One theme of UN Security Council reform proposals- the council’s “legitimacy is in peril unless the body can be reformed to account for recent changes in world politics.”

These changes include: Geopolitical Changes in distribution of military and economic power, Systemic Changes after decolonization which mult. membership and Normative Changes, as in the value given to diversity, equity and representation.

Says this rests on:
An “implicit hypothesis about the source of institutional legitimacy.”

Article surveys:
Five hypotheses and their relative claims about connection between membership and legitimacy- all based on expansion. Then, shows all to be either logically inconsistent or empirically implausible.

Article Outline:
Goal: Is to isolate elements that make up claims, assess their logical consistency.
I. Defend own claim that conventional wisdom is that the current membership structure constitutes a legitimacy crisis for the council.
II. Look at five hypothesis based on changing the membership by expansion
III. Address which of the five are empirically plausible and logically sustainable.
Conclusion: Speculate about political interests that motivate hypothesis, suggest implications about trade-offs, rhetorical entrapment and legitimacy in international organizations.

Two things NOT taken into account:
1. Does NOT look at connection between Council effectiveness and legitimacy. **
2. Does NOT look at privileges of member vs. non member, including veto.

Hypothesis:

H1: The membership of the Council is Representative of the General Assembly membership
H2: The membership of the Council is diverse
H3: The state is a member of the Council
H4: The state has an opportunity to participate in deliberations at the Council
H5: The level of deliberation at the Council is high

H1, H2 & H3 Based on Membership
H4 & H5 Based on Deliberation
The Assessment:

**H1: The membership of the Council is Representative of the General Assembly membership**

**H2: The membership of the Council is diverse**

Several of the hypothesis set up a trade-off between increasing the Council’s legitimacy for some states while necessarily reducing it for other states.

(Note: Lack of metrics for representation and diversity)

So: Lack of consensus means that privileging one interpretation over others will contribute to the delegitimization of an enlarged Council in the eyes of some states.

This weakens H1 & H2.

**H3: The state is a member of the Council**

H3 can only at best increase legitimacy of one state at a time- only going to increase by maybe 10 total, so not helpful.

H3 is out too.

(Note: He states that more interests on the table will necessarily mean that it will be harder to reach an agreement)

(Note: All legitimization hypothesis involve trade-off between increasing Council legitimacy and furthering other values, such as efficiency, effectiveness or power. It’s generally accepted that the size of the council is negatively correlated to effectiveness**)

**H4: The state has an opportunity to participate in deliberations at the Council.**

**H5: The level of deliberation at the Council is high**

Each hypothesis can be undermined by the possibility of ‘informal membership’ in the council.

So throws out all of them H1 H2 H3 - including H4 H5

Charter requirements allow nonmembers of the Council to contribute to deliberation- i.e. they can contribute already.

Throws of H4

Also, not sure that adding (formal or not) new members would necessarily add to its deliberative quality.

Throws of H5

His conclusion:

The weakness of many of these arguments relative to empirical evidence makes it plausible to conclude that much of the ‘legitimacy talk’ is a false front, covering up political interest of states. What aspirants to Council membership want really is a seat. Rhetorical Entrapment- principle of legitimation might be turned around by others in ways the speaker never intended but from which they can’t escape.