design* of legal institutions, the *content* of law, and political *support* for these outcomes. Understanding variation in *when* and *why* international law has developed has highlighted notable successes – and failures – of the contemporary multilateral system in developing articulated sets of rules, and can help to predict the adoption of different drafting strategies in future contexts.

References

Abbott, Kenneth W, and Duncan Snidal. 1998. "Why States Act Through Formal International Organizations." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 42(1): 3–32.

Alesina, Alberto, and David Dollar. 2000. "Who Gives Foreign Aid to Whom and Why?" *Journal of Economic Growth* 5(1): 33–63.

Allee, Todd, and Clint Peinhardt. 2010. "Delegating Differences: Bilateral Investment Treaties and Bargaining over Dispute Resolution Provisions." *International Studies Quarterly* 54(1): 1–26.

Allee, Todd, and Manfred Elsig. 2016. "Why do Some International Institutions Contain Strong Dispute Settlement Provisions? New Evidence from Preferential Trade Agreements." *The Review of International Organizations* 11(1): 89–120.

Allee, Todd, and Manfred Elsig. 2019. "Are the Contents of International Treaties Copied and Pasted? Evidence from Preferential Trade Agreements." *International Studies Quarterly* 63(3): 603–613.

Allee, Todd, Manfred Elsig, and Andrew Lugg. 2017*a*. "Is the European Union Trade Deal with Canada New or Recycled? A Text-as-Data Approach." *Global Policy* 8(2): 246–252.

Allee, Todd, Manfred Elsig, and Andrew Lugg. 2017*b*. "The Ties Between the World Trade Organization and Preferential Trade Agreements: A Textual Analysis." *Journal of International Economic Law* 20(2): 333–363.

Alschner, Wolfgang. 2019. "The Computational Analysis of International Law." In *Research Methods in International Law: A Handbook*. Northampton, Massachusetts: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Alschner, Wolfgang, and Damien Charlotin. 2018. "The Growing Complexity of the International Court of Justice's Self-Citation network." *European Journal of International Law* 29(1): 83–112.

Binder, Martin, and Monika Heupel. 2015. "The Legitimacy of the UN Security Council: Evidence from Recent General Assembly Debates." *International Studies Quarterly* 59(2): 238–250.

Boydstun, Amber E, Shaun Bevan, and Herschel F Thomas III. 2014. "The Importance of Attention Diversity and How to Measure it." *Policy Studies Journal* 42(2): 173–196.

Caron, David D. 1993. "The Legitimacy of the Collective Authority of the Security Council." *The American Journal of International Law* 87(4): 552–588.

Charlotin, Damien. 2017. "The Place of Investment Awards and WTO Decisions in International Law: A Citation Analysis." *Journal of International Economic Law* 20(2): 279–299.

Charnysh, Volha, Paulette Lloyd, and Beth A Simmons. 2015. "Frames and consensus formation in international relations: The case of trafficking in persons." *European Journal of International Relations* 21(42): 323–351.

Cronin, Bruce, and Ian Hurd. 2008. *The UN Security Council and the Politics of International Authority.* Routledge.

Derlén, Mattias, and Johan Lindholm. 2015. "Characteristics of Precedent: the Case Caw of the European Court of Justice in Three Dimensions." *German Law Journal* 16(5): 1073–1098.

Dijkhuizen, Frederieke, and Michal Onderco. 2019. "Sponsorship behaviour of the BRICS in the United Nations General Assembly." *Third World Quarterly* 40(11): 2035–2051.

Finke, Daniel. 2021. "Regime type and co-sponsorship in the UN General Assembly." *International Interactions* 47(3): 559–578.

Fowler, James H, Timothy R Johnson, James F Spriggs, Sangick Jeon, and Paul J Wahlbeck. 2007. "Network Analysis and the Law: Measuring the Legal Importance of Precedents at the US Supreme Court." *Political Analysis* 15: 324–346.

Galbraith, Jean. 2012. "Treaty Options: Towards a Behavioral Understanding of Treaty Design." *Virginia Journal of International Law* 53: 309.

Galinsky, Adam D, and Thomas Mussweiler. 2001. "First Offers as Anchors: the Role of Perspective-Taking and Negotiator Focus." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 81(4): 657.

Garrett, Geoffrey, and Barry R Weingast. 1993. *Ideas, Interests, and Institutions: Constructing the European Community's Internal Market.* Cornell University Press.

Hall, Richard L. 1998. *Participation in Congress.* Yale University Press.

Hurd, Ian. 2008. *After Anarchy: Legitimacy and Power in the United Nations Security Council.* Princeton University Press.

Jacobsen, Kurt. 1969. "Sponsorships in the United Nations: a System Analysis." *Journal of Peace Research* 6(3): 235–256.

Jones, Bryan D, and Frank R Baumgartner. 2005. *The Politics of Attention: How Government Prioritizes Problems.* University of Chicago Press.

Kahneman, Daniel, Jack L Knetsch, and Richard H Thaler. 1991. "Anomalies: The Endowment Effect, Loss Aversion, and Status Quo Bias." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 5(1): 193–206.

Keohane, Robert O. 1967. "The Study of Political Influence in the General Assembly." *International Organization* 21(2): 221–237.

Kim, Soo Yeon, and Bruce Russett. 1996. "The New Politics of Voting Alignments in the United Nations General Assembly." *International Organization* 50(4): 629–652.

Korobkin, Russell. 1998. "Inertia and Preference in Contract Negotiation: The Psychological Power of Default Rules and Form Terms." *Vanderbilt Law Review* 51: 1583.

Linder, Fridolin, Bruce Desmarais, Matthew Burgess, and Eugenia Giraudy. 2020. "Text as Policy: Measuring Policy Similarity Through Bill Text Reuse." *Policy Studies Journal* 48(2): 546–574.

Lupu, Yonatan, and Erik Voeten. 2012. "Precedent in International Courts: A Network Analysis of Case Citations by the European Court of Human Rights." *British Journal of Political Science* 42(2): 413–439.

Malone, David. 2004. *The UN Security Council: From the Cold War to the 21st Century.* Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Malone, David. 2007. *The International Struggle over Iraq: Politics in the UN Security Council, 1980-2005.* Oxford University Press.

Mansfield, Edward D, Helen V Milner, and Jon C Pevehouse. 2007. "Vetoing Cooperation: The Impact of Veto Players on Preferential Trading Arrangements." *British Journal of Political Science* 37(3): 403–432.

McAdams, Richard H. 2000. "A Focal Point Theory of Expressive Law." *Virginia Law Review* 86(8): 1649–1729.

Mower Jr., A. Glenn. 1962. "The Sponsorship of Proposals in the UN General Assembly." *Western Political Quarterly* 15: 661–666.

Neale, Margaret A, and Max H Bazerman. 1992. "Negotiator Cognition and Rationality: A Behavioral Decision Theory Perspective." *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 51(2): 157–175.

Panke, Diana. 2013. *Unequal Actors in Equalising Institutions: Negotiations in the United Nations General Assembly.* Springer.

Panke, Diana. 2014. "The UNGA—a talking shop? Exploring rationales for the repetition of resolutions in subsequent negotiations." *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 27(3): 442–458.

Poulsen, Lauge N Skovgaard. 2015. *Bounded Rationality and Economic Diplomacy: The Politics of Investment Treaties in Developing Countries.* Cambridge University Press.

Rai, Kul B. 1977. "Sponsorship of Draft Resolutions and Amendments in the UN General Assembly, 1946-1970." *Polity* 10(2): 290–299.

Roberts, Margaret E, Brandon M Stewart, Dustin Tingley et al. 2014. "stm: R Package for Structural Topic Models." *Journal of Statistical Software* 10(2): 1–40.

Rosendorff, B Peter, and Helen V Milner. 2001. "The Optimal Design of International Trade Institutions: Uncertainty and Escape." *International Organization* 55(4): 829–857.

Rubin, Shira, Loveday Morris, and Michael E. Miller. 2021. "Deciding by Default." *The Washington Post*.

Shaffer, Robert. 2017. "Cognitive Load and Issue Engagement in Congressional Discourse." *Cognitive Systems Research* 44: 89–99.

Simon, Herbert Alexander. 1982. *Models of Bounded Rationality: Empirically Grounded Economic Reason.* MIT Press.

Smith, Courtney B. 2006*a*. *Politics and Process at the United Nations: the Global Dance.* Lynne Rienner Boulder, CO.

Smith, Karen E. 2006*b*. "Speaking with One Voice? European Union Co-ordination on Human Rights Issues at the United Nations." *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 44(1): 113–137.

Sunstein, Cass R. 2013. "Deciding by Default." *University of Pennsylvania Law Review* 162: 1.

Tallberg, Jonas, and Michael Zürn. 2019. "The legitimacy and legitimation of international organizations: Introduction and framework." *The Review of International Organizations* 14: 581–606.

Voeten, Erik. 2000. "Clashes in the Assembly." *International Organization* 54(2): 185–215.

Voeten, Erik. 2010. "Borrowing and Nonborrowing Among International Courts." *The Journal of Legal Studies* 39(2): 547–576.

von Einsiedel, Sebastian, David M Malone, and Bruno Stagno Ugarte. 2015. *The UN Security Council in the 21st Century.* Lynne Rienner.

Wilkerson, John, David Smith, and Nicholas Stramp. 2015. "Tracing the Flow of Policy Ideas in Legislatures: a Text Reuse Approach." *American Journal of Political Science* 59(4): 943–956.