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ENTRENCHED IN POWER: PATH DEPENDENCE AND UN SECURITY COUNCIL REFORM

by

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Abstract

This paper explores United Nations Security Council reform from a historical perspective. Using the concept of path dependence, the paper shows how features put in place at the Security Council's formation have limited options for reform in the present. The Security Council's concert of power model, separation from the General Assembly, distinction of membership types, and high barrier for change serve as mechanisms of path dependence. These features resulted from the Security Council's formation during WWII in the wake of the failed League of Nations. The inability of current reform movements to bring about change illustrates the Security Council's continued institutional resilience. In light of this, possible outcomes for the Security Council include partial reform of the body or full or partial replacement by another institution. Institutional resilience makes a massive overhaul of the Security Council's structure unlikely, and keeps power in the hands of the body's five permanent members. Through its analysis, the paper demonstrates how understanding the influence of historical factors can provide a useful framework for interpreting current issues in international organization.

Introduction: A Call for Reform

On October 17, 2013, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was one of five states elected to a non-permanent member seat on the United Nations Security Council, the United Nations (UN) body with primary responsibility for international peace and security. The Saudi government had been at work for years to gain a seat on the Council before its efforts came to fruition (BBC 2013). A seat on the Security Council is unparalleled in the realm of foreign relations. For diplomats, such a seat is likely to be the apex of their career (Williams 2013). Among international institutions, the Security Council is unique in its power and authority, its status arguably incomparable (Bosco 2009). Yet the following day, in a move that shocked the international community, Saudi Arabia turned down the two-year appointment. No other state had seen it coming. Samantha Power, the United States ambassador to the UN, had already sent the Saudi foreign ministry a statement of congratulations (Worth 2013). The Saudis' action was entirely unprecedented: Saudi Arabia is the first and only state to have declined a seat on the Security Council in the body's seven decades of existence (BBC 2013).

Why would a country that had long worked to gain a seat choose to step away when the opportunity presented itself? Saudi Arabia willingly provided their rationale, saying, in essence, "It's not me, it's you." The state attributed their decision to the current status of the Security Council itself, claiming that that the institution carries "double standards" and "mechanisms of action" that prevent it from "preserving international peace and security" (Council on Foreign Relations 2013). The Saudi Foreign Affairs Ministry also pointed to particular instances where they perceived failure of the Council, naming the conflicts in Palestine and Syria as examples. The statement ends with a clear call for change: "Accordingly, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia...announces its apology for not accepting membership of the Security Council until the

Council is reformed and enabled, effectively and practically, to carry out its duties and responsibilities in maintaining international peace and security” (Council on Foreign Relations 2013). The state may have kindly apologized for turning down the seat, but their central message is no apology: the Security Council needs to change.

Saudi Arabia is not the first to raise the issue of reforming the Security Council, though their action serves as one of the most dramatic public statements. For decades a variety of international actors have advocated for some kind of change to come to the Council. Over time, support for reform has become widespread. US President Barack Obama has claimed he “look[s] forward to a reformed UN Security Council,” specifically advocating for the addition of India to the body (NDTV 2015). Other global powers such as Germany and Brazil have expressed hope for reform as well. Smaller states have also called for change: Liechtenstein, Singapore, Switzerland, Jordan, and Costa Rica have banded together, advocating for reform of the institution (Cox 2009). Some states present reasons for reform similar to Saudi Arabia, claiming that the Security Council is not functioning in order to fulfill its purposes, while others cite different reasons. Whatever the goal or motivation, numerous actors—states, organizations, and individuals—desire some kind of change to come to the UN Security Council. Yet change has been incredibly elusive. For half a century, an abundance of proposals and movements to reform the Council have failed to bring about any real change.

Discussion on the issue of Security Council reform emphasizes the present and the future, and this focus is well justified. Any kind of reform must understand the problems of the present to create solutions for the future. While this approach is useful and necessary, it often lacks a crucial element: the past. The aim of this paper is to analyze reform of the Security Council from a deeply historical perspective. The core question is this: how does history, particularly that of

the Security Council itself, inform the current conversation on reform? As the international community continues to wrestle with the question of how to organize itself, perspective grounded in the past is vital. Such understanding is important not only in international organization, but for any leaders, political or otherwise, who seek to make decisions based on an analysis of prior events. This paper, then, serves as a model for understanding the present in light of the past, providing a useful framework for interpreting current issues in international organization.

Theory and Outline

This paper applies history in a manner that makes integral connections between past and present. The use of history should go beyond merely connecting the past to the present; it should illuminate an image of innately temporal social processes. Events should be primarily viewed, not as individual moments, but as part of the unfolding of interrelated processes. Political scientist Paul Pierson's book *Politics in Time* explores the details of such temporal processes, seeking to understand "how the theoretical claims we make about a host of important issues can be improved by a better appreciation of temporal processes" (Pierson 2004, 175). Pierson's ideas are applied throughout this paper, describing processes of institutional development.

The idea of path dependence is central to this approach to history. Much of Pierson's work is devoted to applying path dependence, a concept that originated in economics, to politics (Pierson 2004). Path dependence refers to "social processes that exhibit positive feedback and thus generate branching patterns of historical development" (Pierson 2004, 21). The central claim of path dependence is this: movement in a particular direction makes it more difficult to change or reverse course (Pierson 2004). Professor of International Studies Margaret Levi

describes this as “the entrenchments of certain institutional arrangements” (1997, 28). When an institution makes decisions about its order and operations, particularly early on in the body’s existence, the cost of switching to some alternative increases with time. Such institutions are said to be path dependent.

Economist W. Brian Arthur, who has been central in developing the idea of path dependence, cites the development of technology, specifically the videocassette recorder, as a prime example of path dependence. In the early days of the VCR market, two formats of the same price—VHS and Beta—competed for dominance. If one format gained market share, positive feedback would facilitate increasing returns: a greater number of consumers owning VHS or Beta recorders would lead to a larger number of stores carrying that format. With each format beginning at more or less equal standing, VHS came to dominate because small early gains were reinforced by increasing returns, facilitating massive growth. The outcome was based not as much on qualities of the product itself as it was on the influence of the process’s initial stages. After early events (external circumstance and even chance) locked in VHS as the dominant format, changing to an alternative path became decreasingly likely, despite advantages of the alternative (Arthur 1994). This example demonstrates the self-reinforcing dynamics of path dependence. A path dependent process’s own history governs its continued evolution. When a system is limited by cause of its own development, it exhibits path dependence (David 2007).

A tree-climber is a useful image of path dependence. When climbing, one tends to follow the branch on which he or she begins. The further one climbs down a particular tree branch, the feasibility of switching to another branch decreases with time (Levi 1997). And so it is with path-dependent processes and institutions. While there may be many branches to choose from at

some initial stage, the early decision of which to follow has profound future impact. The climber's own past actions determine future possibilities.

This paper also employs a realist approach to explain the behavior of states in the international system. Four main tenants make up realism: (1) states are the primary actors; (2) no body governs the actions of states; the system is anarchic; (3) states are unitary, rational actors, each pursuing what it believes to be self-interest; and (4) survival is the main interest of states. This perspective not only views the state as the main unit of analysis, but also perceives it as monolithic: each state is unitary in the sense that internal conflict and decision-making play no role in analysis. The state is a single body in its preferences, decisions, and actions. Each state is also rational, pursuing actions that maximize self-interest. Every move is interpreted as a one in the service of gaining or retaining power (Donnelly 2008). Thus, every state preference or action discussed in this paper is assumed to fit within this realist framework.

The central aim of this paper is to connect the Security Council's present to its past, revealing how particulars of the institution's formation and subsequent development have had profoundly limiting effects on today's options for reform. In developing this understanding, the paper begins with today's reform movement, giving an overview of the numerous proposals to reshape the Council. From here, the paper backs up, tracing the narrative of the Security Council's formation and examining the body's key features. Based on this look back at the foundations of the Council, the paper uses ideas of path dependence to provide a useful model for understanding reform in light of history, demonstrating how early decisions have created institutional resilience, limiting present options. In closing, the paper looks to the future, exploring potential outcomes for the Security Council.

Due to the institution's resilience, a complete restructuring of the Security Council, in which a new model replaces the current, is unlikely. Partial reform, which would preserve existing structures to an extent while introducing some change, is one possibility, though less direct change is more likely. Such change would be caused by another, more flexible institution that, providing challenge to the Security Council, both assumes some amount of international authority and spurs the Council to change itself. For any meaningful change to occur, it must be supported by the permanent powers already holding the most power within the Security Council—states with an interest in holding on to power.

Overview of the Security Council

The Security Council is one of the six main organs of the UN, all of which were established in 1945 at the organization's founding. Under the UN Charter, the Security Council holds primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, one of the central purposes of the UN. In addition to this responsibility, the Council holds the power to act on behalf of the entire UN. All other members of the UN must accept and carry out decisions made by the Security Council. The institution is unique in this. While other UN organs have the power of recommendation, only the Security Council's decisions are, by the Charter, binding on all 193 UN members. With an overwhelming majority of the world's population belonging to UN member states, the power of the Security Council is unparalleled (United Nations Security Council 2015).

The Council consists of fifteen member states: five permanent and ten non-permanent, each permitted one vote. Non-permanent members serve staggered two-year terms, and cannot be immediately reelected. The permanent member states—The United States, the United

Kingdom, France, Russia, and China, also known as the P5—hold a veto power.¹ All substantive measures must be passed with the approval or abstention of all five of these states. In terms of formal power, these five states stand above the rest (UN Charter art. 23, 27).

The structure of the Security Council is dictated by the Charter, meaning that changing the Council requires an amendment to the Charter. Any amendment requires approval and ratification by a two-thirds majority of all members of the UN, including each of the P5 (UN Charter art. 108). Ratification occurs by each state's domestic constitutional process. In the United States, for example, such ratification occurs only with the support of two thirds of the Senate. An amendment to the UN Charter faces first the hurdle of gaining the necessary support within the UN itself, and second the web of domestic politics involved in achieving ratification by at least 129 states.

Meeting at the UN headquarters in New York, the Security Council has approved and overseen a wide variety of international operations. These have ranged from armed interventions in states such as Bosnia, Haiti, Somalia, and Kuwait, to sanctions placed on Serbia, Libya, and Sudan. The Council has tried heads of state in war crimes courts, and authorized peacekeeping missions around the globe (Bosco 2009). The work of the Security Council has been broad, bringing the body to the forefront of many international events and conflicts. And at the forefront of the Council itself sit the P5, holding some of the most powerful seats of influence in the world, unmoved since the body's establishment seven decades ago.

¹ At the Security Council's 1945 founding, the Republic of China (under Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist Government) and the Soviet Union each held a permanent seat. In 1971 a UN General Assembly Resolution replaced the Republic of China with the Communist People's Republic of China as the representative of China to the UN. When the Soviet Union dissolved in 1991, Russia succeeded in the state's permanent seat. Apart from these two major changes, which happened without amendment to the UN Charter, the Council's permanent membership has gone unchanged (Bosco 2009).

Movements to Reform

In the seventy years since the Security Council's inception, only one change has been made to the institution's structure. This single reform came in the 1960s, after a period of large and steady growth of UN membership. While permanent members brushed aside movements for reform during the Council's earliest years, the calls became too loud to ignore (von Freiesleben 2008). With a larger UN, many states felt that a larger Security Council was needed. Out of this desire came General Assembly Resolution 1991. Adopted in 1963 and ratified in 1965, the resolution amended the Charter to add four non-permanent seats, enlarging the Council from eleven to fifteen members (United Nations 1963). The resolution concurrently increased the required number of affirmative votes from seven to nine, the great power veto remaining in place as before. The UN Charter has been amended only two other times, in 1965 and 1973, to twice increase the size of the Economic and Social Council (Kirgis 1995). Changes to the core aspects of the UN's structure have been rare.

When the UN was established in 1945, membership totaled fifty-one (Tharoor 2011). Roughly twenty-two percent of the body's membership sat on the Security Council. Yet when the General Assembly adopted Resolution 1991 in December of 1963, membership had swelled to 113, making the Security Council less than ten percent of the whole. By direct measurement, each seat on the Security Council had come to represent twice as many members of the organization at large. Resolution 1991 did not restore the Security Council to the same relative size of its founding, but the body increased to include roughly thirteen percent of the UN's total (United Nations Member States 2015).

Resolution 1991 clearly states its justification for increasing the Security Council's size. The document reads: "the present composition of the Security Council is inequitable and

unbalanced...[and] the increase in the membership of the United Nations makes it necessary to enlarge the membership of the Security Council, thus providing for a more adequate geographical representation of non-permanent members and making it a more effective organ for carrying out its functions under the Charter” (United Nations 1963). The goals of this increase of the Security Council’s size were clear: better geographical representation, and greater effectiveness.

The change brought by Resolution 1991 quelled discussion on reform for some time, but as the geopolitical makeup of the globe continued to shift, the topic again bubbled to the surface of international dialogue. The end of the Cold War in the late 1980s marked an increase in Security Council activity, most notably the body’s approval of the Gulf War of 1990-1991 (Weiss and Young 2005). With a Council more active in global affairs, the institution’s composition and operations suddenly became a greater interest to many states. Chief among these were Germany and Japan.

As the losers of WWII, defeated right as the UN was formed, both Germany and Japan (along with Italy) are still labeled as “enemy state[s]” by the UN Charter, in a clause that has never been removed or amended (UN Charter art. 53, para. 1). Yet based on their rising status in the international community and large contributions to the efforts of the Gulf War, the two states began to advocate for their own permanent seats on the Security Council (von Freiesleben 2008). It is no surprise that Japan and Germany emerged at the forefront of the reform movement. Previous losers in institutional formation often become catalysts for change (Pierson 2004). Having lost a war against the UN’s founders, and thus being entirely excluded from the creation of the institution, these former Axis powers became the most likely to seek reform.

With the topic of reform now at the center of attention, three main blocs of states formed, each calling for different kinds of reform. The first, known as the Coffee Club, began to advocate for the creation of additional non-permanent seats. Joining this group were Italy, Pakistan, Mexico, Spain, Argentina, Turkey, and Egypt, among others. This group focused their claims on the equality of all states, believing that the addition of more permanent seats would violate this principle. The second bloc consisted of Germany, Japan, India, and Brazil, forming the Group of Four (G4). These states collected because of common interest: each felt it deserved a permanent seat on the Security Council. Thus, the G4's focus on their self-perceived status as great powers formed a counterbalance to the equity claims of the Coffee Club. The third bloc was a group of African states, placing its focus on gaining greater voice for Africa on the Security Council, particularly as the continent's UN membership had grown dramatically since the institution's creation (von Freiesleben 2008). Through each movement, individual states pursued their own self-interest.

These varied movements, along with numerous smaller groups, gained formal traction within the UN in December 1992. Marking the beginning of the modern reform movement, the General Assembly unanimously passed Resolution 47/62 (Cox 2009). This resolution invited UN member states to "submit...written comments on a possible review of the membership of the Security Council" (United Nations 1992). The opportunity was well received. Comments were so numerous that another General Assembly Resolution was passed a year later, calling for the creation of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council. More conveniently known as the "Working Group," this new body was "to consider all aspects of the question of increase in membership of the Security Council, and other matters

related to the Security Council” (United Nations 1992). The document cites “the substantial increase in membership...especially of developing countries, as well as the changes in international relations” as justification for the group’s creation (United Nations 1992). With the formation of the Working Group, UN member states now had a specific formal outlet for submitting proposals and engaging in discussion on the topic of Security Council reform.

The first comprehensive plan to come out of the Working Group was the 1997 Razali plan (Cox 2009). The proposal was named for its principal author, Razali Ismael of Malaysia, who served as President of the General Assembly and chairman of the Working Group at the time (von Freiesleben 2008). The plan called for the addition of five permanent and four-non permanent members to the Security Council, expanding the total number to 24. One “developing” state from Africa, Asia, and Latin American each would be granted a new permanent seat, with the others filled by two “industrialized states.” Notably, new permanent members would not be granted the veto power. The proposal’s justification for reform was a claim that “the effectiveness, credibility, and legitimacy of the work of the Security Council depend on its representative character, on its ability to discharge its primary responsibility and in carrying out its duties on behalf of all members” (Global Policy Forum 1997). The Razali plan carried on the themes of representation and effectiveness from Resolution 1991, adding to them the argument of legitimacy and credibility. While it ultimately failed, the Razali plan is notable because it was the first to come out of the Working Group. Additionally, the plan is illustrative of most proposals: while it sought to fix widely recognized issues of representation and effectiveness, the plan was unable to gain enough support for the particular ways that it addressed these issues (Cox 2009).

Trouble with particularities became a theme in Security Council reform. While there formed a growing consensus that the Security Council needed some kind of change, no agreement could be reached on the particularities of this change. In 2003, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan (of Ghana) made a clear statement in attempt to push states to find real reform solutions. Speaking to the General Assembly, Annan declared: “I respectfully suggest to you, Excellencies, that in the eyes of your peoples the difficulty of reaching agreement does not excuse your failure to do so. If you want the Council and the Council’s decisions to command greater respect, particularly in the developing world, you need to address the issue of its composition with greater urgency” (United Nations 2003). Backing his words with actions, the Secretary-General formed the “High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change,” which released recommendations for reform a year later. The High Level Panel Report provided two plans for reform. Model A proposed three new non-permanent seats and six new permanent (though veto-less) seats. Model B alternatively proposed a new category of seats with four-year terms, which would have the potential to be immediately re-elected (United Nations 2004a). Full of particularities, the proposal never moved beyond the status of recommendation.

The three blocs of states that formed after the end of the Cold War continue to exist today, each still pushing for particular reforms. The G4, joined in their recommendation by twenty-three other states including France, have adopted the Razali plan’s call for credibility and legitimacy, advocating for a proposal that would add six permanent seats (sans veto) and four non-permanent seats, for a total of twenty-five. While not explicitly stated in the proposal, four of the six new permanent seats would potentially be granted to the G4 states themselves. The plan also includes a fifteen-year review period, after which modifications could be made (United Nations 2005a). This proposal is essentially a combination of the Razali plan and the High Level

Panel Report's Model A plan, expanding the Council with both permanent and non-permanent seats.

The Coffee Club (now reorganized under the name Uniting for Consensus) continues to advocate for additional non-permanent seats (the specific number is now ten), opposing the G4 plan or any other proposal to increase permanent membership. Uniting for Consensus continues in the spirit of the High Level Panel Report's Model B, creating increased space for states from a variety of regions, without allowing any to step into indefinite terms. Their plan would retain two-year terms, but allow for immediate reelection (United Nations 2005c). Led by Italy, Uniting for Consensus has gained broad interest. A May 2011 meeting in Rome was attended by 120 UN member states (Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations 2015).

The group of African states, representing the African Union, has established the Ezulwini Consensus. Including dozens of African states, the Consensus labels the Security Council as undemocratic and calls for a body of twenty-six members. Receiving full veto rights, six new permanent seats would be created (distributed regionally, two allocated for Africa), along with five new non-permanent seats (United Nations 2005b). More, the seats filled by African states would not be elected by the General Assembly, as is current practice, but by the African Union, a body entirely separate from the UN (Lee 2011). While not stated in the proposal, this idea implies that other regional organizations might be granted similar privileges. The Ezulwini Consensus proposal is the only major plan that would extend the veto power to new seats (United Nations 2005b).

The P5 states have all expressed support for some kind of reform, but to different extents. France is the most supportive of new membership, supporting the permanent membership of all of the G4 states, as well as that of some African states. In 2008, the UK joined France in support

of such expansion. The United States has been slightly less enthusiastic, having expressed support for only Japan and India to gain permanent membership. China and Russia, while giving lip service to the idea of reform, have not announced their support of any particular plans (Lee 2011).

In addition to the proposals of these three major blocs and the diverse opinions of the P5, reform plans have emerged from other sources, including both academics and various smaller states (Cox 2009). One example has come about from the growth of the European Union (EU). Though not currently included in any major proposals, some commentators have suggested that the EU might take on one permanent seat, thus satisfying the Germans and other European states vying for influence, without expanding the Council too extensively (Deudney and Maull 2011). The plans and theoretical outcomes are many, yet the actual outcome is unchanged: no proposal has been able to gain the necessary support to bring about real change. While the differences in details among proposals has been a source of inaction, similar themes run through most. Today's discussion centers on the same topics that Resolution 1991 cited fifty years ago: representation and efficacy.

The issue of representation can seem rather simple at first glance: if the Security Council is to act on behalf of the whole UN, the collection of states on the Council should reflect the larger body. But in what way should the Council be representative? With a host of factors that could serve as the basis for determining representation, the issue is anything but simple. Among current proposals, there are two general approaches.

First, the geopolitical approach looks at the distribution of states on the Security Council compared to the makeup of the UN membership and of the world at large. For example, while Europe (not counting Russia) made up barely five percent of the global population in 2011, it

controls a third of the Security Council seats (Tharoor 2011). At the UN's inception, only six members came from Africa and Asia together; now the continents make up over half of the organization's membership (Weiss 2003). While Resolution 1991 expanded the Security Council in response to growth of UN membership, the trend of growth has not ceased. Since 1965, the appearance of newly independent states in Asia and the Pacific, Latin America, and Africa, has, among other factors, contributed to the continued increase of UN membership (Lee 2011). There are not only more UN member states, but the relative distribution of these states throughout the globe is not the same as in 1945, nor as in 1965. The geopolitical approach does not necessarily give attention to specific details about states as much as the sheer number of states from particular regions.

The second way to consider representation is based on each state's contribution to the work of the UN. From this viewpoint, states with greater financial or military contributions to UN operations should be granted greater responsibility and influence on the Council. Many member states that make some of the largest contributions retain a disproportionately small amount of formal influence. A look at contributions to the UN regular budget for the 2015 helps to illustrate the point. Japan's budget contribution measures 10.8% of the total, and Germany's 7.1%. While neither of these contributions come close to the United States' 22.0%, they stand apart from almost all other members. The contributions of France, the United Kingdom, and China all fall within the 5% range (5.6%, 5.2%, and 5.1%, respectively). The contribution of the fifth permanent Security Council member, Russia, makes up only 2.4% of the total budget. Italy, Canada, Brazil, and Spain each contribute more than Russia. At 0.7%, India is the only of the G4 to not exceed Russia in financial support of the UN (United Nations 2014). The disparity has been even more apparent in other years: for the 2005 budget, while Japan's contribution

measured 19.5% and Germany's 8.7%, the contribution of Russia, was only 1.1% (United Nations 2004b). If privilege and power in the UN is to be tied to the hard statistics of who is footing the UN's bill, there is a disparity to be reconciled.

Military contributions to UN operations provide another picture of the contribution gap. A February 2015 report on Military and Police Contributions to the UN Operations shows that many of the top contributors are less developed states. First on the list is Bangladesh, with a contribution of 9,446 military and police personnel. Pakistan, India, Ethiopia, and Rwanda round out the top five. The first of the P5 to make the list is China, ranked eleventh, contributing 2,370 individuals. The relative contributions of the remaining P5 members are small. France ranks 32nd, the United Kingdom 51st, the United States 66th, and Russia 77th, contributing only seventy-two military and police personnel (United Nations 2015). While the exact contribution and ranking of each state varies from month to month, these statistics are representative of the trend over time: greater military contributions to the work of the UN are not tied to formal power in the Security Council.

While the statistics on military contributions are striking, other factors provide some explanation for their seemingly drastic nature. Less wealthy states such as Bangladesh see peacekeeping as an inexpensive method for maintaining large armies (Axe 2010). Troops can receive greater pay than the state is able to provide, while diplomatic connections are built with the potentially resource-rich states in which operations take place. Based on this logic, poorer states have an incentive to contribute to UN operations, an incentive that might not exist to the same extent for wealthier states. On some level, this explains the military contribution gap. Nevertheless, if military contribution is used as a factor in measuring the representativeness of

the Security Council, there is a discrepancy between the current state of affairs and an ideally representative body.

In some instances, the financial and military perspectives on representation can be coupled with the geopolitical perspective. Advocating for its own permanent membership (jointly with the rest of the G4), Brazil bases its claims on factors of geography and financial contribution. Their argument holds that if Latin America is to gain a permanent seat, the most powerful and influential state in the region should be the obvious choice (Deudney and Maull 2011). Brazil not only fits this description, but their financial contributions to the organization set them above other Latin American states. Similar arguments from the African group of states stem from facts such as Ethiopia and Rwanda's large troop contribution (Tharoor 2011). Not only is Africa underrepresented in a geopolitical sense, but some African states are among the largest contributors of military personnel to the work of the UN (United Nations 2015).

Whether viewed through the lens of financial and military contributions to the organization, relative power, or pure geography, the representation argument for reforming the Security Council is popular and pervasive. The issue is the cornerstone of all major proposals. The G4 argue that their contributions, power, location, or a combination thereof should grant them permanent status as representatives of the world's rising economic powers. Uniting for Consensus advocates for an increase in regional representation, so that all kinds of states, including those less powerful, have a voice. The Ezulwini Consensus calls for greater representation for the continent of Africa. Each of these major proposals addresses the issue of representation by increasing the size of the Council, some adding a new category of membership (non-permanent renewable) (Cox 2009). The subject of representation is the vital core of reform talks, and after decades, continues to dominate the discourse.

Institutional effectiveness is a second major theme in reform discussion. Does the operational structure of the Security Council allow it to accomplish its duties? The idea of efficacy rests in potential tension with the issue of representativeness: a larger, more representative Council might become cumbersome, limiting the body's ability to act in times of crisis (Lee 2011). One issue is central to discussion: the veto. The veto power is widely seen as an issue that needs reforming. Of all factors, the veto bears the most blame for the Council's ineffectiveness. The requirement of P5 approval is seen as an unwieldy feature of the body, and beyond this, the veto is also perceived as a facilitator of unequitable policy. In the past the power has been used to protect states with which permanent members have strong political, cultural and/or economic ties (Cox 2009).

In light of these issues, few advocate for the expansion of the veto to new permanent members (the African group's position is the only major proposal to do so) (Lee 2011). Why allow an already present issue to grow even larger? Yet the idea of eliminating the veto is virtually off the table. Actors already holding on to power are rarely in support of reform that would eliminate it (Pierson 2004). Discussion on the veto issue has made no real progress (Lee 2011). States have moved from calling for the elimination of the veto to kindly asking that it not be used. A proposal put forth by the S5 (Costa Rica, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Singapore, and Switzerland; so named because they are the "Small-Five" states) asks permanent members to voluntarily abstain from using the veto in cases of "genocide, crimes against humanity and serious violations of international humanitarian law" (United Nations 2006). While a majority of states see the veto as ineffective and unfair, those wielding the power have shown no sign of relinquishing control. This is the core of the operational complaint against the current state of the Council: five of the UN's 193 members have the ability to block an action, even if every other

member believes it is vital to maintaining international peace and security. There is broad consensus that the Security Council is broken in some way and in need of reform. Yet for fifty years, no change has come.

Context of the Security Council

Why has reform remained so elusive? To understand today's issues of reform, and why no proposal has been able to gain enough support to bring about change, requires a look back at the context of the Council's formation, as well as the key features put in place by the institution's designers. Such context not only helps to understand *what* the world was like at the creation of the Security Council, but it shows *when* events took place within the larger stream of time, illuminating the role of particular sequence and timing in the institution's formation. This narrative could begin in many different places. It could start in 1648 with the Peace of Westphalia, a series of treaties that established a system of sovereign states that exists to this day. Or the story could begin in the throes of the Second World War, tracing how the UN and its Security Council emerged from a desire to never again engage in such terrible global conflict. While there are many potential starting points, this story starts with the formation of an institution that would leave its fingerprints on the Security Council for decades to come: The League of Nations.

In 1919, President Wilson toured the country to muster support for a new international organization of states. In a speech during this national tour, he declared that members of the organization would "enter into a solemn promise to one another that they will never use their power against one another for aggression..." (Holsti 1991, 208). The goal? A new international council that would work to maintain peace and security around the globe. The organization? The

League of Nations. The League was to be a body of nations united for the purpose of preventing the kind of war between great powers that World War I had exemplified. The international community tired of war, and the vision of such an organization brought hope for lasting peace. Certainly not all conflict would cease, but prevention of another global war was a much-desired step. The vision that President Wilson brought before the American people seemed grand, but nothing short of grandiose dreaming would be required to pull the world out of the depths of war into which it had fallen. Wilson and other world leaders perceived that the need was great for this organization. It would bring meaning to the millions of lives lost in the war, and their sacrifice could be the foundation for a new world. At the League's opening, Swiss president Giesepe Motta declared that, "They had before them a vision of a great human family from which force should be banished, and where justice should reign by sovereign right" (Bosco 2009, 10). If the war was an image of humanity's propensity for violence and discord, the League could become an image of human unity and friendship, and perhaps, as Motta hoped, the image of a global family.

Powerful states joined the League—the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Japan, and eventually Germany and the Soviet Union—representing a global will to cooperate. But the United States, who had been a central force in the League's inception, never actually took its seat at the table (Bosco 2009). Despite this hurdle, the League brought a significant portion of the world's powers together in a visible manner. This itself was a partial fulfillment of Wilson's dream. The idea of collecting power, particularly "great powers" such as the UK and France, guided Wilson's original vision for the League (Lind 2006). In a January 1917 address to the U.S. Senate, Wilson had declared that the United States' international strategy would embrace a concert of power idea. "In every discussion of peace that must end this war," he proclaimed, "it

is taken for granted that peace must be followed by some definite concert of power which will make it virtually impossible that any such catastrophe should ever overwhelm us again” (Lind 2006, 175). The notion of a concert was integral to the League of Nations. It was to be an alliance of states whose only enemy would be war itself. By coordinating the actions of great powers, a concert of powers decreases the chance of conflict among themselves (Lind 2006). The goal of this concert would not be to govern, but to prevent the catastrophes of the Great War from plaguing the world again.

Despite its inspiring rhetoric and significant collection of power, the League of Nations failed. When Japan, Germany, and Italy each took actions against the will of the League, the organization proved incapable of responding in meaningful ways. The League attempted accountability by condemning Japan’s 1931 seizure of Manchuria, but Japan simply left the organization. Germany soon left as well, and Italy acted against the League’s wishes by invading Ethiopia in 1935 (Bosco 2009). The League of Nations, with the UK and France at the practical helm, again tried its hand at enforcement, responding with denouncements and a trade embargo, but nothing proved successful (Kennedy 2006). The international cooperation promised by the organization never came about. Less than two decades after its inception, the League had failed. This failure was proven true with the onset of the World War II in the late 1930s, exactly the kind of war the organization had been created to prevent.

The impact of the League on the UN would be great, as it provided a legacy of what to avoid. Three main weaknesses had contributed to the institution’s inability to maintain peace: (1) a requirement for consensus in decision making, (2) confusion as to where responsibility for security fell within the organization, and (3) ineffective enforcement measures (Sutterlin 1997). While the League had embraced a concert model, these weaknesses suggest that the organization

could have benefitted from an even greater concentration of power. The League provided inspiration for future world planners to create a more sustainable body.

This inspiration would manifest itself in the midst of the WWII, as planning for a new world council began. Such early preparation had both present and future purpose. Planning for a postwar organization provided light on the wartime horizon. Historian Robert Hilderbrand notes that “it made American involvement in the war seem more palatable to those who doubted its immediate value” (1990, 5). In the present, hope for peace; in the future, a reality of peace. This mindset closely mirrored that of President Wilson in the midst of World War I. When addressing the U.S. Senate in 1917, Wilson said, “In every discussion of peace that must end this war, it is taken for granted that the peace must be followed by some definite concert of power which will make it virtually impossible that any such catastrophe should ever overwhelm us again” (Lind 2006, 175). Once again, the eyes of those engaged in global conflict became focused on a future organization to facilitate global peace.

The horrors of World War II brought with them a new structure of wartime alliances. The Allies of the United States, the United Kingdom, France, the Soviet Union, and China, among others, fought against the Axis powers of Germany, Italy, Japan, and others. It was the Allies who, as the war raged on, began to assemble plans for a postwar organization. On January 1, 1942, the US, the UK, Russia, and China signed the Declaration by the United Nations, a wartime agreement against the Axis powers (Bosco 2009). Twenty-two other signatories joined the next day, with more to follow. The document cited the defense of “life, liberty, independence and religious freedom” as well as “human rights and justice” as reasons to unite against the Axis powers (Lillian Goldman Law Library 2015). This declaration became the basis, in both substance and name, of the UN. In this way, the UN is not only a postwar organization, but also

a wartime alliance that continued into the postwar world. The institution was created within and out of the reality of global war.

The three most powerful wartime allies—the US, the UK, and the Soviet Union—became colloquially known as the Big Three, taking a central place in both the war effort and the formation of the UN. Each of these powers developed their own preliminary plans for a postwar organization, and after June 1944 brought a successful D-Day invasion, decided that collective planning should begin in earnest. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt hoped the discussion would take place in Washington. His wish was granted when delegations from each country met at the Dumbarton Oaks mansion to design an organization for a postwar world (Bosco 2009).

These three great powers would not remain alone; the Americans and the British wanted trusted allies to join. At the insistence of Roosevelt, China eventually joined the discussion. China's actual influence in planning was small, and the Soviets refused to meet with their delegation directly, but the state's presence itself was significant; the Big Three were now a group of four (Hilderbrand 1990). Roosevelt's inclusion of the Chinese was not to create more equitable geographic representation, but out of concern for the political realities of the day: supporting China was a power play against the Japanese enemy (Bosco 2009). Roosevelt also advocated for Brazil's inclusion, as it was the only Latin American state to contribute troops to war effort, but at the rejection of the British and the Soviets, the idea was laid to rest (Hilderbrand 1990). At the UK's urging, the French were granted a seat at the table. Just as the United States had sponsored China's inclusion, the British provided support for the addition of France to this great powers club. Churchill wrote that "the prospect of no strong country on the map between England and Russia was not attractive" (Bosco 2009, 26). It was not concern for equity, but for their own security, that drove the British to support French inclusion. Though

France was not present for the Dumbarton Oaks conversations, the other powers agreed that France would have a permanent seat on the new Security Council, the body at the new UN's core (Bosco 2009). The permanent powers were to be five. Here, at the tail end of the second global war of the century and in the shadow of the League of Nations, the seeds of the Security Council were planted. With the establishment of the P5, the world entered a new era of international organization.

Features of the Security Council

With a Security Council of five powers at its center, the UN moved from a wartime alliance to a postwar reality. The plans developed at Dumbarton Oaks were later refined at the Yalta Conference, and debated, polished, and formalized at the United Nations Conference on International Organization in 1945 (Hilderbrand 1990). At this San Francisco conference, the UN and its Security Council took their official form in the Charter of the United Nations. The resulting Security Council contained four key features that illustrate how the nature of the body limited options in the future: (1) a concert model, (2) distinct separation from the General Assembly, (3) distinction of membership types, and (4) a high barrier for change.

The idea that a small collection of powerful states should chaperone the globe was not novel to the twentieth century. In the nineteenth century, The Holy Alliance and the Congress of Vienna were formed on similar principles (Bosco 2009). But the Security Council brought this notion to a global level for the first time, successfully including the United States as the League had failed to do. Just as the idea of a concert of power had been central to President Wilson's conceptions of the League of Nations, the Security Council was built on a concert model with significant influence from President Roosevelt.

While Wilson's vision centered on the concert part of this model—valuing a system that incorporated the power of all nations in an equitable manner—Roosevelt's focus landed more squarely on power. The primary aim for Roosevelt was not to create a table large enough for all nations to be granted a seat, but to have a group seated at the table powerful enough to carry out its aims. Diverging from Wilson, Roosevelt believed that right and responsibility ought to rest upon the strength of individual states, not the common strength of all states (Lind 2006). While the Security Council retained the same general goal as the League of Nations—international peace and security—Roosevelt was less concerned with the equity of the method used to meet this goal.

Particular language employed by Roosevelt reflects this sentiment. He commonly referred to four of the world's powers—the US, the UK, the Soviet Union, and China—as the “Four Policemen” (Hilderbrand 1990). Just as police officers have special powers of enforcement over the rest of the population, Roosevelt envisioned that this collection of four powerful states would enforce peace and security around the globe. His view was pragmatic: with a small number of powerful states at the task of policing the world, it would be easier to get things done (Lind 2006). On his Christmas Eve speech in 1943, Roosevelt stated that “Britain, Russia, China, and the United States and their allies represent more than three-quarters of the total population of the earth. As long as these four nations with great military power stick together in determination to keep the peace, there will be no possibility of an aggressor nation arising to start another war” (Bosco 2009, 14-15). If the goals of peace and security were met, less-than-equitable means could be justified.

The US was not the only state to push for a small collection of great powers. The Soviet representatives at Dumbarton Oaks had little regard for what they saw as the pseudo-democratic

ideals of the League of Nations, and, like Roosevelt, were more concerned with results than with façades of international equity. The Soviet delegation embraced a pragmatic vision of effectiveness (Hilderbrand 1990). Just about any form of an international organization that allowed the Soviets to maintain their security and control over a strong Soviet Union was acceptable to their delegation (Cox 2009). It was the Soviets, in fact, that suggested that the UN's central body be named the Security Council, as to be clear to its purpose (Bosco 2009). In this way, the framers of the UN Charter moved away from mirroring the League too closely. Where the League earned criticism for its inability to act because of the equality it granted states, the Security Council would give only a handful of great powers the immediate responsibility for security (Hilderbrand 1990).

The Charter officially codified this power structure, declaring that the members of the UN “confer on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and agree that in carrying out its duties under this responsibility the Security Council acts on their behalf” (UN Charter art. 24, para. 1). This delegation of responsibility exists “[i]n order to ensure prompt and effective action” (UN Charter art. 24, para. 1). The concert of power imagined by Wilson and Roosevelt became a central reality in the structure of the UN. Centrally, the Security Council is granted the power to act, not only on its own behalf, but also on behalf of the UN as a whole. As Roosevelt envisioned, the Charter put into place a Council that sacrificed equality for the sake of efficiency.

While the Security Council favors effectiveness over representation, the Charter states that the organization of the UN as a whole “is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its Members” (UN Charter art. 2, para. 1). All states possess the same legal rights, and the UN is not sovereign over any of its members, nor is any member sovereign over another. In order to

preserve this principal without losing the practical ability of the Council, the UN General Assembly is distinct from the Security Council.

The creation of the General Assembly and the Security Council as entirely separate bodies was born out of the influence of the Big Three powers. The Soviets arrived at the Dumbarton Oaks Conference hoping for an organization with one focus: the maintenance of peace and security, which was to them “the primary and indeed the only talk” (Hilderbrand 1990, 88). They felt that economic and social cooperation was a laudable goal, but should be the work of a separate organization. The British delegation took an opposing view, claiming that social and economic issues were the very root of peace and security, and therefore work in such areas would be a vital part of preventing war (Hilderbrand 1990). The United States’ position fell somewhere in between. The Americans advocated for a Security Council that dealt only with matters of peace and security, yet hoped for some capacity within the UN at large to tackle economic and social issues (Cox 2009). This position, which ultimately developed into reality, held onto both the sovereign equality of all nations and a preference for expediency, each principle reigning in its separate sphere.

The UN’s architects granted the General Assembly a broad range of responsibilities. The Charter gives it the ability to “discuss any questions or any matters within the scope of the present Charter or relating to the powers and functions of any organs provided for in the present Charter” and to “make recommendations to the Member of the United Nations or to the Security Council or to both on any such questions or matters” (UN Charter art. 10). And what matters are within the scope of the Charter? The “Purposes” section lists four central items: the maintenance of international peace and security; the development of international friendships among nations, including respect for equal rights; the achievement of international cooperation on economic,

social, human rights, and other issues; and international coordination in pursuit of these aims (UN Charter art. 1). These purposes are both deep and broad, granting the General Assembly a virtually endless list of tasks.

Yet one key phrase limits the power of the General Assembly. The Assembly is granted the power to make recommendations on any topic under the Charter “except as provided in Article 12” (UN Charter art. 10). Article 12 of the Charter details that the Assembly loses this power of recommendation on any particular topic that Security Council is currently deliberating (UN Charter art. 12, para. 1). During such times, recommendation can be given only if the Security Council specifically requests it. Avoiding the unclear placement of responsibility that had plagued the League, the Security Council’s clear division from the General Assembly guarantees that its status is not questionable; the body is granted distinct and highest authority in matters of peace and security.

The Council’s designers also built such delegation of power into the Council itself with the formalization of distinct membership types. In many ways, all members of the Security Council were granted equity within the body. Each state is granted one vote and one representative on the Council, and all share in the responsibility for maintaining peace and security (UN Charter art. 24, 27). Apart from the difference in term length (two years versus indefinite), the veto power is the main practical and formal distinction between permanent and non-permanent members. Beyond the formal differences between the two membership types, unwritten privileges also exist, contributing to what has become known as the “cascade effect of permanent membership” (Lee 2011, 415). Permanent members hold a de facto right to a permanent judge on the International Court of Justice, as well as a permanent presence at the

General Committee of the General Assembly (Lee 2011). Even where not formalized, privilege begets privilege.

The veto is a direct product of the international political realities of the 1940s. The Soviets would not approve of any organization that did not grant some kind of absolute veto. An absolute veto could safeguard them against the other members of the Council. In particular, the Soviets feared that without requirement for permanent member unanimity, the Western powers might turn against them (Bosco 2009). Without it, they said, “there would simply be no United Nations” (Bosco 2009, 23). While not as vehemently as the Soviets, the American delegation also favored a veto on most matters, seeing that the power could provide safeguard for their interests. The British, meanwhile, stood firmly against the idea, fearing the creation of a barrier so high that the Council would not be able to perform its job (Bosco 2009). The British dissention provided enough resistance to make a solution difficult to find. Discussion stalled on this issue, agreement proving elusive. As the war was nearing an end, each country’s own security concerns grew in relation to the concern of general security (Hilderbrand 1990). The delegates at Dumbarton Oaks developed an increasing sense that agreement on voting would be difficult, even impossible, to reach, and tabled the issue until a later date (Hilderbrand 1990; Bosco 2009).

The Big Three finally reached an agreement on the veto at the Yalta Conference, four months after the meetings at Dumbarton Oaks concluded. The so-called “Yalta formula” set the model that has persisted today, allowing the veto for substantive matters only (Bosco 2009). The role of the P5 in international affairs was to be a great one—the Council could take no meaningful action without the approval or abstention of any one of these states. The formal gulf between permanent and non-permanent members was to be wide.

After the hard bargaining required to establish the Security Council in the Charter, the body's architects put in place a high barrier for its amendment: the requirement of approval from two-thirds of the member states, including the P5. The Big Three, along with China, did not want their months of work to be undone too easily (Hilderbrand 1990). The UN is not unique in its change resistance. Institutions are generally designed to be difficult to change. Pierson notes two main reasons for this: designers wish to restrain themselves as well as their successors. As Odysseus bound himself before the Sirens, institutional designers limit their own options for some future gain. In the case of the Security Council, the gain was stability. With memory of two global wars, the designers worked to prevent any sudden revisions in the future. Institutions with such designs are described as sticky (Pierson 2004). Believing that the Council was well designed at the beginning, the UN's architects ensured that future shifts in political mood, changes in domestic leadership, or the addition of more member states would not allow for an easy overturning of the order put in place. The Security Council was made to be sticky, and remains so today.

This is the UN Security Council: a body of fifteen states at the center of the UN, granted absolute authority for the maintenance of peace and security, distinct from the General Assembly, the P5 at its core, each wielding the powerful veto. The result of debates, compromises, hope for the future, and concern for the immediate, the Council emerged as an institution of its time, shaped by the power dynamics in place during WWII. The Council's main features are a direct product of this context.

A Path-Dependent Institution

Analysis of the Security Council's features, with history providing necessary contextual support, provides understanding as to why the Security Council has been so difficult to reform: institutions are path-dependent. In the case of the Security Council, particular institutional arrangements became entrenched at the beginning, and their limiting effects are now on display. The body displays three key mechanisms that drive the development of path-dependent institutions: coordination problems, veto points, and positive feedback (Pierson 2004).

The idea of coordination problems refers to the central purpose of institutions: for varied actors (states in the case of the Security Council) to reach a model of shared understanding, allowing each to better predict the others' actions. An institution solves problems of coordination. Although each actor might desire a slightly different institution due to varied self-interest, some coordination is better than none at all. Once equilibrium is reached and coordination is achieved, the actors have decreased incentive to deviate; a solution has already been reached (Pierson 2004).

In the case of the Security Council, after states had coordinated for the purpose of decreasing the chance of global conflict, the incentive to change to another model of coordination decreased. Equilibrium had been found in the form of a concert of great powers. With no conflict on the scale of a world war occurring since the Council's inception, the body has been, by a limited definition, entirely successful. Wilson and Roosevelt's concert has achieved its purpose. Thus the body's designers have an incentive to continue with their current concert of power model. The reverse effect is this: those states that had limited or no influence in the Security Council's design (effectively all but the Big Three and China) have incentive to seek a new equilibrium. This is particularly strong for states that have joined the UN since its

creation—over two thirds of the organization’s members today (United Nations Member States 2015). These member states were not a part of the original coordination process, thus the equilibrium originally reached does not account for their preferences. Because of this, the issue of coordination problems actually works for the cause of reform in the case of these states.

The French position on reform illustrates the impact of exclusion from the coordination process. France is the most enthusiastic of the P5 about reform, and was least involved in the Council’s design (Lee 2011; Bosco 2009). While non-P5 states have a clear incentive for reform (interest in power they do not currently hold) and have demonstrated such, France ostensibly benefits from the status quo. Yet the state’s position is clear: the Council should be expanded with the addition of permanent seats (Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations).

Why would France have greater interest in reform than the rest of the P5? France’s public justification for reform is nothing novel; the state makes the standard effectiveness and representation arguments (Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations). The state’s incentive to reform the Council rests in its continued status as a not-quite-first-tier power. At the Council’s creation, the Big Three did not view France as an equal (Bosco 2009). The Soviets even declared that France would be a “charming but weak” addition to the Council (Bosco 2009, 27). That Germany, another continental European power, contributes more than France to the UN budget demonstrates the continuation of France’s not-quite-at-the-top status (United Nations 2014). France’s push to renegotiate the permanent membership of the Council can be viewed as an attempt to preserve a place for themselves in the body. While the initial coordination process placed emphasis on the few most powerful states, a category for which France hardly qualified, a new coordination process could result in a broader collection of powers. If more powers are granted permanent status, France ensures that it continues to qualify for a seat at the table.

If financial contribution to the UN is any marker of status, France is not the least of the P5; Russia's contributions are by far the lowest of the group (United Nations 2014). While France stands to benefit from a new equilibrium, and thus supports permanent membership expansion, Russia does not. The state's lack of support for any particular reform plan and relatively few words in support of the general idea demonstrate their contentment with the status quo (Lee 2011). The current configuration of permanent membership benefits Russia more than any new model would. As illustrated by their financial contributions, the state is simply no longer a dominant global power. Membership in the P5 serves as a stronghold of the state's once superior power. Any reorganization would endanger their prestigious post. While France may gain security through reform, Russia stands to lose whatever influence it still holds. The cases of Russia and France show how an equilibrium reached by coordination can facilitate self-interested states to work both for and against the status quo.

The issue of veto points tilts the process further in favor of the current structure, working as a second source of path dependence. Both the actual veto power given to permanent powers as well as the difficult formal process for amending the UN Charter fit within this category, because they provide formal resistance to change. In addition to making reform more difficult, the processes to change these structures are controlled by the very states that such structures protect (Pierson 2004). These states, the P5 in this case, are known as veto players (Tsebelis 2000). Any change to the status quo requires agreement among the veto players. The veto points within the Security Council, then, are self-reinforcing structures (Pierson 2004). Pierson articulates this point well: "Where the same set of actors who would lose influence as the result of an institution reform must agree to any revision one would naturally expect a higher level of institutional resilience" (2004, 146). While France might stand to gain from a renegotiation of the Council's

structure, not all of the P5 do, and agreement among all five is required for change to occur. Thus, with the P5 as veto players, veto points are a significant contributor to the stagnation of the Security Council.

Context reveals these veto points as well as the Council's original coordination equilibrium to be products of their time. The recent failure of the more equitable League of Nations caused the pendulum of international organization to swing toward practical power. Without the example of the League in recent memory, the Security Council could have easily allocated power more widely and equally, and established less rigid protections for its concentration of power. Additionally, the shadow of two global wars within the last half century created a deep, perhaps even emotionally driven desire to take whatever means necessary to prevent another. While this claim might seem obvious and basic, its significance cannot be overlooked by today's reformers: difficulty in reforming the Security Council is not only a product of today's international political realities, but those of the 1940s as well.

The influence of particular states also helped to set the Security Council down a path-dependent route. In political processes, the implications of decisions often take time to play out. The short time horizons of political actors are one of the key factors that lead to path-dependence-inducing features (Pierson 2004). In the case of the Security Council, the Soviet Union is a key example. It was concern for the immediate possibility of a conflict of interest with Western powers that led to the Soviets' absolute refusal of a veto-less UN. Because of their short time horizon, the Soviet Union facilitated the creation of Security Council with veto-wielding permanent powers. The Soviets were proven right that a veto would preserve their interests when, in 1950, the Council voted in favor of military support for South Korea. The Soviets were absent from the Council at the time, in protest of the fact that the Republic of

China, and not the People's Republic of China's, held a permanent seat. With the Soviet Union absent and thus unable to use its veto, the Council took action against the Soviets' self-interest (Bosco 2009). The veto, then, is both a mechanism of path dependence and, as Russia learned when absent, a powerful tool for preserving self-interest. This lesson about the importance of the veto structure only increased Russia's interest in preserving the structure.

Similar to Russia, China has not expressed support for any particular reform, and the state's preferences permit the persistence of the status quo (Lee 2011). China, which was hardly an international power at the Council's formation, has developed into a dominant global force (Bosco 2009). The danger that China faces in reform is not a loss of its own position, but rather the inclusion of neighboring Japan. As a dominant economic power and a member of the G4, Japan is a top contender for a permanent seat on the Council (von Freiesleben 2008). China would no longer serve as the region's prevailing power on the Security Council. For this reason, China continues to favor, by lack of action, the current structure.

The United States and the United Kingdom, while central players in the Council's original coordination process, have advocated for the body's reform. While their support is not as strong as France's, the states stand clearly in support of change (Lee 2011). Whereas Russia and China stand to lose from changes to the Security Council, the United States and the United Kingdom, like France, stand to gain from a potential increase in the legitimacy of the institution. Both states continue to enjoy enough global prominence that they do not have Russia's concern about loss of status. Neither do the states risk the inclusion of regional rivals as China does with Japan. The United States goes unchallenged as the dominant North American power, while the United Kingdom already shares space on the Council with another European power. If reform of the Council means that the international community sees the body as more credible, the United

States and the United Kingdom stand to gain. Yet the veto power means that even one veto player hoping to preserve the status quo holds great significance. Even with three of the P5 calling for reform, the self-interest of both Russia and China in preserving the status quo, coupled with their status as veto players, contribute powerfully to the Security Council's path dependence.

Positive feedback, a third mechanism of path dependence, relates less to the Security Council's formation and more to its development over time. Processes that reinforce themselves are processes of positive feedback. The very act of a tree-climber moving down a branch continually increases his or her likelihood of staying on that branch. While the issues of coordination problems and veto points illustrate how the Council took a giant leap down a particular path as its creation, positive feedback shows how the body has continued to inch down this path throughout its lifetime. Continued movement in that particular direction makes change increasingly difficult (Pierson 2004).

Again, Russia serves as a prime example. The state's decline in relative power over the Security Council's lifetime has given it an increased interest in the institution's continued prominence. As the state's relative power has waned by other measures, marking a departure from superpower status, Russia's permanent membership on the Council has increased in value (United Nations 2014; Bosco 2009). Thus, Russia's permanent membership on the Security Council has been a self-reinforcing process. The longer the state has been on the Council, its incentive to preserve the status quo has increased. As states like Germany and Japan have grown in relative power since 1945, status as a permanent power on the Security Council has become increasingly valuable for self-interested states. While France, the United States, and the United Kingdom each support reform, they do so only in a manner that protects self-interest, never

calling for change that strips them of their own status. The P5 have enjoyed the development of a United Nations under their control, and as this control continues, the incentive to retain power only increases. Set by its designers down a path of concentrated power, reinforced by veto points and positive feedback, the Security Council has been difficult to reform because of its very nature—one of path dependence.

Conclusion: Possible Outcomes

This paper has examined the history of debate on reforming the Security Council, analyzed the context and formation of the body, and shown that path dependence provides an accurate and useful lens for connecting past choices and events to the present. Understanding the Council's past, particularly its formation, explains much of today's difficulty to find real reform solutions. What, then, does the future hold for the Security Council? Pierson (2004) highlights two different processes of institutional change that give framework to this discussion: replacement and layering.

Of these processes, replacement is the more extreme. One institution may be replaced wholesale by another when an outside consensus becomes so strong that the initial institution loses its legitimacy (Pierson 2004). This is certainly the vocal concern of many reformers. In 2009 Kofi Annan said that we “cannot continue to run the world based on countries that won a war sixty years ago. It's either destructive competition or cooperation. We live in an interdependent world and the only way to move forward is to cooperate” (CNN 2009). His concerns echo those of many: if the Security Council does not change, its decrease in legitimacy will lead to its demise. Reform or die, one might say. Such claims make good speech material, but reality is not as extreme. The Security Council remains an incomparable body (Bosco 2009).

While events like Saudi Arabia's rejection of a seat on the Council may begin to chip away at the body's legitimacy, no other institution stands to replace it any time soon.

Processes of institutional change by layering are more complicated and nuanced than outright replacement. Layering refers to two similar processes, each of which allows the current institutional model to persist in some way. The first of these leaves some pieces of the institution in place, while reforming other elements (Pierson 2004). Every major proposal to reform the Security Council fits within this model, as none of them seeks a complete renegotiation of the body's structure. The permanent membership of the P5 is left intact by all major movements, save discussion on consolidating European representation to a single permanent EU seat. Because of the self-referencing structures that benefit the P5, comprehensive restructuring has not been a topic of legitimate discussion. Thus, layering in the form of partial reform (as expressed in most proposals) is the most likely, and perhaps only probable outcome if the Security Council itself is changed.

Two problems plague such an outcome. The first is the issue of particularities, an obstacle that has long been a theme in reform. Reform by layering requires not just general consent, but consent of a particular plan. When the Big Three negotiated the terms of the Security Council, the present reality of global war pressed the group to arrive at a solution despite divergent preferences. Large, external shocks are often a catalyst for institutional change, and WWII served as such a shock for the establishment of the UN (Pierson 2004). Perhaps overcoming the problem of particularities requires a shock larger than the world has experienced in the last fifty years. The second issue is one of sustainability. Just as the world has changed dramatically in the last fifty years, so too is it likely to change in the next fifty. A layered reform solution that retains some number of permanent seats (whether five or more) will, by the nature

of permanence, not remain “representative” as the world continues to develop. Further, any addition of veto players will increase the institution’s stability, further decreasing the likelihood of future reform (Tsebelis 2000). No significant discussion has taken place on how reform ought to address the need for future reform.

The second kind of layering does not reform the institution itself, but rather involves the development of a parallel institution that seeks to provide competition to the original body. Hopeful reformers are likely to pursue this process when changing the institution itself proves too difficult (Pierson 2004). This kind of layering has potential to precede a process of institutional replacement, but not necessarily. The G7/8 (G standing for “Group of”) is an example of an organization that could provide competition to an unchanged Security Council (University of Toronto Library 2015). Beginning in 1975 as an informal gathering of the heads of many advanced economies, the group since has expanded its discussion beyond economics to issues of security, such as human rights and arms control. Currently the G7/8 consists of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States, and near-full participation from the EU (European Commission 2015). Russia was temporarily suspended from the organization in March 2014 due to the state’s actions in Ukraine, thus creating the numerical uncertainty in the group’s name (University of Toronto Library 2015).

While not strictly a security organization like the Security Council, the G7/8 enjoys the advantages of informality and flexibility. The membership of the G7/8 can easily change over time. While Russia was suspended from the G7/8 without the group needing to amend any charter (they have none), the state remains on the Security Council. The group has been called upon for security matters as well: in 1999, Russia requested that the body be used as the forum for negotiations to end the war in Kosovo (Lind 2006). Because of its informal nature, the G7/8

has the ability to adapt. The group is not on track to provide significant challenge to the Security Council (such usurping would be strange considering the overlap of membership), but the G7/8's nature allows it function in new ways that the Council cannot. The body, then, might act as a catalyst for the Security Council to become more flexible itself.

The path of the Security Council may be limited by its history, but this does not mean that change is impossible. Path dependence, while highlighting institutional resilience, does not necessitate stagnation. The international community continues to hold the power to determine its own organization. This power rests in the same place it always has: the hands of states. Distribution of power continues to be unequal, though. While states like Saudi Arabia might turn down an appointment, and the G4 might claim their own power necessitates change, the ability to bring about actual reform remains the privilege of the five permanent powers. If any change is to come to the Security Council, the P5 must choose to be at reform's core. Will such a movement occur, in the next five, ten, or even fifty years? The future will be written by those in power.

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Appendix: Christian Faith and the United Nations

The exact way that my faith and scholarship interact and inform each other is not always clear, and this relationship has been particularly unclear within my study of international politics. What could Christian faith have to do with the study of secular institutions? Within the world of political institutions, the United Nations is particularly emblematic of secularism. Even though member states may be governed by explicitly religious principles, the UN itself is not. Where would God be in the midst of this? This question has, in part, drawn me to a study of the UN and its Security Council. The UN is a powerful force in the world, seeking to do good. This is exemplified by the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals, which seek to progress human development, health, and flourishing.

What, then, am I as a Christian to think about an organization such as the UN? Is God working good through its good works, or does its secular nature negate this possibility? Can the UN or some international organization like it play a role in God's plan of ultimate redemption? I have no complete answers to these questions, but some guiding principles have emerged from my work on this project.

First, I must be willing to engage. Many people of faith hold a stance toward politics that is either incredibly defensive or offensive. Defensively claiming that politics are godless and corrupt and thus staying as far away as possible, or offensively believing that politics are godless, and attempting to undermine the entire enterprise. To actually partake in the study of international politics I cannot take either of these roads. Instead, my belief that God is involved in everything tells me that politics must have value, and that the words and ideas of political thinkers, Christian or not, can contribute to this value.

Second, and almost opposite the first, I must know that political solutions are not the end. The constant study of political systems can lead to a hope that if humans continue to develop these systems in the correct ways, all problems could be solved. My Christian faith holds central the need for a Savior to redeem humankind from its sin, and political systems cannot bring the same kind of salvation. Human solutions, even good ones, will always fall short of a complete solution.

Finally, a Christian study of international politics must affirm the value of people. Politics is the process of human communities coming together to organize for their own improvement. Theories, institutions, and debates often hide the real human lives within the processes, but my Christian faith says that these people matter. While the academic study of politics might not often provide interaction with those behind the institutions, holding their value as people created by God gives a different kind of depth to institutional analysis.

The United Nations, even with a reformed Security Council, will not bring complete redemption to the world, nor anything close to this. The institution is merely a collection of people. Yet it is filled with people created by God, pursuing the flourishing of humankind, attempting in some way to make our world a less broken place. It is far from perfect, but the United Nations is doing good, and God is present in this.