The G8 as a Newly Emerging Legitimation Object in Global Politics

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The political impact of globalization and the ongoing shift of authority from the nation state to a network of international governance arrangements has been the subject of much academic writing in recent years (Albrow 2003; Beck 2005; Hurrelmann et al. 2007). Within this huge body of work, research on the legitimacy of the democratic nation state on the one hand, and of the emerging international arrangements on the other, has been a particular growth industry (Hurrelmann, Schneider, and Steffek 2007b). Yet whether these international organizations and regimes are truly in need of, deserve, or manage to command the kind of support that the concept of legitimacy usually denotes, and hence the very *meaning* of that concept in the age of global politics, remains disputed.

From a normative perspective, it may appear rather uncontroversial to suggest that international governance arrangements and their representatives must be legitimate(d) to the extent that they assume a growing number of political responsibilities, and hence make decisions for international or even global constituencies that are, de iure or de facto, of a collectively binding nature. But there is visibly no consensus in the literature on the normative acceptability of international organizations and regimes, and we know even less about the scope or foundations of empirical support for them. Much of the extant literature, to be sure, diagnoses severe legitimacy deficits of the EU, the WTO, and various other international organizations. More sanguine observers, however, argue that legitimacy is not even at stake in the international sphere, or that the legitimacy of international governance arrangements is based on different foundations than support for the democratic nation state. There is, in short, a great need for more research into both the normative and the empirical legitimacy of these arrangements.

This paper assumes a strictly empirical perspective. We examine the (de-)legitimation of the Group of Eight (G8) summit regime, which has arguably become a major player in the field of global governance, in the media discourses of four Western democracies: Switzerland, Germany, Britain, and the United States. Our comparative study is based on a content analysis of legitimacy-related communication over the past ten years (1998-2007) in eight quality newspapers, and it will enable us to make inferences both on the scope and foundations of the G8's legitimacy, and on the nature and dynamics of related communicative processes.

We proceed as follows. The next section gives a cursory overview of important debates, questions, and hypotheses related to the legitimacy of international organizations and regimes in the age of global politics, and then sketches the contours of the G8 regime as well as its role in global governance. The following section outlines the rationale of our text analytical perspective on the legitimacy and legitimation of political systems and institutions, and contrasts it with two more conventional approaches frequently used in empirical legitimacy research. The third section presents the analytical framework, data collection and coding procedures of the comparative study. Our findings and their implications are discussed in section four and the conclusion.

Considering the massive protest that its summits have attracted lately, one might expect indications of a legitimacy crisis of the G8 regime – a crisis that one might further hypothesize to be largely grounded in perceptions of its insufficient democratic quality. Our data enable us to corroborate these expectations but also suggest a number of important differentiations. Finally,

they underline the degree to which event character of the summit regime impacts the dynamics of communicative processes related to its legitimacy.[1]

The Legitimacy of International Governance Arrangements:
The Case of the G8

The current International Relations literature abounds with references to legitimacy. However, the discovery by IR scholars of an issue and concept that – in the words of Bernard Crick (1959, 150) – represents no less than the 'master question' of political theory has been a fairly recent development. Moreover, as suggested above, a consensus on the meaning and uses of the term legitimacy with regard to international governance arrangements has yet to emerge (Hurd 1999; Mulligan 2006; Clark 2003, 2005, 2007a, 2007b; Bernstein 2004; Kratochwil 2006; Steffek 2003, 2007). If anything, then, the concept is more elusive and contested at the international level than when it is applied to national political orders and institutions. However, there is at least *some* common ground among scholars of legitimacy (Easton 1965, 1975; Beetham 1991; Barker 1990, 2001; Hurrelmann, Schneider, and Steffek 2007c).

The term legitimacy is usually employed to denote a specific kind of claims, beliefs, or assessments about the acceptability or rightfulness of political authority. The plausibility or prevalence of such claims, beliefs, or assessments is, in turn, thought to create obligations, and hence to foster compliance with the rules of a given political system and the decisions of its elites. But while compliance may also be based on habitual forms of obedience or the rational, self-interested utility calculations of subjects and citizens, including the ones that underpin Easton's *specific* variety of support, the distinctive feature of legitimacy beliefs and assessments is their grounding in evaluation standards of a normative and generalizable kind (Weber 1978; Steffek 2003, 178-9). However, despite the intrinsically normative character of legitimacy and its foundations, normative and empirical uses of the concept – an actor's and an observer's approach to legitimacy – must be properly distinguished. The former gauges the legitimacy of a regime in terms of the academic observer's external standards while the latter approach – which is followed in this paper – treats legitimacy-related claims, beliefs, and assessments as social facts (Barker 2007, 19-21; Hurrelmann, Schneider, and Steffek 2007a, 3-4).

What, then, does the extant literature have to say about the normative or empirical legitimacy of international organizations and regimes? In the state-centric, intergovernmental perspective on international relations that dominated the field in the post-war decades, legitimacy tended to be viewed as a non-issue at the international level – or, at best, as a concept describing the relationship between international organizations and the *governments* of their member states (Steffek 2007, 180-2; Zürn 2004; Ecker-Ehrhardt and Zürn 2007; Zürn et al. 2007). To the extent that international organizations were considered to be no more than handmaidens of national governments and forums of consensual decision-making in a system of executive multilateralism, and the (democratic) chain of legitimation between national constituencies, their representative insti-

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tutions (parliaments) and governments was considered to be intact, the IR literature could afford to concentrate on governments as the authors and adressees of ultimately non-enforceable international rules and obligations, and to draw on the concept of legitimacy merely to explain the 'puzzle' of *state* compliance with them.

With the emergence of a new world order characterized by the upwards and outwards shift of political authority to international and (public-)private governance arrangements, such an intergovernmental perspective on the legitimacy of international organizations and regimes appears more and more obsolete. Once the literature on international regimes and global governance had established the independent political authority of these arrangements, academic debates quickly turned from the issue of regime effectiveness to questions of democratic quality and legitimacy (Bohman 1999; Van Rooy 2004). A quick glance at the literature thus suggests that the processes of economic globalization and political internationalization have not only rekindled academic interest in the legitimacy of political systems and institutions at the national level but also forced IR scholars to reconsider the intergovernmental perspective on *international* legitimacy (Coicaud and Heiskanen 2001).

First of all, the observed upwards and outwards shift of political responsibilites from the state to international organizations and regimes might of course be expected to jeopardize the performance, democratic quality and legitimacy of *national* political orders and their core institutions. The line of reasoning of such crisis diagnoses, which come in normative as well as empirical variants, is familiar enough: In a first step, they tie economic globalization and political internationalization to the hollowing out of state autonomy and capacity, and to the sidelining of representative institutions or democratic procedures in general. This erosion of democratic quality is, then, held responsible for a growing legitimacy crisis of Western democracies and their core institutions (Pharr and Putnam 2000; Dalton 2004; Torcal and Montero 2006).

There are, to be sure, more optimistic diagnoses as well, and one might argue that the legitimacy of international governance arrangements is at least as much at stake in the age of global politics, if not more, than the legitimacy of the democratic nation state. Again, there are normative as well as empirical versions of this argument. According to both variants, however, the expanded authority of international organizations and regimes – notably where it is linked with a shift from consensual to majority decision-making or quasi-legal procedures – forces legitimacy researchers to bring political communities, NGOs as representatives and voices of (trans-)national civil societies, or even individual citizens 'back in', and to consider *them* rather than governments as the ultimate addressees of international rules and obligations (Van Rooy 2004; Anheier, Kaldor, and Glasius 2005; Beisheim 2005; Brunnengräber and Walk 2005; Collingwood 2006).

In other words, an increasing number of authors suggests that the legitimacy of international governance arrangements, and especially of those (like the European Union) that have pronounced supranational elements, can no longer be (re-)produced by governments *alone*. Steffek (2007) therefore reconceptualizes legitimacy as a relationship between international organizations, member states, and their (trans-)national constituencies. Zürn and his co-authors, in a similar vein, posit the following chain of developments: first, a growing *awareness* among the citizens of Western democracies of globalization processes and their effects, and notably of the described authority shift from the state to international organizations and regimes; secondly, because they are considered to be more relevant than in the past, and many of their decisions are

more binding, a *politicization* of these organizations and regimes; thirdly, and as a consequence, growing attention to the normative foundations of their authority, that is, to their *legitimacy*.

Put differently, according to this set of empirical hypotheses, international governance arrangements are no longer 'a-legitimate' but rather invite, and have to (re-)produce, the kind of claims, beliefs, and assessments that underpin the empirical legitimacy of national political orders and institutions. As *legitimation objects*, they are, moreover, likely to be evaluated in terms of those normative standards, or *legitimation criteria*, that are also used to justify or evaluate the legitimacy of the democratic state. These assessments may in principle be supportive or critical. The exacting character of *democratic* benchmarks, however, invites the hypothesis that normative expectations related to international organizations and regimes will continue to be disappointed on a regular basis if they are indeed based on these standards. The protest of the anti-globalization movement and other groups against European integration, the WTO, or the summits of the G8 are usually interpreted along these lines, namely, as evidence of an unresolved *legitimacy crisis* of international governance arrangements that is primarily rooted in disappointment about the gap between democratic aspirations and political reality.

Besides individual citizens or NGOs, political elites at the national level – as well as the representatives of the very international organizations and regimes whose legitimacy is at stake – may also be expected to play a role in their (de-)legitimation. Both governments and oppositions have an (electoral) incentive to react to the democratic and legitimacy deficits of international arrangements that citizens perceive. Where governments and oppositions call for a democratization of these arrangements, they might therefore be motivated by the fear that legitimacy challenges would otherwise be (re-)directed at *national* authorities and institutions. Likewise, the representatives of international regimes themselves have an obvious incentive to engage in self-legitimating strategies (Steffek 2003, 270), such as giving NGOs an observer status.

Much, then, appears to depend on the kinds of criteria that are used to claim or evaluate the legitimacy of international governance arrangements – crisis diagnoses usually assume that democratic benchmarks prevail while more sanguine observers tend to argue that the self-legitimating strategies of international organizations and regimes might indeed be effective, and that, in any case, a *different* set of normative foundations – for instance, related to output criteria – underpins the legitimacy of these arrangements. Still, it appears plausible to suggest that international regimes are at a 'comparative disadvantage in the loyalty struggle within a multi-level system of domination' (Steffek 2003, 271), and hence that their legitimacy has at the very least remained precarious – either because they undermine the democratic quality of national political orders and institutions, or because their own democratic quality is considered to be insufficient.

How legitimate international governance arrangements are, and which criteria play a role in their (de-)legitimation by different actors, will here be examined with a view on the G8 summit regime. Our rationale for the selection of this particular case may not be obvious. After all, one could argue that legitimacy should primarily be an issue for highly institutionalized supranational regimes and not so much for arrangements that have stayed closer to the model of executive multilateralism. This is why the alleged democratic and legitimacy deficits of the EU have attracted considerably more scholarly attention than the legitimacy of other regimes (Abromeit 1998; Beetham and Lord 1998; Majone 1998; Banchoff and Smith 1999; Schmitt and Thomassen 1999; Schmitter 2001; Mair 2005; Moravcsik 2002, 2005; DeBardeleben and Hurrelmann 2007; Føllesdal 2007).

There is no doubt that the G8's degree of institutionalization is, by contrast, on the lower end of the spectrum (Bailin 2005; Fratianni et al. 2007; Dobson 2007; Gstöhl 2003, 2007). Since the first meeting of six heads of state and government in Rambouillet, France, convened in 1975 by President Giscard d'Estaing and German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, the World Economic Summit has, to be sure, become a regular annual event. It was joined by Canada in 1976 and by Russia in 1998, and its agenda has been greatly expanded in a double sense: While issues of economic and monetary coordination among the G7 members themselves dominated the agenda in the first couple of years, the range of topics discussed at the annual summits – and the geographical focus of deliberations – has been constantly broadened in the last three decades. Still, the G8 remains 'an informal grouping without headquarters, permanent staff or legal powers' (Gstöhl 2007, 1). Moreover, Russia's membership – as well as the practice, in recent years, to invite representatives of the EU Commission, the heads of state or government of China, India, and various developing countries – have begun to obfuscate both the self-conception of the G8 – as a 'club' of the world's biggest market economies or liberal democracies – and the geographical scope of its activities. Finally, consensus decision-making is the rule, and the control or enforcement mechanisms at the G8's disposal are, at best, weak. Thus one might question whether the G8 is an international organization or regime at all, or at least whether it is typical for the kind of international governance arrangements whose legitimacy is more and more at stake.

Against this, we submit that the emerging world order is a complex scenario of multi-level and network governance in which summit diplomacy and 'informal core groups such as the G8' (Gstöhl 2007, 33) indeed play a more and more crucial role. A less institutionalized set-up is precisely what characterizes many international regimes in the age of global politics.[2] On the other hand, one should not overlook the modicum of institutionalization achieved by the G8. Although the two- or three-day rotating summits chaired by the head of state or government of the host country remain the focus of its activities, the G8 now has a plethora of task forces, expert and working groups, etc., engaged in a year-round process of deliberations and policy-making. Since 1998, for instance, the ministers of finance and of foreign affairs meet at separate conferences to prepare the summits. Moreover, '[w]ith half of the votes in the Bretton Woods institutions, the G8 countries combine great institutional power' (Gstöhl 2007, 10). A similar argument could be made for the OECD and the UN, among others – the G8 reunites the world's major economic powers, and no less than four of the five nuclear and veto powers in the Security Council. While it is true, then, that it cannot implement or enforce its own decisions, it has an undoubtedly privileged access to, and a most prominent voice in, those international organizations and regimes that *have* the necessary organizational resources and capacity. Finally, the increasingly blurred membership and expanded agenda of the summit regime very much underline its role as a 'group hegemon' (Gstöhl 2005, 406) or 'master transgovernmental coalition' (Baker 2006, 140) in global (network) governance.

For all these reasons, then, we doubt that the G8 summit regime is appropriately characterized as an instance of 'old-fashioned' executive multilateralism. Instead, we posit a neat di-

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[2] Arguably even more than in the past, '[i]nternational governance [today] functions through conventions, conferences, and secretariats that implement a set of agreed upon principles, norms, and rules', and it is 'rarely exercised by distinct and permanently active political bodies that have a wide range of competences and discretion' (Steffek 2007, 181). Also consider definitions of regimes as 'set[s] of governing arrangements' (Keohane and Nye 1977, 19) or 'principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actors' expectations converge' (Krasner 1982, 186). As we intend to show, the G8 summit regime certainly lives up to those definitions.

chotomy of 'traditional' (and hence presumably 'a-legitimate') v. new intergovernmental governance arrangements is no longer plausible in the age of global politics, and that the G8 has, in fact, become a *major* player of global governance even though it is frequently overlooked (Gstöhl 2007, 3; Bayme 2001; Bailin 2005). We therefore also consider the G8 to be no less than a 'crucial' (Gerring 2008) case for students of international governance arrangements and their legitimacy. Moreover, we submit that the 'proper' classification of the G8 in terms of the external criteria proposed by academic observers is not even an issue that need concern us here. Instead, we have to probe into the social and discursive *construction* of its role and legitimacy – for instance, as a self-appointed but illegitimate world government, or as a mere 'photo opportunity' (Antholis 2001) for a 'bunch of guys sitting around a table' (*Washington Post*, May 13, 1998). It is this discursive construction of legitimacy – and ways of examining it – that we now turn to.

Examining the Legitimacy of International Governance Arrangements:
A Text Analytical Perspective

Legitimacy and the processes in which it is (re-)produced or transformed may be captured in (at least) three dimensions, and there is arguably a privileged method for the study of each (Schneider, Nullmeier, and Hurrelmann 2007, 127-33). The two most prominent approaches in the field measure levels and foundations of regime support by way of public opinion research, thus zeroing in on *political attitudes* (legitimacy beliefs), or they observe forms of (non-) compliant *political behavior* interpreted as acts of support or dissent. A third dimension – namely, legitimacy-related *public communication* – has so far been largely neglected (but see Raufer 2005).

There is no doubt that the survey-based measurement of relevant attitudes is the dominant approach to empirical legitimacy research (Kaase and Newton 1995; Norris 1999; Westle 2007). However, this research tradition has so far produced considerably more data on *national* political orders, such as Western democracies, than on international ones. Whereas support for the EU is, for instance, addressed in Eurobarometer surveys, comparable data for other international governance arrangements, notably including the G8 summit regime, do not exist or are, at best, scarce (Niedermayer and Sinnott 1995; Ecker-Ehrhardt and Zürn 2007, 25; Hurrelmann et al. 2007c, 234-5). The available survey data indicate that the growing political authority of international and supranational governance arrangements is indeed perceived by a rising number of people, as hypothesized by Zürn and his co-authors. However, even if more data were available, the stimulus-response logic of the survey method, and hence its reactive, decontextualized nature, would come at a price: If we aim to gauge the extent to which international governance arrangements come to be perceived as legitimation objects, the propensity of surveys to trigger disguised non-responses is an obvious problem. How frequently respondents actually evaluate the legitimacy of different international organizations and regimes as actors in their own social environment – as well as the dominance or marginality of different legitimation criteria in these assessments – cannot be gleaned from surveys (Bourdieu 1984, 417-8; Dryzek 1988; Rosenberg 1989; Barker 2001, 34).

The observation of protest activities and other forms of (non-)compliant political behavior, which yields natural data, therefore seems to have major advantages, and as indicated above, the frequency, volume, and occasional violence of protest in the context of recent WTO or G8 summits is indeed widely interpreted as a sign of legitimacy problems (Barnes and Kaase 1979; Koopmans and Statham 1999; McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001; Koopmans and Rucht 2002;

Norris 2002; Haunss 2007). Conversely, the willingness of NGOs to accept an observer status in international organizations, etc., may be interpreted as an expression of support, however implicit. Yet observational data, for all their intuitive plausibility, also have their limits. One might, for instance, ask whether it is truly the G8 summit regime that protesters target, or rather a somewhat fuzzy set of objects, including 'capitalism' and 'globalization' as such. And given the usually restricted number of active protesters, we might ask how prevalent legitimacy challenges to international governance arrangements are in the wider public. Finally, the mere observation of protest activities, or of compliant behavior, does not tell us much, if anything, about the legitimation *criteria* that underpin them (Norris, Walgrave, and van Aelst 2006).

Both approaches, moreover, largely ignore the 'relational' nature of legitimation, as described above. If legitimacy is a state in which the legitimacy claims of political authorities (and related justifications) converge with the legitimacy beliefs or assessments of the wider public, then we must not ignore the former in an analysis of (de-)legitimation processes. A one-sided focus on survey respondents – as a proxy for citizens – or on protesters is therefore inappropriate. Instead, we submit that the social construction of reality – and of legitimacy – is an essentially communicative or discursive phenomenon, and hence amenable to text analytical methods (Berger and Luckmann 1966; Keller 2005; Keller et al. 2006; Luckmann 2001; Nullmeier 2001; Raufer 2005).

The successful (re-) production of legitimacy in (trans-)national public spheres is the (temporary) outcome of debates on the rightfulness of political orders and institutions, the plausibility of legitimacy claims and beliefs, the appropriateness of specific legitimation criteria, and so on (Sarcinelli 2002). Both political elites and 'simple' citizens may be expected to participate in such legitimacy-related communication, or *legitimation discourses*, with a set of discursive practices and strategies. Any challenges to the legitimacy of a regime and its normative foundations must also communicated, and ultimately be taken up by other participants in these discourses, to be effective. The attitudinal, behavioral, and communicative dimensions of legitimation are thus closely related – legitimacy beliefs are developed (and expressed) against the backdrop of legitimation discourses in which dominant collective representations of political reality, values and normative positions become manifest. Those beliefs that are made public and establish themselves as prominent or even hegemonic elements of such discourses are, in turn, of crucial importance for the generation, maintenance, or transformation of legitimacy at the system level. It is equally obvious that the various forms of behavior that may be viewed as indicators of (de-)legitimation are usually linked with, or indeed represent, *discursive* practices. Their meaning can only be fully understood once their linguistic or communicative nature is taken seriously.

The 'novel political dynamics in the age of global communication and politics' (Steffek 2007, 176), and our interest in the legitimation of international governance arrangements like the G8, makes consideration of legitimation discourses in (trans-)national public spheres and their media particularly apposite. As suggested by Baker (2006, 11), G8 influence is 'based on activities such as discourse construction, the promotion of shared causal and normative beliefs, mutual endorsement, persuasion and ultimately attempts to legitimate existing arrangements'. Yet with Steffek (2007, 189), '[it] is through public communication and debate that a legitimating consensus emerges', and the 'communication flows between the actors involved are channelled through mass media, specialized media, NGO publications, and so on'. The media are, in fact, likely to be the major source of information about international organizations and regimes – as well as related legitimacy claims and protest activities on a global scale (Gstöhl 2005, 397; Ecker-Ehrhardt and

Zürn 2007, 30) – for the (trans-)national constituencies of these arrangements; discontent may, then, be 'channelled back' more or less effectively from the 'periphery' of public spheres to the institutional 'center' of (inter-)national political orders and authorities, 'again via the media and organized civil society' (Steffek 2007, 188; Nanz and Steffek 2004; Peters 2005, 2007).

Whether communicative exchanges in general, and notably legitimation discourses with regard to the G8 or other international regimes, still have a largely national character, or whether there are indications of more transnational exchanges and a convergence of discourses, constitutes an open empirical question. Both the hypothesis of increasingly denationalized beliefs and assessments, and the competing hypothesis according to which variation in the institutional and discursive opportunity structures at the national level remain pronounced, has some prima facie plausibility (Klein et al. 2003; Ecker-Ehrhardt and Zürn 2007, 26, 29).

The G8 in the Mirror of National Legitimation Discourses:
Data and Methods

But how can legitimation discourses be identified and examined? Here we present data collection and coding procedures initially developed for the study of legitimation discourses on *national* political orders and institutions; the analytical framework and research design were slightly adapted for our study of the G8 summit regime (Hurrelmann et al. 2008). We compare G8-related legitimation discourses in Switzerland, Germany, Britain, and the United States. This country sample offers variation in terms of several factors that might be expected to influence the scope and nature of these discourses in the four national public spheres: The sample includes three members and one non-member of the summit regime (Switzerland); two countries with traditionally pronounced skepticism vis-à-vis multilateral arrangements, albeit for very different historical and political reasons (Switzerland, United States), and two (Britain and especially Germany) where the skepticism is less pronounced; three small and medium-sized countries with relatively open media systems, and one where the media system is rather closed and parochial (the United States).[3]

Legitimation discourses may unfold in various arenas. However, given the key role of the media for the very constitution of public spheres in mass societies, their role as 'gate-keepers' between citizens and political elites, and their impact on the framing of political issues, we focus on the media. As indicated by Table 1 (in the Appendix), the study examines two opinion-leading dailies per country, and does so for time windows of eleven days surrounding the G8 summits in the ten-year period between 1998 and 2007.[4] Texts were selected in a two-step procedure. First, automated search routines on the basis of pertinent dictionaries in English and German were used to identify G8-related articles and retrieve from the electronic newspaper database Factiva. These articles were, then, read and searched for propositions that evaluate the G8 summit regime, its authorities, or its policies; articles containing at least one such proposition were included in our

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[3] There are pragmatic motivations for our country sample as well. In a future step, we intend to compare the structures and trajectories of legitimation discourses related to national political orders and institutions and those of discourses on international governance arrangements in a more systematic fashion, and hence to use the data already gathered on the communicative (de-)legitimation of the former in the public spheres of those four countries.

[4] Through informal pretests, we established beforehand that the vast bulk of G8-related news coverage and commentaries in any given year, in fact, occurs during these time windows.

corpus (Table 1 also documents the number of hits yielded by the automated searches and the percentage shares of articles that were ultimately retained).

However, individual propositions of this kind rather than whole articles are the basic units of our empirical analysis. These propositions were identified with the help of a stylized legitimation 'grammar' (Table 2). A *legitimation statement* is thus defined as a positive or negative assessment of the G8 regime, usually but not always on the basis of a specific legitimation criterion, such as accountability, effectiveness, and various others (see below). The three core elements of our grammar – as well as the authors (speaker types) of legitimation statements and the policy or issue context (of the paragraph) in which they were uttered – are the variables of our analysis.[5]

Table 2 Legitimation 'grammar' with examples

Example 1: On the 'frequently asked questions' page of the British government's G8 website, an imagined seeker asks: 'What legitimacy does the G8 have?' Good question, Sir Nigel. And the answer? 'G8 countries are represented at the summit at the level of heads of state or government: these individuals have been democratically elected to lead the governments of their countries' (*Guardian*, July 7, 2005).			
The G8…	… is legitimate	… because it is	… democratic (popular sovereignty).
Example 2: 'We are trying to show the similarities between the kings of the dark ages and how the Group of 8 behave today, said Sigurd Jakobsen, a Danish student dressed as a monarch' (*New York Times*, June 3, 2007).			
The G8…	… is illegitimate	… because it is	… undemocratic (no popular sovereignty).
Example 3: G8 supporters say the meetings have shown that the leaders can respond collectively in the face of political problems. 'One of the things we know that summits do best is respond to the crisis at the time,' said John Kirton, who runs a G8 study center at the University of Toronto (*Washington Post*, May 16, 1998).			
The G8…	… is legitimate	… because it is	… effective.
Example 4: They [the G8] are pure conspicuous consumption, make-work for the 'rich white trash' of international diplomacy. They yield vacuous communiques and mountains of unread paper. Their only substantive conclusion is 'to meet again' (*Times*, July 20, 2001).			
The G8…	… is illegitimate	… because it is	… inefficient and ineffective. … unrepresentative (of the world population).

While both qualitative (discourse analytical) and quantitative (content analytical) methods could, in principle, be used in the examination of legitimation discourses, our approach thus combines elements of the two research traditions (Donati 1992; Hoffmeyer-Zlotnik 1992; Roberts 1997; Titscher et al. 1998; Howarth 2000; Fairclough 2003; Franzosi 2004; Keller 2004; Krippendorff 2004; Nonhoff 2004, 2006). In the following, we present an exploratory statistical analysis of our

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[5] To be precise, we coded yet another variable, namely, whether the proposition in question evaluates G8 policies, authorities, or the summit regime as a whole. Only the latter type of propositions is considered as a *genuine* legitimation statement, for the reasons detailed below. For ease of presentation, though, we will usually refer to all three types of evaluations as legitimation statements.

data, mostly on the basis of contingency tables and their visualization by way of correspondence analysis and other diagrams. But it is important to keep in mind that the data – whose coding involved the interpretive 'reconstruction' of legitimation statements and their 'translation' into the categories of our grammar – capture 'latent' rather than 'manifest' content of the examined articles and propositions.[6]

The G8 in the Mirror of National Legitimation Discourses: Findings

The presentation of our findings on G8-related legitimation discourses in Swiss, German, British, and US quality newspapers is organized around three sets of empirical questions: First, are there indications for rising media attention to the legitimacy of the summit regime? Secondly, does our material support the hypothesis of a legitimacy crisis? Thirdly, what are the normative foundations of the examined legitimacy assessments? A fourth set of questions – related to the nature and dynamics of communicative (de-)legitimation processes – is also discussed. This will enable us to make tentative inferences on the similarity and differences of the four national discourses, and to the stability or change of their structures over the past ten years.

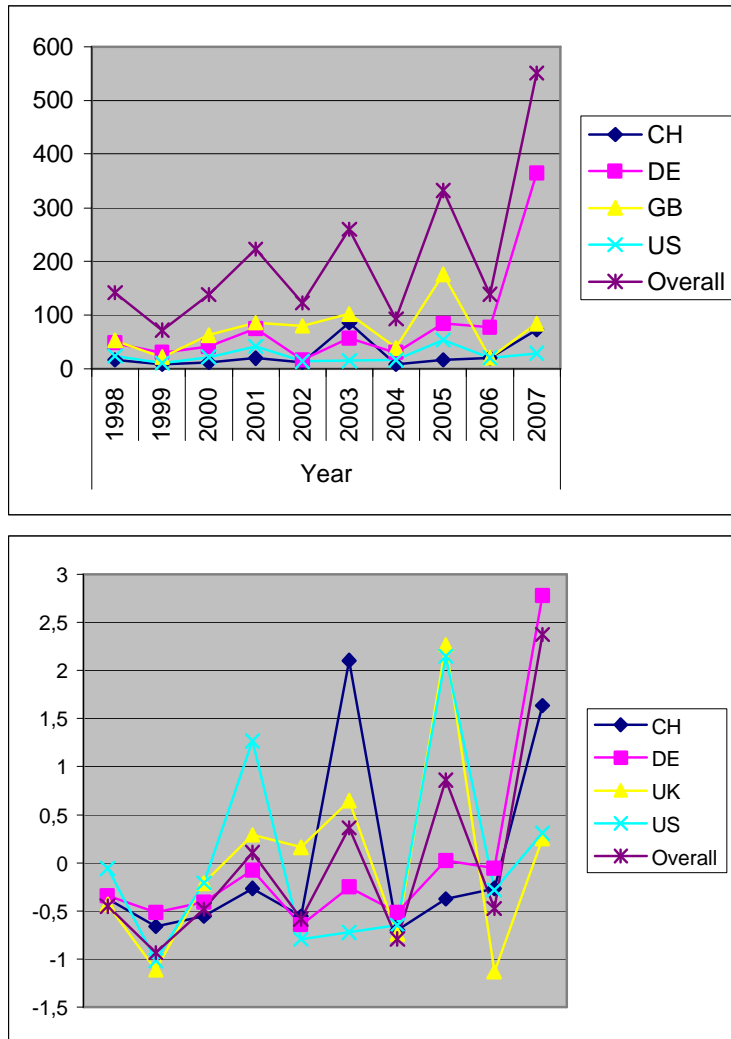*Media Attention to the G8 and Its Legitimacy*

With Steffek, we have argued that political regimes and institutions that hardly ever become the focus of legitimacy-related claims, beliefs, and assessments, or that the public is not even aware of, remain in a state of 'a-legitimacy'. However, following Zürn and his co-authors, we may hypothesize a growing politicization of the G8 summit regime, and hence its discovery as a legitimation object. We use the frequency of legitimation statements – positive or negative evaluations of the G8 – as our indicator of media attention, or *legitimation intensity*.

Table 3 Legitimation statements, by country and year

		Country				N
		CH	DE	GB	US	
Year	**1998**	17	48	53	24	142
	1999	9	30	22	11	72
	2000	12	41	63	22	138
	2001	20	75	86	42	223
	2002	12	17	80	14	123
	2003	86	57	102	15	260
	2004	8	30	39	16	93
	2005	17	85	176	54	332
	2006	20	77	21	21	139
	2007	73	365	84	29	551
N		274	825	726	248	2,073

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[6] A more detailed presentation of our text selection and coding procedures – as well as a discussion of reliability issues – will be made available on our website at www.sfb597.uni-bremen.de in due time.

Figure 1 Legitimation statements, by country and year

Note: Above – absolute number of statements by country and year; below – z-transformed (standardized) values that show each summit's deviation (in multiples of the standard deviation) from the national average for the entire period; values below 0 thus signal below-average media attention to the G8's legitimacy in a given country and year, and vice versa.

Table 3 and Figure 1 document the number of legitimation statements for each country and year (see Table 1 in the Appendix for the number of articles).[7] Overall, the summits between 1998 and 2007 triggered a substantial number of G8-related legitimacy assessments in the eight examined dailies. However, considering the aggregate figures for the entire 10-year period first, we may observe that the number of legitimation statements is exceedingly low in Switzerland and the United States while it is much higher in Germany and Britain. The G8, then, is no more than a marginal legitimation object in the Swiss and US discourses. An intuitive explanation of this finding would of course be that the Swiss and their quality press merely watch the summit regime

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[7] It should be reiterated that the table does not indicate the number of G8-related propositions as such but only the number of *legitimation statements*. It would of course be useful to have a supplementary indicator of legitimation intensity – the share of legitimation statements among all G8-related propositions – but establishing the denominator of this ratio proved impractical.

from the outside, as Switzerland is not a member (although three of its immediate neighbors are, and the country is undoubtedly affected by many of its decisions). Conversely, the United States as the leading member of the G8 is, at the same time, a global superpower involved in various comparable regimes around the world. The G8 must compete with them for attention, and this against the backdrop of a general skepticism with regard to multilateral arrangements and of the strong parochialism of the US public and media. For Britain and Germany, on the other hand, membership in the G8 is prestigious, an indicator and foundation of their role on the world stage (and while the British membership and veto power in the Security Council is undoubtedly at least as important in that regard, this should notably be true for Germany as an *economic* power).

A look at developments over time, as again illustrated by Table 3 and Figure 1, underlines the degree to which the event character of G8 summits and the logic of media reporting continue to influence attention to the regime's legitimacy. While most of the relevant communication is 'bunched' around the summits in any given year, examination of the overall trend line reveals a growing volume of legitimation statements, especially if we compare the 1998-2002 period (N = 698) with the 2003-2007 period (N = 1,375). However, it is obvious that this trend is to a considerable extent driven by the peaks in Britain (2005) and Germany (2007), and that strong cyclical effects are also at play. In other words, one recognizes a pattern of rising and falling media attention to individual summits, and a rather modest ratchet effect over the entire 10-year period.

Table 4 Issues, by country

	CH	DE	GB	US	Overall
Governance of G8 regime (GOV)	56.6	46.1	28.1	3.6	36.1
Development aid, debt crisis (DEV)	17.2	21.5	39.0	27.8	27.8
Enviroment, climate (ENV)	9.1	17.9	11.3	10.9	13.6
Foreign affairs, security issues (FOR)	10.6	6.7	5.1	33.9	9.9
Economy, trade (ECO)	6.6	5.9	12.3	14.9	9.3
Social, health, education issues (SOC)	0	1.9	4.3	8.9	3.3

Media interest to the summits of Birmingham (1998), Cologne (1999), and Okinawa (2000) remained exceedingly low in all four countries. We may safely assume that the violence at the Genoa summit (as previously in Seattle, surrounding the WTO meeting) triggered growing media attention in subsequent years, even though the figures for 2001 are not as impressive as one might have expected. A number of other factors that are likely to drive attention are also readily apparent. Thus media interest for the Kananaskis (2002), Sea Island (2004), and Saint Petersburg (2006) also remained low in most cases – in other words, interest for summits in locations that were precisely chosen due to their remoteness and inaccessibility for demonstrators and even journalists (Kananaskis, Sea Island), or at which protest activities were rigorously stifled by the police (we further pursue this link between protest and legitimation intensity below – see also Kirton 2002; Cherry 2006; della Porta and Reiter 2006; Hajnal 2006; Dafoe and Lin 2007). Moreover, the lower half of the diagram illustrates the rather unsurprising fact that a country's role as host of the summit usually fosters a temporary growth in media interest – see Gleneagles (2005) and Heiligendamm (2007). As for Switzerland, it had a de facto hosting role in 2003, when the summit took place in heavily guarded Évian, France, while protest activities evaded to

neighboring Geneva. These protests were kept in check with the help of German police forces – much to the dismay of the Swiss public – and as a 'compensation' for the damage, the Swiss President was invited to Évian. In 2004, by contrast, we do not see the same effect, arguably because of the anticipated and widely confirmed failure of the Sea Island summit.

But which *issues* provide the background of legitimation statements, and which types of *speakers* have 'voice' in the G8-related legitimation discourses? Both variables shed additional light on the extent to which the various activities and relevance of the summit regime are perceived, on the extent to which it is has become politicized and discovered as a legitimation object by the wider public, and on the framings of its activities that dominate the media (Gamson and Modgliani 1989; Benford and Snow 2000; Ferree, Gamson, and Gerhards 2002). Table 4 documents the percentage shares of broad issue categories for each country and overall. In two countries, (Switzerland and Germany), legitimation statements are embedded in paragraphs that discuss the governance of the G8 regime itself rather than specific policy issues – a finding that one might have expected, and which actually mirrors a similar finding yielded by our analysis of discourses related to national political orders and institutions: A considerable number of legitimation statements are embedded in articles that 'get right to the point', the nature and quality of G8 *institutions and procedures*. This issue category ranks second in Britain while it is marginal in the United, which already hints at little interest in the G8 as a regime (see below). The topic of development aid and the debt crisis of developing countries follows not very far behind; it ranks first in Britain, second in the United States, and has the lowest percentage share in Switzerland. The issue of environmental protection and climate change ranks third overall; its percentage share is highest in Germany and lowest in Switzerland. Economic and trade policy (the historical focus of summits), foreign affairs and security-related issues have a share of less than ten per cent, although economic issues remain more important in the Anglo-Saxon countries and foreign affairs by far dominate in the United States. In short, the data are suggestive of a link between the expansion of the G8's policy agenda on the one hand, and its growing perception as a relevant player and legitimation object on the other. Legitimacy assessments of the summit regime are frequently made against the backdrop of the 'soft' or 'low politics' issues that have more and more come to the fore.

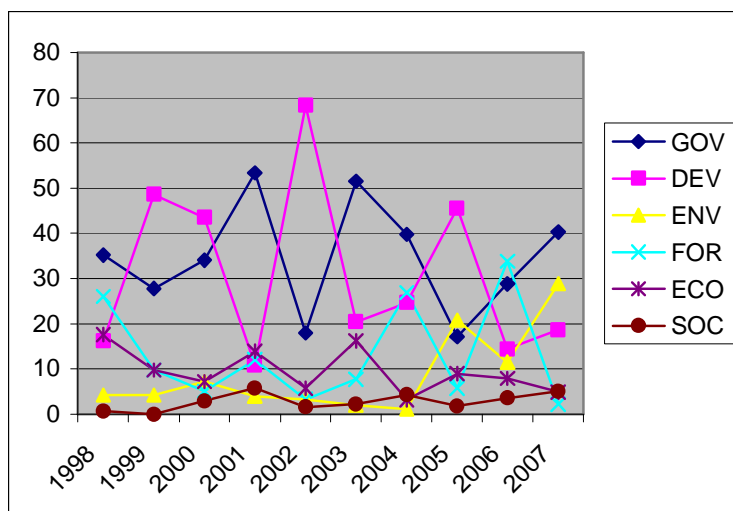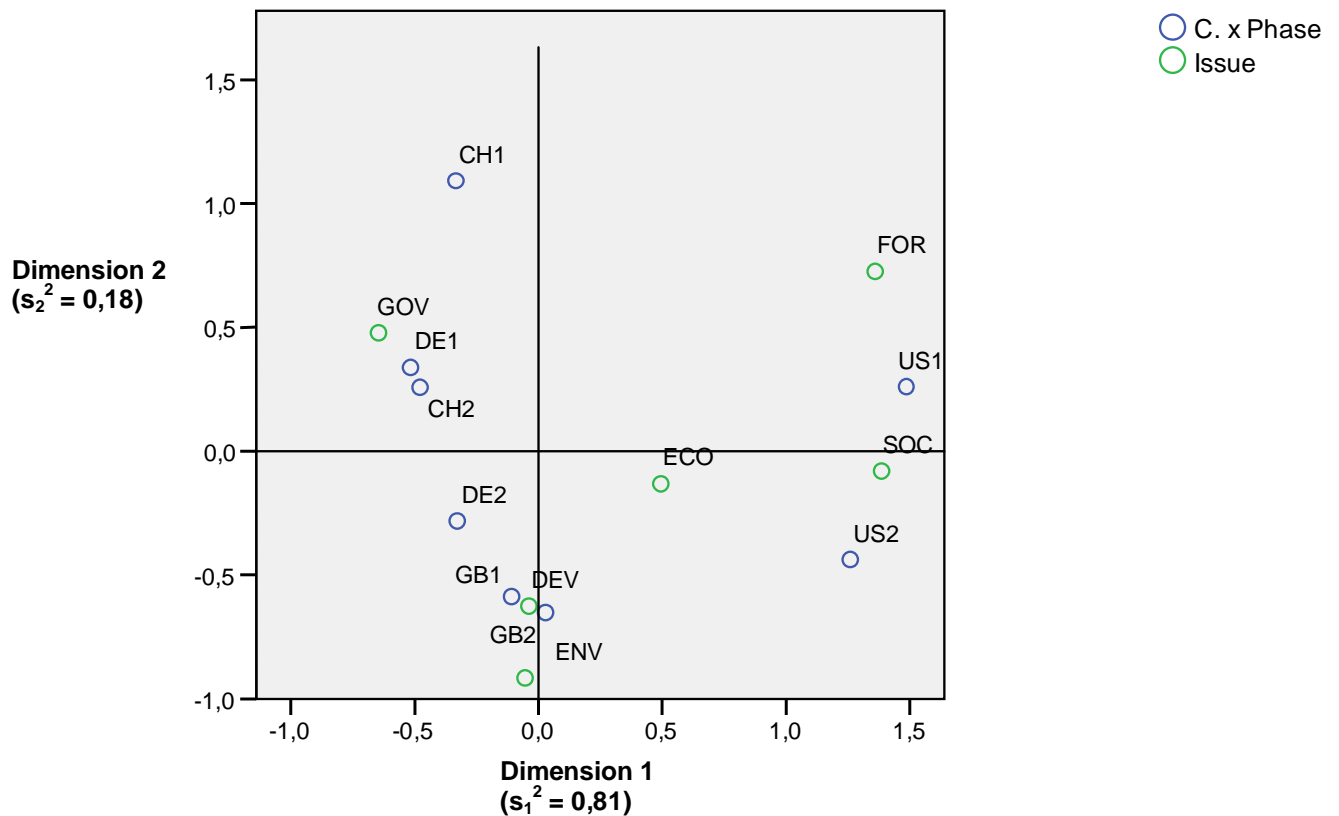**Figure 2** Issues, by year

Figure 3

Note: CH1, DE1, GB1, US1 = Swiss, German, British, and US discourses in the 1998-2002 period; CH2, DE2, GB2, US = 2003-2007 period (these are supplementary points). See Table 4 for the abbreviations of issue categories.

Figure 2 reveals the highly cyclical nature of issue attention, and so media discourses closely follow the priorities of each summit's agenda – for instance, development aid and related issues in 1999, 2002, and 2005, the environment and climate change in 2001, 2003, and 2007, and so on. Figure 3 captures movements between the 1998-2002 and the 2003-2007 by way of a correspondence analysis.[8] Dimension 1 is here dominated by the contrast between evaluations of the G8

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[8] Developed in France by Jean-Paul Benzécri and his collaborators (1973), correspondence analysis is an exploratory procedure for the analysis of bivariate or mutltivariate relationships between the categorical variables in contingency tables. These relationshiops are usually visualized ('mapped') in a bidimensional space (Greenacre 1984; Clausen 1998). In this and the following diagrams, squared singular values (s1², s2²) indicate the percentage share of variance 'explai-

against the backdrop of 'classical' foreign affairs or diplomatic issues and practices v. all the others. This dimension sets US discourses apart from the others. The growing prominence of environmental issues – all discourses, and especially the German one, move in that direction – dominates the (much less important) dimension 2.
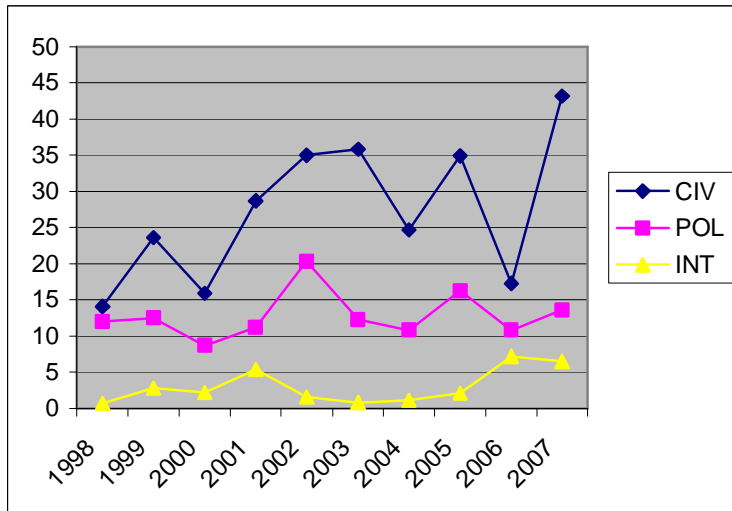
Who are the *authors* of these evaluations, though? If there is indeed a growing attention to, and politicization of, the G8 in the wider public, then we should be able to find traces of this in media discourses, even though the media obviously have a filtering role in that regard, and hence may give more or less 'voice' to (inter-)national political elites, NGO representatives, and other actors in their G8-related news coverage and commentaries. Table 5 illustrates the distribution of speaker types per country and overall. In each case, a plurality or even majority of legitimation statements were uttered by journalists, that is, by the authors of the articles from which they were taken. The distribution of three broad groups of speakers *cited* in these articles with their legitimacy assessments is of greater interest here. Remarkably, civil society actors are the next most important speaker category in each country; their percentage share is highest in the United States and lowest in Switzerland. Both individual and collective actors – NGOs and their representatives, demonstrators, academic experts and members of the cultural sphere, 'celebrity diplomats' like Bono and Bob Geldof, and 'simple' citizens – were included in that category, and many of these speakers are indeed associated with (trans-)national NGOs, especially in Britain. Political actors at the national level – a category that is, unsurprisingly, dominated by members of national *governments* – rank third; they are most frequently cited with assessments of the G8 in the United States. Finally, the representatives of international organizations are rather marginal as speakers, albeit less so in Germany and Switzerland.

Table 5 Speaker types, by country

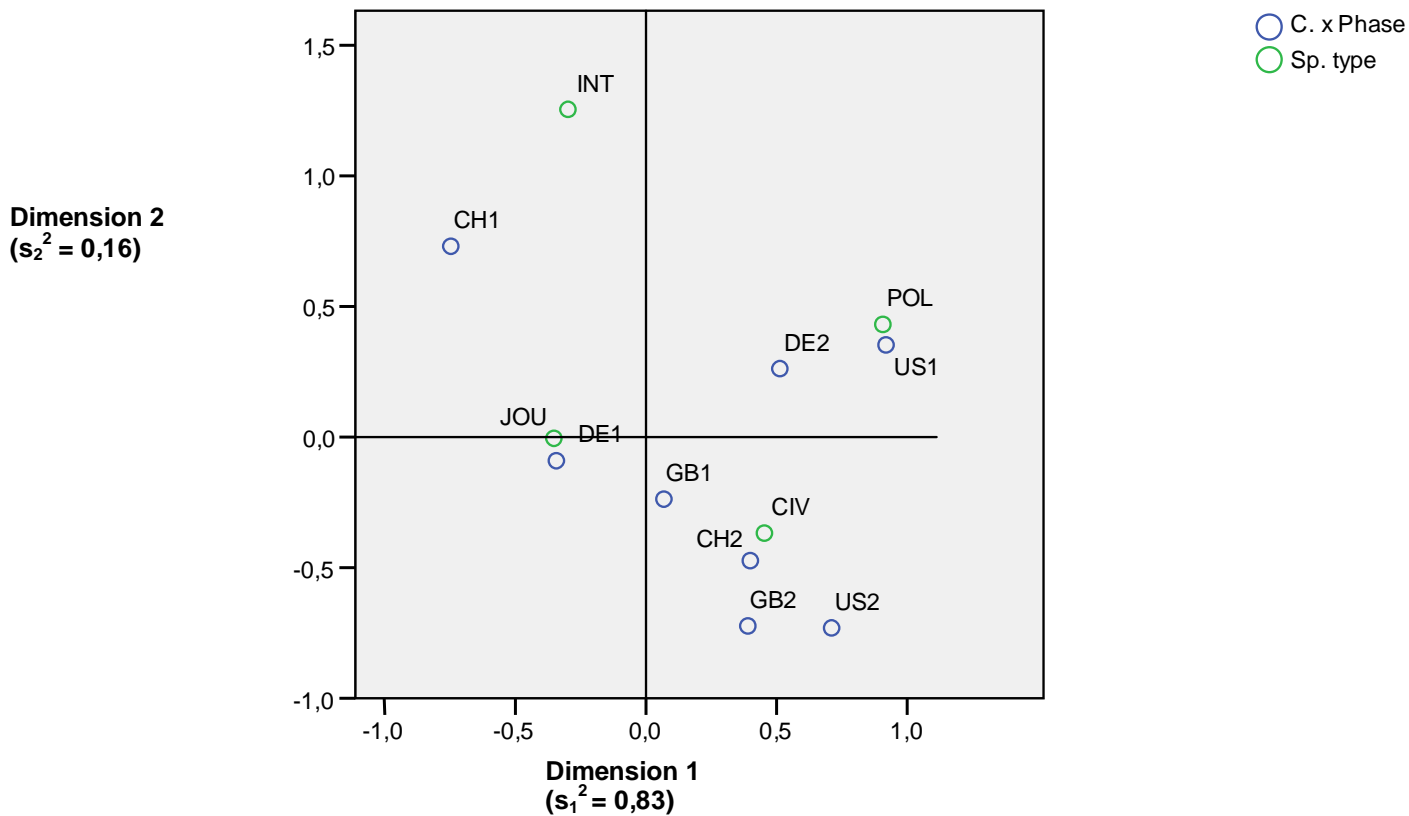|	CH	DE	GB	US	Overall
Journalists (JOU)	55.5	49.3	54.7	43.1	51.3
Civil society actors (CIV)	29.9	31.4	32.0	35.1	31.8
… of which: NGOs	*11.3*	*14.3*	*19.6*	*12.5*	*15.5*
National political actors (POL)	10.6	13.0	12.1	20.2	13.2
… of which: governments	*9.9*	*8.5*	*10.6*	*18.1*	*10.6*
International org. and regimes (INT)	4.0	6.3	1.2	1.6	3.7

ned' by each of the dimensions. Row and column 'profiles' (points) close to or far way from the intersection of the axes ('centroid') may be considered typical or atypical, respectively. Row profiles – and likewise, column profiles – close to or far way from each other are similar to or different from each other. The distances between row and column profiles are not mathematically defined in the symmetrical ('French') plots used in this paper – but their interpretation, too, is possible with the requisite caution (Clausen 1998, 21).

Figure 4 Speakers types, by year

Figures 4 and 5, and a comparison of the underlying percentage shares for the 1998-2002 and 2003-2007 periods, moreover, confirm that the discursive prominence of civil society actors is a robust finding. In all four national public spheres, a growing relative share of discursive interventions by this speaker type is the major development between the two periods, and hence the correspondence analysis plot reveals movements of the four discourses (in one or both dimensions) towards the respective profile.

Figure 5

Note: See Table 5 for abbreviations of speaker types.

Levels of legitimacy

Our analysis so far, then, indicates that the G8 summit regime indeed appears to be perceived as an increasingly relevant legitimation object in public discourses. But how much discursive *support* does it enjoy? We measure our indicator of support – *levels of legitimacy* – as the percentage share of positive (legitimating) evaluations. In light of normative reflections, and considering the amount of protest mobilized by G8 summits in recent years, we might hypothesize low shares of positive evelautions, indicating a legitimacy crisis of the G8. If anything, the presumptive negative bias of media news coverage should depress legitimacy levels further (Eilders 1997). Table 6 illustrates that the G8's legitimacy levels are indeed very low overall and in each country. Even in

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Britain, the only country for which our previous research indicated something of a discursive legitimacy crisis of *national* political institutions, the thrust of G8-related evaluations is considerably more negative than assessments of Britain's own institutions. The gap is even larger in the three other discourses. Moreover, the G8's legitimacy levels are highest and lowest, respectively, in cases with a low and a high volume of G8-related legitimation statements. On the other hand, one should perhaps not overinterpret this indicator. To the extent that our method captures legitimacy-related *debates*, a fairly balanced distribution of positive and negative statements – or even a dominance of the latter – is almost to be expected.

Table 6 Legitimating and delegitimating statements (%), by country

		Evaluation	
		Deleg.	Leg.
Country	**CH**	73.0	27.0
	DE	68.5	31.5
	GB	73.8	26.2
	US	64.5	35.5
		70.5	29.5

Although the overall thrust of G8-related legitimation discourses is critical, developments over time might thus be of greater interest than these absolute levels. Do we find evidence for an exacerbation or relaxation of the summit regime's legitimacy crisis? Figure 6 and inspection of the legitimacy levels for the 1998-2002 and 2003-2007 periods suggest that there is, at best, a very moderate upwards trend overall and in three countries (with the exception of the United States). Once again, cyclical effects – arguably tied to the perceived success or failure of individual summits, the intensity of protest activities surrounding them, and so on – are quite pronounced. The relatively positive evaluation of the 1999 and 2005 summits, for instance, set them apart from summits like Genoa, Évian, or Sea Island. Only two summits – Cologne and Heiligendamm – combine above-average legitimation intensity and legitimacy levels (Figure 7).

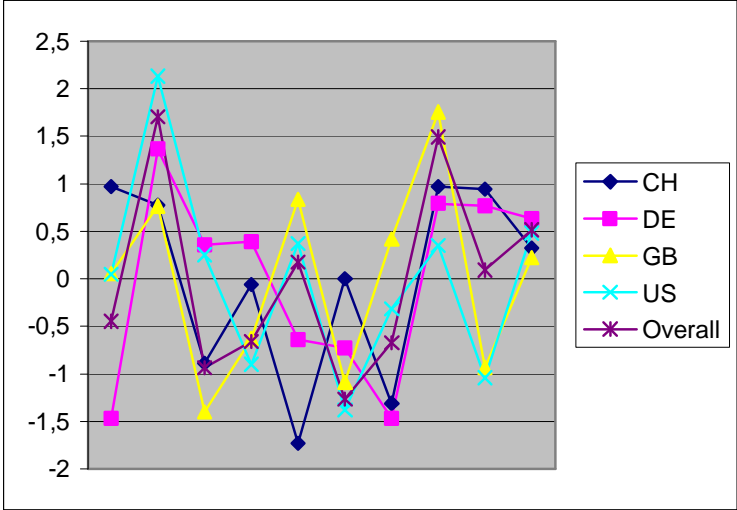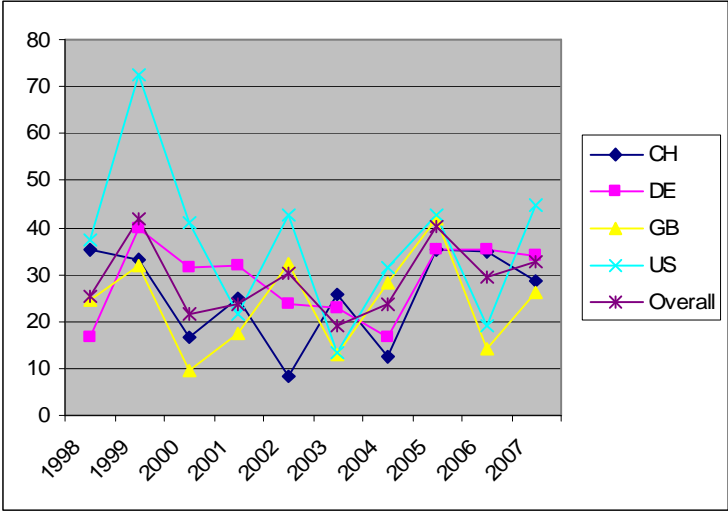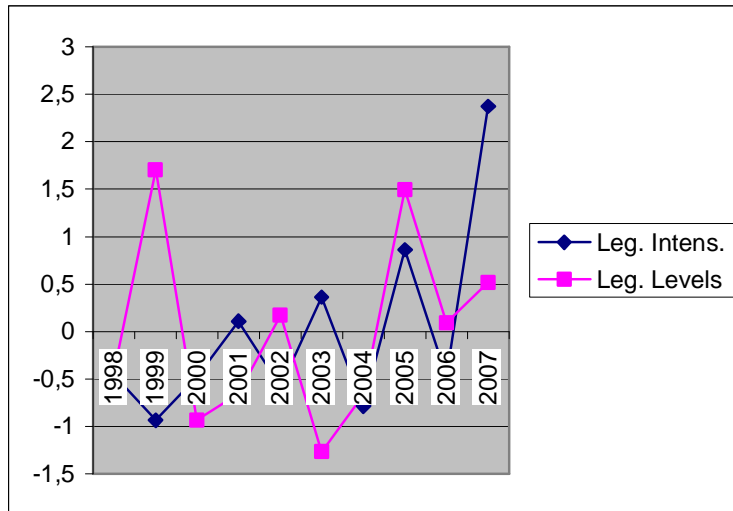**Figure 6** Legitimacy levels, by year

Figure 7 Legitimacy intensity and legitimacy levels (z-scores), by year

Finally, a look at Table 7 is suggestive of the links between protest intensity and media attention the G8's legitimacy, and hence between the behavioral and communicative dimensions of (de-) legitimation, but it also indicates that the relationship between these dimensions is a complex one: Not every summit with a high protest intensity (that is, strong delegitimation as measured in the behavioral dimension) also has particularly low legitimacy levels in the communicative dimension, and vice versa, although this is the rule (and Gleneagles as well as Sea Island are the major exceptions).

Table 7 Legitimation and protest intensity of G8 summits (1998-2007)

Summit (year)	Number of demonstrators (est.)	Protest intensity	Legitimation intensity	Legitimacy levels
Birmingham (1998)	70.000-80.000	High	Low	Low
Cologne (1999)	35.000-50.000	Medium	Low	High
Okinawa (2000)	27.000-70.000	Medium	Low	Low
Genoa (2001)	200.000-300.000	High	Medium	Low
Kananaskis (2002)	2.000-3.000	Low	Low	Medium
Évian (2003)	30.000-100.000	High	Medium	Low
Sea Island (2004)	< 300-1.000	Low	Low	Low
Gleneagles (2005)	200.000-300.000	High	Medium	High
Sankt Petersburg (2006)	< 1.000	Low	Low	Medium
Heiligendamm (2007)	60.000-80.000	High	High	Medium

Sources: Holzapfe and/König 2001; Kirton 2002; Rucht 2002; Barucherl and Dasilva 2005; Hajnal 2006, 2007; Dafoe and Linn 2007. As for protest intensity, high > 50,000, medium <= 50,000, low <= 10,000. As for legitimation intensity and legitimacy levels, high = more than one standard deviation above average, medium = above the average but below one standard deviation, low = below the average.

Before we move on, we have to add an important qualification to our data and findings on legitimacy levels, though. So far, we have not yet considered which *aspect* of the G8 summit regime is

highlighted in legitimacy assessments – its policies, its authorities, or truly its regime in the Eastonian (1965, 1975) sense? This threefold distinction may, in fact, be understood as a hierarchy. On the one hand, an increasing share of *regime-level evaluations* – legitimation statements in a narrow sense – would indicate even more clearly than the aggregate figures presented above, or evaluations of policies and authorities, the growing perception of the summit regime as a genuine legitimation object. We might thus ask whether there is a shift between evaluation types – from policies and authorities to the regime – over time. On the other hand, negative evaluations of the regime may be viewed as more serious indicators of a legitimacy crisis than those of policies and authorities. Again, we might want to probe trends in that respect.

Tabelle 8 Evaluation types, by country

| | | Evaluation type | | |
		Policies	Authorities	Regime
Country	**CH**	13.9	6.6	79.6
	DE	39.7	2.9	57.4
	GB	39.7	2.9	57.4
	US	48.4	14.1	37.5
		35.9	5.7	58.4

Table 8 shows that the majority of evaluations in our corpus is, in fact, 'pitched' at the regime level. The corresponding percentage share is lowest – and the share of authorities highest – in the United States, where the G8 is rarely perceived and evaluated as a regime. By contrast, the Swiss outsider's perspective is strongly focused on the regime level. Figure 8 – as well as consideration of the 1998-2002 v. 2003-2007 periods – does not reveal a linear trend but rather years in which attention to the regime surges – arguably in line with spikes in protest intensity and violence (Genoa, Évian). During the 'development aid' and 'Africa' summits of Cologne, Kananaskis, and Gleneagles, by contrast, policies temporarily received more attention.
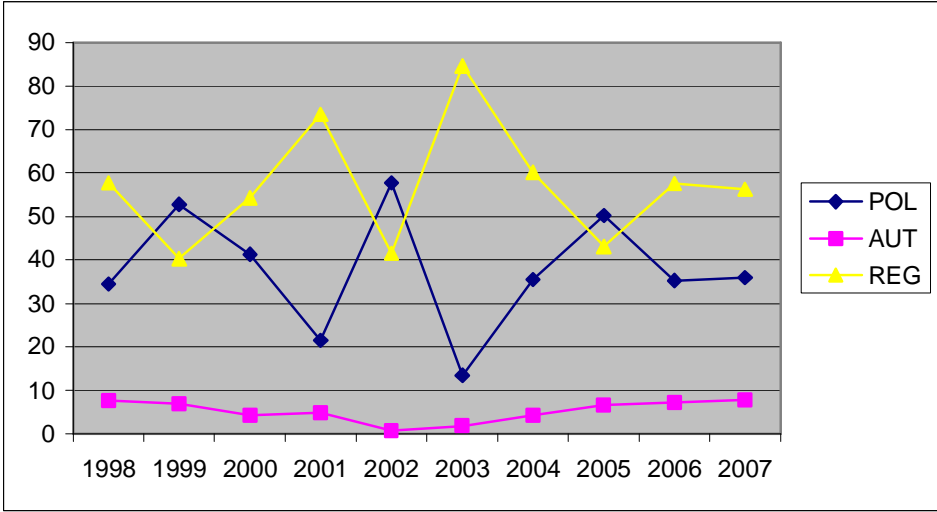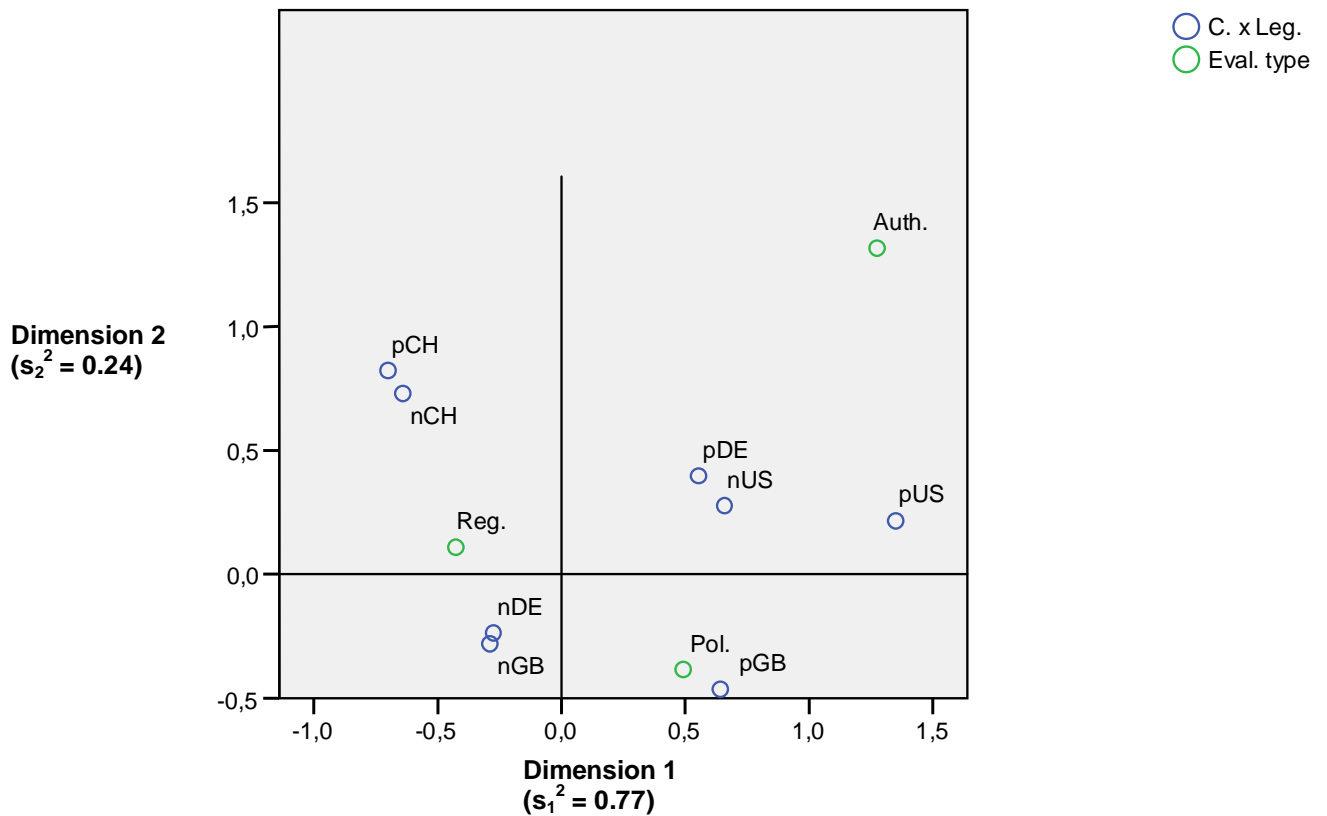
Figure 8 Evaluation types, by year

Figure 9 – a correspondence analysis of evaluation types and the 'interaction' between country and positive or negative character of statements – reveals a greater affinity of regime-level evaluations and delegitimizers (but also legitimizers in Switzerland), and of policies or authorities-related evaluations and legitimizers (but also delegitimizers in the United States). Moreover, (de-)legitimizers in Germany and Britain show relatively more interest in policies-related evaluations.
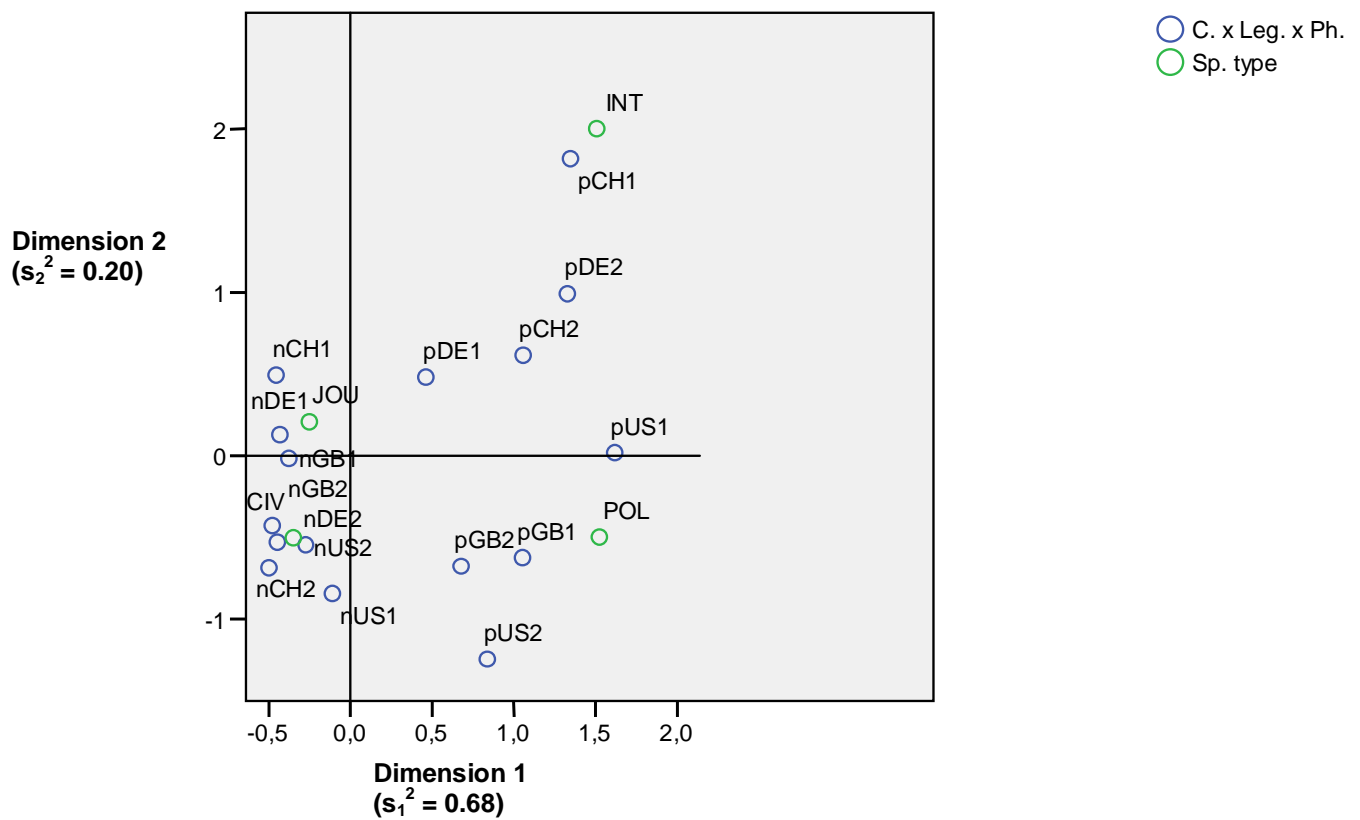
Figure 9

Note: pCH, pDE, pGB, PUS = positive evaluations from Switzerland, Germany, Britain, and the US; nCH, nDE, nGB, nUS = negative evaluations.

Finally, a correspondence analysis for speaker types and 'national discourse coalitions' (legitimizers and delegitimizers) in the 1998-2002 and 2003-2007 periods (Figure 10) illustrates contrasts between speakers associated with (inter)national political orders and institutions and others (in dimension 1), and between international and (presumably) national speakers (in dimension 2). We further see, unsurprisingly, that there is an 'affinity' between the delegitimizing discourse coalitions and civil society actors in all public spheres, and between legitimizing discourse coalitions and international (Germany, Switzerland) or national (Britain, United States) political actors. These patterns are visibly stable over time.

Figure 10

Foundations of Legitimacy

A final issue that needs to be broached here are the normative foundations of individual legitimation statements and entire discourses. Only to the extent that the G8 summit regime is evaluated against normative and generalizable standards, whether positively or negatively, it represents a legitimation object. But what are these standards? As suggested above, crisis diagnoses usually presume that the kinds of democratic legitimation criteria that are (again, presumably) favored in assessments of national political orders and institutions also underpin (most) evaluations of international governance arrangements like the G8 – and that the low legitimacy levels of these ar-

rangements are precisely due to the over-riding importance of benchmarks related to democratic quality. These diagnoses are, however, confronted with more optimistic ones according to which various kinds of non-democratic legitimation criteria, such as effectiveness, have come to the fore in recent years, especially with regard to international organizations and regimes – and that evaluations of their acceptability in light of *these* criteria are (or should be) more positive. In normative terms, one might consider such a transformation of legitimacy and its foundations problematic as well. Combining our distinction between high and low legitimacy levels with high and low shares of democratic benchmarks in legitimation discourses, it is therefore possible to distinguish three *different* crisis scenarios and a reference category, secure democratic legitimacy (Table 9).

Table 9 Types of legitimacy crisis

	Democratic benchmarks	**Non-democratic benchmarks**
Delegitimation	Legitimacy crisis I: *Erosion* of democratic legitimacy, crisis of democratic institutions	Legitimacy crisis II: *Collapse* of democratic legitimacy, crisis of democratic institutions *and* of democracy's normative foundations
Legitimation	Secure democratic legitimacy	Legitimacy crisis III: *Transformation* of democratic legitimacy, crisis of democracy's normative foundations

Of course we already know that the G8 is rather firmly 'stuck' in the first row of the table, and hence that the optimistic scenario III does not hold. Still, we have to ascertain whether the delegitimation of the G8 corresponds to the scenario of a legitimacy crisis induced by a perceived democracy deficit (I) – as widely expected by the literature, including Zürn and his co-authors (Ecker-Ehrhardt and Zürn 2007, 24) – or to the even more 'dramatic' scenario II. Moreover, shifts in the *direction* of any of these scenarios might again be of particular interest. Before we examine our data, one further clarification is in order: While much of the literature conflates the distinction between democratic and non-democratic legitimation criteria with the increasingly popular one between input and output-based evaluation standards, we treat these dimensions as cross-cutting, and hence examine the normative quality of legitimation statements on the basis of the following two-dimensional classification:

(1) *Input (procedural) v. output (substantive)*. A criterion of legitimation is input-oriented if it refers to the processes of decision-making, and especially to the actors involved or the procedures followed. A pattern is output-related if it refers to the results of this process, their nature and consequences (Scharpf 1999, 6-28).
(2) *Democratic v. non-democratic*. A pattern may be called democratic if it points to a standard that is *necessary* to uphold 'a system of governance in which rulers are held accountable for their actions in the public realm by the citizens, acting indirectly through the competition and cooperation of their elected representatives,' as Schmitter and Karl (1996, 76) define democracy; it may be called non-democratic if it is *non-essential* – though not necessarily antithetical – to the implementation and reproduction of such a regime.

In short, there are four groups of legitimation criteria: democratic input (DI), non-democratic input (NDI), democratic output (DO), and non-democratic output (NDO).[9] Table 10 shows the distribution of these groups of criteria by country and overall. As it turns out, 'classical' democratic input criteria only rank third (with the exception of the United States, where they rank second). This group comprises evaluation standards ultimately linked with the principle of popular sovereignty and (the presence or absence of) democratic control mechanisms – criteria like the opportunity to participate, representativeness, transparency, or accountability – and also criteria related to legal equality and procedural fairness v. selective rule making and application. Each of these individual criteria play a role in assessments of the G8, and they are frequently translated into metaphors that refer to the summit regime as an exclusive 'club', a 'fortress', and the like (Hülsse 2003; Schneider 2008). A widespread complaint is, for instance, that the G8 summits – as gatherings of 'rich white trash' – do not adequately represent the countries of the world, or the global political community, let alone individual citizens:

> […] were the G8 nations governed by angels, they would still be incapable of promoting global democracy. These eight hungry men represent just 13 % of the world's population. They were all elected to pursue domestic imperatives: their global role is simply a byproduct of their national mandate. The decisions they make are haphazard and ephemeral. (*Guardian*, July 17, 2001)

Non-democratic output criteria rather than democratic input criteria dominate our four legitimation discourses, and most strongly in the Anglo-Saxon countries (the opposite picture emerges in our data on national political orders and institutions). Assessments in terms of the efficiency and effectiveness of the G8 summit regime are most frequent in this group, which also comprises standards like (international) distributive justice, etc.

Table 10 Aggregate legitimation criteria, by country

	CH	DE	GB	US	Overall
DI	16,8	16,5	11,2	18,5	14,9
NDI	33,2	18,0	14,1	12,5	18,1
DO	5,5	3,6	5,1	3,6	4,4
NDO	36,1	40,4	52,1	56,9	45,9

Note: The percentage shares do not add up to 100.0 % because statements that did not make their evaluation standard explicit, or whose evaluation standard could not be satisfactorily assigned to any of the four groups, are omitted here.

Non-democratic input criteria are also relatively frequent, especially in Switzerland. This group includes criteria like tradition, charismatic leadership, expertise, or religious authority (instead of popular sovereignty and related evaluation standards), most of which are clearly obsolete from a normative point of view. The criteria of expertise and moderation, however, play a more important role in G8-related discourses – the summit regime is then, for instance, evaluated positively

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[9] A list of individual criteria – we identified and coded more than 20 different ones in our material – is contained in Hurrelmann et al. 2008. Here we restrict ourselves to illustrative examples of the most frequent types of evaluation standards in each of the four groups.

due to its role as a forum that facilitates the coordination and cooperation of states, or brings in the requisite amount of expertise and power to tackle global challenges.

Finally, democratic output criteria, such as democratic empowerment and the protection of human rights, are marginal in each case. This is remarkable as the human rights criterion could be shown to be a major resource of *legitimating* assessments in the context of national political orders and institutions, and given the importance of human rights issues for many of the NGOs whose support the G8 and other international governance arrangements seek to mobilize (Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink 1999; Ecker-Ehrhardt and Zürn 2007, 25; Wiesner et al. 2006). In short, we can locate the G8 summit's regime legitimacy and its normative foundations in cell II of our typology – it is evaluated predominantly on the basis of non-democratic standards, and especially output-based ones, but this does not foster discursive support for it to a great extent.

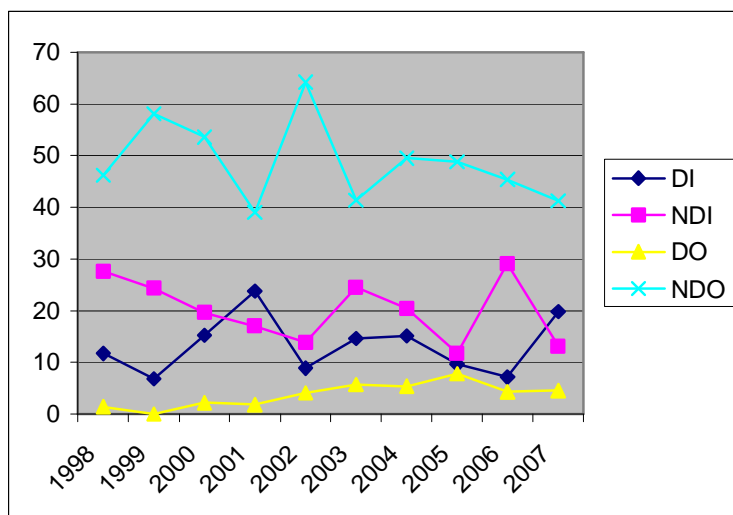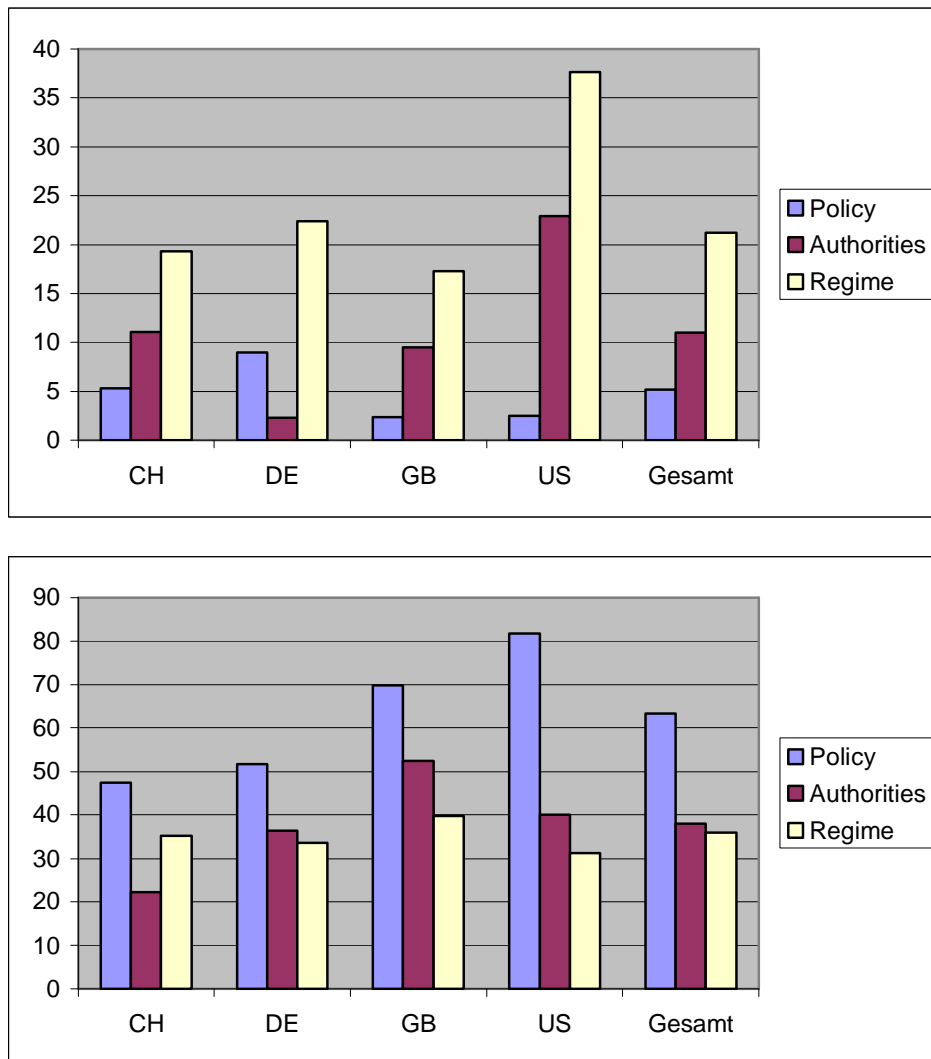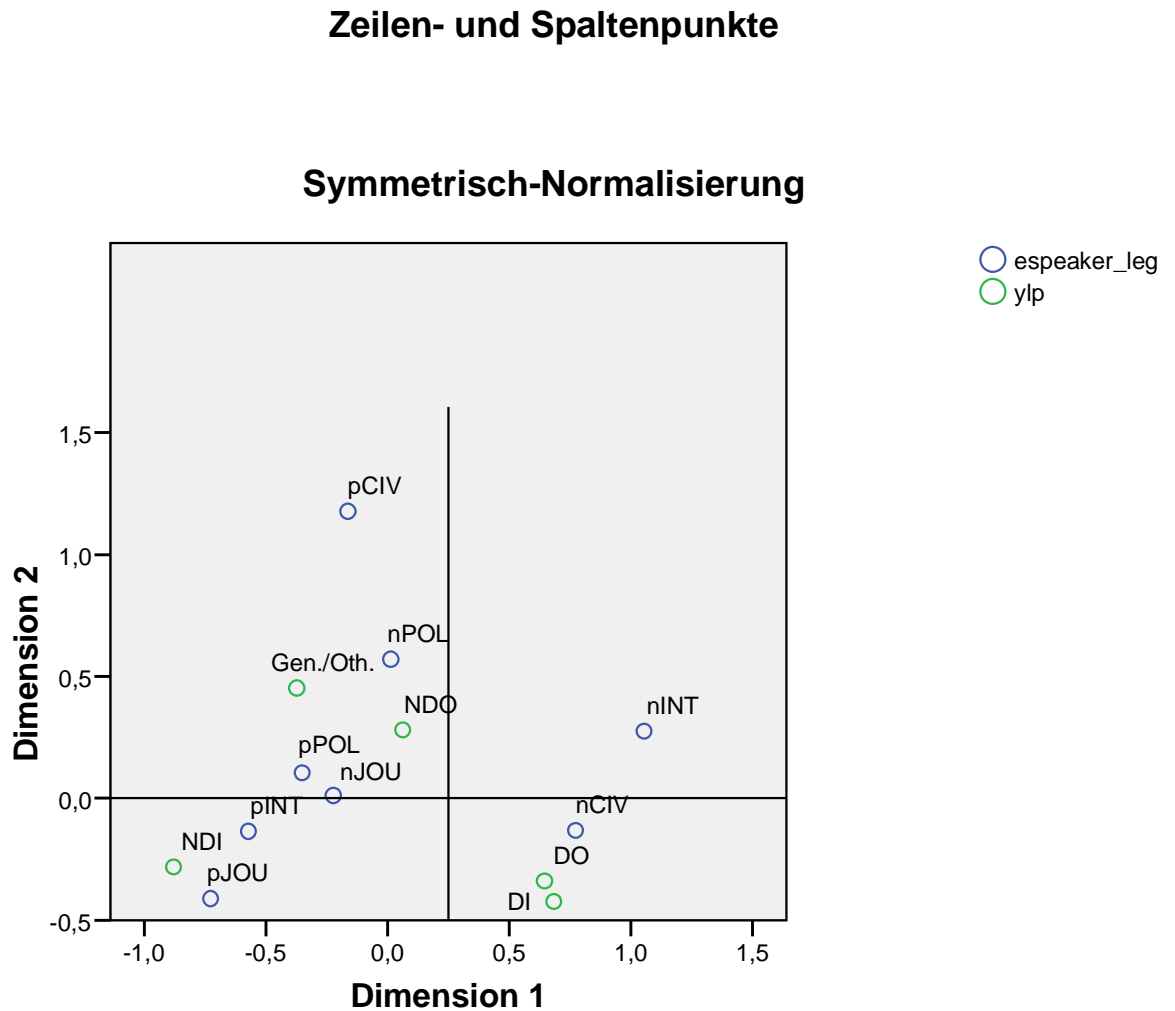**Figure 11** Groups of legitimation criteria, by year

Figure 11 and percentage shares for the 1998-2002 and 2003-2007 periods, moreover, indicate that these findings are robust over time, with no readily apparent trend. But note, for instance, the contrast between Genoa, when events brought the issue of democratic quality to the for, and Kananaskis, when the ('undisturbed') summit very much focused on its policy agenda. This suggests another link, namely, between evaluation type (policies, authorities, or regime) and democratic input v. non-democratic output criteria. The former should play the most important role with regard to the regime, the latter with regard to policies, and as Figure 12 illustrates, this is indeed the case.

Figure 12 Percentage share of democratic input criteria (upper half) and non-democratic output criteria (lower half), by country and evaluation type

To what extent do different speaker types – and the two discourse coalitions – employ different groups of legitimation criteria, as one might expect? Figure 13 captures the contrast between input and output criteria in dimension 1, between democratic and non-democratic ones in dimension 2. It indicates that the use of evaluation standards indeed varies among speaker types – both types of democratic criteria notably have a strong affinity with civil society actors that view the G8 critically. Besides G8-friendly journalists, legitimizers of the G8 among the representatives of international organizations employ a relatively high share of non-democratic input criteria. And non-democratic output criteria are, for instance, more likely to be employed by the (few) legitimizers of the G8 among NGO speakers.
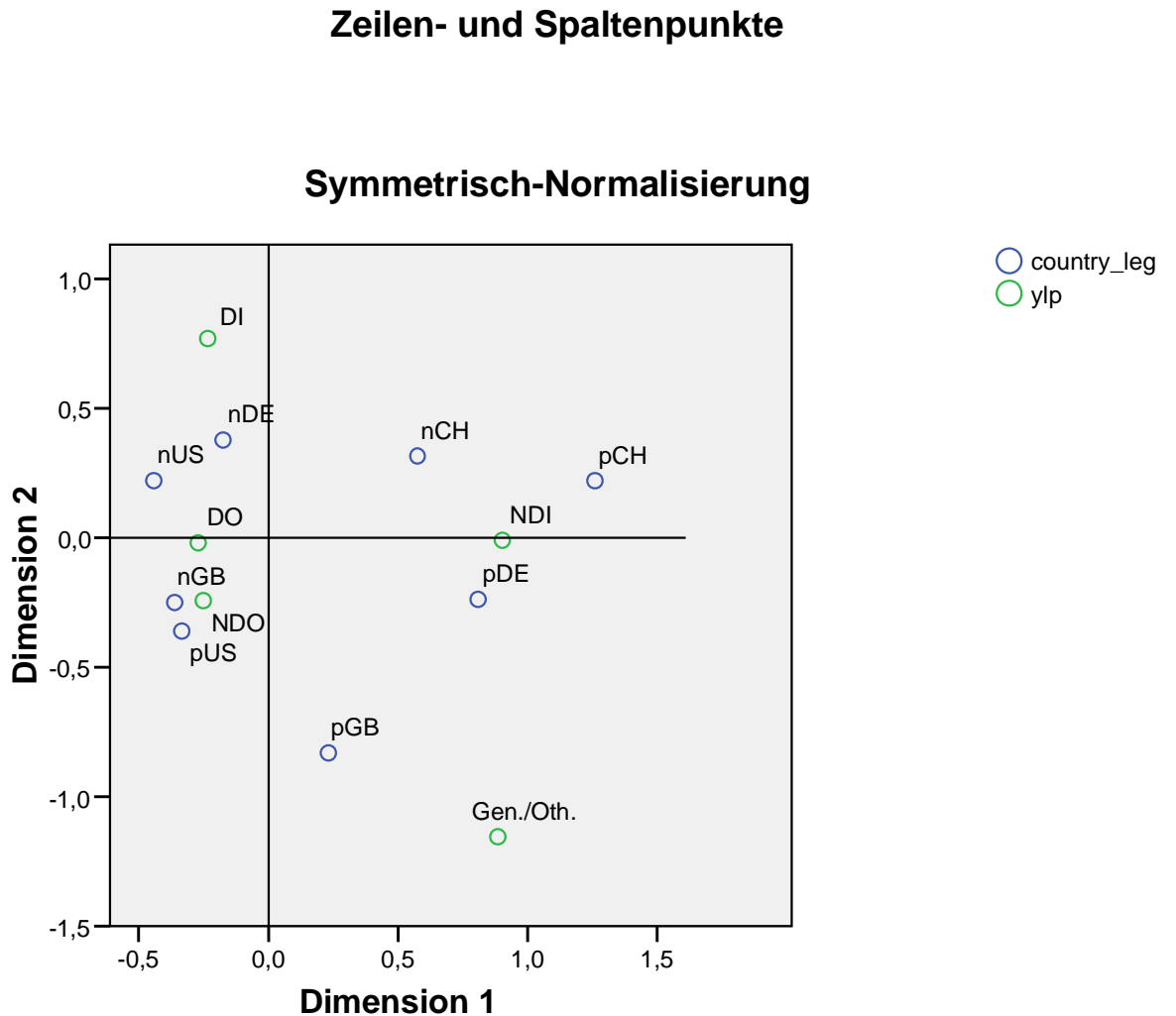
Figure 13

Zeilen- und Spaltenpunkte

Symmetrisch-Normalisierung

Note: pCIV, pINT, pJOU, pPOL = positive evaluations by civil society actors, IO representatives, journalist, and national political actors; nCIV, nINT, nJOU, nPOL = negative evaluations. $s_1^2 = 0.83$, $s_2^2 = 0.11$.

Figure 14 represents the use of the different groups of legitimation criteria by the four national coalitions of legitimizers and delegitimizers. Here we recognize an affinity between Swiss speakers (of both coalitions) and non-democratic input criteria, between German and US delegitimizers and democratic benchmarks, and between delegitimizers in Britain and legitimizers in the US and non-democratic output criteria.

Figure 14

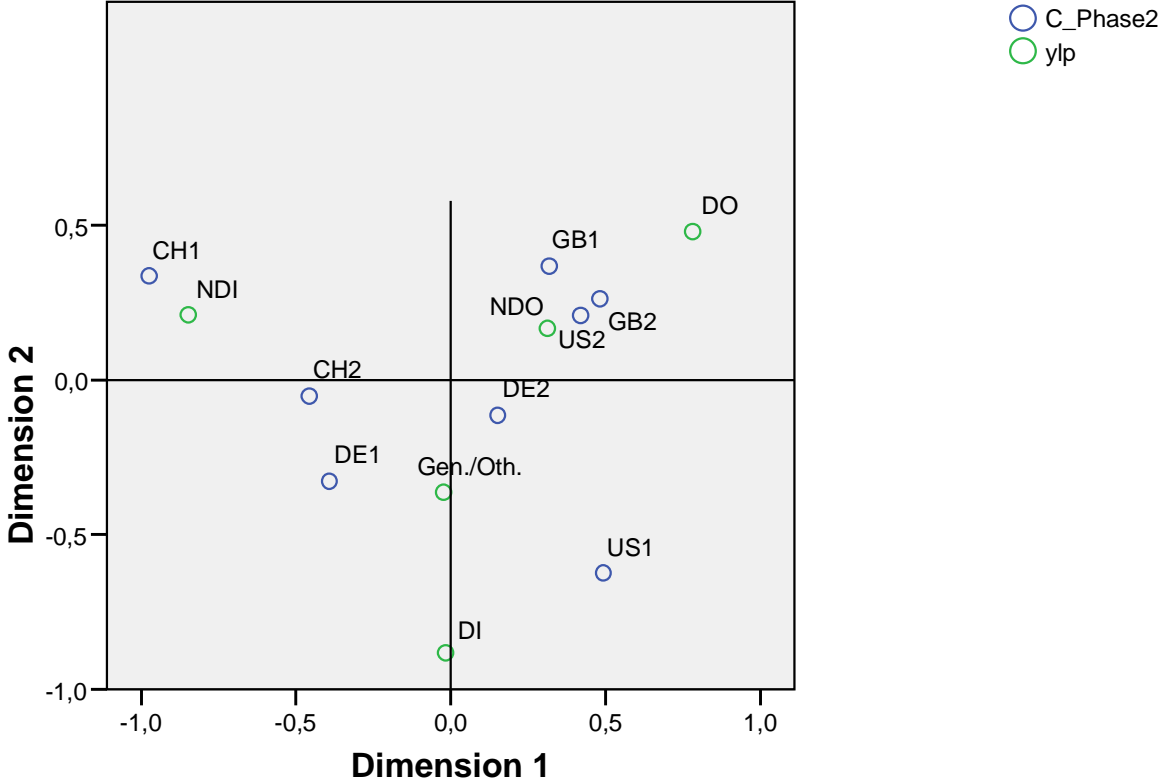## Zeilen- und Spaltenpunkte

Symmetrisch-Normalisierung

Note: $s_1^2 = 0.66$, $s_2^2 = 0.25$.

Finally, Figure 15 aims to capture shifts in the use of legitimation criteria over time. The first dimension is here mostly characterized by the contrast between input criteria, especially non-democratic ones, and (non-democratic) output standards; dimension 2 captures a contrast between democratic input criteria and all others. We see, for instance, that Swiss discourses move away from non-democratic input towards output and democratic input criteria; German and US discourses shift towards the quadrant characterized by (non-)democratic output standards while the British one remains in it all along.

Figure 15

Zeilen- und Spaltenpunkte

Symmetrisch-Normalisierung

Note: $s_1^2 = 0.62$, $s_2^2 = 0.31$.

Conclusion

This study began with the question as to whether the G8 summit regime has become the object of legitimacy assessments in selected media of four countries. Based on a text analytical framework, we examined the structures and trajectories of G8-related legitimation discourses over a period of ten years, and also probed their event character and cyclical dynamics. Our findings suggest, first, that the G8 has indeed left behind the status of 'a-legitimacy'. However, this is notably true for Germany and Britain, less so for the United States and Switzerland. Moreover, the upwards trend in media attention to the summit's regime legitimacy is very modest.

Secondly, the G8's legitimacy levels – the degree of support expressed in discourses – remain very low. We hypothesize that the summit regime (just like, for instance, the EU; Hurrelmann 2008) frequently serves as a negative reference point for the evaluation of national political orders and institutions in legitimation discourses. However, the policies of the G8 are evaluated *somewhat* more positively than the institutions and procedures of the regime.

Thirdly, we considered the normative foundations of positive (legitimating) and negative (delegitimating) assessments of the G8. Here we saw that those 'classical' democratic input criteria that are in line with the hypothesis of a legitimacy crisis primarily induced by a perceived democratic deficit are, in fact, relatively infrequent. Assessments on the basis of non-democratic output criteria like effectiveness dominate by far. However, democratic criteria play a greater role in assessment of the regime level.

Fourthly, we also considered the types of issues and speakers that dominate the G8-related legitimation discourses. The most important finding in that regard was the prominent role of civil society actors and many of 'their' issues in these discourses. Whereas political actors tend to legitimate the G8, civil society actors – and notably NGO representatives – are the core of the delegitimating discourse coalition. Hence behavioral and communicative indicators of (il-) legitimacy strongly converge in that respect but an analysis of the latter also enables us to shed light on the normative foundations of protest activities.

Overall, few clear trends in terms of media attention, legitimacy levels, or the normative foundations of discursive support could be established. This points, on the one hand, to the role of media dynamics and of the summit regime's pronounced event character: Specific events in the context of each summit may push specific issues to the fore and frequently have a strong influence on our legitimacy-related variables. On the other hand, nationally specific variables, such political and media cultures, and also the very different role that the G8 plays for each of the four countries in the sample, appear to have an influence on legitimation discourses.

The research presented here will, in our next step, be expanded in two directions. First, media discourses on other international governance arrangements, such as the EU, the WTO, and the UN, will be examined on the basis of the same analytical framework. Second, other discursive arenas and text types, notably including the self-legitimating claims of the G8 summits' communiqués, will be considered. These expansions will enable us to further probe the 'relational' nature of legitimation discourses in two senses: with a view on relations between different political orders and institutions in the multi-level arrangements of global governance, and with a view on relations between the elites of political orders and their constituencies. Pursuing the first perspective, we might then ask to what extent *comparative* evaluations of different national and

international political orders gain importance in the new world order. Pursuing the second perspective, we might, for instance, examine the degree to which the G8's self-legitimations enter discourses and coalitions of legitimizers taking up and defending these claims emerge.

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Appendix

Table 1 G8 summits (1998-2007), periods and number of articles examined

Country	Source	1998 May 09-May 20 Birmingham	1999 June 12-June 23 Cologne	2000 July 15-July 26 Okinawa	2001 July 14-July 25 Genoa	2002 June 22-July 03 Kananaskis	2003 May 28-June 07 Évian	2004 June 05-June 16 Sea Island	2005 July 02-July 13 Gleneagles	2006 July 08-July 19 Saint Petersburg	2007 June 02-June 13 Heiligendamm
CH	**NZZ**	15	23	16	40	17	79	17	34	38	41
		33.3	*21.7*	*25.0*	*12.5*	*17.6*	*15.2*	*11.8*	*14.7*	*13.*	*24.4*
	TA	---	2	2	24	13	59	16	35	34	48
		(3)	*0*	*0*	*12.5*	*30.8*	*30.5*	*18.8*	*14.3*	*23.5*	*33.3*
DE	**FAZ**	42	73	49	88	49	57	37	77	82	181
		28.6	*13.7*	*20.4*	*19.3*	*20.4*	*25.5*	*21.6*	*19.*	*23.2*	*36.0*
	SZ	60	55	66	74	39	58	30	79	110	238
		15.0	*16.4*	*15.2*	*21.6*	*10.3*	*25.9*	*33.3*	*25.*	*11.8*	*25.2*
GB	**GRD**	70	49	44	83	59	109	67	293	97	142
		24.3	*22.4*	*29.5*	*21.7*	*28.8*	*16.5*	*25.4*	*15.*	*10.3*	*14.8*
	TMS	59	39	44	60	35	71	41	131	59	61
		10.2	*7.7*	*6.8*	*13.3*	*20.0*	*12.7*	*9.8*	*13.*	*6.8*	*18.0*
US	**WP**	29	22	41	35	15	23	48	41	52	28
		24.1	*9.1*	*14.6*	*17.1*	*13.3*	*8.7*	*18.8*	*29.*	*5.8*	*7.1*
	NYT	23	9	9	18	11	25	14	18	25	16
		8.7	*11.1*	*11.1*	*50.0*	*18.2*	*12.0*	*14.3*	*33.*	*16.0*	*31.3*

Note: CH = Switzerland, DE = Germany, GB = Great Britain, US = United States; NZZ = *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, TA = *Tages-Anzeiger*, FAZ = *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, SZ = *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, GRD = *Guardian*, TMS = *Times*, NYT = *New York Times*, WP = *Washington Post*. Articles were drawn from the electronic database Factiva – exceptions: *Tages-Anzeiger* 1998 (archives), FAZ 1998-2006 (CD-ROM), 2007 (electronic archives). Straight figures = number of articles identified by automated search routines; figures in italics = percentage share of relevant articles.