

The Politics of International Peace and Security: Introducing A New Dataset on the Creation of United Nations Security Council Subsidiary Bodies.

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Abstract: In this paper we introduce new data on the creation of Subsidiary Bodies (SBs) by members of the United Nations Security Council between 1972 and 2020. Delegation of tasks to SB's is one of the principal means through which the UNSC acts, and these bodies are designed to carry out crucial functions such as peacekeeping, implementing sanctions, and analyzing crises. Yet, despite their importance, no research has systematically evaluated their creation, design, and use. Our comprehensive data includes a typology of all proposed and created SBs as well as information about their purpose and design. After introducing the data, we empirically analyze the political determinants of SB creation. Multivariate regression analyses demonstrate that SBs are more likely to be created when the preferences of the permanent Security Council members are aligned. Moreover, stronger bodies are created during periods of high preference alignment. These results provide unique evidence demonstrating how politics affects the choice of when and how the UNSC responds to global problems. Our data and analysis paint a picture of a more proactive UNSC than is commonly portrayed in the literature, and these data will enable scholars to further analyze the politics of UNSC action.

Introduction

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is perhaps the most important, and controversial, international organization (IO). With a broad mandate to “maintain or restore international peace and security”, it is empowered with a variety of tools, including mediation, sanctions, and the use of force (U.N. ch. VII, art. 42). Despite this variety, scholarship in international relations typically focuses on the deployment and effectiveness of these actions in isolation from one another. By ignoring the diversity of tools the council possesses, much of the literature paints an incomplete picture of how the UNSC responds to international crises and the political constraints it faces in doing so.

One underappreciated aspect of the UNSC is that much of the actual work is not done through the Council as a whole, but through delegation of tasks to Subsidiary Bodies (SBs). The creation of SBs is integral to the functioning of the Council because they involve more flexible agendas and participation, which helps members manage the heavy workload of the Council and respond in new ways to global problems. Importantly, members create new SBs in order to implement actions taken by the UNSC, including peacekeeping, sanctions, tribunals, and investigating the causes and consequences of global crises. Despite the importance and diversity of these bodies, no research to date has systematically evaluated their creation, design, and use in international politics.

To provide a more holistic understanding of the causes and consequences of UNSC actions, we collect original data on the proposal and creation of all SBs by the UNSC between 1972 and 2020. This new dataset includes 205 proposed SBs, including temporary missions, committees, international commissions and representatives, working groups, and others, which we compile at both the SB body level and the UNSC meeting level. The dataset includes a

typology of SBs as well as information about the purpose of each body, the voting records during the debates over their creation, and the strength of the body proposed. Notably, by including both proposed and created SBs, this new dataset allows us to examine the political and structural determinants of proposal and acceptance of SBs by the UNSC, which can help advance our understanding of when and why the Council chooses to act, as well as *how* it chooses to do so.

After describing the data, we perform empirical analyses on the determinants of SB creation. This is an important exercise given that the creation of SBs is a unique measure of UNSC action that is operative across multiple issue areas. We find that the decision to create SBs depends on the political alignment of UNSC members. Specifically, negative binomial regression models show that overlap in preferences between the permanent five members of the UNSC, and the United States and Russia specifically, is a strong predictor of SB creation. When the views of the major powers align, they propose and create SBs that address global problems, but when they are further apart – as they are now on matters such as Syria and Ukraine – the creation rate of SBs drops.

Moreover, we show that the strength of SBs created is also conditioned by geopolitical alignment. When members' preferences align, they are more willing to take stronger, more costly actions. As alignment decreases, the UNSC creates weaker bodies to carry out its preferred policies. This empirical application illustrates that the creation of SBs constitutes an important form of institutionalization within IGOs that is overlooked by contemporary scholarship. At the UNSC, the creation of SBs signals an interest and willingness on the part of member states to address global problems through the delegation of tasks to ad-hoc coalitions of member states and bureaucrats.

Our work suggests a novel way to conceptualize and measure UNSC action. Scholars, policymakers, and the public often view the SC as little more than a talk shop, rarely taking substantive action on matters of urgent international concern. But an exclusive focus on dramatic, high-profile action misses out on much of what the Council does. By considering the creation of SBs, we show that the UNSC “does something” much more often than is typically appreciated by critics (see also Beardsley and Schmidt 2012). This suggests that to understand UN action we must consider the various tools at member states’ disposal. At the same time, however, the UNSC’s ability to create SBs is constrained by politics among member states. Thus, we consider our study an important step to better understanding when the UNSC acts and what form successful action is most likely to take. More broadly, our results also speak to long-standing debates about the design and functioning of international organizations. Our data and analysis here suggest that IGO member states can flexibly interpret their mandates and act through the creation of SBs, potentially side-stepping political and practical barriers to action. This can help IGOs maintain a central role in global governance, even when they cannot take the decisive types of actions envisioned by their founders.

The Need for New Data on UNSC Subsidiary Bodies.

When and Why Does the Security Council Act?

The original vision for the Security Council was of a body that could take a variety of actions to help ensure international peace and stability. Chapter VI of the UN Charter outlines steps that the Council can take to investigate and settle disputes, whereas Chapter VII authorizes the use of sanctions, blockades, and the use of military force. The founders concentrated power over those

decisions within the Great Powers, commonly referred to as the P-5, by granting them veto-power over actions taken by the council (Claude 1971, ch. 4; Bourantonis, 2004; Von Einsiedel and Malone 2018).¹

The Council's ability to act ebbs and flows with the relationship between the P-5 members, often relying on members devising new ways to cooperate (Voeten, 2008, Cronin & Hurd, 2008). Despite these constraints, the SC is still the most consequential international body dealing with matters of peace and security. As a result, scholars have examined how SC action has evolved in response to political opportunities and constraints (Bourantonis, 2004, Voeten, 2008). Moreover, reform of the Council is nearly always a hot-button issue in policy circles (Weiss 2003; Voeten, 2008; Nadin 2016; von Einsiedel and Malone 2018).

Despite this widespread interest, empirical scholarship on UNSC actions is less developed. Much scholarship is siloed, with different strands coalescing around individual actions such as peacekeeping or sanctions. This limits our purchase over how members choose between various policy tools. Consider peacekeeping, which is one of the most developed areas of study empirically. Existing data have allowed scholars to address diverse questions ranging from the effectiveness of peacekeeping (Fortna and Howard 2008; Hegre et al., 2019; Howard 2019; Walter, Howard, and Fortna 2021), the determinants of country personnel commitments (Kathman 2013; Oestman 2021), the effectiveness of the UN relative to regional peace operations (Bara and Hultman 2020), peacekeeping misconduct (Karim and Beardsley 2016), variation in peacekeeper mandates (Howard and Dayal 2018; Amicarelli and Di Salvatore 2021; Lloyd 2021), and how the location of peacekeeping troops affects outcomes (Cil, Fjelde, and Hultman 2020; Dworschak and Cil 2022). Similarly, a variety of studies have sought to collect

¹ See for example, articles 23, 27, 47, 86, 106, 108, and 110 of the UN Charter.

systematic data on the use and effectiveness of sanctions (Drezner 2011; Biersteker, Eckert and Tourinho 2018), as well as mediation (Beardsley, Cunningham, White 2019; Vukovic 2019; Palik and Rustad 2019), and statements made by the UN in response to global atrocities (Medzihorsky, Popovic, Jenne 2017; Binder and Heupel 2015; Eckhard et. al., 2021).

This work is extremely valuable, but it does not paint a full picture of the how the SC functions. Namely, when facing a threat to international peace and security, the Council can choose from a variety of tools. Thus, studies that focus exclusively on one type of tool potentially miss important dynamics. Crucially, the choice of action should reflect the political realities of both the nature of the threat, but also the political relationships between the council's members. For example, the dramatic increase in sanctions in the 1990's should not be viewed as an increase in the number of sanctionable events, but rather the ability of the members of the Council to work towards a common purpose. Ignoring variation in UNSC actions also hides important political and institutional developments in SC action over time. We know, for example, that peacekeeping was an institutional innovation that rose to prominence in the 1990's, but was this at the expense of other potential policy interventions? A fuller snapshot of UNSC action is necessary to answer such questions.

Even in the most developed areas of research, the quantitative literature often black-boxes SC decisions. While qualitative studies of SC actions describe intense debates between the P-5 and other states, many of the outcomes studied in the quantitative literature are not able to fully capture internal conflict within the SC. For example, many more actions are proposed in the SC than are successfully implemented, and many mandates are watered down through deliberations. Understanding the entire process from proposal to SC action is crucial to understanding the true power of the UNSC. This includes understanding why the SC chooses

certain tools from its toolbox. It is difficult to trace the entirety of this process with the data currently available.

Delegation and the Proliferation of New Global Governance Structures.

New data on the creation of SBs is also important for its ability to speak to long-standing questions on delegation in the design of international institutions.² Specifically, one of the principal means through which states delegate authority is through the creation of new intergovernmental bodies, which can contribute to a proliferation of new international institutions increasingly noted by the literature.³ A substantial portion of the overall universe of intergovernmental bodies are linked to existing IGOs, often as part of the larger “United Nations” or “World Bank Group.”⁴ However, few studies have differentiated between quasi-independent linked intergovernmental organizations (LIGOs), such as UN and EU commissions and agencies, and more limited subsidiary bodies, such as those established by the UNSC (Johnson 2014; Lugg 2022). Our dataset will be among the first to provide systematic knowledge on the different forms that these bodies take and why they are created in the first place.

What are Subsidiary Bodies at the UNSC?

The UNSC creates SB’s via Chapter 4 Article 29 of the UN Charter, which states “The Security Council may establish such subsidiary organs as it deems necessary for the performance of its functions” (United Nations, 1946). Members have used this authority to create hundreds of SBs,

² See, for example, Dür, Baccini, and Elsig (2016), Koremenos (2016), Hooghe and Marks (2015), Nielson and Tierney (2003), Lake et al, (2003), and Koremenos et al (2000).

³ Pevehouse et al., (2020); Pratt (2018); Lipsy (2017); Morse and Keohane (2014); Gehring and Faude (2014); Volgy et al., (2008).

⁴ Shanks, Jacobson, and Kaplan (1996); Roger (2020); Roger and Rowan (2022); Faude and Parizek (2021); Vabulas and Snidal (2013, 2021); Reinsberg, Michaelowa, and Knack (2017).

far exceeding what was envisioned in 1945 (Sievers and Daws 2014). In fact, one of the main tasks of the *Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council* is to track the creation of SBs (UNGA Res 686 (VII) 1952). Delegation to SBs has become increasingly important as the work of the SC increased in the post-war period.⁵

In the early post-war period, the creation of SBs elicited vigorous debate over the composition, mandate, and authority of each body, as well as the rules that would govern creation.⁶ Over time, however, several norms and formal procedures have taken root. For example, Rule 28 of the Provisional Rules of Procedure has been interpreted to allow member states to create several different types of SBs, and other notes, letters, and decisions have clarified working methods, powers, and related issues (Sievers and Daws 2014). In general, SBs take the form of either committees or working groups designed to address procedural and substantive matters. Although there is no legal difference between the two types, committees tend to be created to address specific issues such as sanctions, peacekeeping missions, and tribunals, whereas working groups tend to address more thematic issues, such as disarmament.

Logistically, all SBs rely on UN administrative personnel and financing, but they vary in their structure and authority. For example, each peacekeeping mission is overseen by a SC committee that provides direction to the Department of Peace Operations and the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs. In contrast, the Counter Terrorism Committee (CTC) has its own Executive Directorate (CED) headed by an Assistant Secretary-General and has the power to provide guidance to other SBs and various parts of the UN bureaucracy, including sanctions

⁵ For example, UNSC members created over 20 SBs from 1946 to 1948 dealing with a variety of procedural and substantive matters, including a commission established in 1946 to investigate incidents along the northern Greek border as well as commissions for India and Pakistan, Indonesia, Palestine, and on Conventional Armaments.

⁶ For example, initial proposals for the establishment of the Commission on the Greek Frontier advocated for a small body composed of the 5 permanent members along with Brazil and Poland. In subsequent debate, however, the Commission was expanded to include all SC members in 1947. The body was formally established 19 Dec 1946 and was terminated in Sep 1947. See United Nations, p. 182.

committees and the UN Office for Counter-Terrorism. After creation, each SB chooses its own working methods, the composition of its working groups, and its leadership structure.⁷ Overall, there is considerable variety with respect to the specific design features of SBs and how they relate to other parts of the UN bureaucracy.

Introducing the New Dataset

We present original data on the proposal and creation of UNSC SBs at the UNSC meeting level: specifically, we tally whether a resolution was passed and whether it resulted in the proposal or creation of a subsidiary body. This data ranges from 1972 - 2022 and was collected from UN documents of UNSC meetings as well as bi-annual reports of subsidiary bodies, all of which can be found through the UN's searchable database⁸. Our primary goal was to tabulate the number and strength of UN Security Council Subsidiary Bodies created, by type and purpose, over time. Gathering data at the meeting level helps us understand the likelihood that a meeting resulted in a resolution and if a resolution proposed and subsequently resulted in the creation of a subsidiary body. Additionally, by looking at the meeting level, future studies can seek to better understand the number of meetings dedicated to specific issues as well as how this relates to the likelihood of subsidiary body creation.

Using the UNSC's bi-annual reports, we systematically identified the proposal, creation, extension, and termination of subsidiary bodies, as well as each body's purpose and strength. We also include more specific classifications, such as observers, sanctions, and fact-finding bodies,

⁷ For example, the current norm is for non-permanent members to chair most committees.

⁸ <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/repertoire/standing-and-ad-hoc-committees>

as well as information on the year each body was proposed, established, and terminated (if applicable), and the purpose of the body and countries involved in the resolution.⁹

Based on the UNSC’s own typology, we identified seven types of subsidiary bodies: Committee, Commission, Mission, Representative, Working Group, Tribunal, and Regional Office. They are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Typology of Subsidiary Bodies

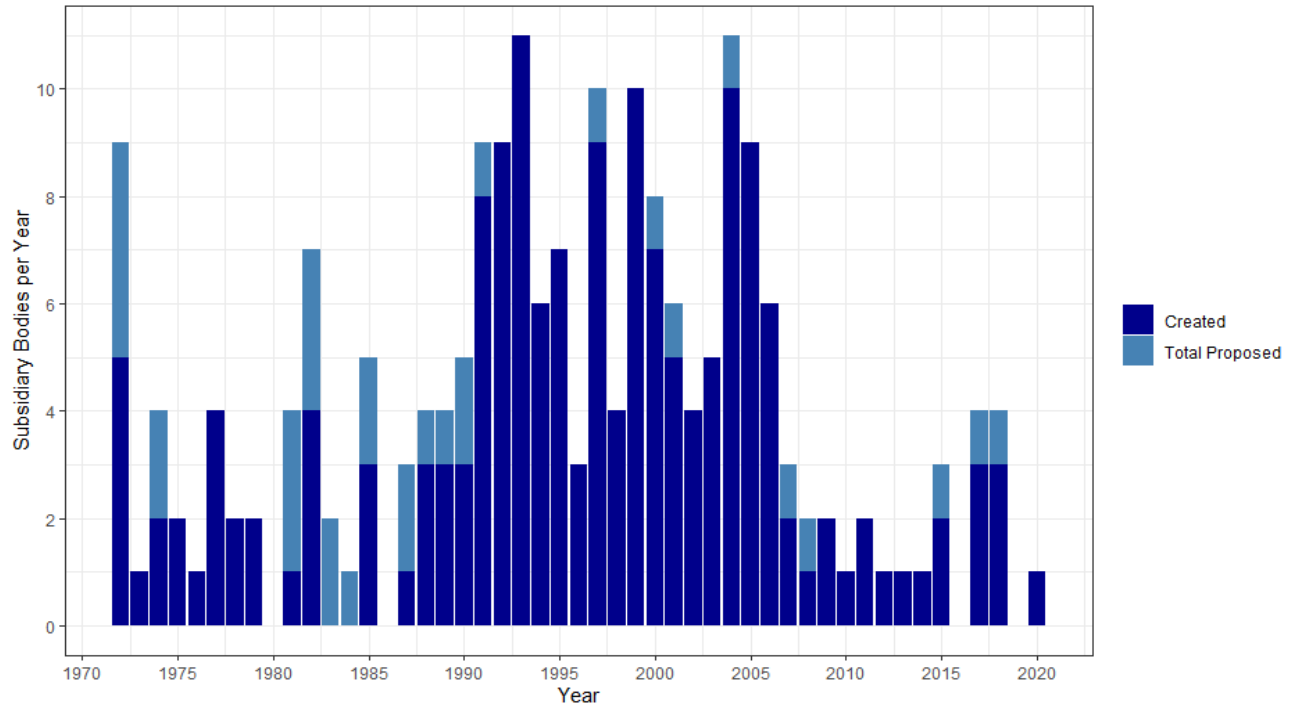
Body Type	Description	Example
Committee	Body to oversee agreement implementation	Sanctions against Guinea-Bissau
Commission	Body with specialized knowledge to report on issue of interest	Peacebuilding Commission
Mission	Body sending Observers or other UN Actors to an area of concern	United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB), United Nations Mission in Nepal (UMIN)
Representative	Individual or small group representing the UN in some capacity	Special Envoy to UN Support Mission in Libya
Working Group	Body to assess an issue in a less formal manner than commissions	Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict
Tribunal	Body to try crimes	International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR)
Regional Office	Body to ensure UN presence in a region	Regional Office of West Africa

Descriptive Statistics

⁹ Data points were taken from the official record. In cases where entries were ambiguous, we conducted further investigation to assess the purpose of the body, countries involved, and termination status. Further details are available in the codebook.

We track 7,613 SC meetings as well as 2,198 resolutions, during which 203 subsidiary bodies were proposed and 170 were created. The trend of proposal and creation is presented in Figure 1. The figure shows that both the number of bodies proposed as well as the overall proportion of proposed bodies that are successfully created has fluctuated over time. Broadly, there have been three distinct eras of SB proposal and adoption. During the Cold War years, from 1972 to 1989, an average of around two SBs were formally proposed every year, with a successful creation rate of 61.8%. This changes with the end of the Cold War, with an average of 7.4 SBs created each year and a creation rate of over 90%. However, since 2010, fewer SBs have been proposed, approximately 1.8 per year, and the creation rate has dropped to 83%. As will be discussed more fully in our quantitative analyses, we find that these trends are largely driven by geo-political alignment within the P-5, especially between the US and Russia. While this US-USSR disagreement during the Cold War manifested itself through the use of P-5 veto power, after the Cold War, the threat of veto power has had a chilling effect on SB proposals. Whether through vetoes or threatened vetoes, we find that SB creation decreases when the US and Russia disagree.

Figure 1. Subsidiary Bodies Proposed and Created by Year, 1970 to 2020.



The data also gives us insight into the use of vetoes when creating subsidiary bodies. Over the 48 years covered in this data, 33 bodies have been proposed but not passed. Nearly half of these rejections came from 1980-1989. Of these 30 cases, 22 failed due to the veto of a permanent member, 1 was not passed due to not achieving a majority, and the remaining 7 cases were not put up for a vote. The division of states who exercised their veto for resolutions establishing subsidiary bodies is outlined in Table 2.

Table 2. P-5 Member Vetoes on Subsidiary Body Resolutions, 1970 – 2020. ¹⁰

Country	Veto
United States	13
Russia	8
United Kingdom	4
China	2
France	1

France and China have only ever used their veto in tandem with the United States and Russia, respectively. The United Kingdom also uses its veto most frequently in tandem with the United States. The most recent use of the veto in our dataset comes from 2018, when a mission to investigate chemical weapons in Syria was vetoed by Russia. Out of 5,394 resolutions taken to vote from 1970-2020, 107 were not passed, 100 due to veto and 7 due to not receiving sufficient votes. Twenty-two percent of vetoes were used against a subsidiary body, a substantial percentage for a type of proposal made in only 203 of these 5,394 resolutions.

Variation in the body types created by SC members is noted in Table 3. Missions and Committees are the most often proposed and created type of SB. They were especially prevalent throughout the 1990-2010 period. This is also the period the bulk of SBs were proposed and created. This trend notably changed after 2008, after which SB creation cooled to levels last seen during the Cold War. During this time what we see instead is an increase in supplementary resolutions to further expand the mandates of existing bodies.

¹⁰ Any discrepancy in the number of vetoes reflected in this table and the number of subsidiary bodies rejected by veto can be attributed to a few cases in which more than one P5 member vetoed the same proposed resolution

Table 3. Subsidiary Body Count by Type, 1970 to 2020.

Subsidiary Body Type	Count
Committee	61
Commission	15
Mission	93
Representatives	16
Working Groups	8
Tribunals	5
Regional Offices	2

Another important source of variation is the geographic region and state(s) that are mentioned as the focus of the body. Most notably, we find that African countries are a frequent source of issues that culminate in SB creation, followed by the Middle East, South East Asia, Central America and the Caribbean, and Eastern Europe.¹¹

Strength Variable

In addition to tracking the seven types of bodies, we also coded each on an original ordinal scale that measures the strength of each tool. The idea behind this measure is that the UN Charter proposes a variety of tools that the SC may use in given situations, which vary according to whether they are meant to investigate, resolve, or mediate disputes—actions outlined in Chapter 6 of the Charter—or whether they are designed to be more forceful tools to punish actors once a dispute has escalated—outlined in Chapter 7 of the Charter. Peacekeeping missions and other high-profile bodies are the strongest, with a corresponding value of 3. SBs related to sanctions and embargoes were coded as middle strength, corresponding to a 2 on our scale. Finally, fact-finding missions and representatives were coded as the lowest-strength type of body,

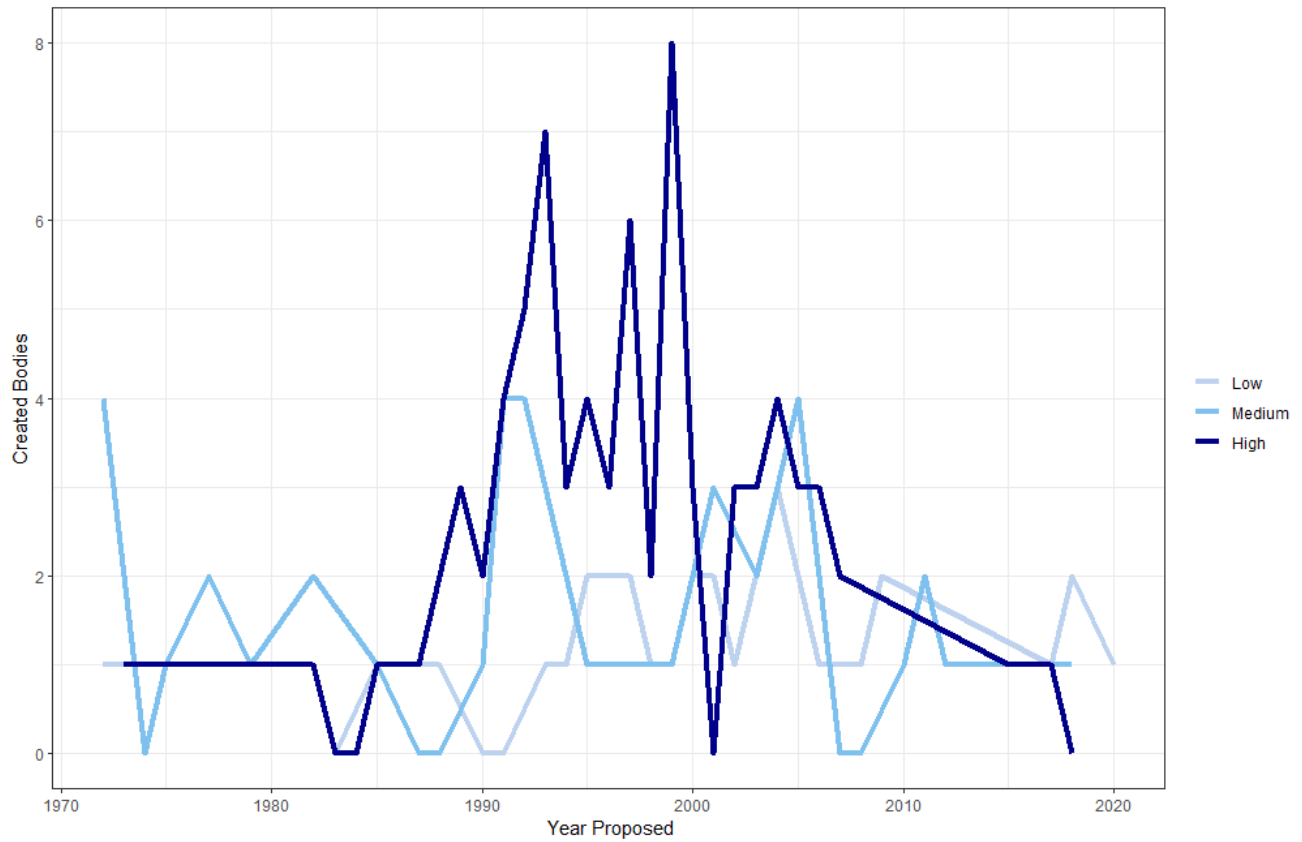
¹¹ We summarize these results in more detail in the appendix.

corresponding to 1. Overall, there were 91 bodies of high strength, 66 of middle strength, and 43 cases of low strength.¹²

Figures 2 below illustrates variation in *strength*, which, in turn, reflects larger political dynamics in the UNSC. During the Cold War period, a majority of bodies created were medium and low strength, as indicated by the medium and light blue lines. Starting in the immediate Post-Cold War period, however, the creation rate of high-strength bodies increased, a trend that lasted until around 2008. This suggests that during this period, from approximately 1988 to 2008, member countries were more willing to engage in potentially costly (and controversial) tasks. Tellingly, the pattern is different for low- and medium-strength bodies. Before 1988 and after 2008, these lower-strength bodies outnumbered the creation of high strength bodies. Overall, this lends support to the notion, which we develop in more detail below, that middle- and low-strength bodies' proposal and creation rates are less affected by tensions between P-5 members than higher-strength bodies, which require more resources and political will on the part of SC members.

¹² Three cases were not given enough detail in the UN documents to assess their strength.

Figure 2. The Strength of Created Security Council Subsidiary Bodies Per Year, 1972 to 2020.



Empirical Illustration

As an empirical illustration, we use our data to test conjectures about the conditions under which SC members are more likely to propose and create new SBs. We have three primary empirical expectations. Our first is that the UNSC is more likely to act in response to threats to peace and security – in this case propose and successfully create a SB – when the preferences of the P-5 members are aligned. Because each P-5 state has veto power over substantive decisions made by the council, the likelihood of acting should increase the closer the preferences of the P-5 countries are each year. The core logic is that P-5 preference concordance makes it less likely

that one of the members will wield their veto – either formally or informally through threat of its use – making it more likely that the Council members can find a mutually agreeable point along the Pareto frontier. This aligns with theoretical accounts describing when the SC is most likely to act (Claude 1971; Voeten 2001) and historical accounts of council (in)action due to political alignment of the council members (Weiss et al., 2017 ch 2.). Specifically, it builds upon accounts that view the Security Council as a body that responds actively to international events in line with its overall mission and mandate as outlined in the Charter, as opposed to the narrow parochial interests of the P-5 members themselves (see Beardsley and Shmidt 2012; Gilligan and Stedman 2003).

Few empirical studies have directly evaluated this claim. Moreover, previous large-n analyses have two shortcomings: A) they often focus on a single issue area, such as interventions in civil wars, which excludes other types of threats to international peace and security, and B) they only include covariates related to the nature of the conflict and the P-5 states' relationship to the state(s) where the conflict is taking place. This brackets the political relationships between members on the council, which should condition when and how members decide to act. We focus instead on the core political relationships between council members, which helps advance our understanding of how the council is likely to act in different scenarios.

Next, building upon our first claim, we focus exclusively on the degree of alignment between the two most pivotal members of the SC, the United States and Russia. Most analyses of the Council view the relationship between the US and Russia as the crux of whether the council acts in response to a threat to the peace. During the Cold War, for example, the configuration of preferences was typically the United States, France, and Great Britain as occupying one end of a continuum, with the Soviet Union on the opposite end, and China somewhere in the middle.

Thus, the key determinant of action was whether the US and USSR could agree not to wield their vetoes. Similarly, since the end of the Cold War, the US and Russia have tended to occupy opposite poles, but as their preferences became more aligned in the 1990's, the Council took a more active role responding to threats, creating SBs related to peacekeeping, sanctions, and mediation, to name a few. Therefore, our second conjecture is that the number of SBs created each year should increase as the preference distance between the US and USSR/Russia shrinks.

Third, we advance the novel argument that the *strength* of UN bodies should vary based on the preference alignment of the primary council members. We theorize that high-strength bodies should be more sensitive to the geo-political alignment of member states, as they are more costly to create. Thus, we expect that the creation rate of high-strength bodies will more closely track changes in the preferences of members, whereas low- and middle-strength bodies will be less sensitive.

To assess these conjectures, we model the proposal and creation of SBs using multivariate regression. For our primary dependent variables, we collapse our data on subsidiary bodies created to the yearly level to produce the variables *Subsidiary Bodies Proposed*, which is the count of SBs proposed each year between 1972 and 2020, and *Subsidiary Bodies Created*, which is the count of SBs created over the same time period. To assess our first theoretical conjecture, we include the variable *P5 Distance*, which is calculated using ideal point estimates derived from country's voting records in the UN General Assembly¹³ (Bailey, Strezhnev, and Voeten 2017). To produce the measure, we calculate the mean distance between each P5 country dyad at a yearly level. Smaller numbers indicate closer preferences between the countries,

¹³ Given the nature of GA votes, we view this as a good proxy for major powers' preferences. Moreover, it exhibits greater variation from year to year than measures based on alliance portfolios or other static metrics. In an auxiliary analysis, we found only 106 topic-year matches between UNGA and UNSC votes from over 8,000 topic-years, indicating GA votes are not directly indicative of SC votes, which are rarely on the same topic.

whereas larger numbers indicate that they are further apart. To assess our second conjecture, we again use ideal point estimates, but calculate only the distance between the US and USSR/Russia.

Several control variables help ensure that the results are not spurious. First, because some years contain more potential crises (and therefore, more need for UNSC mobilization) than others, we include the variable *Meeting Number*, which is the number of SC meetings in a given year. We expect the variable to be positive, as more meetings should be associated with more UNSC actions, include SB creation. Second, we include *Vetoes*, the total number of vetoes used per year. This helps to ensure that we are measuring something specific about SB creation, rather than simply providing another measure of UNSC discord. Third, we include a linear term for the year, which models potential time effects. Fourth, we include *PK Forces*, the total number of Peacekeepers in the field in a given year. We expect that SC members are sensitive to the costs of their actions for the viability of the UN as an organization. Therefore, as the number of peacekeepers increases, Council members might factor this into their decision to incur further costs with the creation of new SB.¹⁴ Finally, we include a *Cold War* dummy, due to the common observation that political realities associated with the Cold War drove the political relationships between UN members. This variable should strongly bias against finding results consistent with our two conjectures, as the fundamental dynamic that changed when the Cold War ended involved the preference alignment between Russia and the West.

Due to the count nature of our primary dependent variables, we model the relationship using Poisson regression.¹⁵ Table 4 presents the results using the total number of SBs proposed

¹⁴ The United States has often expressed concern about costs associated with the proliferation of UN missions, providing plausibility to this expectation.

¹⁵ We confirm the choice of Poisson over related techniques for count variables such as negative binomial regression (NBREG) by performing likelihood ratio tests of our primary model versus equivalent negative binomial models. In

as the dependent variable. Models 1 and 2 include the measure *P-5 Distance*, whereas models 3 and 4 include the measure *US-Russia Distance*. The results strongly support both of our conjectures. Across both models 1 and 2 the coefficient on *P-5 Distance* is in the expected negative direction and statically significant at the .05 level in model 1 and the .1 level in model 2. This indicates that as the distance in preferences between P-5 members grows, the number of SBs proposed goes down. Similarly, in models 3 and 4 the coefficient on *US-Russia Distance* is in the expected negative direction and statistically significant in both models. This suggests that the distance between the US and Russia is a strong determinant of SB proposal, a relationship that is robust to the inclusion of the full battery of controls.

Table 4. Determinants of the UNSC Subsidiary Body Proposal, 1972 to 2020.

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>			
	Subsidiary Bodies Proposed			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
P5 Distance	-1.624*** (0.506)	-0.884* (0.500)		
US Russia Distance			-0.622*** (0.110)	-0.582** (0.231)
SC Meetings	0.003* (0.002)	0.002 (0.002)	0.002 (0.002)	0.004* (0.002)
Vetoes	-0.016 (0.047)	0.093* (0.055)	0.066 (0.050)	0.062 (0.053)
Year	-0.049***	-0.067***	-0.045***	-0.041***

each instance, the associated p-values are greater than .05. Similarly, an inspection of the residuals of our primary models relative to the same models estimated using NBREG shows that they is not discernable difference.

	(0.015)	(0.018)	(0.012)	(0.014)
PK Forces		-0.158 (0.194)		-0.406** (0.193)
Cold War		-1.586*** (0.331)		-0.341 (0.603)
Constant	101.004*** (30.678)	137.841*** (35.493)	93.554*** (23.205)	88.106*** (27.130)
Observations	45	45	45	45
Log Likelihood	-108.702	-97.107	-98.484	-95.654
Akaike Inf. Crit.	227.405	208.214	206.969	205.307

Note:

* p < 0.1; ** p < 0.05; *** p < 0.01

There are no major surprises with the control variables. The number of meetings per year is in the expected positive direction but is only statistically significant in models 1 and 4. The number of vetoes is only significant in model 2. The PK Forces variable is negative and statistically significant in model four, whereas it is negative but not statistically significant in model two. We take this as evidence that the major powers consider the resource outlay of the UN when deciding whether to propose new SBs but that the political relationship between the P-5 members is more important. Finally, the Cold War dummy is in the expected negative direction, indicating that SBs were somewhat less likely to be proposed during the Cold War. However, our preference distance measures are more robust predictors of SB proposal than the blunter binary measure of political dynamics. Moreover, the fact that the US-Russia and P5 Distance measures remain significant even with the inclusion of *Cold War* indicates that our

primary conjectures are significant even in more demanding model specifications. The year variable is also negative and statistically significant across all the models, further reinforcing the importance of the Cold War in driving SC action.

Table 5 below presents the results for models where the dependent variable is the number of SBs successfully *created* in a given year. Again, the results lend strong support to our primary conjectures. In models one and two the coefficients are in the expected negative direction. The coefficient is statistically significant in model 1 but does not quite reach the .10 level of significance in model 2. The results for US-Russia distance are much more robust. Across both models three and four the coefficient is in the expected negative direction and significant at the .01 level in model 2 and the .1 level in model 4. We take this as evidence that the relationship between the US and Russia is a more important determinant of SC action than the distance between all the p-5 members. The other control variables are largely consistent with the results for the number of SB's proposed yearly. Notably, the results suggest again a negative impact for year and Cold War. The main different here is that the variable PK forces is not significant in either model it is included in, although it is close in model 4.

Table 5. Determinants of the UNSC Subsidiary Body Creation, 1972 to 2020.

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>			
	Subsidiary Bodies Created			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
P5 Distance	-1.417*** (0.545)	-0.494 (0.524)		
US Russia Distance			-0.754*** (0.119)	-0.482* (0.274)

Meeting Number	0.004** (0.002)	0.002 (0.002)	0.003 (0.002)	0.004* (0.002)
Vetoes	-0.097* (0.056)	0.072 (0.065)	0.030 (0.060)	0.047 (0.063)
Year	-0.043*** (0.016)	-0.075*** (0.019)	-0.049*** (0.013)	-0.055*** (0.016)
PK Forces		-0.140 (0.201)		-0.336 (0.208)
Cold War		-2.257*** (0.374)		-1.122 (0.749)
Constant	89.068*** (33.350)	154.244*** (38.563)	101.143*** (25.761)	116.067*** (31.799)
Observations	45	45	45	45
Log Likelihood	-107.485	-88.671	-91.258	-87.623
Akaike Inf. Crit.	224.970	191.342	192.517	189.246

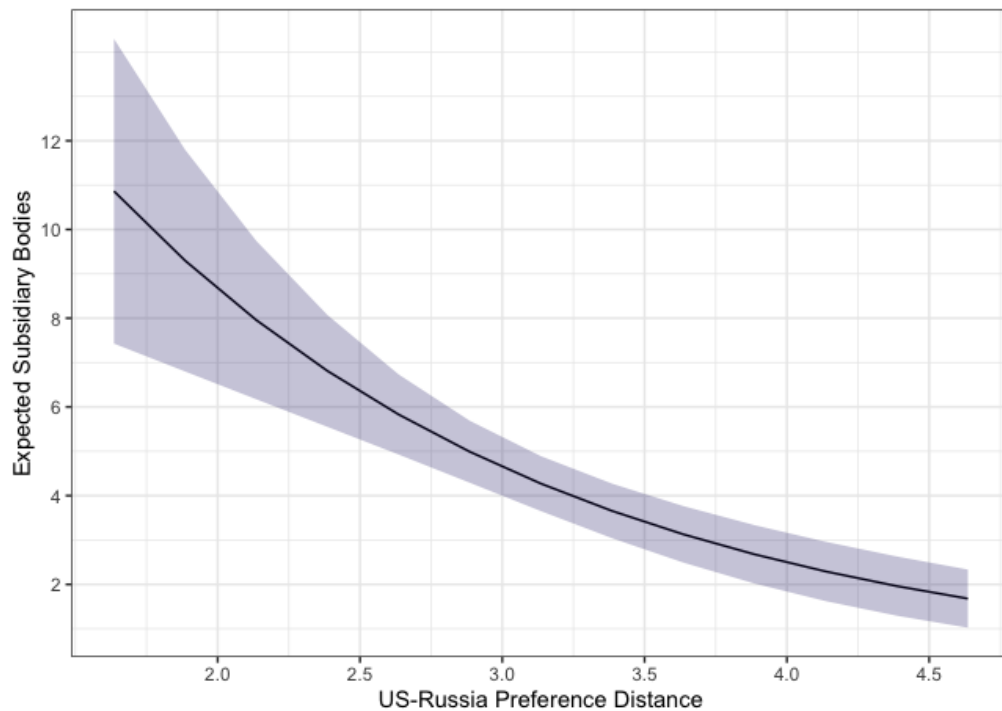
Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

The results are substantively significant as well. The coefficient estimates from model 3 in Table 4 suggest that that a one-unit increase in *US-Russia Distance* decreases the expected count of SB proposed by approximately 46 percent. Similarly, the estimates from Table 5 show that a one-unit increase in *US-Russia Distance* measure decreases the expected count of SB's *created* by 53 percent. To further illustrate these effects, in Figure 3 we estimate the expected count of SBs created across the full range of values of *US-Russia Distance* from model 3 in Table 5. We generate the predicted counts by holding all the other variables at their average values in the sample. Figure 3 demonstrates that when US and Russia's preferences are aligned

at low values of US-Russia Distance we can expect to observe 8 or more SBs created per year, which was true for several years during the immediate post-Cold War period. Whereas at very high values of preferences distance, corresponding to values of 4 and above, we can expect fewer than 3 SB created per year.

Figure 3. Predicted Count of Subsidiary Bodies Proposed per Year by US-Russia Preference Distance.



We evaluate our third conjecture in Table 6. Here we estimate three separate models where each assesses how *US-Russia Distance* affects the creation rate of SBs of a particular strength: high, medium, and low respectively. The results strongly support our central contention. Namely, the effect of *US Russia Distance* is strongest when applied to bodies of high strength. The coefficient is -1.006 and significant at the .01 level. The effect becomes weaker for

bodies of medium strength. The coefficient is still negative and statistically significant, but it is much smaller. Finally, for Low-Strength bodies, we see that the coefficient is smaller again, and this time not significant at conventional levels. Overall, this adds an important condition to our central empirical finding. Namely, preference alignment helps determine when the SC will act, but this effect also conditions the type of intervention SC members are willing to engage in. In other words, when the stakes are lower, preference divergence is less of an obstacle to cooperation, but when the stakes are higher, the great powers will find it harder to reach a solution that is mutually agreeable.

Table 7. UNSC Subsidiary Body Creation, by Strength.

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	High-Strength (1)	Medium-Strength (2)	Low-Strength (3)
US Russia Distance	-1.006*** (0.167)	-0.477** (0.195)	-0.133 (0.257)
Meeting Number	-0.001 (0.002)	0.005 (0.003)	0.003 (0.004)
Vetoes	0.129 (0.080)	0.031 (0.089)	0.024 (0.101)
Year	-0.045*** (0.017)	-0.052** (0.021)	-0.030 (0.026)
Constant	93.241*** (33.276)	104.047** (42.479)	60.512 (51.598)
Observations	45	45	45
Log Likelihood	-74.233	-66.362	-52.923
Akaike Inf. Crit.	158.466	142.725	115.847

Note:

*p<0.10; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Robustness Checks

In the supplemental appendix, we show that our core empirical findings are robust to a number of sensitivity checks. First, we show that the results are robust to the use of negative binomial regression. Second, we show that the results are robust to the use of OLS. Finally, we show that the results are robust to the alternative measures of our core preference variables.

Conclusion

The members of the UNSC can use a variety of tools to address international peace and security. In this paper, we introduced new data designed to increase scholarly understanding of the totality of that toolbox. Instead of focusing on just one UNSC policy option, we introduce and analyze new data on the proposal and creation of all UNSC SBs. This allows us to open the black box of UNSC action, determining when and why UNSC members propose, create, and delegate to smaller bodies. We find that the barriers to creation of SBs are similar to other barriers in international cooperation. We also find that different types of bodies follow different trends, and that some SC actions are more difficult to carry out than others. For example, higher-strength subsidiary bodies require more political alignment than lower-strength bodies.

Our work here is only a start. We envision several fruitful areas for future scholarship. First, our work here shows that formal cooperation is more flexible than many pessimists contend. The UN SC has never quite lived up to the hopes of its creators, due in large part to the emergence of deep geopolitical differences between its core members. But, as our results here show, states have nonetheless found ways to utilize the council, albeit in different ways

depending on political considerations. This tracks with recent research suggesting that members often feel compelled to act, even if the response may be insufficient or flawed, out of a desire to maintain the Council's legitimacy (see Howard and Dayal 2018). Thus, future work should seek to better understand under what conditions members innovate, engaging in more limited forms of cooperation, and how this affects larger dynamics on the Council. Does this dynamic occur in other IOs? And are there common characteristics of certain issues areas that make this more likely?

Second, future work should theorize more deeply on the political factors that influence the creation of different types of subsidiary bodies. For example, which types of states tend to propose SBs? For which types of conflicts or emergencies are SBs more likely to be proposed and created? When are vetoes most likely to be deployed against SBs, and why? Our dataset makes these questions answerable in ways that previous data did not. Moreover, future efforts could add to these data to better understand the design features of the SBs as well as the distribution of leadership positions allocated across SB's.

Third, and perhaps even more importantly, our data make it possible to provide a better understanding of the *consequences* of SB creation. Are SBs effective in their mandates? Which types of SBs are most effective for which types of emergencies? Under what conditions can the SC delegate effectively? Once again, previous work was only able to answer a subset of these questions for certain types of responses to certain types of emergencies. Our more holistic data allows us a better glimpse of the entire UNSC toolbox. Ideally, this dataset will allow international actors to hone their responses to global issues. The more we know about the causes and consequences of various UN tools, the better the global response should be when an event requires it. Understanding the costs and consequences of deploying different types of bodies in

response to different international events can only serve as a net positive for global action. We hope that future scholarly and policy work will build on this framework to improve global responses.

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Supplemental appendix.

Appendix A: Codebook and variables included in UNSC Subsidiary Body Data version 1.0.

Case - Number indicating the order in which the proposed resolution was coded

Year Proposed - Year the body was proposed to the Security Council through a resolution

Year Established - Year the resolution was passed (if applicable)

Year Terminated - Year the body created by the resolution was dissolved (if applicable)

Subsidiary.bodytype1 - This variable indicates the most general type of subsidiary body, with 7 main categories

Committee - This type of body is mainly created to oversee sanctions, arms embargoes, and implementations of agreements

Commission - These bodies organized a group of people with specialized knowledge to assess an issue at hand

Mission - These bodies focused on sending observers to a situation, these bodies purposes included peacekeeping, peacebuilding, and aid, as well as observation

Representatives (Envoys, Advisors, Representatives) - These bodies designated an individual or group of individuals to represent the UN in some capacity

Working Groups - These bodies organized groups of people to assess an issue in a less formal manner than Commissions

Tribunals - These bodies were created to try crimes

Regional Offices - The bodies were created to ensure a United Nations presence in a region

Subsidiary.bodytype2 - This variable includes a more specific assessment of the purpose of a proposed body

Resolution - Number given to passed resolutions if applicable. Some bodies were created without a resolution

Subsequent Resolutions - Resolution numbers of resolutions passed to extend, expand, or modify the mandate of the body created in the initial resolution.

Continuation - Resolution number of the resolution which dissolved the initial resolution body but created a new body that serves a similar purpose

Yea.Votes.on.Creation.Resolution - Number of Yea votes for a proposed resolution

Nay.Votes - Number of Nay votes for a proposed resolution

Abstentions - Number of abstentions for a proposed resolution

p-5.Vote - Number of permanent five members that voted Nay for a proposed resolution

US Veto - Dummy Variable indicating if the US vetoed a proposed resolution

0 = US did not veto

1 = US did veto

Russia Veto - Dummy Variable indicating if Russia vetoed a proposed resolution

0 = Russia did not veto

1 = Russia did veto

IO.Mobilization1 - Name of the International Organization that was included or referenced in the resolution if applicable

IO.Mobilization2 - Name of the secondary International Organization that was included or referenced in the resolution if applicable

UN.Mobilization1 - Name of the United Nations body or group mobilized by the resolution if named

UN.Mobilization2 - Name of the secondary United Nations body or group mobilized by the resolution if named

Sponsor - Name of state(s) that sponsored the proposed resolution

Requester - Name of the state or organization that requested a proposed resolution be voted on

Purpose - This variable indicates a further specification of the purpose of a proposed body, while this can overlap with the Subsidiary.bodytype.2 variable, it can also add further clarity to the purpose of a proposed body.

Summary - Brief description of the purpose of the proposed resolution, the states involved, and if any agreement was being implemented.

Appendix B: Descriptive statistics.

Variable	Median	Mean	Min	Max	SD	N
Strength	2	2.24	1	3	0.7845237	200
US Veto	1	0.5909	0	1	0.5032363	22
Russia Veto	0	0.3636	0	1	0.492366	22

Table 1 below shows the average creation rate of SBs by decade from 1972 to 2020.

Table 1. Subsidiary Bodies Proposed and Created by Decade.

Decade	Proposed	Created	Percent Created
1972-1979	25	19	76%
1980-1989	30	15	50%
1990-1999	74	70	95%
2000-2009	56	51	91%
2010-2020	18	15	83%
Total	203	170	83.8%

Table 4 presents regional comparisons. The data reveal that Africa and the Middle East have been the focus of the bulk of SB creation with 91 and 42 bodies respectively. They are followed by Europe, Asia, and North America with 20, 16, and 12. Surprisingly, no SB bodies have had South America as their stated focus.¹⁶

The distribution of created subsidiary bodies by country of interest are shown in Figure 2. The data show that African countries are a frequent source of issues that culminate in SB creation, followed by the Middle East, South East Asia, Central America and the Caribbean, and Eastern Europe. This trend is also seen in the overall meeting data. Out of 7,614 meetings, 6,563 meetings focused on a specific region. Africa was the most common with 45.6% of meetings dedicated to this region, whereas the Middle east was second with 29.1%. This demonstrates that the UNSC discusses the regions of most involvement most frequently. The total number of bodies per region can be found in the appendix.

¹⁶ One resolution did involve the Falkland Islands conflict, but because it also involved the United Kingdom, it is not coded as a particular geographic region.

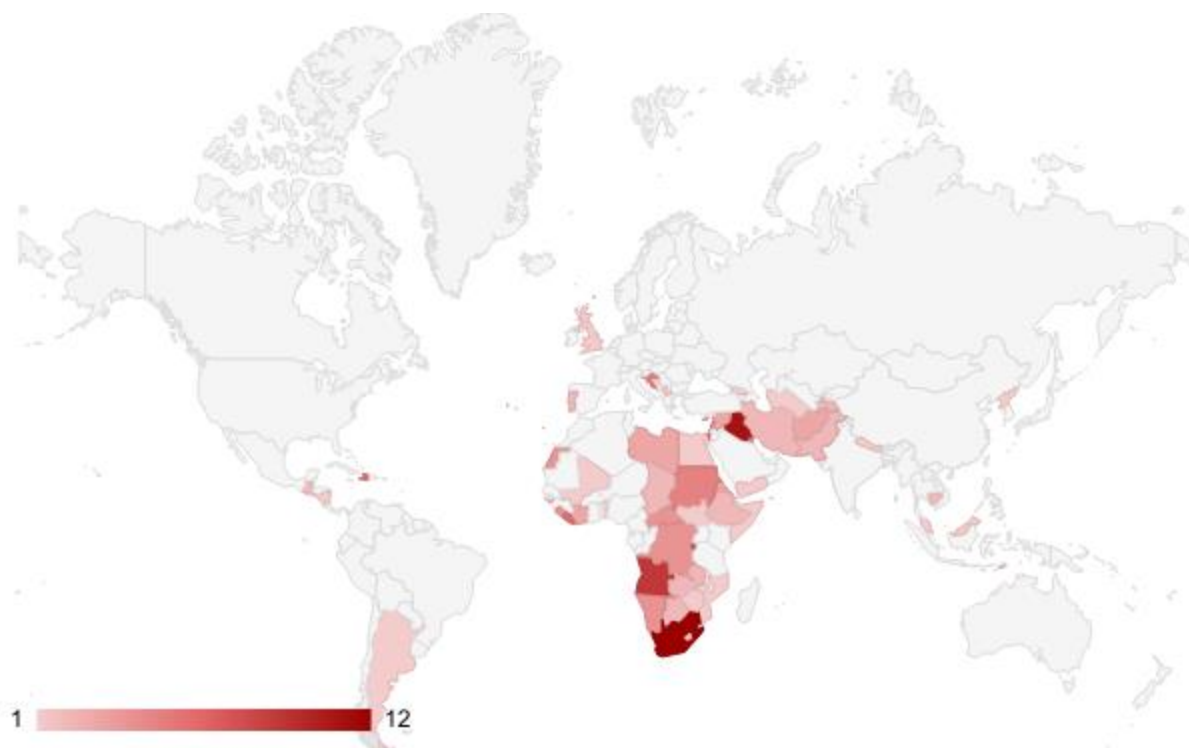


Figure 2. Distribution of Proposed Subsidiary Body by Country of Interest¹⁷

Table B. Proposed Bodies by Region, 1970 to 2020.

Region	Proposed Bodies
Africa	91
Middle East	42
Europe	20
Asia	16
North America	12
South America	0
Oceania	0

¹⁷ One resolution does cite Argentina, this resolution was aimed at the dispute between Argentina and the United Kingdom over the Falkland Islands.

Appendix C. Descriptive statistics for empirical analyses used in paper.

Table A1. Descriptive statistics used for main analyses in paper.

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
SBs Total	45	4.51	3.06	1	11
SBs Created	45	3.78	3.01	0	11
SBs not created	45	0.73	0.99	0	4
P-5 Distance	45	1.91	0.30	1.43	2.59
US Russia Distances	45	3.18	0.98	1.64	4.81
SC Meetings	45	150.33	82.97	49	299
Vetoes	45	1.96	1.69	0	7
Cold War	45	0.38	0.49	0	1
PK Forces	45	45,495.84	35,766.45	7,200	107,088
High Strength	45	2.02	2.08	0	8
Medium Strength	45	1.47	1.34	0	6
Low Strength	45	0.96	0.80	0	3

Appendix D. Robustness checks for empirical analyses used in paper.

Table A1. Robustness to Alternative Model Specification, Negative Binomial Regression and SB Proposal.

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>			
	sub_count_total			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
US Russia Distance	-0.634*** (0.126)	-0.585** (0.242)		
P5 Distance			-1.591** (0.668)	-0.916* (0.546)
Meeting Number	0.002 (0.002)	0.004* (0.002)	0.003 (0.002)	0.002 (0.002)
Vetoes	0.066 (0.056)	0.060 (0.055)	-0.016 (0.061)	0.089 (0.059)
Year	-0.047*** (0.013)	-0.041*** (0.015)	-0.050** (0.019)	-0.066*** (0.019)
PK Forces		-0.419** (0.206)		-0.179 (0.214)
Cold War		-0.329 (0.632)		-1.561*** (0.355)
Constant	97.719*** (26.090)	88.151*** (28.557)	102.892*** (39.584)	137.242*** (38.436)
Observations	45	45	45	45
Log Likelihood	-98.994	-96.556	-105.963	-97.918
theta	19.766 (22.967)	46.001 (110.175)	6.302* (3.300)	31.863 (55.611)
Akaike Inf. Crit.	207.988	207.112	221.925	209.835

Note:

* p < 0.1
** p < 0.05
*** p < 0.01

Table A2. Robustness to Alternative Model Specification, Negative Binomial Regression and SB Creation.

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>			
	(1)	(2)	created (3)	(4)
US Russia Distance	-0.773*** (0.135)	-0.482* (0.274)		
P5 Distance			-1.371* (0.774)	-0.494 (0.524)
Meeting Number	0.003 (0.002)	0.004* (0.002)	0.004 (0.003)	0.002 (0.002)
Vetoes	0.030 (0.064)	0.047 (0.063)	-0.086 (0.073)	0.072 (0.065)
Year	-0.052*** (0.014)	-0.055*** (0.016)	-0.042* (0.022)	-0.075*** (0.019)
PK Forces		-0.336 (0.208)		-0.140 (0.201)
Cold War		-1.122 (0.749)		-2.257*** (0.374)
Constant	106.096*** (28.540)	116.065*** (31.802)	87.185* (45.560)	154.240*** (38.570)
Observations	45	45	45	45
Log Likelihood	-91.919	-88.623	-102.657	-89.671
theta	21.158 (28.738)	17,646.810 (735,205.600)	4.029** (1.837)	13,575.380 (548,894.800)
Akaike Inf. Crit.	193.838	191.247	215.314	193.343

Note:

* ** *** p<0.01

Table A3. Robustness to Alternative Model Specification, OLS and SB Creation.

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
		created		
US Russia Distance	-3.395*** (0.563)	-2.124** (0.974)		
P5 Distance			-5.425* (3.103)	-2.942 (2.541)
Meeting Number	0.008 (0.007)	0.006 (0.009)	0.012 (0.009)	-0.0003 (0.009)
Vetoes	0.144 (0.219)	0.199 (0.227)	-0.302 (0.273)	0.266 (0.245)
Year	-0.207*** (0.050)	-0.202*** (0.063)	-0.147* (0.082)	-0.272*** (0.087)
PK Forces		-0.931 (0.985)		-0.400 (1.078)
Cold War		-4.184 (2.583)		-8.500*** (1.553)
Constant	426.638*** (99.347)	424.234*** (120.983)	306.525* (167.614)	558.152*** (170.224)
Observations	45	45	45	45
R ²	0.523	0.565	0.155	0.527
Adjusted R ²	0.475	0.496	0.070	0.453
Residual Std. Error	2.183 (df = 40)	2.139 (df = 38)	2.907 (df = 40)	2.230 (df = 38)
F Statistic	10.970*** (df = 4; 40)	8.227*** (df = 6; 38)	1.829 (df = 4; 40)	7.064*** (df = 6; 38)

Note:

* ** *** p<0.01

Table A4. Robustness to Alternative Model Specification, NBREG and SB Strength.

<i>Dependent variable:</i>			
	High- Strength (1)	Medium- Strength (2)	Low-Strength (3)
US Russia Distance	-1.837* (1.080)	-2.493*** (0.925)	-0.090 (1.115)
Meeting Number	0.001 (0.003)	0.006** (0.003)	0.003 (0.004)
Vetoes	-0.045 (0.101)	0.013 (0.086)	0.003 (0.095)
Year	-0.038 (0.030)	-0.082*** (0.028)	-0.025 (0.032)
Constant	80.769 (61.307)	167.184*** (57.307)	49.997 (65.900)
Observations	45	45	45
Log Likelihood	-84.773	-66.462	-54.053
theta	1.925** (0.938)	92.539 (1,067.747)	25,069.680 (533,525.200)
Akaike Inf. Crit.	179.546	142.925	118.105

Note:

* p < 0.1
** p < 0.05
*** p < 0.01