

A Seat at the Table: How Security Council Membership Shapes Public Opinion about the UN*

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Abstract

In an era of rising anti-globalist sentiment, opposition to international organizations (IOs) often centers on concerns over inadequate control. How does countries' influence within IOs shape citizen support for these institutions? We argue that elevated institutional influence improves public opinion about the IO through preferences for policy impact and heightened international status. The static nature of IOs' rules complicates empirical tests; however, we overcome this by analyzing the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), where member states' influence varies over time. Using difference-in-difference analyses of repeated cross-sectional survey data (N>900,000), we examine shifts in public opinion about the UN when countries join the UNSC. We complement this with a case study of India, combining a survey experiment with media content analysis. These findings reveal how shifts in institutional influence can sway public opinion, suggesting that struggles for influence within IOs are not just battles among states, but also levers in winning hearts and minds.

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Introduction

International organizations (IOs) often need the support of member state publics to accomplish their goals. Public confidence in such organizations helps keep member states engaged in active participation and encourages compliance with an IO's rules (Hurd 1999; Buchanan and Keohane 2006; Dellmuth and Tallberg 2015; Tallberg, Bäckstrand and Scholte 2018). When IOs lack buy-in from mass audiences, countries may retrench from them, create alternative venues, or exit from them altogether (Morse and Keohane 2014; Gray 2018; von Borzyskowski and Vabulas 2019; Pratt 2021). Displeased publics can also act subversively in many issue domains, threatening the success of multilateral development aid and peacekeeping missions (Woods 2007; Gutner and Thompson 2010; Autesserre 2014; Tallberg et al. 2016). It is no surprise, then, that IOs proactively work to improve their images amongst public audiences, such as by adopting policies that are in line with public preferences (Hagemann, Hobolt and Wratil 2017; Schneider 2019) and by engaging in public communication (Ecker-Ehrhardt 2018; Dingwerth, Schmidtke and Weise 2020; Martin 2024).

Despite such efforts, public support for IOs like the UN has fluctuated across many countries over the last two decades.¹ In this era of popular backlash against IOs, discontent has multiple sources,² but it frequently centers on concerns about insufficient national control. The Brexit campaign's slogan — 'Take back control' — epitomized this sentiment. Similarly, Kenya's president Uhuru Kenyatta portrayed the International Criminal Court as a tool of imperial powers (Winsor 2013), while President Donald Trump criticized the World Trade

¹ *Chicago Council on Global Affairs*, 2024, <https://bit.ly/48hvfQH>

² Increases in populism may partially explain such effects. Populist voters are more critical of IOs (Kiratli and Schlipphak 2025), and populist politicians often target IOs because they are staffed by elites and constrain the sovereignty of member state governments (Copelovitch and Pevehouse 2019; Carnegie, Clark and Kaya 2024; Morse 2023). Politicians scapegoat IOs for domestic troubles, whether economic in nature (Brutger and Strezhnev 2022; Handlin, Kaya and Gunaydin 2023), or related to the military and courts (Voeten 2020, 2021). Research indicates that many voters are responsive to such cues (Brutger and Clark 2022; Dellmuth and Tallberg 2023).

Organization as unfairly biased against the United States.³ For rising powers in particular, dissatisfaction with international institutions often focuses on how decision-making rules reflect an outdated distribution of power and grant them inadequate influence within these IOs (Zürn and Stephen 2010; Cooley, Nexon and Ward 2019; Stephen and Zürn 2019; Mukherjee 2022).

This study systematically investigates the relationship between a state’s institutional influence and popular support for an IO. Although this question has received scholarly attention, existing research leaves important gaps. The literature on rising powers’ dissatisfaction with IOs demonstrates that elites are deeply concerned with influence within these institutions, but it does not assess whether such concerns extend to mass publics. Studies that directly examine institutional influence and public opinion yield mixed findings: Brutger and Clark (2022) and Dellmuth and Tallberg (2015) identify negative effects of institutional influence on support for IOs, whereas others report mixed results across outcomes (Ghasim, Koenig-Archibugi and Cabrera 2022) or estimates that are “not stable” across model specifications (Ecker-Ehrhardt 2016, 108).

We build on this literature while addressing its theoretical and empirical limitations. Theoretically, prior studies largely focus on a single mechanism — the public’s desire to shape policy outcomes — and also bracket the question of how citizens learn about their country’s influence within IOs. Empirically, existing multicountry analyses rely primarily on cross-sectional comparisons between more and less influential states. Such comparisons likely produce biased estimates, since more and less influential countries differ systematically on other determinants of mass attitudes toward international institutions (e.g., the attractiveness of unilateral outside options).

We broaden the theoretical framework by introducing status concerns as a second, distinct

³*BBC*, 2018, <https://bit.ly/4iy8z1P>

mechanism that may explain why popular support for an IO rises when a country gains institutional influence. Our research thus explores two possible causal pathways that link influence and public support. First, citizens may value their country’s ability to shape IO policies, anticipating that greater influence will advance their personal or collective interests. Publics should therefore place greater value on IOs in which their government exercises more control over decision-making. Second, citizens may prize a privileged position within an IO as a signal of their country’s elevated status relative to other states. Such status gains can generate psychological benefits, including pride and collective self-esteem.

In addition to explaining why publics care about their country’s influence in IOs, we also theorize about how they come to learn about it. We argue that media cues constitute a key transmission channel. In particular, increases in a country’s institutional power are likely to generate more (and more favorable) media coverage of the IO. Shifts in the tone and volume of reporting may reflect either sincere changes in journalistic evaluation or strategic communication by elites anticipating greater public interest.

Empirically, we move beyond cross-sectional comparisons between more and less influential countries by combining design-based causal inference with a case study that includes a preregistered survey experiment and media content analysis. Our mixed-methods investigation focuses on an institution in which influence varies systematically over time: the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). In the UNSC, all members except the five permanent members serve non-renewable two-year terms. Although the permanent members possess disproportionate formal voting power (Hosli et al. 2011), both they and other states expend substantial resources — including side payments and policy concessions — to influence the votes of non-permanent members (Kuziemko and Werker 2006; Vreeland and Dreher 2014; Mikulaschek 2026). Informal practices further amplify the influence of non-permanent members beyond what formal rules or material capabilities alone would suggest (Mikulaschek

2026). Consequently, securing a non-permanent seat substantially increases a country’s influence within the UN. We argue that this temporary shift in institutional power leads to higher public approval of the UN during the years in which countries serve on the Council.

Our empirical analysis begins with design-based causal inference using observational data. We conduct difference-in-differences (DID) analyses of repeated cross-sectional Eurobarometer, Gallup, and Pew survey data, enabling us to compare changes in UN attitudes during 32 UNSC terms to contemporaneous changes in countries whose membership status did not change. We address the inferential challenge posed by the non-random selection of UNSC members in two ways. First, we compare shifts in UN attitudes following entry onto the Council to simultaneous trends in countries that join the UNSC several years later. Second, we exploit the distinctive selection process for European non-permanent members, which makes it highly implausible that the same time-varying confounders would drive both a country’s earlier decision to seek a seat and subsequent changes in UN attitudes during its term. Across 918,810 interviews spanning 636 country-years, our DID estimates indicate that serving a temporary term on the UNSC increases public support for the UN by 2 to 6 percentage points. This effect is substantively meaningful: it amounts to at least half the size of the effect of a college or graduate education, a well-established predictor of attitudes toward international affairs (Hainmueller and Hiscox 2006).

While polling data reveal macro-level patterns, we also examine the micro-foundations of our argument through a case study of India. India has served multiple terms as a non-permanent member of the UNSC over the past two decades and experienced notable increases in public approval of the UN during these periods. We begin with an analysis of media coverage in the years before, during, and after India’s 2011–2012 Council term. Although the volume of UN-related news articles did not increase, their tone became significantly more positive while India served on the Council. This shift suggests that changes in media framing

may have contributed to rising public approval of the UN.

We then adjudicate between our two proposed mechanisms through a preregistered survey experiment fielded to a nationally representative sample of Indian respondents. The experiment tests how citizens respond to primes emphasizing policy impact versus international status. We find that status primes reduce negative views of the UN by 2–3 percentage points, whereas policy impact primes have no statistically significant effect. These results indicate that status concerns are a key driver of the broader patterns identified in the cross-national DID analyses.

While we focus our empirical analysis on the UN, our argument likely generalizes to a broad range of IOs in which influence is contested among member states. Similar to the Security Council, several other organizations exhibit systematic variation in the distribution of influence over time. At the International Monetary Fund, for example, the most powerful countries appoint their own representatives (Executive Directors) to the Executive Board, while developing and middle-income states are grouped into multi-member constituencies whose leadership rotates among members. In the European Union, the presidency of the Council of the EU alternates in a comparable fashion. But even beyond these direct comparisons, IO influence shifts in other ways as states gain leadership roles or reform decision-making rules. Such variation creates opportunities for commensurate tests of how changes in influence shape public approval.

Our study makes several contributions to the literature on IOs and public opinion. Theoretically, we articulate two mechanisms through which citizens may value institutional influence: the desire to shape policy outcomes — emphasized in existing work — and the pursuit of national status through prominent positions within IOs. We also move beyond straightforward accounts by theorizing about how publics learn about their countries' influence, highlighting the role of media cues. Empirically, where earlier studies produced mixed

findings due to the aforementioned empirical limitations, our causally identified DID estimates and in-depth case study provide consistent evidence that rising institutional influence increases mass support for IOs. By combining cross-national quasi-experimental analysis with micro-level experimental evidence, we provide generalizable findings while maintaining strong internal validity.

Our findings also contribute to scholarship on the domestic foundations of international cooperation (Bearce and Cook 2018; Bechtel and Scheve 2013; Moravcsik 1997). The Indian case suggests that increased institutional influence coincides with more positive media sentiment toward the IO and greater public support for the UN. Given that citizens rely on elite cues when forming opinions about international institutions (Brutger and Strezhnev 2022; Brosius, van Elsas and de Vreese 2019; Vliegenthart et al. 2008; de Vreese et al. 2006), one plausible mechanism is that media coverage transmits more favorable elite rhetoric to mass audiences, thereby shifting attitudes. Although our empirical focus is the UN, these findings underscore the broader importance of media framing and elite communication in shaping public views of global governance (Dellmuth and Tallberg 2023).

Finally, our work advances the literature on status in international politics. Responding to Macdonald and Parent’s (2021) critique that “it has not been demonstrated that domestic constituencies place much stock in status,” our survey experiment shows that the Indian public is attentive to such considerations, even outside the crisis contexts emphasized in recent experimental research (Powers and Renshon 2023; Carnegie and Dolan 2021; Viskupic 2020). Whereas prior studies examine how status concerns shape public opinion about states and political leaders, we demonstrate that status also influences mass attitudes toward IOs.

Public Opinion about International Institutions

How do publics form opinions about international institutions? Two schools of thought present contrasting answers to this question. One strand of literature argues that publics hold coherent attitudes about foreign affairs (see, e.g., Rathbun et al. 2016), suggesting that citizens evaluate IOs based on the institutions' performances, processes, and alignment with individuals' values and identity. Publics may hold more positive views about international institutions that they view as effective and efficient at delivering public goods (Bernauer, Mohrenberg and Koubi 2020) and at generating economic benefits (Gabel 1998; Hobolt 2014). Since performance-based trust may result from citizens' egocentric or sociotropic considerations, international institutions can earn trust by promoting individual or collective welfare. Informed citizens may also pay attention to the rules of an institution when determining support.⁴ Egalitarian decision-making processes in IOs tend to be popular among publics (Ghassim, Koenig-Archibugi and Cabrera 2022) and especially among liberals (Brutger and Clark 2022). Publics also value civil-society involvement in global policymaking (Bernauer and Gampfer 2013) and appreciate being directly represented in IOs (Ghassim, Koenig-Archibugi and Cabrera 2022). Citizens' underlying values and identities are likely to shape their assessments; researchers have found that cosmopolitan values (Bechtel, Hainmueller and Margalit 2014; Ecker-Ehrhardt 2016), altruism, and leftist political ideology (Daniele and Geys 2015) help explain support of IOs.

A second school of thought starts from the premise that citizens are rationally ignorant about international affairs rather than well-informed. In this tradition, publics rely on heuristics and cues to form opinions about IOs. Citizens may use more familiar domestic institutions as cognitive shortcuts to extrapolate lessons for IOs (Harteveld, van der Meer

⁴As Buchanan and Keohane (2006) note, IO legitimacy is linked not only to performance but the perceived acceptability of underlying rules or procedures.

and de Vries 2013; Hobolt 2012). Media coverage is also likely to influence views of IOs, as existing research indicates that media frames influence how individuals process information about foreign affairs (Baum and Potter 2008; Maier and Rittberger 2008; Azrout, Spanje and de Vreese 2012; Baum and Potter 2019; Mikulaschek and Parizek 2026). Finally, elite rhetoric may shift how citizens understand the output and process of IOs (Dellmuth and Tallberg 2023; Guisinger and Saunders 2017),⁵ with the media playing a key role in transmitting these cues to publics.

Both scholarly approaches offer channels through which gains in institutional power might increase public approval of an IO. A well-informed public might view increased institutional influence as enhancing procedural or outcome-based legitimacy. Alternatively, the public might prefer increased influence due to perceived gains in prestige or status. We theorize about these two pathways in the next section.

Influence in IOs and Individual-Level Attitude Shifts

We argue that citizens' attitudes about an IO are likely to improve when their home country gains additional influence in the IO. Specifically, we expect that a state's increased institutional power may shape mass attitudes about the IO through two distinct mechanisms. First, the public is likely to prefer an IO where the country has greater *policy impact* because citizens may expect that elevated influence translates into more beneficial institutional outcomes. Second, the public may view gains in institutional power as elevating the country's *status*. We discuss each of these mechanisms in turn. Then we address the question of how mass publics learn about countries' influence in IOs, and we argue that mass media constitute an important transmission channel for information about institutional power.

⁵Elites capable of influencing public opinion about IOs include leaders of political parties (Dellmuth and Tallberg 2023; Steenbergen, Edwards and de Vries 2007), policy experts (Guisinger and Saunders 2017), autocratic government leaders (Isani and Schlipphak 2020), and IOs themselves (Walter et al. 2018).

Policy Impact

Mass publics are likely to prefer IOs where they perceive their countries as having greater control over policy outcomes. At the most basic level, citizens may assume that increased institutional influence is likely to translate into outcomes closer to their own interests. When a state gains power in an IO, citizens may view the IO as more representative and thus more likely to generate direct material benefits. Even when personal benefits from an IO's work are not easily discernible, sociotropic considerations may lead publics to favor IOs where their country is influential if citizens believe that such institutions materially benefit their nation. Analogously, the literature on mass attitudes about trade shows that citizens do not merely take into account their individual interests when forming cost-benefit assessments of foreign affairs but also consider national interests (Guisinger and Saunders 2017; Mansfield and Mutz 2009).

Gains in institutional power can promote the interests of citizens through multiple channels. Influential countries sway multilateral decision making to secure the adoption of policies that are more reflective of their national interests. For instance, states that face negative externalities from nearby civil wars use their influence in the UN Security Council to secure a more active UN response to these conflicts (Mikulaschek 2026); great powers with extensive influence in the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank secure aid and loans with more favorable terms for countries that are economically or strategically important to them (Stone 2011; Clark and Dolan 2021); and countries that hold the European Union's presidency when the Union's budget is negotiated attain financial benefits (Aksoy 2010) and steer more European aid to their former colonies (Carnegie and Marinov 2017). In addition to shaping the institution's substantive work, countries employ issue-linkage strategies to leverage influence in IOs to earn side payments from other IOs or states. In the Security Council, states utilize their influence as non-permanent members to attain more bilateral

and multilateral aid (Kuziemko and Werker 2006; Vreeland and Dreher 2014) and higher receipts from the European Union budget (Mikulaschek 2018).

In sum, increases in institutional power are likely to translate into policy outcomes that more closely reflect citizens' underlying preferences. Such effects could be observed directly via individual material gains or indirectly through policymaking that more closely aligns with the country's national interest. In either case, when a country gains additional influence in an IO, citizen attitudes toward the IO should become more favorable.

Desire for Status

Citizens may also prefer increased institutional influence as a means of gaining status. International relations scholarship commonly defines status as “an actor's position within a social hierarchy”.⁶ The pursuit of higher status is common among great powers (Larson and Shevchenko 2019), rising powers (e.g., Mukherjee 2022), middle powers (Karim 2018), and small powers (de Carvalho and Neumann 2014; Wohlforth et al. 2018). States pursue status for various reasons: to gain strategic leverage for interactions with rival states (Renshon 2017), to bolster domestic legitimacy (Ward 2017; Sambanis, Skaperdas and Wolforth 2015), or even to increase “collective self-esteem and pride” (Larson and Shevchenko 2019, 3).

Gains in institutional power may enhance a state's perceived status. Active participation in international institutions is itself its own marker of high status (Johnston 2008, 76), as is membership in elite international institutions (Mukherjee 2022). Consequently, “states that sit on the UN Security Council, the IMF executive board, or the WTO core negotiation group have higher status than those that are excluded” (Macdonald and Parent 2021, 365). When countries attain such privileged positions within IOs, their status is recognized by the international community — temporary Security Council members receive more leader visits,

⁶This definition is drawn from Ward (2017, 35) and is quoted in Macdonald and Parent (2021, 361).

for example (Wang 2022). States may even choose to join these institutions for the purpose of enhancing their status (Larson and Shevchenko 2019; Hurd 2002, 41), with leaders framing accession in such terms (Lin and Katada 2022).

Based on these insights, we posit that publics may prize increased institutional influence not to shape policy outcomes but because of the status benefits that such influence entails. Psychologists view desire for status as a powerful motive for individuals (Anderson, Hildreth and Howland 2015). When one’s self-ascribed value and importance is confirmed by someone else, that actor will be viewed favorably (Wolf 2011; Kelley 2017). Elites and citizens derive part of their identity from group membership, and belonging to a group with higher status yields psychological benefits in the form of pride and collective self-esteem (Larson and Shevchenko 2019, 3; Johnston 2008, 84). “Nations serve as highly salient group memberships” (Mutz and Lee 2020) in the formation of public opinion about foreign affairs.

In sum, increases in institutional power may be associated with gains in international status. In such cases, citizens may be more likely to support an IO because it affords their country heightened international status, thereby triggering the aforementioned psychological benefits of countries’ high status. In such cases, gains in IO influence should be associated with more favorable public attitudes toward the institution.

How Mass Publics Learn about IO Influence

Even if publics are sensitive to their country’s policy impact and status, the influence their country wields in IOs can only affect public opinion if citizens know about it. Citizens rely on external sources like the media for information about international affairs (Hayes and Guardino 2011). News coverage and political commentary in prominent media outlets informs public opinion about IOs (Brutger and Strezhnev 2022; Brosius, van Elsas and

de Vreese 2019; Vliegenthart et al. 2008; de Vreese et al. 2006). News coverage can also convey shifts in elite rhetoric, which provide cues that shape public attitudes about world politics (Zaller 1992; Berinsky 2009; Guisinger and Saunders 2017; Dellmuth and Tallberg 2023; Mikulaschek 2023; Morse and Pratt 2022, 2025).

When a country's influence in an IO rises, media coverage of the IO may change for two reasons. First, if a country's media elites and public share a desire for policy impact and/or status and if journalists' attitudes influence the news, a country's growing clout in an IO may affect both mass attitudes and media coverage.⁷ The latter may thus sincerely communicate updated elite views on the IO. Second, a shift in media coverage in the wake of a gain in influence in the IO may reflect elites' updated expectations of what mass audiences want to hear (i.e., strategic communication). Thus, journalists, news commentators, and other elites quoted in media reports may talk more about an IO when they anticipate growing public interest in it, and they may speak more positively about it when they think that the public becomes more supportive of it.

To see how news coverage of an IO might affect public opinion in practice, consider the example of Indonesia, which was a non-permanent Security Council member from 2019-2020. Even before Indonesia took its seat, media coverage highlighted comments from local elites that the non-permanent membership represented world recognition for Indonesia, and allowed the country a bigger role in settling global conflicts.⁸ When Indonesia's term started in January 2019, the *Indonesia Tribune* immediately covered the accession, describing the Indonesian Permanent Representative "unveiling the Red and White flag at the UN Headquarters."⁹ Comparing the two years before Indonesia's term to the term itself, the amount

⁷Kertzer (2022) finds that elites' and publics' foreign policy attitudes respond similarly to the same stimuli and Dellmuth and Tallberg (2021) detect that media elites' views on IOs are more similar to those of the public than the opinions of most other elites.

⁸"Government gets plaudits for UNSC seat win," 10 June 2018, *Indonesia Tribune*, retrieved from Nexis-Uni

⁹"Indonesia officially becomes a member of UNSC for 2019-2020 period," 3 January 2019, *Indonesia*

of *Indonesia Tribune* articles on the United Nations actually decreased, but the tone of the coverage became significantly more positive. Some articles highlighted Indonesia’s policy contributions: its role as a “bridge-builder,” its sponsored resolutions, and its success on topics like terrorism.¹⁰ Other coverage emphasized Indonesia’s rising status, detailing its placement in the “epicenter of decision making at the global level’ as leader of various Security Council committees.¹¹

Overall, we expect that rising influence in an IO may lead to two types of changes in media coverage that might affect public attitudes about the institution. First, as a country gains prominence in an IO, overall media coverage of an IO may increase, translating into gains in familiarity with an IO. Increased knowledge may reduce ambivalence or ignorance, turning low-information individuals into supporters. Second, media coverage may shift in tone, becoming more positive and leading to increased public support for the IO. We test these these mechanisms in our case study of India.

Research Design

Our research design relies on a two-step approach. First, we leverage repeated cross-sectional public opinion survey data from 75 countries to analyze the causal effect of an increase in countries’ influence in an IO on mass opinion about that institution. Second, we field an original survey experiment and conduct a news media content analysis to examine the causal mechanisms through which institutional influence shapes mass attitudes about IOs.

Tribune, retrieved from Nexis Uni.

¹⁰“Year ender - UNSC stint highlights Indonesia’s role as bridge-builder,” 26 December 2020, *Indonesia Tribune*, retrieved from Nexis Uni on 11 November 2025.

¹¹“Indonesia should establish legal instrument for UNSC Resolution,” 31 January 2019, *Indonesia Tribune*, 11 November 2025.

Identification Strategy and Public Opinion Data

We test our argument in the context of the United Nations, where member states' influence systematically varies in the Security Council. 10 of the 15 Council members serve non-renewable two-year terms. When countries gain a seat at the Council's famous horseshoe table, their influence in the United Nations as a whole increases. The Council is the only international body tasked with maintaining international peace and security. As such, it has a large toolkit at its disposal (authorization of military interventions, imposition of economic sanctions, deployment of peacekeepers, establishment of criminal tribunals, etc.), and the unique authority to adopt decisions that are binding for all countries in the world (Luck 2006).

Cross-sectional comparisons between countries that had seats on the Council and those that did not have found mixed results. Dellmuth and Tallberg (2015) finds that membership the Security Council *reduces* publics' confidence in the United Nations. Ghassim, Koenig-Archibugi and Cabrera (2022) obtains the opposite result but also concludes that populous countries' publics were *not* more supportive than other publics of reforms that boost the formers' national influence. Ecker-Ehrhardt (2016, 108) transparently acknowledges that his estimates of the effect of serving on the Security Council on support of United Nations authority are "not stable over different specifications of the models".

We suspect that cross-sectional comparisons between Council members and non-members in the extant literature have two primary sources of bias that may affect estimates. First, comparisons between public opinion in the five countries with permanent seats on the Council (China, France, Russia, United Kingdom, and United States) and in countries that are not represented may conflate the effect of influence on the Council with the impact of other systematic differences; these differences may in turn inform public attitudes about the United

Nation.¹² Second, estimates that are based on comparisons between temporary Council members and non-members are likely to be confounded because of endogenous selection of non-permanent members. Almost a third of United Nations members have never served on the Council while others have served up to eleven times. This pattern shows that the choice to run for election and the ability to win are not exogenous.¹³ Countries' size, wealth, and foreign policy orientation determine how likely they are to run for and win the election of Council members in the General Assembly (Dreher, Eichenauer and Gehring 2014; Lai and Lefler 2017). Countries' foreign policy (Ecker-Ehrhardt 2016) and size (Ghassim, Koenig-Archibugi and Cabrera 2022) also affect public opinion about the United Nations. Therefore, observable and unobservable confounders may bias estimates of how serving on the Council affects public opinion.

To overcome these inferential challenges, we leverage (1) cross-sectional time series data to conduct a DID analysis, which examines differential change in public opinion about the United Nations after countries join the Security Council, and (2) the unique way in which European non-permanent Security Council members are selected, which we discuss below. This analysis draws on multiple rounds of nationally representative Eurobarometer surveys that were fielded between 2005 and 2022 in 17 European countries before they started a temporary term on the Council and again while they served on the Council. Figure 1 lists these countries and shows the 193 country-years for which individual-level survey data is available. Our DID estimation procedure accounts for the staggered timing of the Council membership of these countries (Callaway and Sant'Anna 2021).

Causal identification of the effect of joining the Security Council rests on the parallel

¹²For example, powerful countries' have superior abilities to unilaterally pursue their foreign policy interests, which enhances their bargaining power in the UN (Voeten 2001). They may also have higher status as the sole nuclear-weapon states recognized by the UN's non-proliferation regime.

¹³In Africa, Security Council seats rotate between African regions but not between countries (Mikulaschek 2026).

trends assumption, which implies that treated and control groups have similar trends absent the treatment. In the UN context, this means assuming public opinion about the UN in countries that started a UNSC term in a given year would have followed a similar trend as public opinion in countries that did not join the UNSC in that year. This assumption is plausible for two reasons.

First, our analysis compares changes in attitudes in the wake of joining the Council (depicted in dark grey in Figure 1) to simultaneous changes in other countries that joined the Council several years later (shown in light grey in Figure 1). The treatment and control group thus share key characteristics: both have pursued and obtained seats on the Council during the period of analysis between 2005 and 2022. In other words, the parallel trends assumption for our analysis can be stated as follows: We assume that changes in attitudes that coincide with the start of a Council term and simultaneous changes in attitudes in countries that joined the Council a few years later would have followed parallel trends if the former countries had not joined the Council in that year. This assumption would only be violated if the *timing* of countries' terms on the Council was systematically related to confounders that affect changes in United Nations attitudes.

Second, the unique way in which European non-permanent Security Council members are selected makes the presence of such confounders exceedingly unlikely. European countries announce their candidacy for a seat on the Council at least five and up to fifteen years before they actually join this body (Mikulaschek 2018, 500-501), as competition for Council seats is stronger in this region than elsewhere (Security Council Report 2012). It is highly unlikely that the same time-varying confounder would influence changes in United Nations attitudes at the start of a country's term on the Council as well as that country's choice to run for a Council seat five to fifteen years earlier. Analyses support this proposition: the parallel trends assumption held during the decade before countries joined the Security Council,

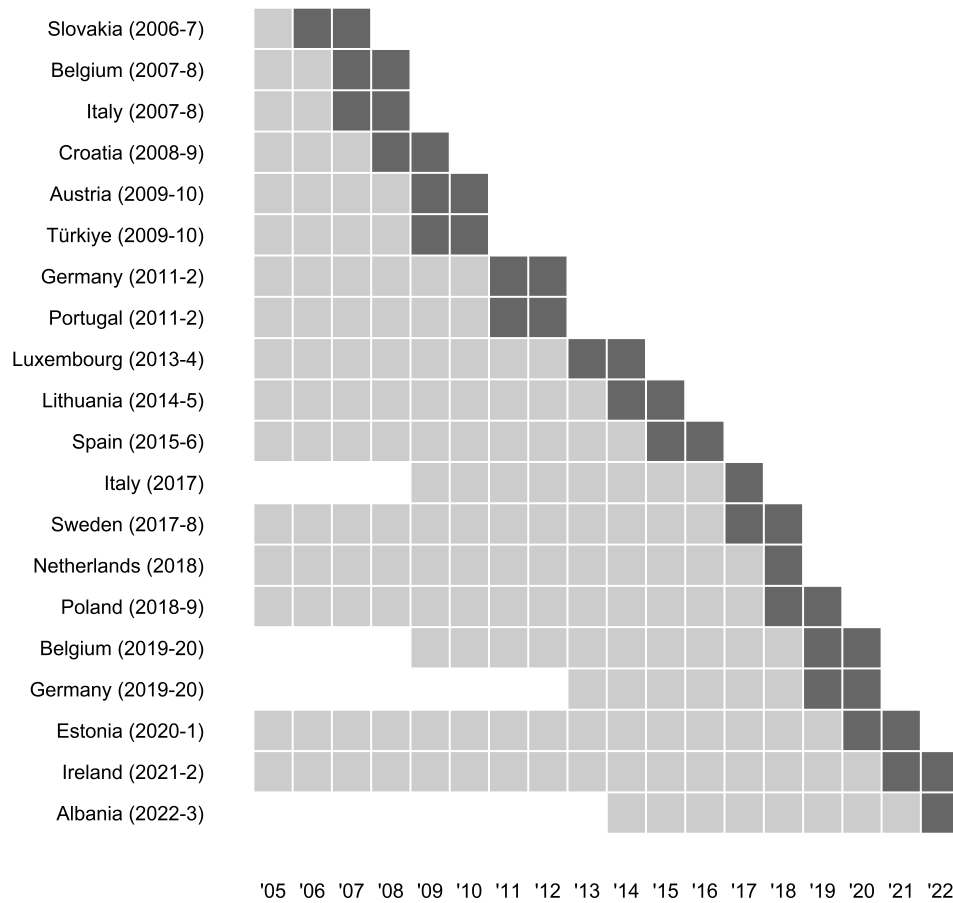


Figure 1: **Country-years included in DID analysis of Eurobarometer surveys** Country-years during terms on the Security Council are depicted in dark grey. Country-years preceding Council membership are shown in light grey. Note that Belgium, Germany, and Italy served twice on the Council between 2005 and 2022. Albania has been included in the Eurobarometer survey since 2014. Norway served on the Security Council in 2021-2 but did not participate in the Eurobarometer during the two preceding years.

further enhancing our confidence that it was also satisfied during the subsequent two years (see Appendix Figure A.1). Covariate balance tests also do not detect significant differences between respondents who took the survey while their country served on the Security Council and others who were interviewed as part of the same survey wave in countries that joined the Council at later date (see Appendix Table A.9).

To investigate whether findings from the analysis of Eurobarometer data generalize beyond Europe, we conduct separate DID analyses of repeated cross-sectional polls that were fielded in 11 countries before and during Security Council terms and in 6 additional countries before their countries joined the Council. These nationally representative surveys were administered by Pew Research Center between 2004 and 2019. Figure 2 shows that the set of 17 countries includes states in all world regions; Table A.1 in the Online Appendix indicates that Africa and Asia-Pacific are overrepresented while Western and Eastern Europe are underrepresented, which makes this data set a good complement to the Eurobarometer survey. The empirical approach for this data is identical to that of the analysis of Eurobarometer data described above, with one exception: Unlike Eurobarometer, Pew did not include questions about the United Nations in every annual survey round. For this reason, our DID analysis omits countries where Pew did not ask about the United Nations in the two years before their term on the Council. We empirically verify the plausibility of the parallel trends assumption by analyzing whether this assumption held during the years leading up to countries' terms on the Council and by conducting covariate balance tests across the two groups of respondents (see Appendix Figure A.2 and Appendix Table A.10).

A third set of analyses leverages repeated cross-sectional survey data from Gallup International Association. Gallup administered surveys in 6 countries in the year before they joined the Security Council and again during their first year on the Council, and it simultaneously fielded the same repeated cross-sectional poll in 59 other countries whose influence on the Council did not change. Argentina, Denmark, Greece, and Japan started Council terms in 2005 and Azerbaijan and Pakistan temporarily joined the institution in 2012. We examine this data using the same DID analysis described above.

Since only four Gallup survey waves (in 2004, 2005, 2011, and 2012) include questions about the United Nations, we cannot use attitude trends in countries that joined the Se-

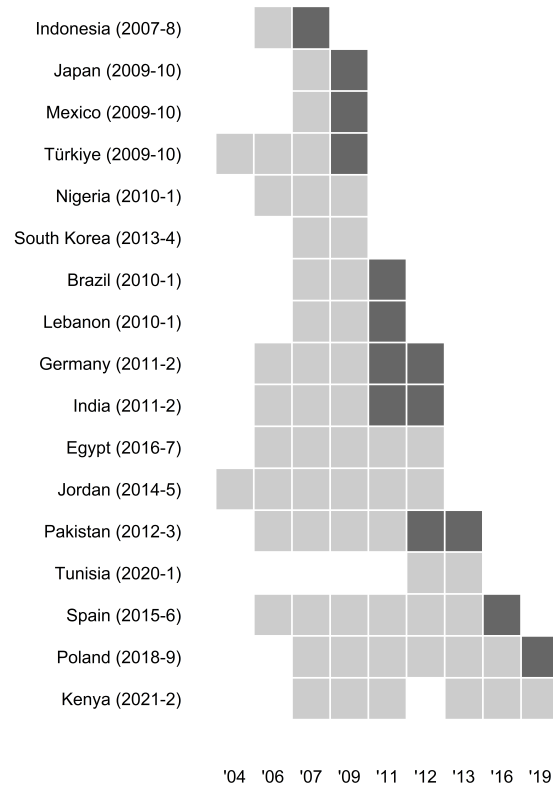


Figure 2: **Country-years included in DID analysis of Pew Research Center surveys** Country-years during terms on the Security Council are depicted in dark grey. Country-years preceding Council membership are shown in light grey. Years on the Council appear in parentheses.

curity Council at a later date as counterfactuals. Therefore, we estimate how joining the Council changed attitudes by using simultaneous changes in 59 countries that did not join the Council as a counterfactual. The analysis of the Gallup data thus rests on the parallel trends assumption that changes views of the UN at the time when countries joined the Security Council and simultaneous changes in attitudes in other countries that did not join the Council would have been indistinguishable in the absence of the former group’s Council membership. This assumption would be violated if trends in public opinion in the six countries that joined the Security Council in 2005 and 2012 attitudes were systematically

different from mass attitudinal trends in the 59 other countries. This parallel trends assumption is more taxing than the one required for the analysis of the Eurobarometer and Pew data, which more convincingly deal with the inferential challenges identified at the start of this section.

To account for such concerns in this latter analysis, we take two steps: (1) omit permanent UNSC members from the analysis, as these countries differ from other countries on more dimensions than UN influence, and (2) omit countries that have never been elected onto the Council, as such countries may plausibly exhibit different attitudinal trends than countries that pursued and won seats on the Council. We also probe the plausibility of the parallel trends assumption by analyzing parallel trends between Council members and other countries before the former joined this institution (see Appendix Figure A.3). Finally, we examine covariate balance between respondents interviewed while their country served on the Security Council and others who took the survey during the same year in a country without a seat on the Council (see Appendix Table A.11).

Taken together, our public opinion analyses of Eurobarometer, Pew, and Gallup data cover individual-level responses from 918,810 respondents interviewed during 636 different country-years covering 75 different countries and 32 temporary terms on the Security Council. Figure 3 depicts these countries.

Measurement

Our main dependent variable is attitudes toward the UN, which is measured in different ways across the three sets of surveys. The Eurobarometer asks, “For each of the following institutions, do you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it? ... The United Nations”. Respondents can indicate that they ‘tend to trust’, ‘tend not to trust’, ‘don’t know’ or refuse

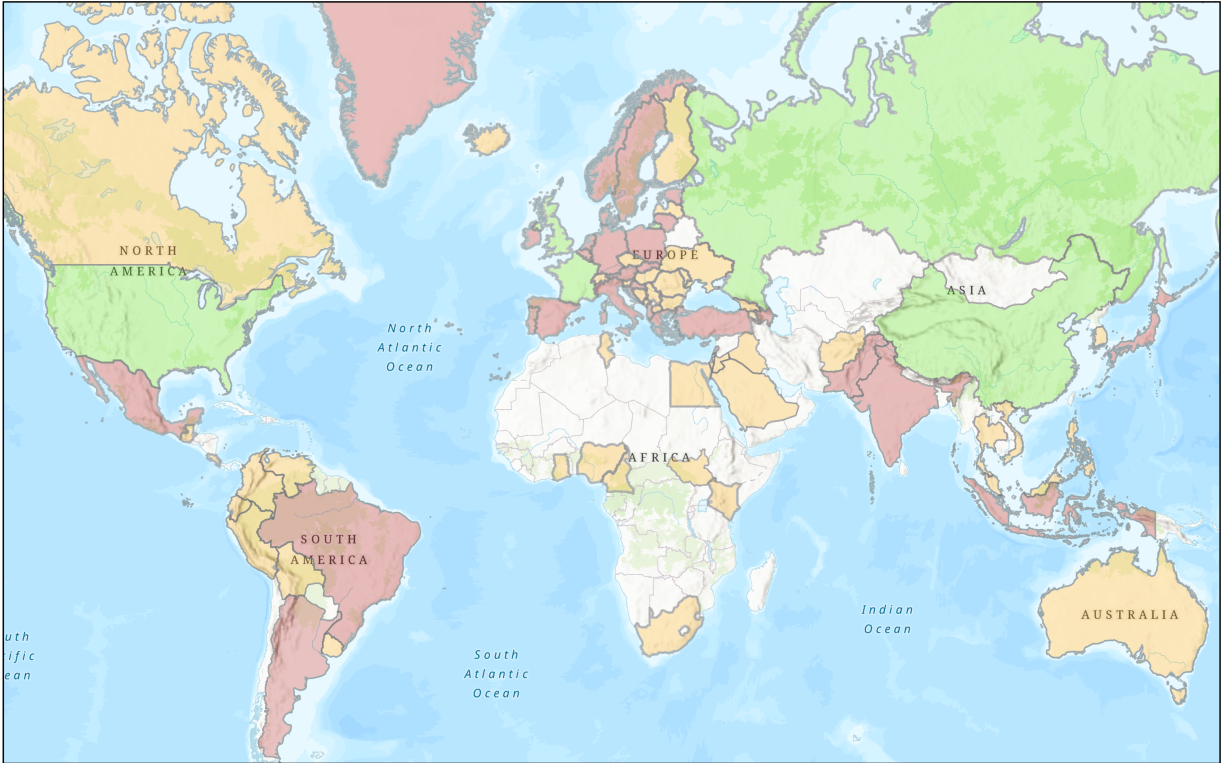


Figure 3: **Countries included in DID analysis of public opinion** Countries where surveys were fielded during and before Security Council terms are depicted in red. Countries where multiple survey waves were administered (a) either before, but not during, Council terms or (b) that did not serve on the Council during the temporal scope of analysis are depicted in yellow. Permanent Council members, which appear in green, are not included in the analysis.

to answer. Pew measures UN attitudes with the following survey question: “Please tell me if you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable opinion of ... the United Nations”. The six answer options were ‘very favorable’, ‘somewhat favorable’, ‘somewhat unfavorable’, ‘very unfavorable’, ‘don’t know’, and refusal to answer. Finally, Gallup surveys include the following question: “And is your overall opinion of ... positive, neutral or negative? UN (United Nations)”. Respondents could choose between expressing a positive, neutral or negative attitude or indicate that they did not know or refused to answer. All Likert scales were rescaled from 0 to 1 to facilitate comparisons. We

view differences in survey questions as a strength: if separate analyses of Eurobarometer, Pew, and Gallup data yield similar results, we can be confident that they are not due to idiosyncratic differences in the way these surveys measure attitudes about the United Nations.

Our main independent variable records whether a country was on the Security Council or not when the survey wave was administered. It was coded for this study based on information from the Security Council’s website. All DID analyses condition on age, gender, and education level to make our estimates robust to potential variation in the distribution of these covariates between countries that joined on the Council and others that did not simultaneously fill Council seats.¹⁴ Descriptive statistics are presented in Appendix Tables A.2-A.4.

Results

Publics become more favorable of the United Nations when their countries serve on the Security Council. This effect is consistent in separate DID analyses of repeated cross-sectional Eurobarometer, Pew, and Gallup surveys fielded in 75 countries before and during 32 non-permanent terms on the Council. Figure 4 shows that the estimates of the three public opinion analyses are remarkably similar, despite variation in geographic coverage and question wording.

In the Eurobarometer surveys (see Figure 1 for geographic and temporal coverage), 61 percent of respondents expressed trust in the United Nations. The DID analyses show that a temporary term on the Security Council increases trust in the institution by 2.3 percentage

¹⁴DID analysis does not estimate the effects of these variables on the outcome; instead, conditioning on known determinants of the outcome aims to render the parallel trends assumption more credible (Callaway and Sant’Anna 2021).

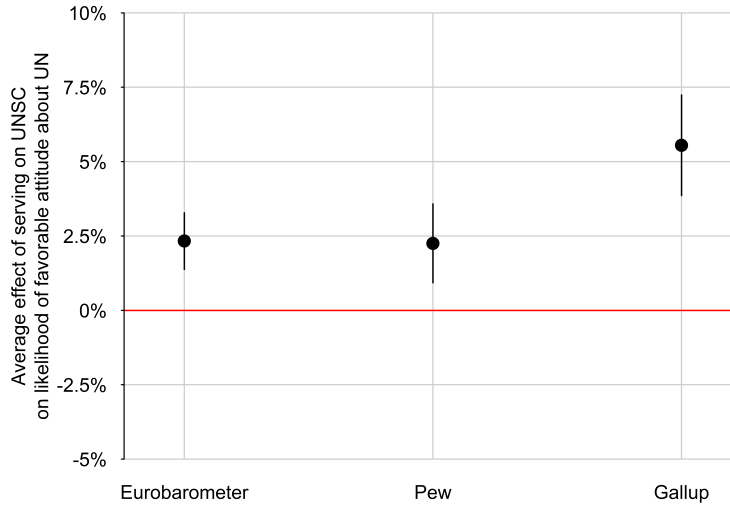


Figure 4: **Main results of DID analysis of repeated cross-sectional Eurobarometer, Pew, and Gallup data.** 95% CIs appear around point estimates. See Appendix Table A.5 for full results.

points (or 4 percent) per year, on average. The size of the effect of Council membership is substantively meaningful — it amounts to more than half of the effect of attending college or graduate school (see Appendix Table A.6), which, as we noted earlier, is a strong predictor of foreign policy preferences Hainmueller and Hiscox 2006.¹⁵ Pre-trend analyses show that the two groups are indistinguishable during the years before any of them have a seat on the Council, which renders us confident that the observed effect of Council membership captures the impact of elevated influence at the United Nations rather than a violation of the parallel trends assumption (see Appendix Figure A.1).

DID analyses of Pew survey data show that these results generalize beyond Europe. 55 percent of interviewees express a positive opinion about the United Nations in the countries and survey rounds included in the DID analysis of Pew survey data in Figure 2. A seat on

¹⁵To benchmark the effect of serving on the Security Council against a key predictor of attitudes about international institutions, we estimated the correlation between education and United Nations attitudes using country fixed-effects models of the same data used in the DID analyses.

the Council increases support of the United Nations by 2.3 percentage points (or 4 percent) per year, on average. Strikingly, this effect is larger in size than the increase in positive views of the United Nations that is associated with a college or graduate school education, which is estimated by country fixed-effects OLS models in Appendix Table A.7. It is remarkably consistent with the estimate obtained from DID analysis of Eurobarometer data. While the DID is significant during Council terms, trends in United Nations attitudes during the preceding years are mostly indistinguishable during the preceding years, which corroborates the plausibility of the parallel trends assumption (see Appendix Table A.2).

DID analyses of Gallup survey data detect a similar but slightly larger effect of rising influence in the United Nations on attitudes about the institution. 72 percent of Gallup respondents hold a positive view of the institution. On average, a country's representation on the Security Council increases the share of its public with a positive opinion about the United Nations by 5.6 percentage points (or 8 percent). This effect is almost three times as large as the increase in support of the United Nations that is associated with college or graduate school attendance (see Appendix Table A.8). Pre-trend analyses confirm that temporary Council members do not have more favorable mass attitudes about the United Nations than other countries before the former gain seats on the Council (see Appendix Figure A.3).

Covariate imbalances between respondents who were interviewed while their country served on the Security Council and others who took the same survey while their country lacked a seat on the Council are an unlikely explanation of our results. Covariate balance tests in Appendix Tables A.9-A.11 do not detect a single significant correlation between respondents' characteristics and their country's representation on the Council. Thus, membership in the Council is the most plausible explanation of why attitudes about the United Nations start to diverge between citizens of countries that serve on this body and countries

that are absent from it.

As a robustness check, we conduct a second DID analysis of Eurobarometer survey data that relies on a different counterfactual: Instead of using attitudinal trends during the years leading up to Security Council terms of other countries as a basis of comparison (as in our main analysis), this robustness check compares trends in mass opinion about the United Nations during Security Council terms to simultaneous changes in public attitudes in eleven European countries that did not serve on the Council during the period of analysis (see Appendix Figure A.4). While trends in United Nations attitudes in these countries were parallel to those in the 17 European countries with non-permanent Security Council seats prior to the latters' terms on the Council, they diverged during subsequent two-year Council terms (Appendix Figure A.5). In short, serving on the Council improves public opinion about the United Nations (Appendix Figure A.6). The same result holds when countries that never served on the Council are dropped from the analysis of Eurobarometer data for a second robustness check (Appendix Figure A.6).

Subset analyses to probe causal mechanisms and potential confounders

Serving a non-permanent term on the UN Security Council is associated with a range of behavioral changes in both recipient states and great powers. Council members receive more foreign aid (Kuziemko and Werker 2006; Vreeland and Dreher 2014), obtain higher net receipts from the EU budget (Mikulaschek 2018), secure more peacekeeping deployments in nearby conflicts (Mikulaschek 2026), contribute more troops to UN operations (Voeten 2014), and receive more visits from great power leaders (Wang 2022). To assess whether the attitudinal effects we identify are driven by these behavioral changes rather than by

institutional influence per se, we conduct additional DID analyses on relevant subsets of the Eurobarometer and Pew samples. These tests speak both to potential confounders and to the policy impact mechanism.

First, we examine material benefits. DID analyses of Pew data show that UNSC membership increases support for the UN both in countries whose foreign aid receipts rose during their Council terms and in those whose aid declined (Appendix Figures A.7-A.8). The same pattern holds in the Eurobarometer data: public support increases both in EU member states whose net EU receipts rose during Council service and in those whose receipts fell (Appendix Figures A.9-A.10). Material gains in the form of foreign aid or EU funding therefore cannot account for the rise in public support.

Second, peacekeeping deployments do not explain the effect. During the relevant Council terms, none of the Eurobarometer countries were proximate to civil-conflict theaters with UN peace operations. Yet public support for the UN still increased while these countries served on the Council.

Third, we assess whether heightened diplomatic attention drives the results. Great power leader visits may elevate a country's status and create opportunities for policy influence. However, DID analyses show that support for the UN increases during Council terms both in cases with and without such visits (Appendix Figures A.11-A.12).¹⁶

Finally, we examine whether countries' own behavioral changes — specifically increased peacekeeping contributions — drive the effect. If improved public opinion stemmed from greater national contributions rather than greater status or influence, attitudinal gains should be concentrated among countries that increased troop and police deployments — but DID

¹⁶These analyses compare trends in UN attitudes in countries whose Council terms coincided (or did not coincide) with visits by heads of state or government from one of the five permanent members, relative to contemporaneous trends in countries that served later and also did (or did not) receive such visits. Limited variation prevents parallel subset analyses with the Pew data.

analyses show that they are not (Appendix Figures A.13-A.14).

Taken together, these tests indicate that the rise in public support during UNSC terms is not explained by material benefits, peacekeeping dynamics, diplomatic visits, or other observable behavioral changes. Nor do we find support for observable implications of the policy impact mechanism. The increase in support materializes even in the absence of measurable policy gains.

We conclude with a caveat. While our main DID estimates identify the overall effect of Council service, differences across subsets cannot themselves be interpreted causally. Subset contrasts may reflect unobserved confounding factors that simultaneously shape aid flows, diplomatic activity, or peacekeeping behavior and public attitudes. We also cannot rule out systematic public misperceptions; for example, that citizens attribute policy gains to Council membership even when such gains do not occur. To more directly assess causal mechanisms, we therefore turn to a case study featuring a survey experiment and media content analysis.

Case Study of India

To shed additional light on the relationship between institutional influence and public support for an IO, we conduct a case study of India. This case study consists of two parts. We begin with an analysis of Indian news media in the years before, during, and after the country's 2011-12 Council term. This media analysis is designed to explore a core informational channel through which citizens may have become aware of India's increased influence in the UN. We then probe our two hypothesized causal mechanisms through a survey experiment fielded to a nationally representative sample of Indian citizens in spring 2025.

We view India as a hard case for testing our argument. While India undoubtedly wants more influence on the Security Council, it has been vying for a permanent Council seat for

several decades, and therefore the public and news media should be less responsive to an increase in influence that comes from temporary membership. Moreover, Indian familiarity with the UN is likely to be relatively high, as UN military observers have been deployed to observe the ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir since 1949. Finally, because India's involvement with the UN is multi-faceted, the content of news coverage related to the UN varies widely, with topics including UN sanctions, Indian blue helmets, UN agency programs in India, and UN reports on development. This range of content makes it less likely we would observe a sentiment shift during UNSC membership in an analysis of Indian news media coverage of the UN.¹⁷

Even though India is a hard case to test our argument, it did experience an increase in support for the United Nations after the start of India's 2011-2 term on the Security Council. Between 2010 and 2011, the share of Pew respondents who expressed a favorable opinion of the United Nations jumped by 7.5 percentage points to 59.8 percent. The following section of this case study examines the shift in media rhetoric about the UN that coincided with this change in mass attitudes.

Media Analysis

Rising influence in an IO could result in two types of changes in media coverage that might affect mass opinion about the organization. First, as a country becomes more powerful in an IO, media coverage of the IO may increase, which may reduce the number of citizens who are indifferent about the institution. Increased coverage may also turn some of those who previously lacked information into supporters of the IO. Second, media coverage may shift in tone, becoming more positive and leading to increased public support for the IO.

To probe these two possibilities, we examine changes in the quantity and sentiment of

¹⁷We pull these topics from the media data we collected, as described subsequently.

Indian media coverage about the UN in the year prior to, during, and after India’s 2011-2012 Council term. To assemble our data, we use NexisUni to search the *The Times of India* and download all articles that discuss the United Nations between 2010 and 2013.¹⁸ *The Times of India* is India’s fourth most popular newspaper by circulation and the world’s largest English-language newspaper. It was also recently ranked as “the most trusted media news brand among English-speaking, online news users in India” by the Reuters Institute.¹⁹ We therefore believe it to be a valid newspaper to test for changes in how the UNSC is discussed in popular media in India.

To start, we examine whether the share of articles written about the UN (out of all news articles) increased during the years that India served on the Security Council. If so, this might drive improved familiarity with the United Nations and its operations which could, in turn, increase the number of individuals that view the Council favorably. We do not find evidence for the familiarity mechanism, as Figure 5 shows. Specifically, the share of articles neither increases after the start of India’s term in 2011 nor decreases after India leaves the Council at the end of 2012.

Second, we examine whether the sentiment of news coverage changed during this period. We expect that articles on the UN might become more positive, as India has greater ownership of the Security Council’s actions during this period. Reporters might highlight important policy outputs that align with Indian interests. In November 2012, for example, the Security Council imposed sanctions against the Pakistan-based Haqqani terror network, which was accused of attacks in Afghanistan and previous attacks against Indian interests. In reporting the sanctions, *The Times of India* noted that the sanctions come “at a time when India is the president of 15-national Council and Pakistan is one of its members.”²⁰

¹⁸We search for mentions of “UNSC”, “United Nations”, and/or “Security Council.”

¹⁹*Reuters*, 2021, <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/digital-news-report/2021>.

²⁰Vishwa Mohan, 8 November 2012, “United Nations Security Council blacklists Haqqani terror network, India welcomes move,” *The Times of India*, accessed via Nexis-Uni on 10 Nov 2025.

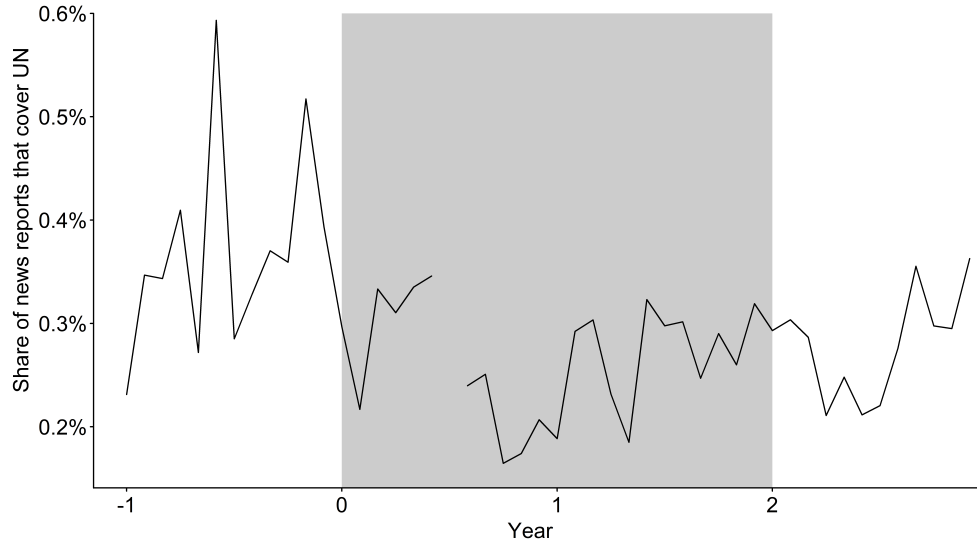


Figure 5: **Monthly Share of Articles on the United Nations (out of all Articles) in *The Times of India*, 2010–2013.** The plot shows the percentage of articles discussing the UN before, during, and after India’s term on the UN Security Council, with the two-years on the Council shaded in grey. Data for July 2011 is missing from Nexis Uni.

Or articles might emphasize India’s influence on the Council, such as the 26 February 2012 headline, “UNSC bows to India, mum on Iran,” where the article describes how India shaped a UNSC statement to condemn a terror attack on an Israeli diplomat in New Delhi without mentioning Iran.²¹

To assess sentiment more comprehensively, we pre-process the data²² and use the Bing sentiment dictionary, which simply codes words as positive, negative, or neither.²³ Our

²¹Indrani Bagchi, 26 February 2012, “UNSC bows to India, mum on Iran,” *The Times of India*, accessed via Nexis-Uni on 10 November 2025.

²²We pre-process the text data in R with the `tm_map` function in order to remove white space, remove punctuation, convert all letters to lowercase, remove numbers, and remove English stopwords. We also manually remove words common to *TOI* that have to do with authors, copyright information, NexisUni material, and mentions of the name of the paper itself. These are as follows: “toi”, “loaddate”, “ltd”, “copyright”, “reserved”, “rights reserved”, “section”, “length”, “timescontentcom”, “body”, “coleman”, “bennett”, “times”, “reprint”, “page”, “document.” Each of these arose in examining the most common words across all articles.

²³The Bing dictionary is drawn from product reviews. It is one of the most widely-used sentiment dictionaries and includes over 5,000 words.

primary dependent variable compares the prevalence of positive and negative terms and is coded as follows: $(\frac{Positive-Negative}{Positive+Negative})$.²⁴ Higher values thus represent more positive sentiment in news media. Our independent variable is a binary equal to one if India belongs to the UNSC. Our dataset includes 1,771 articles from *The Times of India* overall, and the unit of analysis is the article.

	Sentiment score
(Intercept)	0.057** (0.019)
UNSC membership	0.050* (0.024)
N	1771
R ²	0.002
Adj. R ²	0.002

***p < .001; **p < .01; *p < .05

Table 1: **Regression Results (Effect of UNSC on Sentiment in *The Times of India*)**. UNSC membership is associated with a positive and statistically significant increase in sentiment in news media compared to years in which India is not on the Council.

The sentiment results, presented in Table 1, offer support for the proposition that the tone of media coverage of the UN became more positive during India’s time on the Council. Substantively, membership on the UNSC is associated with sentiment that is around ten percent of a standard deviation more positive than when India is not a Council member. This is suggestive evidence that positive messaging may be more important than familiarity in driving shifts in attitudes.

In reviewing this underlying content of news articles included in this sentiment analysis, we note the existence of articles emphasizing policy impact as well as articles emphasizing India’s international status. Policy impact coverage highlights India’s voting record, influence on specific resolutions, and leadership during its presidency of the Council. Media

²⁴See e.g., Carnegie, Clark and Kaya (2024) for use of this method.

coverage with status cues, on the other hand, includes articles highlighting India’s quest for a permanent UN Security Council seat, as well as its ”global player status,”²⁵ and its “status as an emerging power.”²⁶ To identify whether status or policy impact is most influential in driving public opinion, we turn next to our survey experiment.

Survey Experiment

To disentangle the effects of policy impact and status considerations, we fielded a pre-registered survey experiment in India between February and April 2025.²⁷ Qualtrics administered the survey to a sample of 2,494 respondents, which was representative of India’s adult population with respect to age, gender, and state of residence. Appendix Table A.14 presents descriptive statistics of our sample.

The experiment provided individuals with background information about the UN and the Security Council before randomly assigning respondents to conditions designed to evoke status considerations and/or policy impact. In line with previous research on international status (Carnegie and Dolan 2021), our status prime explicitly compares India to members of a desirable peer group: established great-power countries. By referencing the relative frequency of membership in the Security Council, it is consistent with conceptions of status as membership in a club or relative standing within such a club (Larson, Paul and Wolforth 2014, 7). Our policy impact language highlights two areas of influence that are highly salient

²⁵Chidanand Rajghatta, “Ditched during Syria vote, US still backs India’s UNSC bid,” 26 August 2011, *The Times of India*, accessed via Nexis-Uni, 10 Nov 2025.

²⁶“Manmohan slams West for using force to change regimes,” 25 Sept 2011, *The Times of India*, accessed via Nexis-Uni, 10 Nov 2025.

²⁷Preregistration: AsPredicted #214545. Institutional Review Boards at [REDACTED] approved the study [FILE NUMBERS REDACTED]. After reading a consent script that invited respondents to participate in a research study, informed them of study procedures and compensation, and assured them of confidentiality, respondents gave their voluntary and informed consent to taking the survey by clicking an icon at the end of the consent script. The survey company recorded respondents’ consent for us but did not reveal their names to us.

to Indian audiences: peacekeeping and counterterrorism.²⁸

“The United Nations is the biggest international organisation in the world. Its goal is to promote peace and economic development. Some praise the United Nations for aiding those in need while others criticise it for using double standards and a wasteful bureaucracy. India is a member of the United Nations. The UN Security Council is the most powerful United Nations body and is responsible for maintaining international peace and security.”

Respondents were distributed equally across the four conditions:

- Control - No additional language
- Status Treatment - *India ranks among the top seven countries in the world — and higher than Germany and Japan — in terms of how often it has been a member of the Security Council.*
- Policy Impact Treatment - *As a frequent member of the Security Council, India has had a big impact on United Nations policies on counterterrorism and peacekeeping.*
- Status + Policy Impact Treatment - *India ranks among the top seven countries in the world — and higher than Germany and Japan — in terms of how often it has been a member of the Security Council. As a frequent member of the Security Council, India has had a big impact on United Nations policies on counterterrorism and peacekeeping.*

Our outcome of interest is favorable views of the UN. Following the experimental vignette, respondents were asked: “Is your opinion about the United Nations positive, neutral or negative?”²⁹ Respondents could choose from five answer options: strongly positive, somewhat positive, neutral, somewhat negative, or strongly negative. We transform responses to this question into a binary outcome variable, but our results are robust to using the untransformed five-point measure (see Appendix Table A.13).

²⁸Religious conflicts and terrorism were listed among India’s most important issues by 35 and 27 percent of Indian respondents who took a nationally representative survey fielded in 2024-5 (Buchholz N.d.).

²⁹This question was modeled on the Gallup question to maintain consistency with the DID analyses presented above.

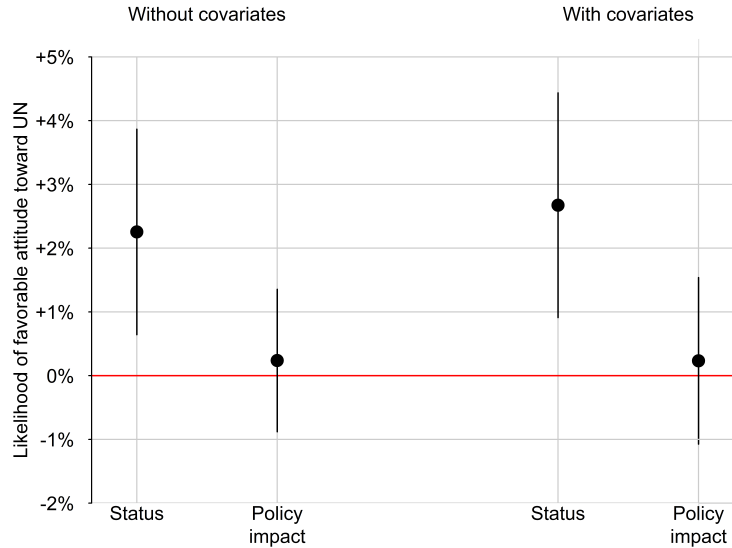


Figure 6: **Effect of experimental treatments on likelihood of favorable attitudes toward UN.** 95% CIs appear around point estimates. Effects shown are in comparison to control condition.

Across all treatment conditions, 71% of respondents expressed a positive opinion about the UN and only 7% indicated a negative view (see Appendix Figure A.15). Priming respondents to consider the status benefits of India’s frequent membership in the UNSC further improved respondents’ attitudes vis-à-vis the UN. In contrast, priming them to take into account India’s influence on UN policy during its many Council terms did not significantly affect mass opinion about the UN.

Figure 6 shows these results. The status treatment reduced the likelihood of negative attitudes about the UN by 2-3 percentage points (or by 34-40 percent), which is a substantively large effect. Appendix Table A.13 shows that this effect is significant in models with or without covariates as well as in a model with the untransformed five-point measure of UN attitudes. In contrast, the policy impact treatment did not have a significant effect in either model.

Taken together, the media analysis and survey experiment offers important insight into

the causal process that links institutional influence and public support for an IO. During India's 2011-2012 Council term, news coverage of the UN did not increase, but it did shift toward more positive sentiment. Such changes may help explain why Indian public sentiment toward the UN also became more positive during this period. Our survey experiment allows us to explore causal mechanisms that may explain this effect. We find that while citizens' attitudes shift in response to a status prime, the policy impact prime has no statistically significant effect on support.

Conclusion

This paper theorizes about the relationship between institutional influence and public support for an IO in a member state. We argue that increased influence should be associated with gains in public support and offer two mechanisms to explain this linkage: preferences for policy impact and preferences for higher status. Empirically, we probe our argument through a study of non-permanent members to the UNSC, using a mixed-methods approach that includes quantitative analysis of polling data from 75 countries, a survey experiment, and a news media content analysis.

Our empirical results are robust and informative. DID analyses of repeated cross-sectional Eurobarometer, Gallup, and Pew survey data indicate that holding a seat on the UNSC significantly improves attitudes toward the UN. A case study of India, including both a pre-registered survey experiment and news media content analysis, systematically probes our hypothesized causal mechanisms. We find that while media coverage became more positive in tone during India's 2011–2012 Council term, the volume of UN-related news coverage remained unchanged. Experimental evidence supports a possible causal mechanism for the increase in IO support that rising institutional influence triggers: a preference for higher status. In the Indian context, these results suggest citizens are attuned to their country's

status in the international system, and that the media plays a critical role in disseminating positive narratives about IOs.

Our findings carry important implications for global governance. They show that mass audiences are more likely to endorse cooperation through IOs when their country attains greater institutional influence. Publics seem especially responsive to status gains, which not only elevate perceptions of their own countries but also frame them as belonging to more desirable and powerful peer groups. These dynamics suggest that the distribution of influence within IOs can shape not only elite attitudes (Dellmuth et al. 2022) but also mass support for multilateralism. Since influence in IO is a finite quantity, our findings point to a zero-sum logic that may spell trouble for IOs that seek to maintain future buy-in from different mass audiences. A country's influence cannot be enhanced without diluting some other countries' privileged status, and thus a gain in mass approval in some country may weaken support elsewhere.

Influential IOs like the IMF and World Bank have already begun adapting to these realities through governance reforms. Rising middle-income states like India and China have long yearned for increased IO influence and have recently begun to gain it through shifts in voting shares (Kaya 2015). Our results suggest that such reforms may bolster public enthusiasm for international cooperation in countries gaining influence while potentially dampening support in countries that lose power. IO leaders and policymakers may therefore wish to design governance reforms not merely with elite bargaining in mind, but with careful attention to how influence structures affect the broader legitimacy and mass appeal of multilateral institutions.

In the context of the UN, the gap between the UNSC's composition and the distribution of power in the world today is tarnishing the institution's perception (Binder and Heupel 2015). Yet efforts to reform the UNSC have stalled because of disagreements over which

countries should obtain additional permanent seats. This study suggests that the UN can win over publics in underrepresented countries merely by enabling them to more frequently fill non-permanent seats, which may be a more viable path for UN reform at least in the short to medium term.

Lastly, this research points to several promising avenues for future study. First, scholars should investigate whether the trends we document in the UN generalize to other international organizations, particularly those where influence is distributed differently or where status is perceived differently by domestic audiences. The UN is relatively well-known in developed and developing countries alike, while development IOs, for example, often face awareness and legitimacy deficits in developed donor states compared to developing recipient countries (Clark, Dolan and Zeitz 2025). Future work might also probe how long the public approval boost from organizational influence persists — whether these are fleeting gains tied to moments of visible leadership, or more enduring shifts in mass opinion. Last but not least, scholars should examine implications for public policy of the rise in public support of an IO from elevated institutional influence. For instance, does this boost in popular support of the UN lead countries to provide more public goods in the form of UN blue helmets or voluntary financial contributions to the UN? A broader research agenda on the political consequences of national standing in IOs would shed light on how global governance institutions can maintain mass legitimacy in an era of shifting power dynamics and growing public skepticism toward international cooperation.

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A Seat at the Table:
How Serving on the Security Council shapes public
opinion about the United Nations

Online appendix of supporting information

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1 Repeated cross-sectional data: descriptive statistics

UN region	Number and share of seats on UNSC	Number and share of countries in Pew sample
Africa	3 UNSC seats (20%)	4 countries (24%)
Asia-Pacific	3 UNSC seats (20%)	7 countries (41%)
Eastern Europe	2 UNSC seats (13%)	1 country (6%)
Latin America & Caribbean	2 UNSC seats (13%)	2 countries (12%)
Western Europe & Others	5 UNSC seats (33%)	3 countries (18%)

Table A.1: **Composition of Pew sample and underlying population of UNSC members.**

Variable	N	Mean	S.d.	Min.	Max.
Approval of United Nations	315,617	0.61	0.49	0	1
Age	375,738	48.66	18.25	15	99
Female	375,743	0.54	0.50	0	1
Educ. attainment: primary education	368,671	0.07	0.26	0	1
Educ. attainment: secondary education	368,671	0.63	0.48	0	1
Educ. attainment: tertiary education	368,671	0.30	0.46	0	1
Financial situation: very good	336,608	0.12	0.33	0	1
Financial situation: rather good	336,608	0.54	0.50	0	1
Financial situation: rather bad	336,608	0.27	0.45	0	1
Financial situation: very bad	336,608	0.06	0.23	0	1
Political right	261,585	5.24	2.15	1	10

Table A.2: **Descriptive statistics of Eurobarometer sample.**

Variable	N	Mean	S.d.	Min.	Max.
Approval of United Nations	63,887	0.55	0.32	0	1
Age	77,924	38.57	15.14	18	97
Female	78,230	0.50	0.50	0	1
Educ. attainment: primary education	77,864	0.31	0.46	0	1
Educ. attainment: secondary education	77,864	0.44	0.48	0	1
Educ. attainment: tertiary education	77,864	0.26	0.44	0	1

Table A.3: **Descriptive statistics of Pew sample.**

Variable	N	Mean	S.d.	Min.	Max.
Approval of United Nations	127,690	0.72	0.35	0	1
Age: <30	163,842	0.30	0.46	0	1
Age: 30-50	163,842	0.42	0.49	0	1
Age: 51-65	163,842	0.19	0.39	0	1
Age: >65	163,842	0.09	0.28	0	1
Female	164,947	0.51	0.50	0	1
Educ. attainment: primary education	163,711	0.22	0.41	0	1
Educ. attainment: secondary education	163,711	0.49	0.50	0	1
Educ. attainment: tertiary education	163,711	0.29	0.46	0	1

Table A.4: **Descriptive statistics of Pew sample.**

2 DID analysis: main results

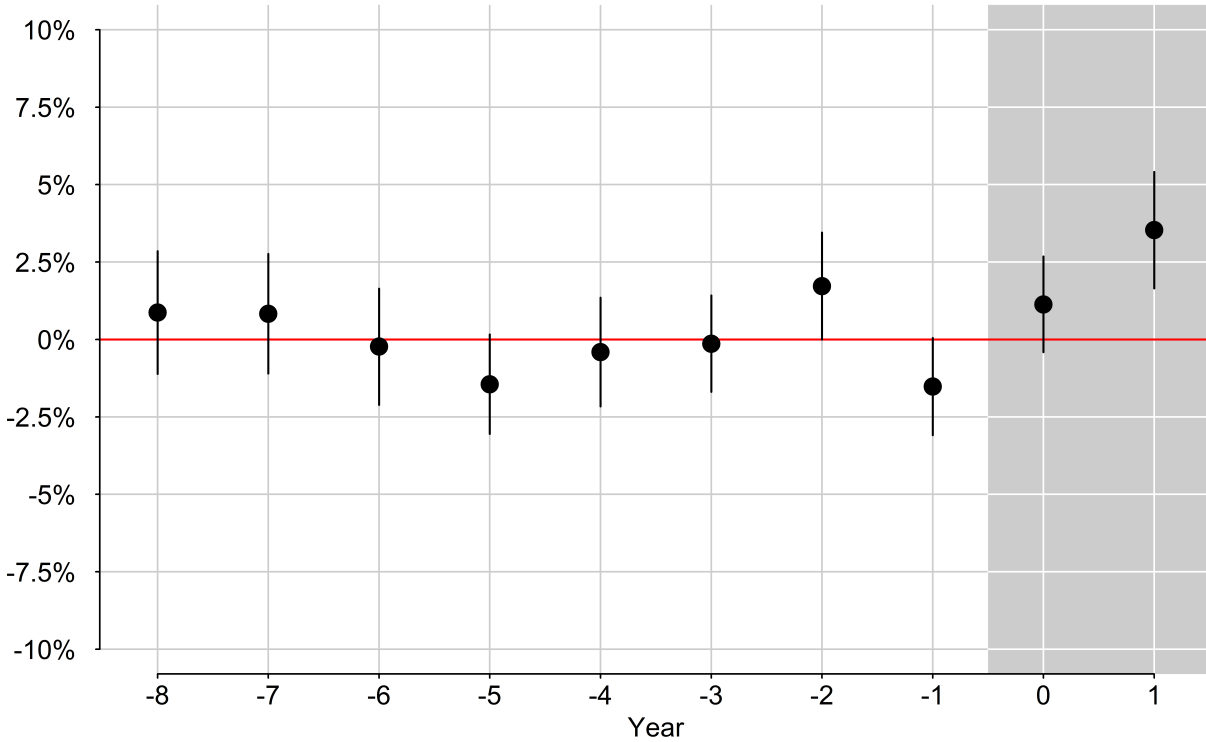


Figure A.1: **Eurobarometer survey analysis: DID estimate of average treatment effect of serving on the Security Council and parallel trends during pre-treatment period.** The plot shows that trends in United Nations attitudes in countries that were about to join the Security Council were not systematically different from those in other countries that joined the Council at a later date and serve as a counterfactual in the DID analysis of the effect of serving on the Council. The similarity of pre-trends in United Nations attitudes during the eight years before a term on the Council strengthens our confidence in the parallel trends assumption about the subsequent two years. The plot also shows that serving on the Security Council started to significantly improve public opinion over the course of a two-year term on the Council in the years 0 and 1, which are depicted in grey. 95% confidence intervals appear around the point estimates. See Appendix Table A.5 for full results.

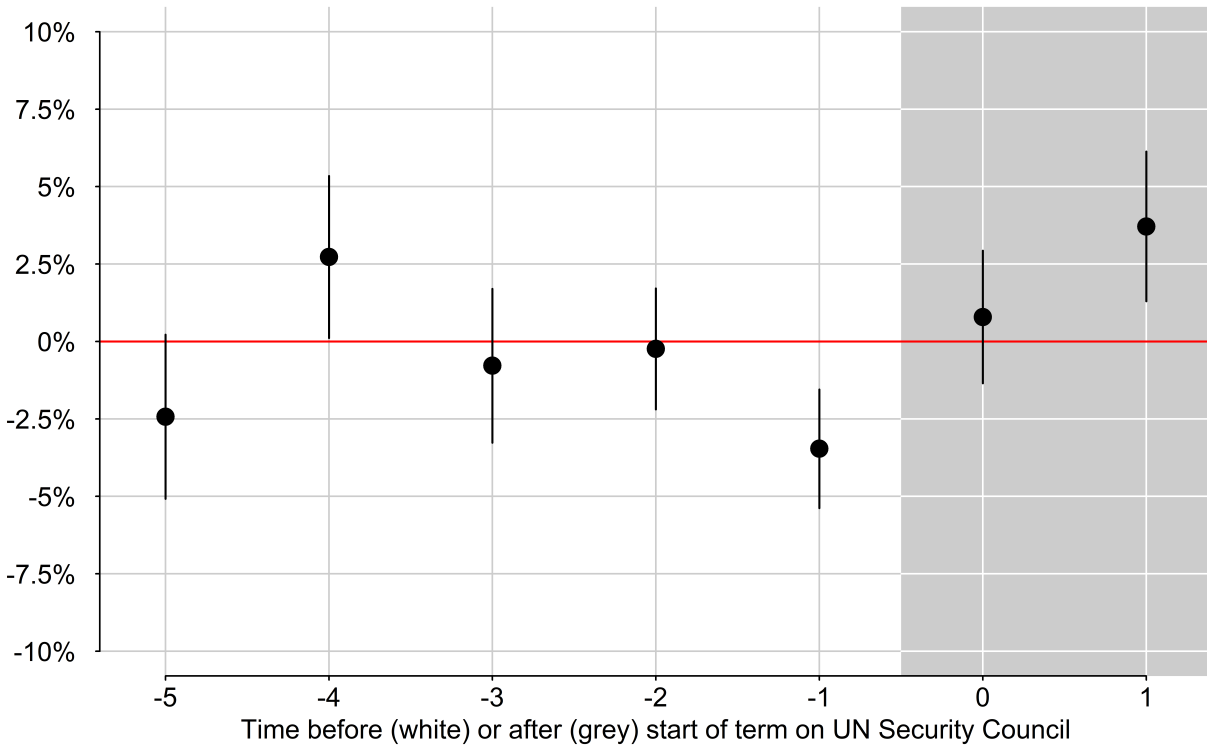


Figure A.2: **Pew survey analysis: DID estimate of average treatment effect of serving on the Security Council and parallel trends during pre-treatment period.** The plot shows that serving on the Security Council started to significantly improve public opinion over the course of a two-year term on the Council in the years 0 and 1, which are depicted in grey. 95% confidence intervals appear around the point estimates. The plot also shows that in most years trends in United Nations attitudes in countries that were about to serve on the Security Council were not systematically different from simultaneous trends in other countries that had seats on the Council at a later date; the latter serve as a counterfactual in the DID analysis of the effect of serving on the Council. The two differences in trends before Council membership are not consistently signed. The similarity of pre-trends in United Nations attitudes before Council terms and the absence of a pattern in the two significant pre-trend differences strengthens our confidence that the assumption of parallel trends during Security Council terms is valid. See Appendix Table A.5 for full results.

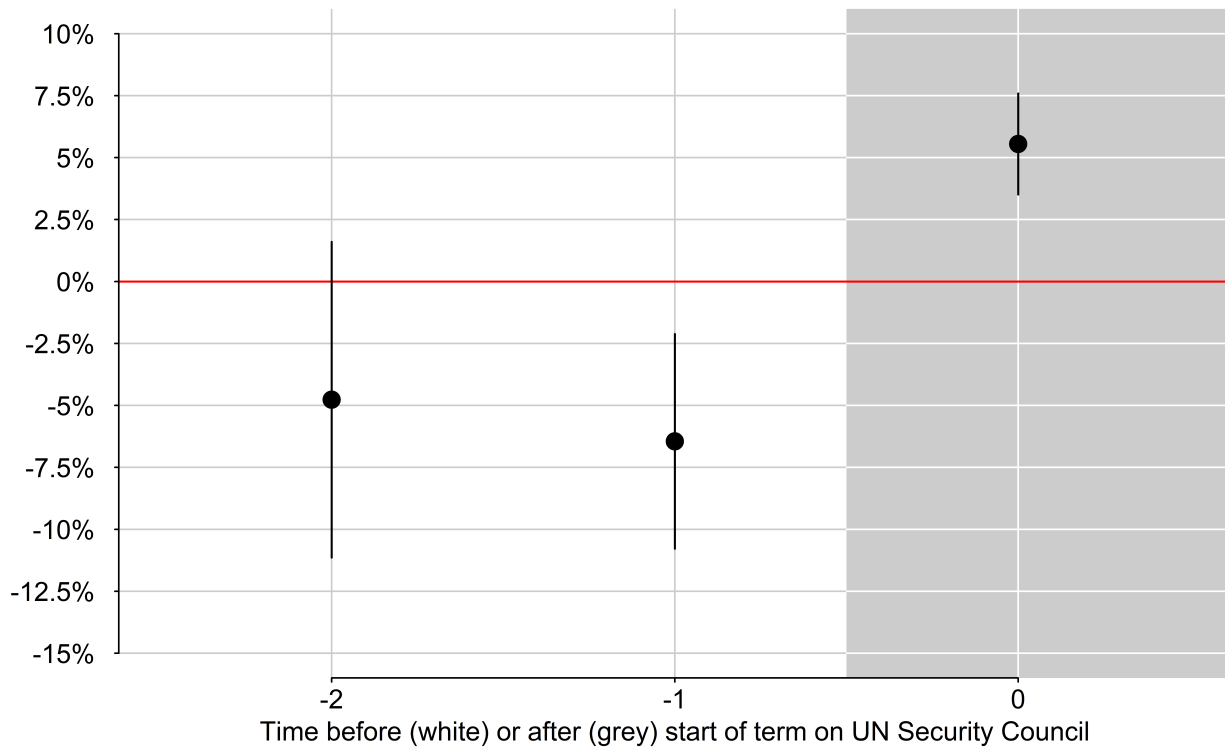


Figure A.3: Gallup survey analysis: DID estimate of average treatment effect of serving on the Security Council and parallel trends during pre-treatment period. The plot shows that serving on the Security Council started to significantly improve public opinion during a two-year term on the Council, which is depicted in grey. The plot also shows that higher increases in support of the United Nations in countries that served on the Council than in other countries were not an artifact of temporary Council members' publics becoming more favorable of the United Nations than other publics even before their country gained a seat on the Council's horseshoe table. The time series depicted in this figure is shorter than that of the Eurobarometer and Pew data because questions about the United Nations were only included in few Gallup survey rounds. 95% confidence intervals appear around the point estimates. See Appendix Table A.5 for full results.

Data set	Eurobarometer	Pew	Gallup
	Overall ATT	Overall ATT	Overall ATT
	0.023*	0.023*	0.056*
	(0.005)	(0.007)	(0.009)
Time before start of UNSC term	Dynamic effects	Dynamic effects	Dynamic effects
-8	0.009 (0.007)		
-7	0.008 (0.007)		
-6	-0.002 (0.006)		
-5	-0.015 (0.005)	-0.024 (0.010)	
-4	-0.004 (0.006)	0.027* (0.010)	
-3	-0.001 (0.005)	-0.008 (0.009)	
-2	0.017 (0.006)	-0.002 (0.007)	-0.048 (0.029)
-1	-0.015 (0.005)	-0.035* (0.007)	-0.065* (0.019)
0	0.011 (0.005)	0.008 (0.008)	0.056* (0.009)
1	0.035* (0.006)	0.037* (0.009)	
N	375,743	78,230	164,947
Country-years	193	70	202
Countries	17	17	65

* $p < 0.05$

Table A.5: **Estimates from DID analysis of Eurobarometer, Pew, and Gallup survey data.** Positive (negative) values designate increases (decreases) in the likelihood of a favorable opinion about the UN caused by the non-permanent UN Security Council membership of the country where a respondent was interviewed. The Overall ATT (average treatment effect for the treated subpopulation) averages the effect of serving on the Security Council on UN attitudes observed in the first and second years of all two-year terms on the Security Council. Dynamic effects average treatment effects at different lengths of exposure to the treatment (i.e., during the first and second year on the UN Security Council, which are labelled year 0 and year 1) and at specific points in pre-treatment periods (e.g., two years before the start of a term on the Council). Note that Pew and Gallup fielded fewer survey rounds with questions about the UN than Eurobarometer. Gallup did not field its survey in any country that was in its second year on the Security Council and that had also been included in an earlier survey round just before its term on the Council.

3 DID analysis: additional results, covariate balance, robustness

	(1)
DV	UN support
(Intercept)	0.85*** (0.02)
Age	-0.00* (0.00)
Female	0.00 (0.01)
Primary educ.	-0.04 (0.02)
Tertiary educ.	0.05*** (0.01)
Fin. sit. rather good	-0.04*** (0.01)
Fin. sit rather bad	-0.12*** (0.01)
Fin. sit. very bad	-0.27*** (0.02)
Pol. right	0.00 (0.00)
Country f.e.	Yes
Adj. R ²	0.06
Num. obs.	197,736

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table A.6: **Country fixed-effects OLS model of Eurobarometer survey data that examines correlation between support of the United Nations (DV) and sociodemographic characteristics (IVs)**: The coefficients depict the change in support of the United Nations associated with age, education, gender, respondents' financial situation and political ideology in comparison to the baseline category, a young man with secondary education whose financial situation is very good and who identifies as a aligned with the political left. Standard errors are clustered by country. The purpose of this correlational analysis is to establish a benchmark with which we can compare the effect of a seat on the UN Security Council on support of the United Nations depicted in Figure 4 in the main text.

(2)	
DV	UN support
(Intercept)	0.54*** (0.01)
Age	-0.00*** (0.00)
Female	0.00 (0.01)
Primary educ.	-0.01 (0.01)
Tertiary educ.	0.02** (0.01)
Country f.e.	Yes
Adj. R ²	0.14
Num. obs.	63379

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table A.7: **Country fixed-effects OLS model of Pew survey data that examines correlation between support of the United Nations (DV) and sociodemographic characteristics (IVs)**: The coefficients depict the change in support of the United Nations associated with age, education, and gender in comparison to the baseline category, a young man with secondary education. Standard errors are clustered by country. The purpose of this correlational analysis is to establish a benchmark with which we can compare the effect of a seat on the UN Security Council on support of the United Nations depicted in Figure 4 in the main text.

(3)	
DV	UN support
(Intercept)	0.51*** (0.03)
Age: 30-50	-0.02*** (0.00)
Age: 51-65	-0.02*** (0.01)
Age: >65	-0.01 (0.01)
Female	0.02*** (0.01)
Primary educ.	-0.01* (0.00)
Tertiary educ.	0.02*** (0.01)
Country f.e.	
Adj. R ²	0.08
Num. obs.	126,272

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table A.8: **Country fixed-effects OLS model of Gallup survey data that examines correlation between support of the United Nations (DV) and sociodemographic characteristics (IVs)**: The coefficients depict the change in support of the United Nations associated with age, education, and gender in comparison to the baseline category, a young man with secondary education. Standard errors are clustered by country. The purpose of this correlational analysis is to establish a benchmark with which we can compare the effect of a seat on the UN Security Council on support of the United Nations depicted in Figure 4 in the main text.

(4)	
DV	Interview during non- permanent UNSC term
(Intercept)	0.08 (0.08)
Age	-0.00 (0.00)
Female	0.01 (0.01)
Secondary educ.	-0.09 (0.07)
Tertiary educ.	-0.09 (0.07)
Fin. sit. rather good	-0.01 (0.02)
Fin. sit. rather bad	-0.01 (0.04)
Fin. sit. very bad	0.04 (0.05)
Pol. right	-0.00 (0.00)
Year f.e.	Yes
Adj. R ²	0.19
Num. obs.	228,624
Num. clusters	20

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table A.9: **Covariate balance test (Eurobarometer survey data)**: A year fixed-effects OLS model examines the correlates of being interviewed in a country while it served on the Security Council. It does not detect significant differences in sociodemographic characteristics of respondents interviewed in the same survey round in a country that had a non-permanent seat on the Security Council and respondents interviewed in other countries. Standard errors are clustered by country.

(5)	
DV	Interview during non- permanent UNSC term
(Intercept)	-0.03 (0.08)
Age	0.00 (0.00)
Female	0.00 (0.01)
Secondary educ.	-0.02 (0.05)
Tertiary educ.	0.04 (0.05)
Year f.e.	Yes
Adj. R ²	0.24
Num. obs.	77,575
Num. clusters	17

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table A.10: **Covariate balance test (Pew survey data)**: A year fixed-effects OLS model examines the correlates of being interviewed in a country while it served on the Security Council. It does not detect significant differences in sociodemographic characteristics of respondents interviewed in the same survey round in a country that had a non-permanent seat on the Security Council and respondents interviewed in other countries. Standard errors are clustered by country.

(6)	
DV	Interview during non-permanent UNSC term
(Intercept)	0.00 (0.01)
Age: 30-50	0.00 (0.00)
Age: 51-65	-0.01 (0.02)
Age: >65	-0.01 (0.02)
Female	0.00 (0.00)
Secondary educ.	-0.00 (0.01)
Tertiary educ.	0.00 (0.01)
Year f.e.	Yes
Adj. R ²	0.04
Num. obs.	162,656
Num. clusters	97

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Table A.11: **Covariate balance test (Gallup survey data)**: A year fixed-effects OLS model examines the correlates of being interviewed in a country while it served on the Security Council. It does not detect significant differences in sociodemographic characteristics of respondents interviewed in the same survey round in a country that had a non-permanent seat on the Security Council and respondents interviewed in other countries. Standard errors are clustered by country.

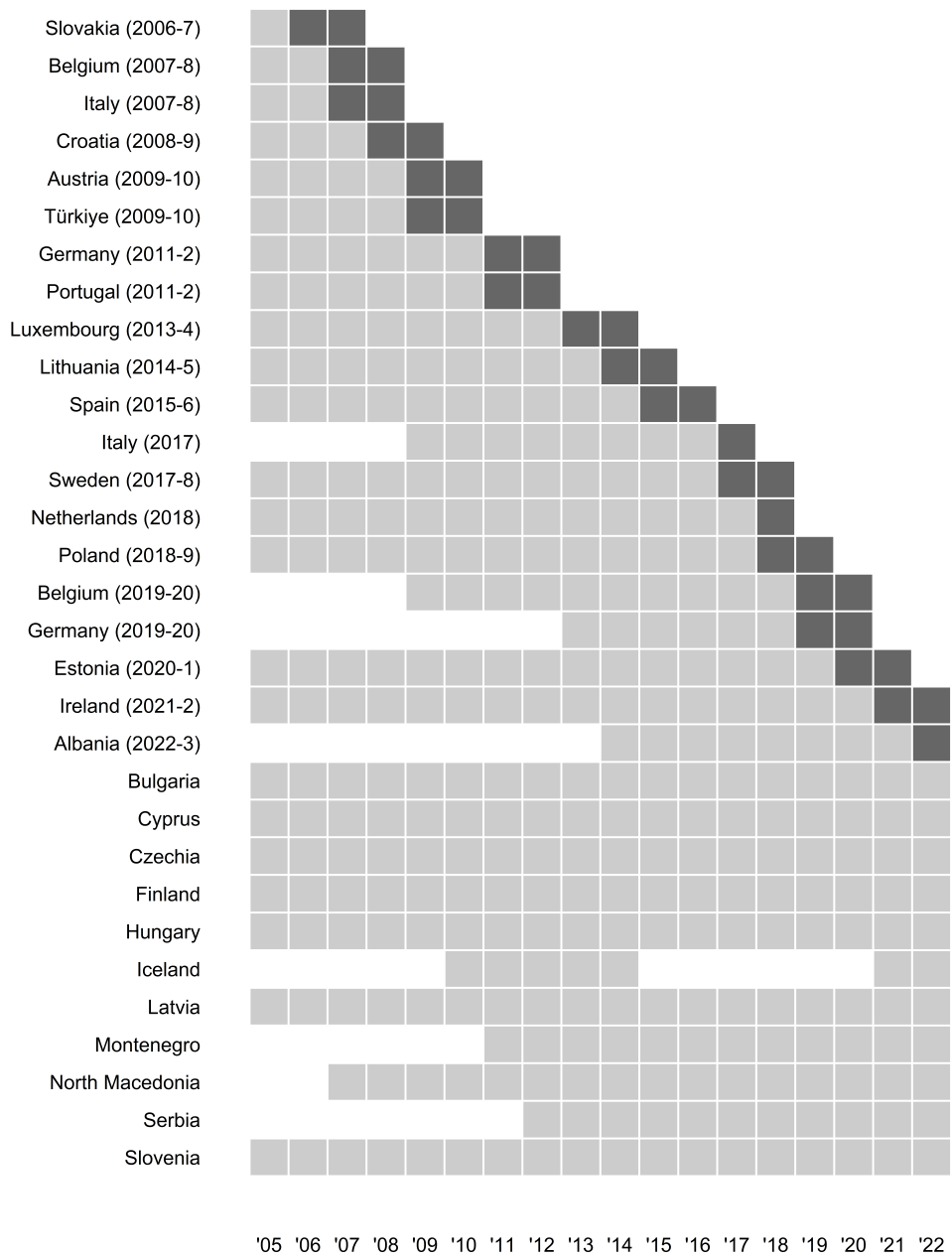


Figure A.4: **Country-years included in DID analysis of Eurobarometer surveys for robustness check that includes eleven countries that did not serve on Security Council during period of analysis:** Country-years during terms on the Security Council are depicted in dark grey. Country-years preceding Council membership are shown in light grey. Note that Belgium, Germany, and Italy served twice on the Council between 2005 and 2022. Albania, Iceland, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia were not included in all rounds of the Eurobarometer survey.

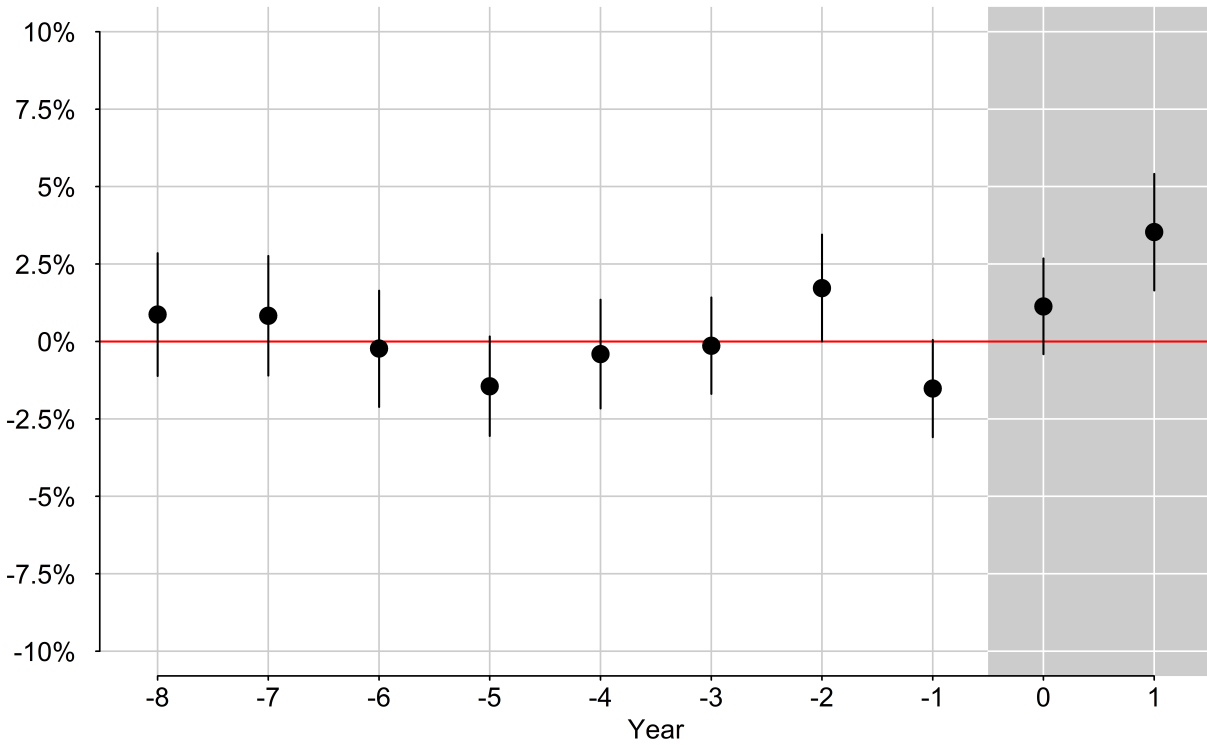


Figure A.5: Eurobarometer survey analysis for robustness check that includes eleven countries that did not serve on Security Council during period of analysis: DID estimate of average treatment effect of serving on the Security Council and parallel trends during pre-treatment period. The plot shows that trends in United Nations attitudes in countries that were about to join the Security Council were not systematically different from simultaneous trends in other countries that did not serve on the Security Council during the period of analysis and serve as a counterfactual in the DID analysis of the effect of serving on the Council. The similarity of pre-trends in United Nations attitudes during the eight years before a term on the Council strengthens our confidence in the parallel trends assumption about the subsequent two years. The plot also shows that serving on the Security Council started to significantly improve public opinion over the course of a two-year term on the Council in the years 0 and 1, which are depicted in grey. 95% confidence intervals appear around the point estimates. See Appendix Table A.12 for full results.

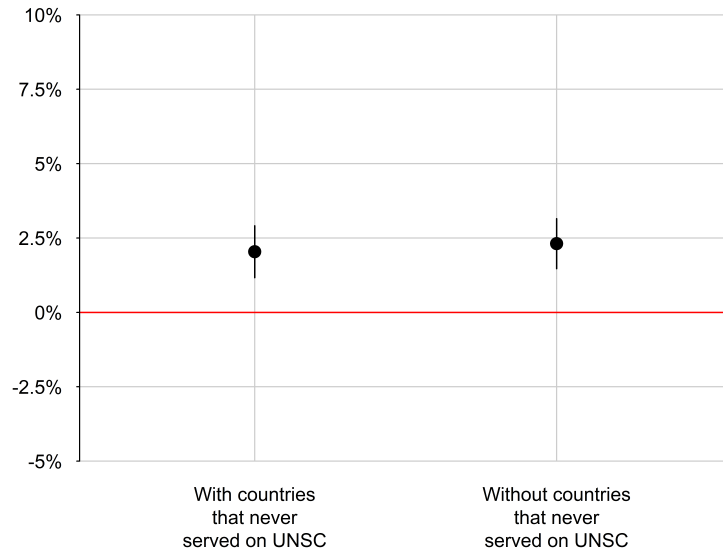


Figure A.6: **Robustness check: Result of DID analysis of repeated cross-sectional Eurobarometer data.** 95% CIs appear around point estimates. See Appendix Table A.12 for full results.

Data set	Eurobarometer	Eurobarometer
Scope of analysis	17 UNSC members +11 countries that did not serve on UNSC betw. 2006 and 2022	17 UNSC members +5 countries that did not serve on UNSC betw. 2006 and 2022 but did so earlier
	Overall ATT	Overall ATT
	0.020* (0.004)	0.0231* (0.004)
Year	Dynamic effects	Dynamic effects
-8	-0.004 (0.006)	-0.002 (0.006)
-7	-0.001 (0.006)	0.000 (0.006)
-6	-0.003 (0.005)	-0.004 (0.006)
-5	-0.012 (0.005)	-0.013 (0.005)
-4	-0.000 (0.005)	0.005 (0.005)
-3	0.003 (0.005)	0.003 (0.005)
-2	0.013 (0.005)	0.014* (0.005)
-1	-0.010 (0.004)	-0.010 (0.005)
0	0.010 (0.004)	0.013 (0.005)
1	0.031* (0.005)	0.034* (0.005)
N	675,633	549,853
Country-years	364	283
Countries	28	22

* $p < 0.05$

Table A.12: **Robustness checks: Estimates from DID analysis of Eurobarometer survey data.** Positive (negative) values designate increases (decreases) in the likelihood of a favorable opinion about the UN caused by the non-permanent UN Security Council membership of the country where a respondent was interviewed. The Overall ATT (average treatment effect for the treated subpopulation) averages the effect of serving on the Security Council on UN attitudes observed in the first and second years of all two-year terms on the Security Council. Dynamic effects average treatment effects at different lengths of exposure to the treatment (i.e., during the first and second year on the UN Security Council, which are labelled year 0 and year 1) and at specific points in pre-treatment periods (e.g., two years before the start of a term on the Council).

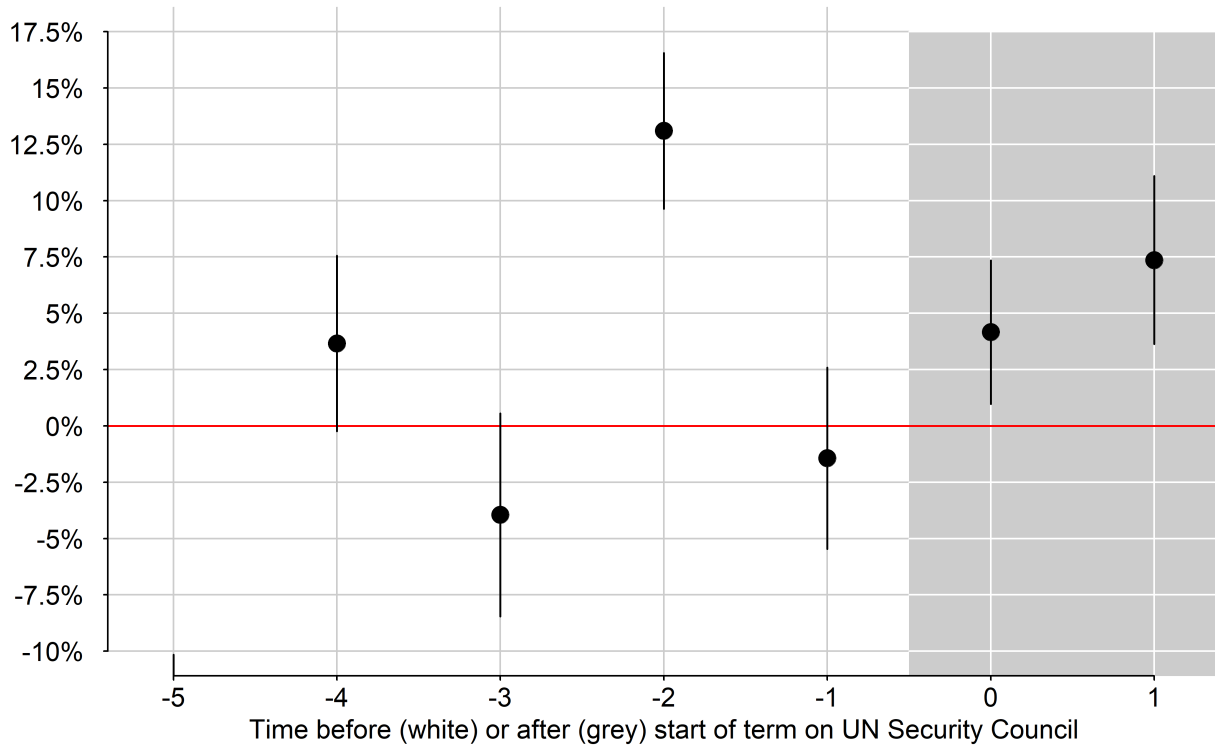


Figure A.7: Eurobarometer survey analysis: DID estimate of average treatment effect of serving on the Security Council for subset of countries whose official development aid (ODA) receipts increased while they served on the Security Council and parallel trends during pre-treatment period. These analyses compare trends in UN attitudes whose ODA receipts were higher during their Security Council term than they were during the preceding period (shown in grey in Figure 1 in the main text), on the one hand, and simultaneous trends in public opinion about the UN in other countries that served on the Council at a later point in time and whose ODA receipts were also higher during their UNSC term than they were during the preceding period, on the other. See Appendix Table A.13 for full results. ODA receipts include all bilateral and multilateral ODA disbursements. Source of ODA disbursement data: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2026).

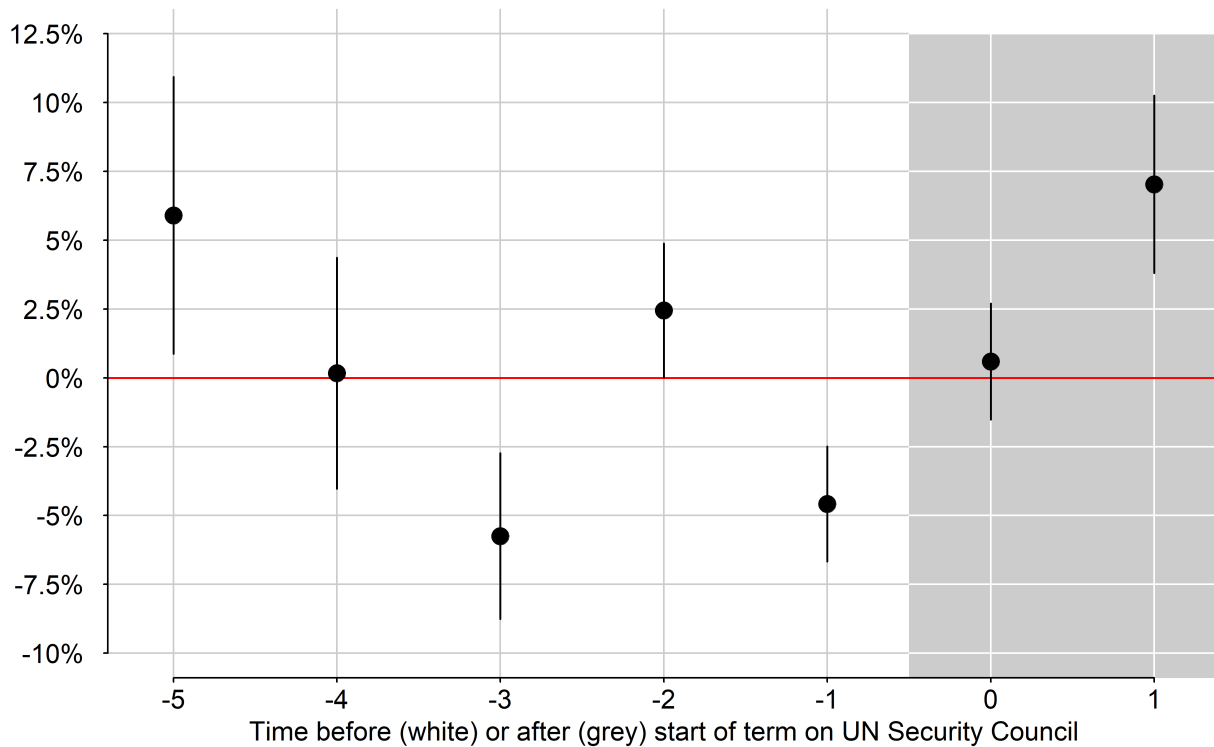


Figure A.8: Eurobarometer survey analysis: DID estimate of average treatment effect of serving on the Security Council for subset of countries whose official development aid (ODA) receipts did not increase while they served on the Security Council and parallel trends during pre-treatment period. These analyses compare trends in UN attitudes whose ODA receipts were at the same level or lower during their Security Council term than they were during the preceding period (shown in grey in Figure 1 in the main text), on the one hand, and simultaneous trends in public opinion about the UN in other countries that served on the Council at a later point in time and whose ODA receipts were also at the same level or lower during their UNSC term than they were during the preceding period, on the other. See Appendix Table A.13 for full results. ODA receipts include all bilateral and multilateral ODA disbursements. Source of ODA disbursement data: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2026).

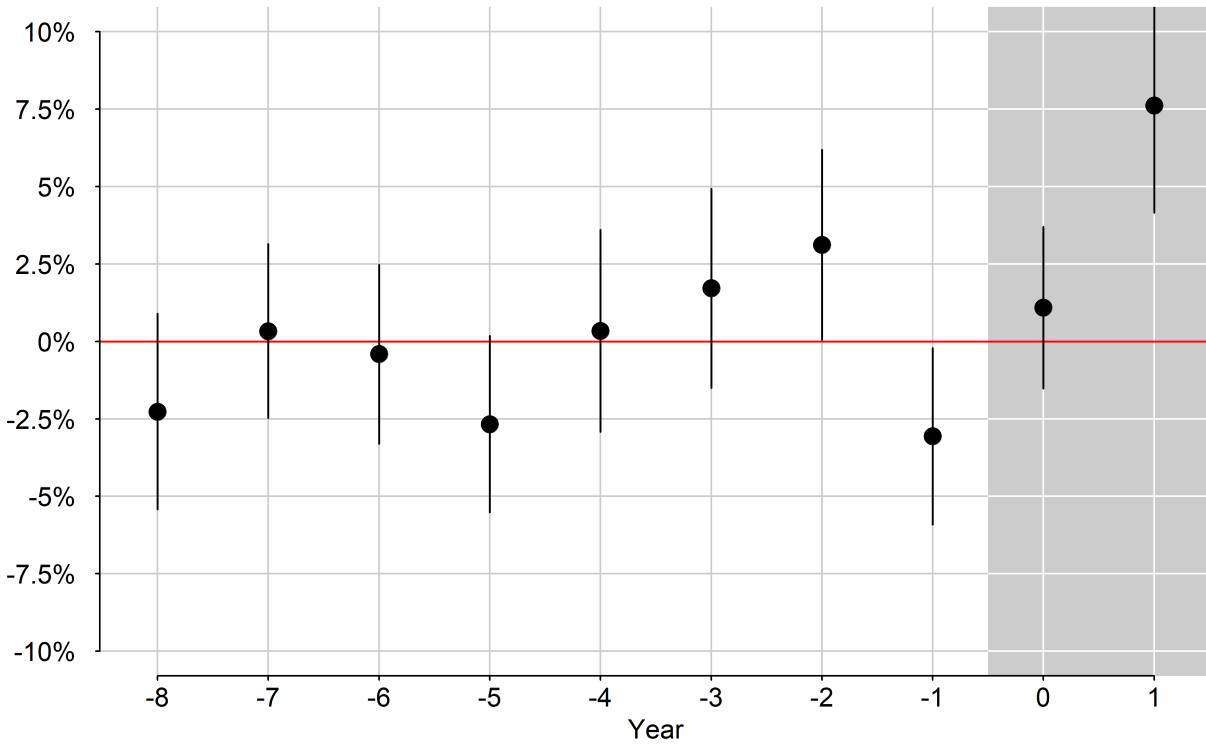


Figure A.9: Eurobarometer survey analysis: DID estimate of average treatment effect of serving on the Security Council for subset of countries whose EU budget net receipts increased while they served on the Security Council and parallel trends during pre-treatment period. These analyses compare trends in UN attitudes whose net receipts from the EU budget (in constant 2024 Euro) were higher (or whose net contributions to the EU budget were lower) during their Security Council term than they were during the preceding period (shown in grey in Figure 1 in the main text), on the one hand, and simultaneous trends in public opinion about the UN in other countries that served on the Council at a later point in time and whose net receipts from the EU budget (in constant 2024 Euro) were also higher (or whose net contributions to the EU budget were lower) during their UNSC term than they were during the preceding period, on the other. Net receipts were calculated by subtracting each country’s EU budget receipts from its EU budget contributions; net contributions are negative net receipts. Receipts and contributions were converted into 2024 Euro using the harmonized index of consumer prices published by Eurostat (2026). See Appendix Table A.13 for full results. Source of data on net receipts from/net contributions to the EU budget: European Commission (2023).

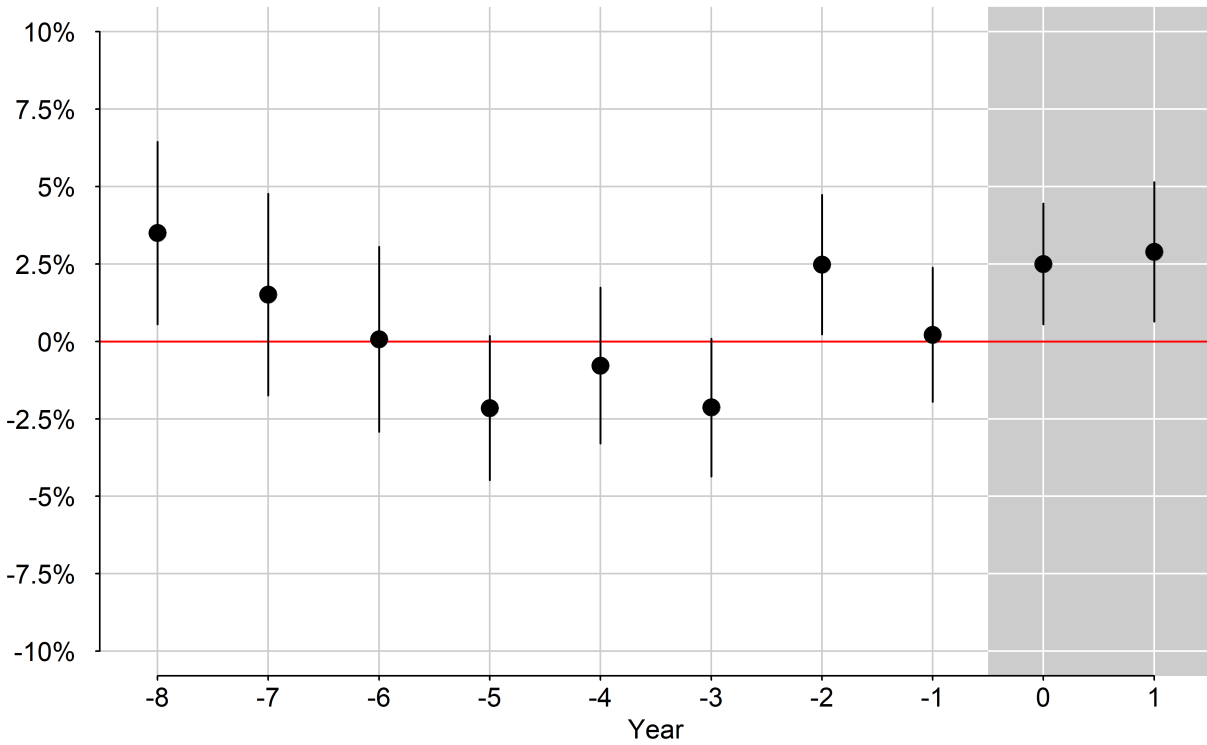


Figure A.10: Eurobarometer survey analysis: DID estimate of average treatment effect of serving on the Security Council for subset of countries whose EU budget net receipts decreased while they served on the Security Council and parallel trends during pre-treatment period. These analyses compare trends in UN attitudes whose net receipts from the EU budget (in constant 2024 Euro) were lower (or whose net contributions to the EU budget were higher) during their Security Council term than they were during the preceding period (shown in grey in Figure 1 in the main text), on the one hand, and simultaneous trends in public opinion about the UN in other countries that served on the Council at a later point in time and whose net receipts from the EU budget (in constant 2024 Euro) were also lower (or whose net contributions to the EU budget were higher) during their UNSC term than they were during the preceding period, on the other. Net receipts were calculated by subtracting each country’s EU budget receipts from its EU budget contributions; net contributions are negative net receipts. Receipts and contributions were converted into 2024 Euro using the harmonized index of consumer prices published by Eurostat (2026). See Appendix Table A.13 for full results. Source of data on net receipts from or net contributions to the EU budget: European Commission (2023).

Data set	Pew	Pew	Eurobarometer	Eurobarometer
Subset	Increase in aid	No increase in aid	Increase in EU receipts	No increase in EU receipts
	Overall ATT	Overall ATT	Overall ATT	Overall ATT
	0.057* (0.012)	0.038* (0.008)	0.040* (0.009)	0.027* (0.006)
Time before start of SC term	Dynamic effects	Dynamic effects	Dynamic effects	Dynamic effects
-8			-0.023 (0.011)	0.035* (0.010)
-7			0.003 (0.010)	0.015 (0.011)
-6			-0.004 (0.010)	0.001 (0.010)
-5	-0.144* (0.016)	0.059* (0.019)	-0.027 (0.010)	-0.022 (0.008)
-4	0.037 (0.015)	0.002 (0.016)	0.003 (0.011)	-0.008 (0.008)
-3	-0.040 (0.017)	-0.058* (0.011)	0.017 (0.011)	-0.021 (0.007)
-2	0.131* (0.013)	0.025* (0.009)	0.031* (0.011)	0.025* (0.007)
-1	-0.014 (0.015)	-0.046* (0.008)	-0.031* (0.010)	0.002 (0.007)
0	0.042* (0.012)	0.006 (0.008)	0.011 (0.009)	0.025* (0.006)
1	0.074* (0.014)	0.070* (0.012)	0.076* (0.012)	0.029* (0.007)
N	37,545	40,685	205,613	170,130

* $p < 0.05$

Table A.13: **Estimates from DID analysis of different subsets of Eurobarometer and Pew survey data.** Positive (negative) values designate increases (decreases) in the likelihood of a favorable opinion about the UN caused by the non-permanent UN Security Council membership of the country where a respondent was interviewed. The Overall ATT (average treatment effect for the treated subpopulation) averages the effect of serving on the Security Council on UN attitudes observed in the first and second years of all two-year terms on the Security Council. Dynamic effects average treatment effects at different lengths of exposure to the treatment (i.e., during the first and second year on the UN Security Council, which are labelled year 0 and year 1) and at specific points in pre-treatment periods (e.g., two years before the start of a term on the Council). Note that Pew fielded fewer survey rounds with questions about the UN than Eurobarometer.

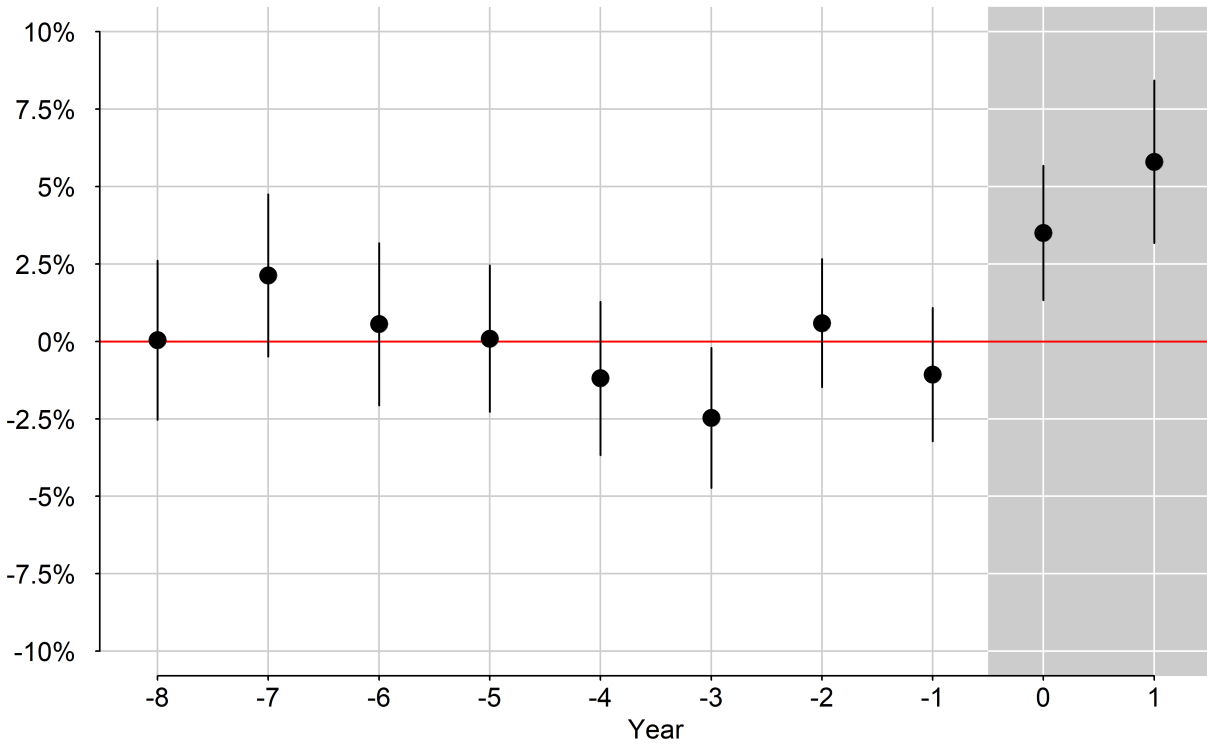


Figure A.11: Eurobarometer survey analysis: DID estimate of average treatment effect of serving on the Security Council with a great power leader’s visit during the term on the Council and parallel trends during pre-treatment period. These analyses compare trends in UN attitudes whose terms on the Council coincided with a visit by a Chinese, French, Russian or U.S. president or a British prime minister, on the one hand, and simultaneous trends in public opinion in other countries that served on the Council and also received (did not receive) a great power leader during their subsequent UNSC term, on the other. Two-year terms on the Council are shaded in grey. 95% confidence intervals appear around the point estimates. See Appendix Table A.14 for full results. Source of data on U.S. president’s visits: U.S. Department of State Office of the Historian (2025), on Chinese presidents’ visits: Wang and Stone (2023), and on visits by French and Russian presidents and UK prime ministers: Moyer et al. (2025).

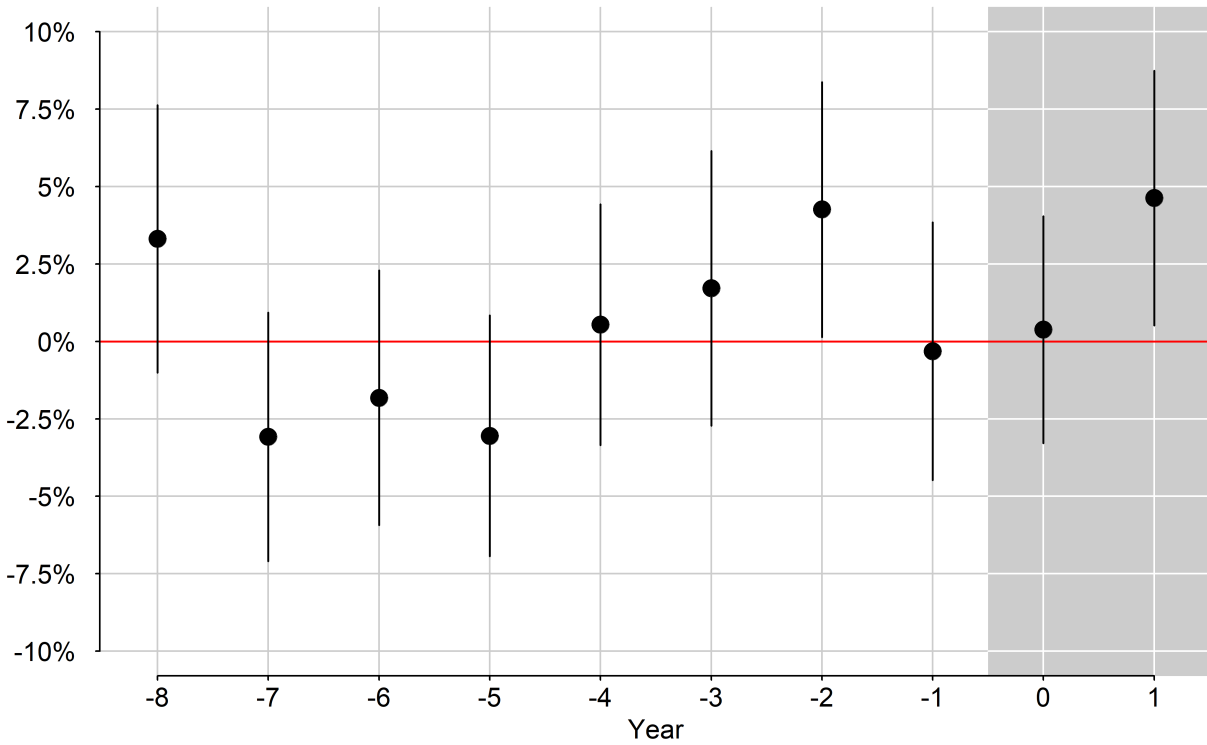


Figure A.12: Eurobarometer survey analysis: DID estimate of average treatment effect of serving on the Security Council without a great power leader’s visit during the term on the Council and parallel trends during pre-treatment period. These analyses compare trends in UN attitudes whose terms on the Council did not coincide with a visit by a Chinese, French, Russian or U.S. president or a British prime minister, on the one hand, and simultaneous trends in public opinion in other countries that served on the Council and also did not receive a great power leader during their subsequent UNSC term, on the other. Two-year terms on the Council are shaded in grey. 95% confidence intervals appear around the point estimates. See Appendix Table A.14 for full results. Source of data on U.S. president’s visits: U.S. Department of State Office of the Historian (2025), on Chinese presidents’ visits: Wang and Stone (2023), and on visits by French and Russian presidents and UK prime ministers: Moyer et al. (2025).

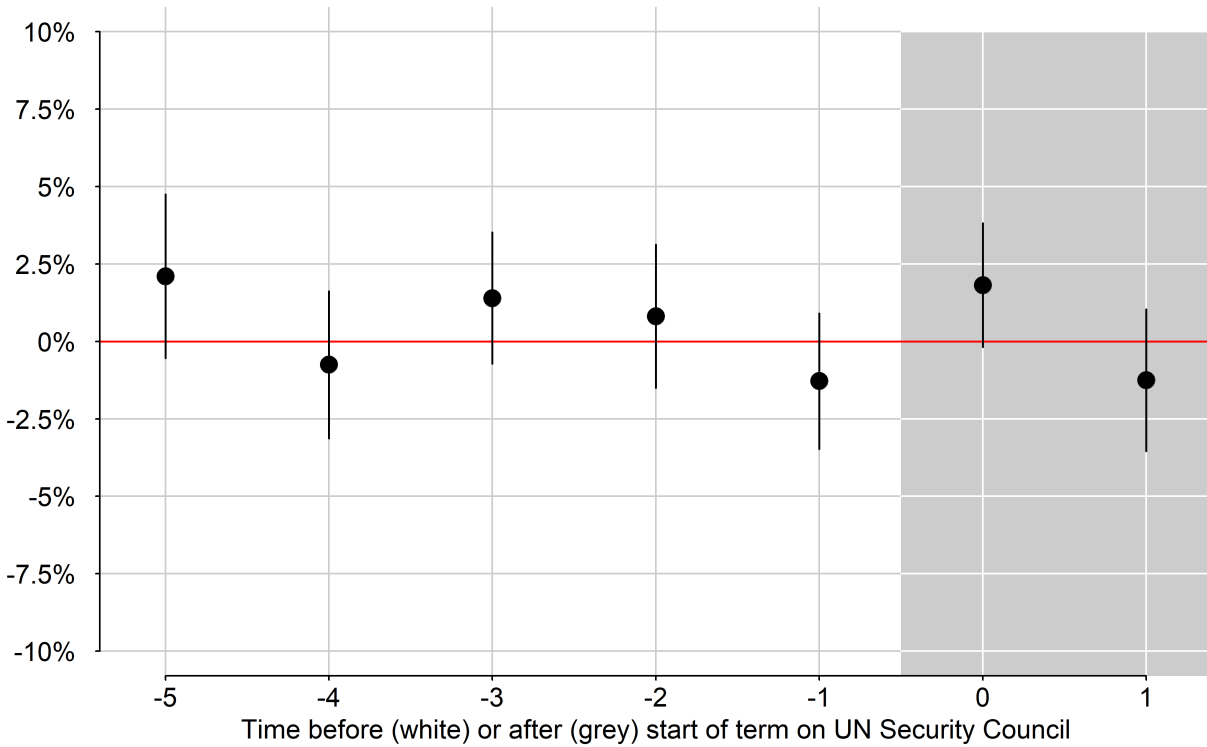


Figure A.13: Eurobarometer survey analysis: DID estimate of average treatment effect of serving on the Security Council for subset of countries that contributed more staff to UN peace operations while they served on the Security Council and parallel trends during pre-treatment period. These analyses compare trends in UN attitudes that contributed more troops, military observers, and civilian police officers to UN peace operations during their Security Council term than they did during the preceding period (shown in grey in Figure 1 in the main text), on the one hand, and simultaneous trends in public opinion about the UN in other countries that served on the Council at a later point in time and that also contributed more staff to UN peace operations during their UNSC term than they were during the preceding period, on the other. See Appendix Table A.14 for full results. Source of data on contributions to UN peace operations: United Nations Department of Peace Operations (2026).

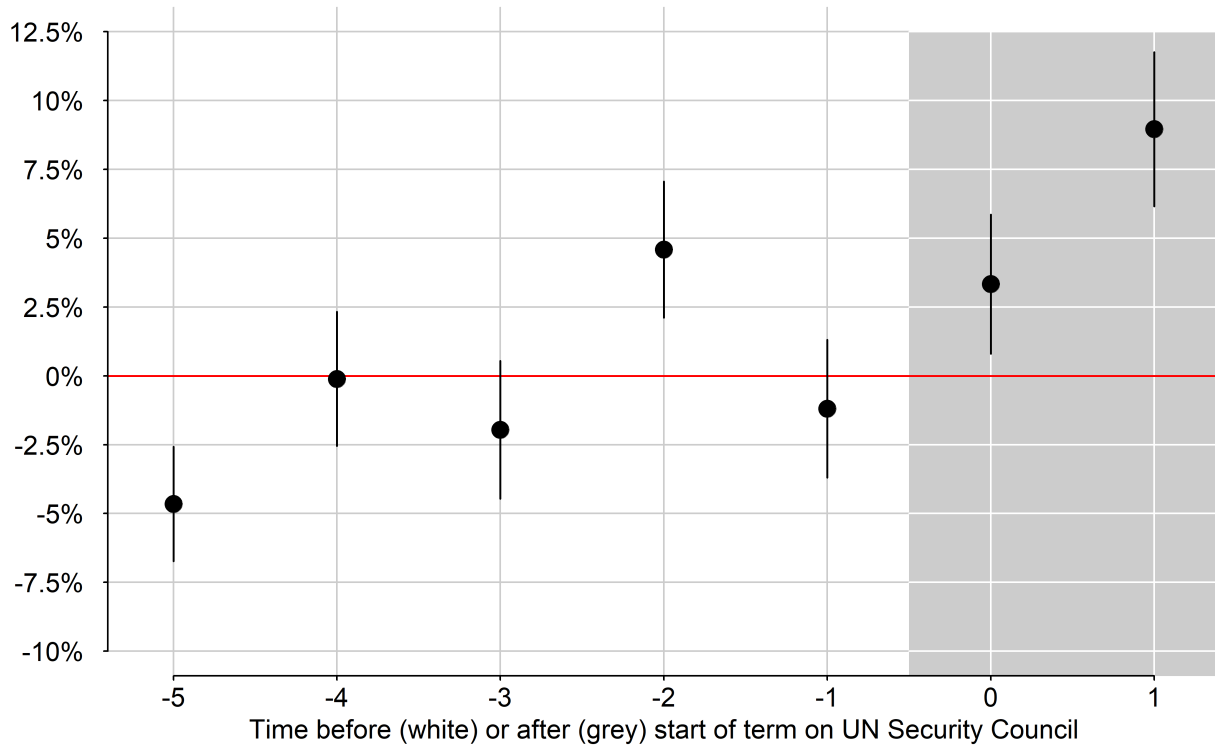


Figure A.14: Eurobarometer survey analysis: DID estimate of average treatment effect of serving on the Security Council for subset of countries that contributed fewer staff to UN peace operations while they served on the Security Council and parallel trends during pre-treatment period. These analyses compare trends in UN attitudes that contributed fewer troops, military observers, and civilian police officers to UN peace operations during their Security Council term than they did during the preceding period (shown in grey in Figure 1 in the main text), on the one hand, and simultaneous trends in public opinion about the UN in other countries that served on the Council at a later point in time and that also contributed fewer staff to UN peace operations during their UNSC term than they were during the preceding period, on the other. See Appendix Table A.14 for full results. Source of data on contributions to UN peace operations: United Nations Department of Peace Operations (2026).

Data set	Eurobarometer	Eurobarometer	Eurobarometer	Eurobarometer
Subset	With great power visit	Without great power visit	Increase in PK contrib.	No increase in PK contrib.
	Overall ATT	Overall ATT	Overall ATT	Overall ATT
	0.047* (0.007)	0.025* (0.011)	0.003 (0.006)	0.062* (0.008)
Time before start of SC term	Dynamic effects	Dynamic effects	Dynamic effects	Dynamic effects
-8	0.000 (0.009)	0.033 (0.015)	0.033* (0.010)	0.037* (0.010)
-7	0.021 (0.009)	-0.031 (0.014)	0.010 (0.011)	0.021 (0.009)
-6	0.006 (0.009)	-0.018 (0.014)	0.006 (0.011)	-0.003 (0.009)
-5	0.001 (0.008)	-0.030 (0.014)	0.021 (0.009)	-0.047* (0.007)
-4	-0.012 (0.008)	0.005 (0.014)	-0.008 (0.008)	-0.001 (0.008)
-3	-0.025* (0.008)	0.017 (0.016)	0.014 (0.007)	-0.020 (0.008)
-2	0.006 (0.007)	0.043* (0.015)	0.008 (0.008)	0.046* (0.008)
-1	-0.011 (0.007)	-0.003 (0.015)	-0.013 (0.008)	-0.012 (0.008)
0	0.035* (0.007)	0.004 (0.013)	0.018 (0.007)	0.033* (0.009)
1	0.058* (0.009)	0.046* (0.015)	-0.013 (0.008)	0.090* (0.009)
N	119,407	256,336	189,632	186,111

* $p < 0.05$

Table A.14: **Estimates from DID analysis of different subsets of Eurobarometer survey data.** Positive (negative) values designate increases (decreases) in the likelihood of a favorable opinion about the UN caused by the non-permanent UN Security Council membership of the country where a respondent was interviewed. The Overall ATT (average treatment effect for the treated subpopulation) averages the effect of serving on the Security Council on UN attitudes observed in the first and second years of all two-year terms on the Security Council. Dynamic effects average treatment effects at different lengths of exposure to the treatment (i.e., during the first and second year on the UN Security Council, which are labelled year 0 and year 1) and at specific points in pre-treatment periods (e.g., two years before the start of a term on the Council). Note that Pew fielded fewer survey rounds with questions about the UN than Eurobarometer.

4 Survey experiment: descriptive statistics

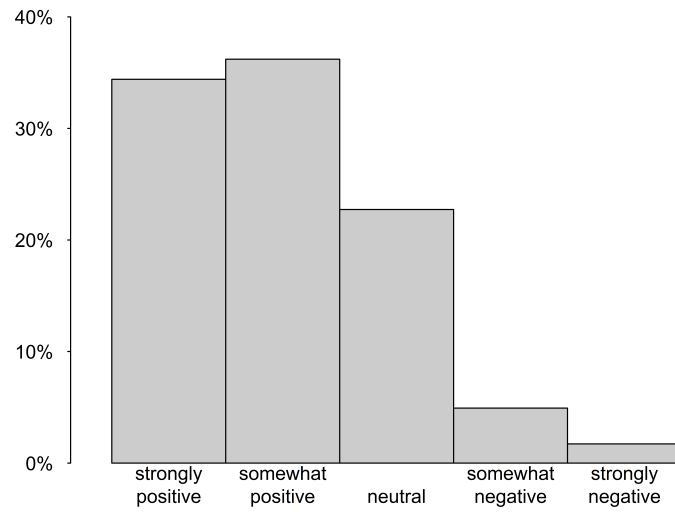


Figure A.15: **Distribution of attitudes toward UN in Indian survey sample.**

Table A.15: Descriptive statistics of the sample of Indian survey respondents

Variable	<i>N</i>	Mean	S.d.	Min.	Max.
Dependent variables					
Favorable opinion about UN (binary)	2,494	0.933	0.249	0	1
Favorable opinion about UN (untransformed)	2,494	2.966	0.961	0	4
Experimental treatments					
Status	2,494	0.507	0.500	0	1
Policy impact	2,494	0.503	0.500	0	1
Pretreatment covariates					
Age	2,494	41.050	14.839	18	84
Female	2,494	0.474	0.499	0	1
Educ.: Less than intermediate pass (class 12)	2,494	0.018	0.132	0	1
Educ.: Intermediate pass (class 12)	2,494	0.087	0.281	0	1
Educ.: Diploma (after class 10 or 12)	2,494	0.052	0.222	0	1
Educ.: Graduate or equivalent	2,494	0.464	0.499	0	1
Educ.: Post graduate or equivalent	2,494	0.356	0.479	0	1
Educ.: Doctoral or equivalent	2,494	0.024	0.153	0	1
Pol. ideology: left	2,311	0.059	0.235	0	1
Pol. ideology: left-center	2,311	0.074	0.262	0	1
Pol. ideology: center	2,311	0.510	0.500	0	1
Pol. ideology: center-right	2,311	0.151	0.358	0	1
Pol. ideology: right	2,311	0.206	0.404	0	1
Religion: Hindu	2,494	0.763	0.426	0	1
Religion: Muslim	2,494	0.087	0.282	0	1
Religion: Christian	2,494	0.089	0.284	0	1
Religion: Sikh	2,494	0.012	0.111	0	1
Religion: Buddhist	2,494	0.005	0.069	0	1
Religion: Other	2,494	0.009	0.096	0	1
Religion: None	2,494	0.018	0.133	0	1
Religion: Non-response	2,494	0.017	0.130	0	1
Income: low	2,494	2.346	0.762	1	5
Home town < 1 mil.	2,494	0.241	0.428	0	1
Home town \geq 1 mil. < 2.5 mil.	2,494	0.240	0.427	0	1
Home town \geq 2.5 mil. < 5 mil.	2,494	0.189	0.392	0	1
Home town \geq 5 mil. < 7.5 mil.	2,494	0.223	0.416	0	1
Home town \geq 7.5 mil.	2,494	0.106	0.308	0	1

5 Survey experiment: main results

DV	(7) UN support (binary)	(8) UN support (binary)	(9) UN support (untransformed)
(Intercept)	-0.02** (0.01)	0.02 (0.04)	0.08 (0.19)
Status	0.02** (0.01)	0.03** (0.01)	0.07* (0.03)
Policy impact	0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	-0.04 (0.04)
Age		-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)
Female		0.05*** (0.01)	0.06 (0.05)
Educ.: Intermediate pass (class 12)		-0.08* (0.04)	-0.07 (0.13)
Educ.: Diploma (after class 10 or 12)		-0.04 (0.04)	0.09 (0.16)
Educ.: Graduate or equivalent		-0.06* (0.03)	0.03 (0.13)
Educ.: Post graduate or equivalent		-0.07* (0.03)	0.02 (0.13)
Educ.: Doctoral or equivalent		-0.06 (0.04)	0.09 (0.18)
Pol. ideology: left-center		0.01 (0.03)	-0.27 (0.16)
Pol. ideology: center		0.02 (0.03)	-0.33* (0.15)
Pol. ideology: center-right		0.01 (0.03)	-0.31* (0.16)
Pol. ideology: right		-0.02 (0.03)	-0.25 (0.15)
Religion: Muslim		-0.06*** (0.02)	-0.22*** (0.07)
Religion: Christian		0.02 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.07)
Religion: Sikh		-0.08 (0.04)	-0.01 (0.19)
Religion: Buddhist		-0.03 (0.08)	-0.25 (0.30)
Religion: Other		-0.04 (0.08)	-0.45 (0.29)
Religion: None		-0.06 (0.04)	-0.31 (0.17)
Religion: Non-response		0.02 (0.03)	-0.03 (0.17)
Income: low		-0.01 (0.01)	-0.08* (0.04)
Home town \geq 1 mil. < 2.5 mil		0.02 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.07)
Home town \geq 2.5 mil. < 5 mil		-0.01 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.07)
Home town \geq 5 mil. < 7.5 mil		0.03 (0.02)	0.16 (0.11)
Home town \geq 7.5 mil.		0.00 (0.02)	0.10 (0.06)
State f.e.	Yes	Yes	Yes
R-sq.	0.013	0.036	0.042
N	2,494	2,311	2,311
States	35	35	35

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$


Table A.16: **Effect of status and policy impact treatments on likelihood of favorable opinion about the UN.** Results from state fixed-effects OLS models with standard errors clustered by state


6 Survey experiment: pre-registration

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'How influence in IOs shapes public opinion: A survey experiment in India' (AsPredicted #214545)

Author(s)

This pre-registration is currently anonymous to enable blind peer-review.
It has 3 authors.

Pre-registered on
2025/02/24 - 02:42 PM (PT)

1) Have any data been collected for this study already?

It's complicated. We have already collected some data but explain in Question 8 why readers may consider this a valid pre-registration nevertheless.

2) What's the main question being asked or hypothesis being tested in this study?

Research question: How does a country's influence in an international organization affect public opinion in that country about the organization? In short, we argue that publics value international organizations in which their home country wields substantial influence. We field a survey experiment to investigate two hypothesized ways in which a country's elevated influence in an international organization may improve mass attitudes in that country about the international organization:

Hypothesis 1: Members of the public prefer IOs where their country has substantial influence over policy outcomes.

Hypothesis 2: Members of the public prefer IOs that grant their country higher status compared to other states.

3) Describe the key dependent variable(s) specifying how they will be measured.

We investigate our hypotheses in the context of Indian public opinion about the United Nations.

The main dependent variable captures respondents' answer to the following survey question: "Is your opinion about the United Nations positive, neutral or negative?" Respondents can choose one of five answer options to this forced-choice question: Strongly positive/ somewhat positive/ neutral/ somewhat negative/ strongly negative. We will focus on this dependent variable to test our hypothesis.

We also add the following two exploratory questions to the survey, which measure the same attitude about the United Nations as the main dependent variable: "Should India's government increase, keep constant, or decrease spending on Indian diplomacy at the United Nations?" [Answer options: increase/keep constant/decrease/I do not know]. "Should India's government spend more money on Indian diplomacy at the United Nations or on sending more Indian diplomats to Washington and Moscow?" [Answer options: Spend more on Indian diplomacy at the United Nations/ Send more Indian diplomats to Washington and Moscow/I do not know]. We will definitely analyze the main dependent variable, but we are less certain about these exploratory alternative measures, which are cognitively more demanding than the main question. Our choice to include or exclude analysis of the two more exploratory questions in any publication will be a function of respondents' feedback in the open-ended questions and average time spent on each of the three questions.

https://aspredicted.org/see_one.php

1/3

4) How many and which conditions will participants be assigned to?

Respondents will be randomly assigned with equal probability to one of three treatment groups.

The control group will read the following text, which appears on the same screen and directly above the question used for the main dependent variable: "The United Nations is the biggest international organisation in the world. Its goal is to promote peace and economic development. Some praise the United Nations for aiding those in need while others criticise it for using double standards and a wasteful bureaucracy. India is a member of the United Nations. The UN Security Council is the most powerful United Nations body and is responsible for maintaining international peace and security."

The status treatment group reads the same text as the control group as well as the following additional sentence that appears at the end of the paragraph shown to the control group: "India ranks among the top seven countries in the world – and higher than Germany and Japan – in terms of how often it has been a member of the Security Council."

The policy influence treatment group reads the same text as the control group as well as the following additional sentence that appears at the end of the paragraph shown to the control group: "As a frequent member of the Security Council, India has had a big impact on United Nations policies on counterterrorism and peacekeeping."

A final treatment group reads the text displayed to the control group as well as both additional sentences shown to the status and policy influence treatment groups.

5) Specify exactly which analyses you will conduct to examine the main question/hypothesis.

We plan to estimate the following OLS model and calculate marginal effects:

$$DVi = T_statusi + T_policyinfluencei + covariatesi + locationi + e$$

Covariates include measures of age, gender, education, social class, hometown's population size, religion, and political ideology. Due to the sensitivity of political views and religion, respondents were given the option to decline answering these two questions. If many respondents decline to answer questions about religion and/or political views, we will not include these two measures as covariates to avoid a decrease in statistical power and representativeness of the sample that would stem from listwise deletion of respondents with missing values for either of these two measures if values are not missing at random. Location describes the location of the place where the respondent took the survey.

We will also estimate the same model without covariates and calculate marginal effects.

We will reject the null hypothesis if we find the differences between the two treatment groups and the control group to be statistically significant at the 95 percent level or above.

6) Describe exactly how outliers will be defined and handled, and your precise rule(s) for excluding observations.

Only adult Indian citizens are eligible to take the survey. Those who take the survey at an unreasonable speed and those who fail the attention check will not be allowed to complete the survey and will be automatically dropped during data gathering.

As a robustness check, we will process data by examining individuals who pass the following manipulation checks:

The survey contains the following manipulation check: "Did the short text about the United Nations that you just read mention India's participation in the United Nations Security Council?" [Answer options: yes/no/I do not remember].

Respondents who answered 'yes' will read the following follow-up question: "What did the short text about the United Nations that you just read say about India's participation in the United Nations Security Council? Please select ONE OR TWO answer options." [Answer options: India ranks among the top seven countries in the world – and higher than Germany and Japan – in terms of how often it has been a member of the United Nations Security Council./ As a frequent member of the United Nations Security Council, India has shaped how the United Nations combats terrorism and how it conducts peacekeeping./ The short text about the United Nations did not mention India's participation in the United Nations Security Council./ I do not remember.]. Based on the assumption that a large majority of respondents will pass the manipulation check (i.e., answer both questions correctly), we plan to analyze the intent to treat effect among all respondents (i.e., including those who fail the manipulation check) in our main models.

7) How many observations will be collected or what will determine sample size?

No need to justify decision, but be precise about exactly how the number will be determined.

The number of observations will be approximately 2,550.

8) Anything else you would like to pre-register?

(e.g., secondary analyses, variables collected for exploratory purposes, unusual analyses planned?)

We register this study prior to any human observation of the data. 299 survey responses have been automatically recorded in Qualtrics Software Suite, but no one human has observed or accessed this data. We do not even know at this point how many of these responses are complete - and can be used for analysis - and how many are incomplete - including speeders and those who failed the attention check. Screenshots of the Qualtrics Software Suite download history are on file with the authors and available on request.

Version of AsPredicted Questions: 2.00

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