

Targets and Perpetrators: Resolutions and Voting in the UNCHR and UNHRC*

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Abstract

Despite the high hopes for the new United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) targeted resolutions against specific countries continue to play a considerable role in the activities of this new assembly (compared to its predecessor, the United Nations Commission for Human Rights (UNCHR)). Drawing on data on resolutions and votes in these two bodies I show that targets of specific resolutions do not necessarily have worse human rights records than the sponsors of these resolutions. Using an item-response theory model I also demonstrate that resolutions sponsored by human rights offenders targeting specific countries split the voting members of these two bodies very differently, compared to other resolutions. Consequently, the UNHRC appears to follow in the tracks of the UNCHR when it comes to politicizing human rights debates.

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1 Introduction

In June 2006 47 members convened for the first session of the newly created United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC). This new body replaced its often passionately criticized predecessor, namely the United Nations Commission for Human Rights (UNCHR). Elections of members with dubious human rights records to the latter body (see Edwards, Scott, Allen and Irvin, 2008; Chetail, 2010, 205f) discredited increasingly the UNCHR. With high hopes a successor was designed, but numerous authors question whether any significant improvements in the functioning of this main human rights body of the United Nations (UN) have occurred. Many of the critics lament a continuing politicization of the UNHRC's work (see for instance Ghanea, 2006; Besant and Malo, 2009; Chetail, 2010; Cox, 2010; Seligman, 2011; Freedman, 2013).

As indication for this politicization often serve two sets of information. Scholars either compare the human rights records of the members of the two bodies (see for instance Cox, 2010; Seligman, 2011) or consider the importance of targeted resolutions (i.e., resolutions criticizing directly the human rights situation in a target country, see Wheeler, 1999) in the two bodies (see for instance Cox, 2010; Seligman, 2011; Voss, 2013*a*).¹ While the former have quite clearly shown that the overall respect for human rights has, if at all, only slightly improved from the UNCHR to the UNHRC, the latter largely show that targeted resolutions still seem to focus heavily on Israel.

It remains an open question, however, to what degree these targeted resolutions are abused, and whether they provide clear evidence for the politicization of the two UN bodies (see for instance Freedman, 2014). Consequently, and proceeding by comparing the UNCHR and the UNHRC, I propose to study targeted resolutions in these bodies from the angle of the targets and perpetrators of human rights violations. More specifically, in a first step I analyze more closely the main sponsors of targeted resolutions and the target country, and in a second step I assess how these two elements interact and affect voting in the two bodies. I find that only for a few targeted resolutions the authoring country is a worse perpetrator of human rights violations than the target country and these votes are hardly more divisive. At the same time, however, I find that more generally

¹To my knowledge only Seligman (2011) and Hug (2015 (forthcoming)) propose a comparison of the voting behavior of the members of the two bodies.

targeted resolutions introduced by perpetrators of human rights abuses are more divisive.

In the next section I start by discussing the role that targeted resolutions play in UN bodies dealing with human rights issues. Drawing on this discussion I present in section three a detailed comparison of this type of resolutions in the UNCHR and the UNHRC from 1996 to 2012 (covering the last ten sessions of the former body and the first twenty sessions of the latter body). In section four I propose an analysis of how characteristics of these targeted resolutions affect the voting behavior of members in these two bodies, before concluding in section five.

2 Human Rights and targeted resolutions in UN bodies

At least since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) bodies of the UN have dealt with human rights issues (Simmons, 2009, 41). The UNCHR, created as a commission of the UN's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC, for a detailed history, see Tolley, 1987), had human rights in its brief. For some time, however, resolutions discussed by this body dealt exclusively with generally framed human rights issues. Wheeler (1999) offers a detailed discussion of how targeted resolutions, i.e. resolutions focusing on human rights issues in a specific country, found their way into the repertoire of the UNCHR.² Regarding these targeted resolutions in the UNCHR Wheeler (1999, 86) notes that “. . . most draft resolutions which target governments for systematic human rights violations are introduced by Western states and place a heavy emphasis on civil and political rights which are lacking in many Third World states.”³

Amongst others Lebovic and Voeten (2006) have studied targeted resolutions in the UNCHR covering the time period from 1976 to 2000. In a subsequent paper (Lebovic and Voeten, 2009) they analyze how this public shaming affects aid

²For a related study on targeted resolutions in the UNGA see Hedley (2014) (see also Donnelly, 1988; Hillman and Potrafke, 2011; Becker, Hillman, Potrafke and Schwemmer, 2015 (forthcoming)).

³He offers as explanation for this that “. . . the Commission's emphasis on Third World regions has been skewed by the large number of resolutions which have targeted Israel and (apartheid) South Africa.” (Wheeler, 1999, 87).

allocation both at the bilateral and the multilateral level. Krain (2012) pursues this research by looking at the effects of naming and shaming of NGOs but also the UNCHR and finds that such measures improved the situation regarding genocides etc.. Relatedly, Ausderan (2014) finds that such targeted resolutions also affect the perceptions of human rights abuses in the countries targeted.

With the creation of the UNHRC (for some background information, see Burci, 2005; Müller, 2007), both Cox (2010) and Voss (2013*b*) compare the targeting of specific countries in the two bodies, as does Seligman (2011). These authors find that Israel still is a main focus of targeted resolutions, as Wheeler (1999, 87) already noted for the UNCHR. The question arises, however, whether such targeted resolutions are abusive. Hillman and Potrafke (2011), focusing on resolutions targeting Israel in the UNGA, suggest that worse human rights offenders use this country as a decoy to deflect from their own human rights abuses (see also Becker, Hillman, Potrafke and Schwemmer, 2015 (forthcoming)).⁴ A clear demonstration of whether these resolutions are abusive lacks, however. Consequently, I propose in what follows to assess more generally which targeted resolutions might be considered abusive and what kind of effects these resolutions have on the voting behavior of the two UN bodies.⁵

3 Targeted resolutions in the UNCHR and the UNHRC

In a first step, however, targeted resolutions need to be identified. To do so I proceed slightly differently than recent work on the UNCHR and the UNHRC (see for instance Lebovic and Voeten, 2006; Cox, 2010; Seligman, 2011; Voss, 2013*a*) that uses broader definitions. I follow more closely Wheeler (1999) by considering as targeted a resolution that explicitly names a country in the title of the resolution (or a territory under the target's control) and focuses on the

⁴Casper (2013) builds on this argument and suggests that perpetrators of human rights abuses use their membership in the UNHRC to extract foreign aid from donors.

⁵More general studies have assessed how, for instance, the European Union coordinates its actions in the UNCHR (Smith, 2006) and the UNHRC (Wouters, Basu and Bernaz, 2008; Macaj and Koops, 2010; Smith, 2010; Macaj, 2012; Macaj and Koops, 2012) or evaluate the newly introduced Universal Periodic Review (UPR) (McMahon, 2012). Other studies focus more specifically on the voting in the new body more generally (Lukács, 2011; Lukács, 2010; Hug and Lukács, 2014).

human rights situation in a critical fashion.⁶

For the time period covered in this paper, namely 1996 to 2012 (1996-2005 for the UNCHR and 2006-2012 for the UNHRC),⁷ I find that approximately 10 percent of all UNHRC resolutions are targeting specific countries, while this share was 15 percent among all UNCHR resolutions.⁸ I offer in tables 1 and 2 for the UNCHR, respectively the UNHRC, information on how many such targeted resolutions were considered in each session, and which countries were the targets of these resolutions. As the two tables underline, Israel started to attract the largest share of targeted resolutions in the 55th session of the UNCHR and has always been in the top-place (sometimes shared) ever since, except in four sessions of the UNHRC in which only a single targeted resolution was debated.

⁶I infer this information on the basis of the title of the resolution.

⁷The data used in this paper is available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.7910/DVN/28049> and <http://dx.doi.org/10.7910/DVN/28053>.

⁸Comparing my list for the UNCHR with Lebovic and Voeten's (2006) I note that they have a much longer list of targeted resolutions for the years 1996-2000. As they do not offer a clear definition it is hard to assess to what this is due. Similarly Cox (2010) identifies in the first 11 regular sessions (and the first 11 special sessions) 53 country-specific resolutions, from which he excludes those of an advisory nature. Voss (2013*b*, 14), on the other hand, lists more countries being targeted than the ones I list in tables 2, respectively 4.

Table 1: Targets of targeted human rights resolutions in the UNCHR

target	52nd	53rd	54th	55th	56th	57th	58th	59th	60th	61st
Afghanistan	6.2	5.9	6.7	5.6	6.2	7.1	7.7	7.7	0.0	0.0
Belarus	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.7	16.7	14.3
Bosnia	6.2	5.9	6.7	5.6	6.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Burundi	6.2	5.9	6.7	5.6	6.2	7.1	7.7	7.7	0.0	0.0
Cambodia	6.2	5.9	6.7	5.6	6.2	7.1	7.7	7.7	0.0	0.0
Cuba	6.2	5.9	0.0	5.6	6.2	7.1	7.7	7.7	16.7	14.3
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.7	16.7	14.3
Democratic Republic of the Congo	0.0	0.0	6.7	5.6	6.2	7.1	7.7	7.7	0.0	0.0
East Timor	0.0	5.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Equatorial Guinea	0.0	5.9	6.7	5.6	6.2	7.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Haiti	6.2	5.9	6.7	5.6	6.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Iran	6.2	5.9	6.7	5.6	6.2	7.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Iraq	6.2	5.9	6.7	5.6	6.2	7.1	7.7	7.7	0.0	0.0
Israel	6.2	5.9	6.7	5.6	6.2	14.3	30.8	15.4	16.7	28.6
Kosovo	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Lebanon	6.2	5.9	6.7	5.6	6.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Myanmar	6.2	5.9	6.7	5.6	6.2	7.1	7.7	7.7	16.7	14.3
Nigeria	6.2	5.9	6.7	5.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Rwanda	6.2	5.9	6.7	5.6	6.2	7.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Sierra Leone	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.6	6.2	7.1	7.7	7.7	0.0	0.0
Sudan	6.2	5.9	6.7	5.6	6.2	7.1	7.7	0.0	0.0	14.3
Togo	6.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Turkmenistan	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.7	16.7	0.0
Zaire	6.2	5.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	99.2	100.3	100.5	100.8	99.2	99.5	100.1	100.1	100.2	100.1
Count	16	17	15	18	16	14	13	13	6	7

Table 2: Targets of targeted human rights public resolutions in the UNHRC

target	2	3	4	6	7	8	9	10	11	13	15	16	17	19	20
Belarus	0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	100	0.0	100
Côte d'Ivoire	0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16.7	0	0.0	0
Democratic People's Re-	0	0	0	0	16.7	0	0	20	0	20	0	16.7	0	16.7	0
public of Korea															
Democratic	0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	20	0	20	0	16.7	0	16.7	0
Republic of the															
Congo															
Iran	0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16.7	0	16.7	0
Israel	100	100	50	25	33.3	0	50	40	0	40	0	16.7	0	33.3	0
Myanmar	0	0	0	25	33.3	100	0	20	0	20	0	16.7	0	16.7	0
Sudan	0	0	50	50	16.7	0	50	0	100	0	100	0.0	0	0.0	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Count	1	1	2	4	6	1	2	5	1	5	1	6	1	6	1

As I will argue that one way in which abusive targeted resolutions can be identified is by the relationship between the authoring country and the target of a resolution, I report in tables 3 and 4 for each target the authors of the resolution concerning them, both for the UNCHR and the UNHRC.⁹ These two tables clearly indicate that in addition to human rights violations there are other motivations driving countries to submit targeted resolution in these two bodies.

To identify among the targets and authors of resolutions the perpetrators of human rights violations I rely on Wood and Gibney’s (2010) “Political Terror Scale.”¹⁰ This dataset, based on annual reports from the US State Department and Amnesty International categorizes states in five categories according to their human rights record. The first category is formed by countries that respect the rule of law and physical integrity is respected. In the fifth category fall countries with widespread human rights abuses.

In a first step I identify for each targeted resolution introduced by a single country¹¹ the value on the “Political Terror Scale” of the authoring country. Figure 1 depicts this information showing quite important differences between the two bodies. For the UNCHR, as noted by Wheeler (1999, 86), a large share of targeted resolutions was introduced by western countries with, on average, rather good human rights records (low values). Only a small, respectively minute, share of all targeted resolutions were introduced by countries with considerable or even dramatic human rights violations (i.e., the two highest values on the “Political Terror Scale”). The share of such resolutions increased considerably in the first twenty sessions of the UNHRC, while those introduced by countries with no or minor human rights violations became less frequent.

⁹I focus on resolutions voted upon in these two tables, as these resolutions will form the basis for the analyses that follow. In tables 5 and 6 in the appendix I list all target-author pairs including for resolutions adopted without a vote.

¹⁰I use this dataset instead of Cingranelli and Richards’s (2010) dataset, as the former is updated until 2012 (instead of 2011), i.e. the last year I cover in this paper. In addition I used the values reported by Wood and Gibney (2010) based on the US state department reports, except for the United States where I used the ones stemming from Amnesty international. I also imputed one missing value, namely for France in 1996, where I used the value for 1997.

¹¹Thus, the lists of target-author pair is longer than the ones depicted in tables 3 and 4. The full lists are presented in tables 5 and 6 in the appendix.

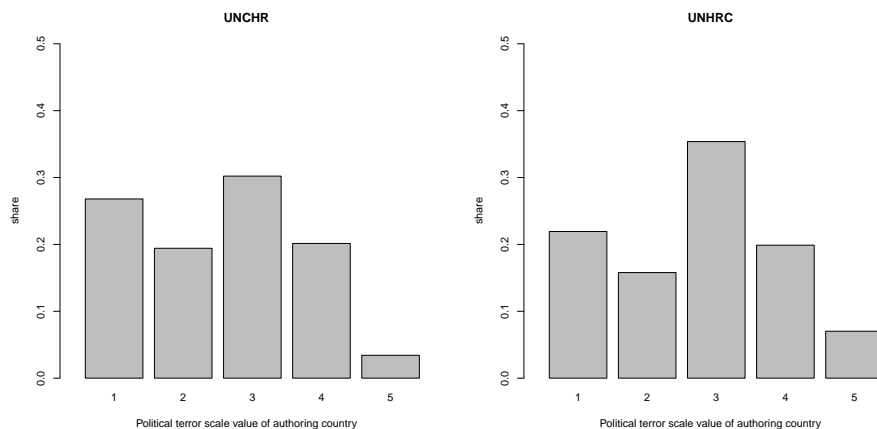
Table 3: Targets and authors in the UNCHR: only resolutions voted upon

target	author(s) of resolution (n in parentheses)
Belarus	United States of America (2), United States of America/EU (1)
Bosnia	United States of America (5)
Cuba	Czech Republic (3), Honduras (1), Peru (1), United States of America (3), Uruguay (1)
Democratic People’s Republic of Korea	Greece (on behalf of the European Union) (1), Ireland/EU (1), Luxembourg (on behalf of the European Union and Japan) (1)
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Germany/EU (1), Greece (on behalf of the European Union) (1), Portugal (on behalf of the European Union) (1), Spain (on behalf of the European Union) (1), Sweden (on behalf of the European Union) (1), United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland/EU (1)
East Timor	Netherlands (1)
Iran	Germany/EU (1), Italy/EU (1), Netherlands (1), Portugal/EU (1), Sweden (on behalf of the European Union) (1), United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (1)
Iraq	Germany (on behalf of the European Union) (1), Greece/EU (1), Italy (on behalf of the European Union) (1), Netherlands (1), Portugal/EU (1), Spain/EU (1), Sweden (on behalf of the European Union) (1), United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland/EU (1)
Israel	Pakistan (1), Pakistan/OIC (2), Saudi Arabia (4), Syrian Arab Republic (9)
Kosovo	Pakistan (1)
Lebanon	Egypt (2), Qatar (1), Tunisia (1), Tunisia (on behalf of the League of Arab States) (1)
Nigeria	Egypt (1), Italy (on behalf of the European Union) (1), Tunisia (1), United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland/EU (1)
Rwanda	Canada (1), Egypt (1), Kenya (1), Nigeria (1), Senegal (1), Tunisia (1)
Sudan	Ethiopia (1), Germany (on behalf of the European Union) (1), Portugal (on behalf of the European Union) (1), Spain/EU (1), Sweden (on behalf of the European Union) (1), United States of America (3)
Turkmenistan	Greece (on behalf of the European Union) (1), Ireland/EU (1)

Table 4: Targets and authors in the UNHRC: only resolutions voted upon

target	author(s) of resolution (n in parentheses)
Belarus	Cyprus (1), Hungary (1)
Democratic People’s Republic of Korea	Czech Republic, Japan (1), Denmark and Japan (1), Hungary (1), Japan, Slovenia (1), Spain, Japan (1)
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Egypt (1), Nigeria (2), Senegal (1)
Iran	Sweden (2)
Israel	Bolivia, Cuba, Morocco, Pakistan, Palestine, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Venezuela (1), Pakistan (6), Pakistan, Cuba, Yemen (1), Pakistan, Palestine (5), Pakistan, Sudan (1), Palestine (4)
Sudan	Egypt (3), Egypt, Portugal (1), France (1), Germany and Algeria (1), Nigeria (1)

Figure 1: Political terror scale value of authoring countries: UNCHR and UNHRC (all resolutions introduced by a single country)



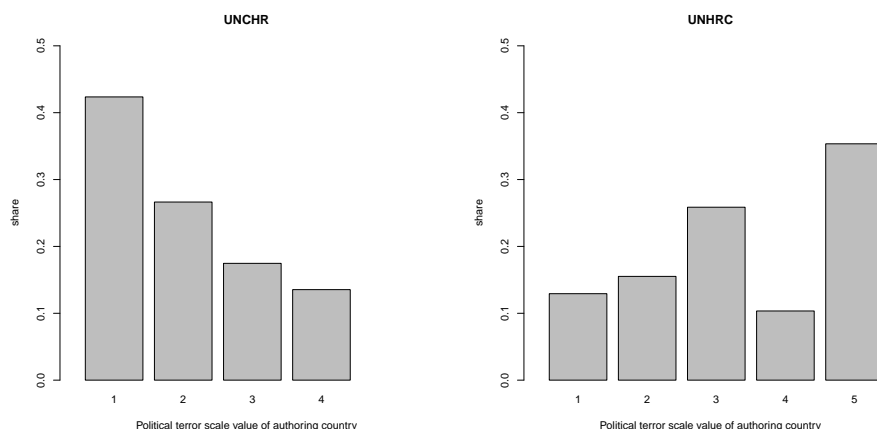
This change becomes even more accentuated if only targeted resolutions introduced by single countries that were voted upon are considered (resolutions at the basis of tables 3 and 4). In the UNCHR, as figure 2 shows, no such targeted resolution voted upon was introduced by a country with the worst score on the “Political Terror Scale” between 1996 and 2005. The picture changes dramatically in the UNHRC, where the largest share of targeted resolutions is introduced by countries with exactly this worst score on the “Political Terror Scale,” namely the value 5. Resolutions introduced by countries respecting much better human rights and voted upon are considerably less frequent.

Consequently, even though several authors noted a slight improvement in the average human rights record among members of the UNHRC, compared to the one for the UNCRH, this appears not to have found reflection in the member countries authoring targeted resolutions. According to figures 1 and 2, quite to the contrary, the fewer offenders of human rights in the UNHRC appear to have become more active in authoring targeted resolutions, and, in addition, these are also much more likely to be voted upon.¹²

Given this important change I consider one way to identify abusive targeted resolutions by considering all resolutions in which at least one of the authors of

¹²Hug and Lukács (2014) also note this tendency for the UNHRC, namely that resolutions introduced by human rights offender are more likely to be voted upon than adopted without a vote.

Figure 2: Political terror scale value of authoring countries: UNCHR and UNHRC (all resolutions introduced by a single country and voted upon)



the resolution has a worse score on the “Political Terror Scale” in the year it was voted upon than the target of the resolution.¹³ I illustrate this with three examples, two stemming from the UNCHR and one from the UNHRC. In figure 3 I depict for two country pairs the scores on the “Political Terror Scale” over time, namely for Israel-Syria and Israel-Egypt. In the first pair, Syria authored a series of resolutions in the UNCHR, but its score on the “Political Terror Scale” is systematically lower than the ones of its target, i.e., Israel.¹⁴ For the other pair I find that Egypt, when introducing a resolution focusing on human rights in Israel, had a worse score on the “Political Terror Scale” than its target.

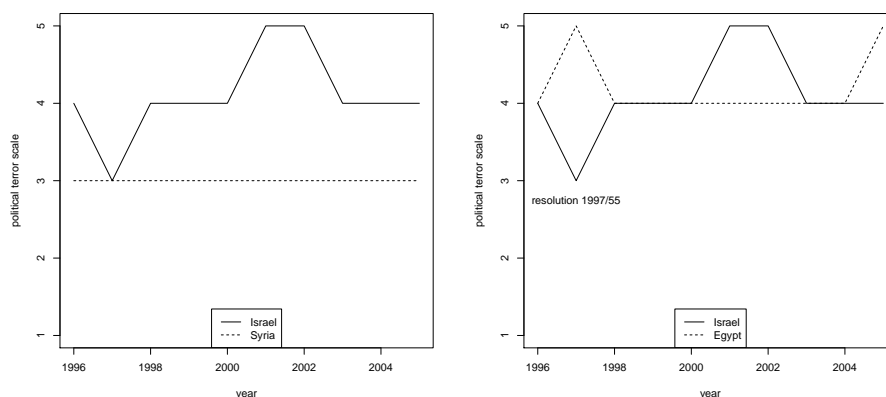
I depict the same information in figure 4 for the Israel-Pakistan pair in the UNHRC. The latter country introduced a series of resolutions dealing with Israel, but up until 2010 the latter country’s “Political Terror Scale” score was worse than the author’s of the resolution. Only the resolutions introduced starting from 2010 fulfill the criterion of having an authoring country with a worse human rights record than its target.

Overall seven targeted resolutions in the time period considered fulfill the

¹³This is akin to the way in which Hillman and Potrafke (2011) and Becker, Hillman, Potrafke and Schwemmer (2015 (forthcoming)) proceed, as they compare, amongst other, the number of victims in violent events in Israel and other countries.

¹⁴As most of these resolutions concern the occupied territories, I use the score for Israel and Occupied Territories from Wood and Gibney’s (2010) dataset.

Figure 3: Political terror scale: target and authoring country in UNCHR

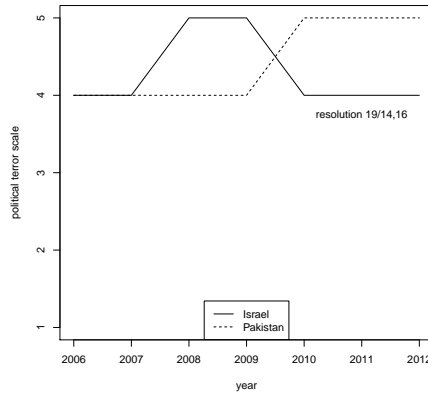


proposed criterion:

- Human rights situation in southern Lebanon and West Bekaa 1997/55, introduced by Egypt
- Situation of human rights in Kosovo 1999/2, introduced by Pakistan
- Human rights in the occupied Syrian Golan A/HRC/RES/13/5, introduced by Pakistan, Sudan
- The grave human rights violations by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem A/HRC/RES/13/8, introduced by Bolivia, Cuba, Morocco, Pakistan, Palestine, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Venezuela
- Human rights in the occupied Syrian Golan A/HRC/RES/16/17, introduced by Pakistan
- Human rights in the occupied Syrian Golan A/HRC/RES/19/14, introduced by Pakistan
- Human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem A/HRC/RES/19/16, introduced by Pakistan

Given figure 3, not surprisingly, only two of these resolutions were debated in the UNCHR, while the remaining five resolutions were debated in the UNHRC.

Figure 4: Political terror scale: target and authoring country in UNHRC



In addition, the list also shows that these resolutions almost all had Israel as target.

4 Voting on targeted resolutions

As with few exceptions resolutions in the UNCHR and the UNHRC are adopted,¹⁵ it is useful to study more in detail how conflict lines emerge in these two bodies by relying on an item-response theory model following Voeten (2004) and Hug and Lukács (2014) as well as Hug (2015 (forthcoming)).

To assess whether the UNCHR and the UNHRC differ I assume that the way in which their respective members vote on resolutions relates to ideal-points in a policy space. In addition, I assume that countries cast their vote based on how far (or close) a proposal lies (compared to its alternative, most often the status quo) to their ideal-point. Based on these assumptions, several estimation strategies have been devised to uncover the latent ideal-points and information on the alternatives voted upon (for excellent summaries, see Poole, 2005; Clinton, 2012; Carroll and Poole, 2014 (forthcoming)). I employ, as suggested by Clinton, Jackman and Rivers (2004) (see also Martin and Quinn, 2002) an item-response

¹⁵As Hug and Lukács (2014) for the UNHRC and Hug (2015 (forthcoming)) for the UNCHR and its successor show, a large share of resolutions are adopted without a vote. Rejections of resolutions are rare, as in the General Assembly (Hug, 2012). In all these assemblies rejections of proposals are much more varied when it comes to amendments, motions and separate votes.

theory (IRT) model. This model is specified in the following equation:

$$\begin{aligned}\pi_{ij} &= Pr(y_{ij}|\theta_i, \beta_j, \alpha_j) \\ &= F(\theta_i\beta_j - \alpha_j)\end{aligned}\tag{1}$$

In this specification π_{ij} reflects the probability that a member i votes in favor of proposal j . The IRT model assumes that this probability relates to the members' ideal-points θ_i . The latter's impact is, however, mediated by two proposal characteristics namely β_j and α_j which reflect the discrimination and difficulty of proposal j . With adequate additional assumptions all these parameters can be estimated in a Bayesian framework.

A complication comes from the fact that in voting bodies, and also in the UNCHR and the UNHRC, members often abstain. Following other scholars (for example Voeten, 2004; Boockmann and Dreher, 2011) I assume that an abstention is an intermediary category between a yes- and a no-vote. This can easily be accommodated in an IRT model by complementing equation 1 with a second one, which models the distinction between abstention and a yes vote (for a related approach, see Voeten, 2004):

$$\begin{aligned}\pi_{ij} &= Pr(y_{ij}|\theta_i, \beta_j, \alpha_j, \gamma_j) \\ &= F(\theta_i\beta_j - \alpha_j + \gamma_j)\end{aligned}\tag{2}$$

$+\gamma_j$ reflects the shift parameter from the first to the second logit-curve. If γ_j is zero then abstentions do not form a distinct category. Hug (2015 (forthcoming)) shows that an overwhelming share of the estimated γ_j s are clearly distinct from 0. To assess whether the characteristics of the proposer-target dyad and the characteristics of the proposer affect the voting behavior, I follow Hug and Lukács (2014) and assume that the β_j s in equation 2 varies depending on the authoring country of the resolution in the following way:¹⁶

$$\beta_j = \beta_{j0}e^{(x_j\beta_\beta)}\tag{3}$$

¹⁶The functional form assumed here is slightly different than the one adopted by Hug and Lukács (2014).

Consequently, I assume that as a function of some independent variables (x_j , e.g, whether the targeted resolution is abusive) the discrimination parameter of a proposal β_j increases or decreases in value compared to the baseline β_{j0} . The latter corresponds to the discrimination parameter for the remaining resolutions, i.e., those introduced by several countries.

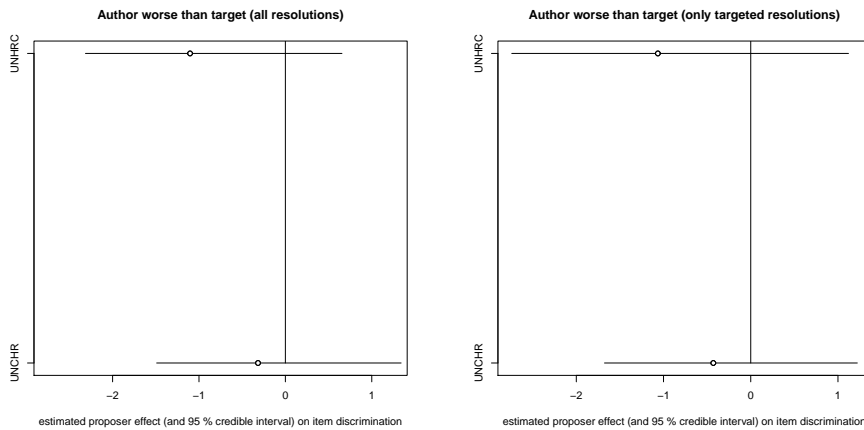
As the goal is also to assess differences between the UNCHR and the UNHRC the models estimated for these two bodies have in one way or another to be linked. In order to allow for such comparisons I follow Voeten (2004) and Bailey, Strezhnev and Voeten (2013) and select resolutions with very similar content and identical voting patterns as bridging observations. More specifically each country appears as observation (provided it was member in the two bodies) both for the UNCHR and the UNHRC. The votes cast in these two bodies allow to estimate the various parameters in equations 1 and 2. To insure that the estimates are comparable I assume that two pairs of resolutions (one from each body) are identical and the votes by both members of the UNCHR and those of the UNHRC are recorded in the same variable. The following pairs of resolutions were used to allow for such a bridging:

- UNCHR: E/CN.4/RES/2000/7 Human rights in the occupied Syrian Golan
UNHRC: A/HRC/RES/13/8 The grave human rights violations by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem
- UNCHR: E/CN.4/RES/2001/10 Human rights situation of the Lebanese detainees in Israel
UNHRC: A/HRC/RES/19/14 Human rights in the occupied Syrian Golan

I selected these bridging observations on the basis of the following criteria. I first identified the set of resolutions with the most important number of similar resolutions. Without any question this set is formed by resolutions focusing on the Middle East. Among these resolutions I checked which pairs of targeted resolutions displayed the highest voting agreement across the two bodies. In addition, as I use China's and the US' voting record to have the same polarity across votes (I recoded all votes so that if these two countries do not agree, a yes vote is voting with the US and a no vote is in accordance with China's stance), I also considered only votes where these two countries jointly voted (and thus none abstained or was not member of the body).

Based on this combined dataset of voting records from the UNCHR and the UNHRC I first estimated an IRT model with as explanatory variable for the item discrimination parameter only the information whether I consider the targeted resolution as abusive.¹⁷ I estimated this effect for both bodies separately using first the full sample of resolutions voted upon and then the subset of all targeted resolutions. Figure 5 depicts the estimated effects for this variable. Surprisingly, the estimated effect for abusive targeted resolutions is negative in both panels of the figure and for both assemblies. The credible intervals of the estimated coefficients are, however, quite large and always include the value of 0. The negative effect suggests that the voting behavior of the members on these abusive targeted resolutions is less related to their ideal-points (the θ s) than the remainder of the resolutions. As the effect is similar across the two panels of figure 5 this suggests that this holds both compared to all resolutions and compared to only targeted resolutions. While this is an interesting finding, given the large credible intervals, these resolutions, which authors often consider the most offensive (for UNGA resolutions, see Donnelly, 1988; Hillman and Potrafke, 2011; Becker, Hillman, Potrafke and Schwemmer, 2015 (forthcoming)), do not display any significant differences in voting patterns.

Figure 5: The effect of worse offenders targeting other countries: UNCHR and UNHRC (all resolutions)



¹⁷All IRT-models reported upon in this paper were implemented in Plummer’s (2010) JAGS-program. After 50000 burnins and additional 5000 iterations were generated, which were thinned by a factor of 5, generating 1000 values from the simulated posterior distribution.

Another way to conceive the degree to which targeted resolutions are abusive is by only considering the human rights record of the country having introduced a given resolution. Based on the five values of the “Political Terror Scale” of the authoring country of a resolution I reestimated two IRT models, one based on all resolutions, the other considering only targeted resolutions.

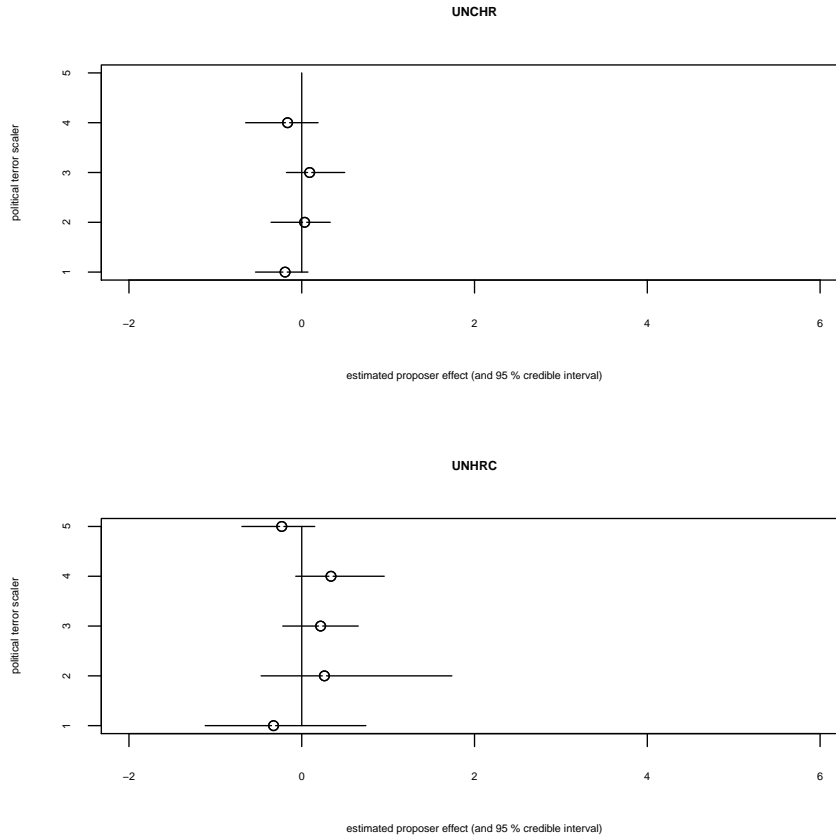
The two panels in figure 6 show that compared to all resolutions those submitted by a single country do hardly differ in terms of their discrimination parameter as a function of the human rights abuses by the authoring country. For the UNCHR the estimated effects are small and the credible intervals all include the value of 0.¹⁸ Only for the targeted resolutions introduced by a single country with a perfect human rights record appears almost a negative effect that differs sufficiently from 0. The second panel, based on the UNHRC, shows on average stronger effects, but again with rather broad credible intervals. This panel suggests that targeted resolutions introduced by countries with considerable human rights abuses (value 4) are more divisive for the members in their voting behavior than the remainder of all resolutions.

This latter difference becomes even more important in the second panel of figure 7,¹⁹ where the effects compared to the remaining targeted resolutions are considered. Thus, in this figure the comparison is between a targeted resolution introduced by a single country and targeted resolutions introduced by multiple countries. As this panel shows, resolutions introduced by countries with considerable human rights abuses (value 4) discriminate much more strongly among the members of the UNHRC than those introduced by multiple countries or single countries with either better or worse human rights records. The latter resolutions differ, however, barely from the targeted resolutions introduced by multiple countries, as the credible intervals all include the value of 0. When comparing this second panel with the first one it is again apparent that the estimated effects are smaller for the resolutions voted upon in the UNCHR. Despite smaller credible intervals, due to a larger number of resolutions available to estimate each of these effects, these intervals continue all to include the value of 0, suggesting that there are no systematic differences between targeted resolutions as a function of the

¹⁸This panel omits the effect for the worst human rights abusers as no resolution submitted by such countries were subject to a vote in the UNCHR (see figure 2).

¹⁹In this panel I omit to depict the effect for the second category as it is estimated on the basis of a very small number of votes, namely four. The panel for the UNCHR again omits the effect for the worst human rights abusers for the same reason as mentioned above.

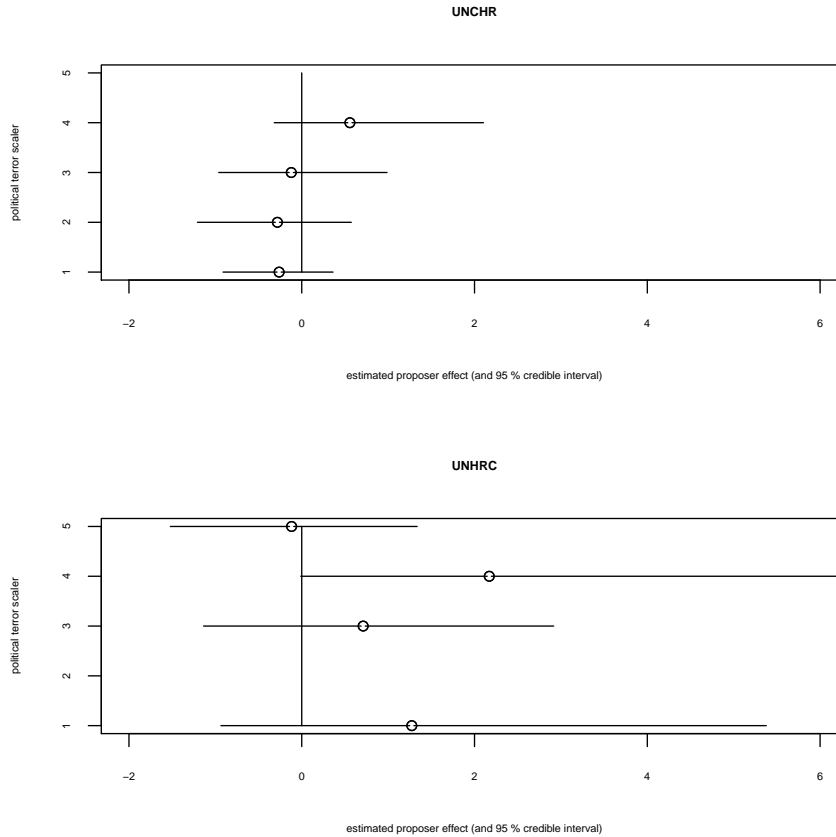
Figure 6: The effect of the political terror scale of authoring countries: UNCHR and UNHRC (all resolutions)



human rights record of the authoring country.

While the estimated effects of characteristics either of the relationship between the authoring country and the target of a targeted resolution (figure 5) or the human rights abuses of the former (figures 6 and 7) are rather limited, they still offer interesting insights. First, if anything has changed from the UNCHR to the UNHRC with respect to voting on targeted resolutions, then it is that the effects on the discrimination parameter have become more important in the UNHRC than they were in the UNCHR. Second, especially in the former body it appears that resolutions introduced by human rights offenders (though not the worst) lead to votes that are more divisive for the member states.

Figure 7: The effect of the political terror scale of authoring countries: UNCHR and UNHRC (only targeted resolutions)



5 Conclusion

The change from the UNCHR to the UNHRC has raised quite some hopes for a less politicized treatment of human rights problems by UN bodies. With the exception of the widely appreciated Universal Periodic Review (UPR) (see for instance McMahon, 2012), however, the newly created body soon attracted an equal share of criticism. Many of these criticisms are, however, based on an only implicit comparison with the predecessor, making it hard to see the basis for such pointed views.

Consequently, I proposed to study in this paper more in detail one set of resolutions that are often used as indication for a continued politicization, namely

targeted resolutions. These resolutions focusing in a critical manner on the human rights situation in a specific country continue to be prevalent in the newly created body, but their share has decreased. As a first analysis in this paper was able to show, these targeted resolutions appear to be introduced more and more frequently by perpetrators of human rights abuses, especially compared to the situation in the UNCHR.

A second analysis suggested that resolutions targeting countries with a better human rights record than the one of the country introducing the resolution hardly differ with regard to their impact on the voting behavior. Only when I consider more in detail the human rights record of the authoring country do some effects appear, suggesting that targeted resolutions introduced by countries with human rights abuses discriminate more strongly among voting members, especially in the UNHRC.

Consequently, contrary to studies focusing on the human rights records of UNCHR, resp. UNHRC, member states cite [Cox2010](#), [Seligman2011](#) e.g., or on the number of targeted resolutions in these two bodies (e.g., [Cox, 2010](#); [Seligman, 2011](#); [Voss, 2013a](#)), this study seems to suggest that the politicization has even increased with the new UNHRC [Hug2015a](#) for a study focusing on voting coming to a similar conclusion, see. An explanation for the absence of improvement might be found in the composition of these two bodies, which, despite a change in the election process, has barely changed according to [Chetail \(2010, 234\)](#):

[t]he Human Rights Council is not significantly different from the preceding Commission. Like the Commission, it remains a political body because of its intergovernmental composition.

Appendix

In tables 5 and 6 I list for each target of human rights resolution what countries introduced the resolution.

Table 5: Targets and authors in the UNCHR

target	author(s) of resolution
Afghanistan	Chairperson (7)
Belarus	United States of America (2), United States of America/EU (1)
Bosnia	United States of America (5)
Burundi	Egypt (1), Kenya (1), Nigeria (1), Nigeria/African states (1), Senegal (1), South Africa (1), Tunisia (1)
Cambodia	Australia (3), Japan (5)
Cuba	Czech Republic (3), Honduras (1), Peru (1), United States of America (3), Uruguay (1)
Democratic Republic of Korea	Greece (on behalf of the European Union) (1), Ireland/EU (1), Luxembourg (on behalf of the European Union and Japan) (1)
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Germany/EU (1), Greece (on behalf of the European Union) (1), Portugal (on behalf of the European Union) (1), Spain (on behalf of the European Union) (1), Sweden (on behalf of the European Union) (1), United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland/EU (1)
East Timor	Netherlands (1)
Equatorial Guinea	Egypt (1), Kenya (1), Nigeria (1), Senegal (1), Tunisia (1)
Haiti	Venezuela (5)
Iran	Germany/EU (1), Italy/EU (1), Netherlands (1), Portugal/EU (1), Sweden (on behalf of the European Union) (1), United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (1)
Iraq	Germany (on behalf of the European Union) (1), Greece/EU (1), Italy (on behalf of the European Union) (1), Netherlands (1), Portugal/EU (1), Spain/EU (1), Sweden (on behalf of the European Union) (1), United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland/EU (1)
Israel	Pakistan (1), Pakistan/OIC (2), Saudi Arabia (4), Syrian Arab Republic (9)
Kosovo	Pakistan (1)
Lebanon	Egypt (2), Qatar (1), Tunisia (1), Tunisia (on behalf of the League of Arab States) (1)
Myanmar	Germany (on behalf of the European Union) (1), Greece (on behalf of the European Union) (1), Ireland (on behalf of the European Union) (1), Italy (on behalf of the European Union) (1), Luxembourg (on behalf of the European Union) (1), Netherlands (1), Portugal (on behalf of the European Union) (1), Spain (on behalf of the European Union) (1), Sweden (on behalf of the European Union) (1), United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (on behalf of the European Union) (1)
Nigeria	Egypt (1), Italy (on behalf of the European Union) (1), Tunisia (1), United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland/EU (1)
Rwanda	Canada (1), Egypt (1), Kenya (1), Nigeria (1), Senegal (1) Tunisia (1)
Sierra Leone	Canada (4), Chairperson (1)
Sudan	Ethiopia (1), Germany (on behalf of the European Union) (1), Portugal (on behalf of the European Union) (1), Spain/EU (1), Sweden (on behalf of the European Union) (1), United States of America (3)
Togo	Gabon (1)
Turkmenistan	Greece (on behalf of the European Union) (1), Ireland/EU (1)
Zaire	Italy (on behalf of the European Union)(1), Netherlands (1)

Table 6: Targets and authors in the UNHRC

target	author(s) of resolution
Belarus	Cyprus (1), Hungary (1)
Côte d’Ivoire	Nigeria (1)
Democratic People’s Republic of Korea	Czech Republic, Japan (1), Denmark and Japan (1), Hungary (1), Japan, Slovenia (1), Spain, Japan (1)
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Egypt (1), Nigeria (2), Senegal(1)
Iran	Sweden (2)
Israel	Bolivia, Cuba, Morocco, Pakistan, Palestine, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Venezuela (1), Pak- istan (6), Pakistan, Cuba, Yemen (1), Pakistan, Palestine (5), Pakistan, Sudan (1), Palestine (4)
Myanmar	Czech Republic (1), Denmark (1), Hungary (1), Portugal (1), Slovenia (3), Spain (1)
Sudan	Egypt (3), Egypt, Portugal (1), France (1), Germany and Algeria (1), Nigeria (1)

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