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The Proof Is in the Process: Self-Reporting Under International Human Rights Treaties

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Recent research has shown that state reporting to human rights monitoring bodies is associated with improvements in rights practices, calling into question earlier claims that self-reporting is inconsequential. Yet little work has been done to explore the theoretical mechanisms that plausibly account for this association. This Article systematically documents—across treaties, countries, and years—four mechanisms through which reporting can contribute to human rights improvements: elite socialization, learning and capacity building, domestic mobilization, and law development. These mechanisms have implications for the future of human rights treaty monitoring.

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