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The United Nations After 75: Assessing Current Understandings, Charting Fruitful Research Agendas

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From its capacity for deploying joint operations in conflict zones to its status as a standard-bearing forum for international behaviour, the United Nations has asserted its relevance in a diverse array of issues and conflicts around the world. Equally as diverse has been the scholarship surrounding the United Nations over the past several decades. This collection of essays provides a snapshot of these diverse lines of scholarship, highlighting existing scholarship on a range of topics, as well as identifying areas of opportunity for future scholarly work on these topics. Taken as a whole, this forum more broadly provides insight into core pillars of the United Nations' mission--including the maintenance of peace and security; fostering friendly relations between nations; promoting human rights and humanitarian goals; and encouraging cooperation and harmonization of interests between nations. Moving forward, it is our hope that this collection will serve as a sprigboard for inspiring future work to both build and expand upon the insights from the past several decades of scholarship on the United Nations.

Introduction to the Forum

Zuhaib Mahmood and Kyle Beardsley

The UN and the Maintenance of International Peace and Security

United Nations Charter, Article 1

The Purposes of the United Nations are:

1. *To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches*

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of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace;

2. *To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace;*
3. *To achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion; and*
4. *To be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends.*

The United Nations (UN), over 75-years young, has been one of the most prominent institutions in the world. Perhaps most unique about this institution is the sheer scope of both its internal political operations and its externally facing actions. From its capacity for deploying joint operations in conflict zones to its status as a standard-bearing forum for international behaviour, the UN has managed to assert its relevance in a diverse array of issues and conflicts around the world.

Mirroring this has been the equally diverse array of scholarship which has arisen over the past several decades around the UN. The essays in this forum consider the different facets in which the UN has operated as what Buzan (1991: 177) calls 'a model for a more mature anarchy' – an organization that both edifies the sovereignty of its member states and shapes the behaviours of those sovereign states in the direction of fostering mutual peace, friendly relations, cooperation and harmonization. On the heels of the UN's 75th anniversary, we have organized this forum with these four purposes—drawn from Article 1 of the UN Charter—in mind.[1] The essays highlight existing scholarship regarding the relevance of the UN to these purposes. Much more, the essays provide new insight into our understanding of the UN as a vehicle toward these ends. Finally, the essays consider constructive, policy-relevant paths forward.

At the present moment, the Ukraine crisis casts a shadow over whether the UN can remain a viable institution expected to contribute to its core purposes commissioned over 75 years ago. The collection of essays in this forum highlight the relevance of academic research into understanding what the UN has achieved and what it has failed to achieve. To the

[1]Just as the four purposes are not mutually exclusive—in many ways they are complementary—the binning of the essays is not meant to limit the application of the essays. Each essay has some application to our understanding of additional purposes of the UN.

extent that this moment, or any future moment, proves to be an inflection point in whether the UN is contributing to functional or dysfunctional global governance, the corpus of scholarship on the UN has much to offer in diagnosing the challenges and identifying constructive paths forward.

The UN and the Maintenance of International Peace and Security

The study of UN peace operations alone—perhaps one of the most visible and prolific lines of research on the topic, mirroring once again the UN's visibility and proliferation in practice—spans at least back to the 1960s, evolving from detailed case histories to more quantitatively oriented analyses at the turn of the twenty-first century.[2] In addition to the diversity of research itself, this has also been reflected in continually evolving data collection efforts, such as fine-grained data on peacekeeper deployments (Cil et al. 2020; Hunnicutt and Nomikos 2020; Kathman 2013; Ruggeri et al. 2018).

Beyond the methodological advancements and data collection, the types of questions and the substantive understanding of how to study peacekeeping effectiveness itself has changed. That is, what it means to maintain peace and security has evolved in theory and practice. In their contribution to this forum, Newton et al. extensively detail how scholarship on peacekeeping has expanded to evaluate both 'first-order' and 'second-order' goals: i.e. the amelioration of conflict as well as the advancement of societal well-being.

Even some of the foundational assumptions of peacekeeping have warranted scrutiny: in a more targeted essay, Nomikos & Villa challenge conventional approaches to what they refer to as 'state-centric' peacekeeping, pointing out the unintended consequences that this approach may have on building a lasting peace. In both cases, the authors provide a path forward for researchers on this purpose of the UN, including, among others, understanding the most optimal approaches to building a lasting, sustainable peace.

The UN and the Development of Friendly Relations based on Equal Rights

One of the key challenges of the UN has been to cultivate a system of collective decision making that is based on mutual respect, amidst vast disparities in military power, economic wealth and cultural influence across the member states. For the UN to function as a legitimate forum of collective

[2]For a detailed discussion on the evolution of peacekeeping research, see Fortna and Howard (2008).

governance, it must give unequal voice to those states which are expected to bear a disproportionate burden of responsibility and which have viable outside options that if exercised would undermine the legitimacy of the organization. At the same time, it must give sufficient voice to the many states that are quite sensitive to the implications of the UN's actions and that are frequently victims of great-power coercion and exploitation. The UN must maintain a delicate balance between sufficiently benefiting and sufficiently constraining the most powerful states in the system.

As Binder points out, conventional wisdom on the UN has placed the five permanent members of the Security Council—The United States; China; Great Britain; France; and Russia—front and centre with respect to how interests are converted into actions at the UN. This, of course, is for good reason: not only are these countries institutionally favoured in terms of veto power at the UN Security Council, but they are also favoured in a bargaining setting, with a plethora of what Voeten (2001) refers to as 'outside options' relative to acting through the UN. A considerable amount of work has also shown that major powers are able to leverage financial power to buy votes (Kuziemko & Werker 2006; Vreeland & Dreher 2014; Alexander & Rooney 2019) at the Security Council.

However, as Binder's essay further posits, this disproportionate influence is not limitless, and there are both institutional and normative reasons that major powers still face constraints in reflecting their interests at the UN. Indeed, Allen & Yuen expand on this in their essay. They focus on agenda-setting as a vehicle for smaller powers—in this case, the 10 non-permanent, elected members of the UN Security Council—to assert considerable influence over the UN. By leveraging institutional rules for the presidency, and also by framing their interests in what Allen & Yuen call 'thematic' terms (as opposed to 'national'), these smaller countries are able to focus UN attention on issues which major powers may otherwise de-prioritize. In yet another example of the diverse lines of scholarship for studying the United Nations, they also introduce and preview a new dataset for studying these agenda items, providing not only a resource for future work, but also an inspiration for additional data collection to uncover previously unknown (or invisible) processes at the United Nations.

The UN and Cooperation to Solve Economic, Social, Cultural and Humanitarian Problems and to Promote Human Rights

In considering how the UN is doing in solving some of the most pressing challenges to human security, we must understand why states are likely to under-contribute to a common cause, even if (and this is a big 'if') there is agreement on that common cause. Passmore & Shannon, in their essay,

tackle this question head-on, analyzing a critical problem that the UN faces in this respect: namely, the problems associated with delivering public goods. Both collective action problems and concerns over maintaining sovereignty plague the ways in which individual states impact the provision of public goods that the UN is tasked with; the authors use two core functions of the UN to explore these problems, including peacekeeping and public health responses. Moreover, they draw lessons from the relatively successful—though still inefficient—implementation of peacekeeping to the timely issue of building more effective pandemic responses and global public health initiatives.

Another challenge to collective problem solving, especially in the domain of protecting human rights, relates to generating consensus on what problems are appropriate and obligatory to address. Related to the above discussion, effective problem solving requires consensus on what the common cause should be. Toward this end, the UN plays an important role as a venue for normative consensus. Quoting E.H. Carr (1964), Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) succinctly describe this framework for analysis by pointing out that 'Political action must be based on a coordination of morality and power.' Hultman's essay in this forum provides a targeted discussion of how the United Nations, especially in recent decades, has developed what she refers to as a 'protection norm' focused on protecting civilians. Her essay evaluates the ways in which three iterations of this norm—Responsibility to Protect; Protection of Civilians; and Women, Peace, and Security—have shaped United Nations Security Council actions, as well as pointing to some of the areas where these norms have either been less visible or limited in implementation.

The UN and the Harmonization of Actions

Norms also matter to whether states can pursue their own interests without triggering a fear that such pursuit is harmful to the pursuit of common objectives. Deconfliction among member states and centreing them on their common objectives are thus key functions of the UN, even when it is sometimes minimized to being a 'talking shop.' The language of harmonization calls up imagery of actors operating separately but in ways that are complementary. Harmonious action implies legitimacy—states in harmony have freedom to pursue actions that accord with a common understanding of what appropriate actions should be. Is the UN relevant to fostering such harmony? Here, we can find work tracing back to the early days of the United Nations, including Inis Claude's (1966) foundational work on the UN's role in 'legitimation' of political action and foreign policy, building toward more contemporary work on the UN's capacity to communicate legitimacy (Voeten 2005; Thompson 2009; Chapman 2011).

Building on this function of the UN and further underscoring the diversity of scholarship on the United Nations, Chapman's essay in this forum provides a unique perspective on legitimacy as a theoretical concept. This essay bridges the growing use of game theory with the broader discussion on norm implementation: it argues that the very nature of cooperative institutions like the UN require some shared understanding of the boundaries for acceptable behaviour (what he refers to as 'common conjectures'). This view of equilibrium behaviour provides a theoretical tool for scholars to understand how both normative and political expectations can work together to shape international behaviour. This approach should inspire future scholarly work on the UN's role as a vehicle of legitimation and harmonization of state actions, freeing—rather than constraining—states in the pursuit of their interests.

Rhetorical choices by state representatives to the UN play key roles in the processes of harmonization and norm adoption. The contents of the 'talking shop' matter; i.e. the language used in the UN's decisions and discussions gives us a rich sense of the organization's role as a vehicle for harmonization. How states frame the problems they wish to address via the UN can tell us much about continuity and change in the levels of accord and discord among member states. Understanding how the UN is doing with regard to its objective to harmonize actions requires rich data about the rhetorical content within the UN fora. Mahmood & Tucker provide a window into two such data sources with their essay in this forum, focusing on United Nations Security Council resolutions and speeches delivered on the floor of the United Nations General Assembly. These data sources exist at the cutting edge of data collection on the UN, and provide an opportunity to reflect upon the content of both UN actions (for example, the condemnation of specific actors in UN resolutions) and UN engagement (for example, the expression of particular interests via speeches). This essay closes out the forum by showcasing another route for future scholarship to advance the study of the UN: namely, the collection, interpretation, and dissemination of data on UN behaviour and discourse.

In summary, our goal with this forum is to reckon with the state of scholarly research on the UN by highlighting the diverse—but interconnected—lines of research that currently exist, are ongoing, and remain to be conducted. Each essay explores the development of a research agenda or puts forth a unique perspective on a broader issue relating back to the UN's key purposes. To this end, our hope is that scholars use these essays as a springboard to inspire future work—whether this means answering an existing question in a new way, discovering novel avenues for resolving existing puzzles, or even discovering new puzzles that were not previously known to exist.

The UN and the Maintenance of International Peace and Security: Pursuing Peacekeeping's Many 'Peaces'

Christopher Newton, Chhandosi Roy, Jacob D. Kathman and Colin Tucker

UN Peacekeeping and the Pursuit of Peace

In a sense, 'peacekeeping' is an odd way to describe the activities of United Nations operations. In its original conception, UN peacekeeping sought to maintain ceasefires or peace agreements between states after shooting on the battlefield had stopped. Hence, peacekeeping was meant to *keep* the *peace*. Yet, contemporary peacekeeping operations (PKOs) are most commonly deployed to active conflicts where no clear peace is present (Hultman, Kathman & Shannon 2019), and PKOs are often tasked with a multitude of objectives that range from such proximal goals as achieving and maintaining stability to more comprehensive efforts like building and consolidating institutions. Generally, these various objectives of UN peacekeeping can fall along a continuum of peace (c.f. Davenport et al. 2018), ranging from ameliorating violence on the battlefield to the promotion of human, economic, political, and social wellbeing.[3]

Historically, most peacekeeping research has focused on ameliorating conflict. Research on peacekeeping effectiveness in reducing violence has often focused on either in-conflict analyses or immediate post-conflict periods at risk of war recurrence, finding that UN peacekeeping is an effective means of managing hostilities and maintaining post-conflict peace (Walter, Howard & Fortna 2021). Central to the positive empirical consistency of recent peacekeeping effectiveness studies is a cohesion in theorizing that focuses on the importance of mechanisms by which PKOs reduce violence, end conflict, and secure peace.

In the hierarchy of peacekeeping goals, stopping the killing is a first-order objective that must be achieved before downstream second-order peace quality goals can be addressed – such as economic development, political reform, and institution-building. In contrast to the work on first-order PKO efficacy, research on peacekeeping's effect toward the goal of advancing second-order societal wellbeing objectives is still in its nascent stages. One reason for this may be the complexity of the peace dimensions under study, which include many interrelated social, political, and economic processes that make straightforward empirical evaluation difficult. More importantly, the complexity of these processes means that it is not always obvious how UN peacekeeping influences them to produce identifiable second-order outcomes. As such, the mechanisms associated with ending and preventing

[3]Diehl and Druckman (2010) review the many objectives ('missions') that peace operations can pursue.

conflict may be rather different from those that are relevant to building institutions and tackling injustices.

Below, we discuss developments in peacekeeping research along different first- and second-order peace dimensions. We reveal that the mechanisms of first-order conflict amelioration do not seamlessly map onto second-order goal achievement, thus requiring theoretical innovation. We point to advancements in scholarship along these lines, indicating opportunities for future research as it pertains to work on the quality of peace.

Peacekeeping Mechanisms for Achieving First-Order Peace Objectives

Research has pointed to several mechanisms by which UN peacekeeping has pursued conflict cessation. Howard (2019) identifies three elements of UN peacekeeping that are central to its first-order conflict management objectives. First, UN PKOs are impartial in seeking resolution to violence, if not neutral relative to the actors involved in conflict. Second, the conflict parties' consent to the UN's involvement is central to authorizing PKO deployments.[4] Third, the UN's blue helmets are generally only mandated to use force in self-defense or to protect civilians when their capabilities allow. This restrained approach is unique to the UN's institutional process. It is upon these factors that Howard builds her argument that PKOs pursue peace through persuasion, inducements, and coercion in moving combatants away from violence.

Other research on first-order peacekeeping effectiveness relies on a rationalist framework, starting from a point similar to Howard's and pointing to several ways in which PKOs seek to resolve information asymmetries and commitment problems that incentivize violence and serve as hurdles to peace. First, UN peacekeepers separate factions territorially, forming a physical barrier to violence. Further, blue helmets monitor combatant positions and activities, share this information among the parties, and thereby reduce the element of surprise.

In addition to providing a physical barrier to violence, UN PKOs can be a barrier of a different sort. With the arrival of a PKO, the international spotlight on combatant activities intensifies. Groups seeking to govern post-conflict as a legitimate member of the international community have an incentive to comply with UN peace efforts (Fortna 2008). Since the UN is widely recognized as the institutional representative of the global community

[4]While consent is not required under Chapter VII authorizations, and while consent is not always consistently maintained throughout deployments, it is a principal element of the UNSC's authorizations.

responsible for international security, combatant parties have legitimization incentives to respect the UN's peacekeeping efforts.

Peacekeepers can also engage in the peace purveying mechanisms of disarmament and demobilization. This is especially the case when the two above-mentioned mechanisms also operate: when the factions are separated and respect the legitimacy of the UN's involvement, disarming and demobilizing the belligerents become possible. To the extent that the factions believe peacekeepers are nonaggressive and impartial, PKOs can shepherd the conflict toward peace by removing arms from the battlefield and returning soldiers home, reintegrating them into normal society. Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR), when effectively undertaken, is a mechanism that directly reduces the killing capacity of the combatant groups (Hultman, Kathman, & Shannon 2013, 2014).

Finally, peacekeepers are able to verify compliance with progress toward peace (Fortna 2008). By observing and reporting on combatant activities, the factions need not rely upon the honesty of their adversary. This helps the combatants to avoid the conflict spirals that are common in security dilemma environments (see Walter & Snyder 1999).

The Effects of Peacekeeping on Conflict Mitigation and Termination

Researchers have empirically evaluated the peacekeeping mechanisms described above using many indicators of first-order objectives. The most straightforward element is the reduction or avoidance of violence that defines intergroup combat. While Cold War era analyses suggested that peacekeeping was ineffective at avoiding war recurrence (Diehl, Reifschneider, & Hensel 1996), studies of longer periods indicated that UN peacekeeping is capable of securing post-conflict peace and avoiding a return to battlefield combat (Doyle & Sambanis 2000; Fortna 2004, 2008). In the post-Cold War era, UN peacekeeping efforts have expanded substantially, including the deployment of larger personnel contingents to restrain combatant violence. Research has theorized that larger armed deployments are more capable of engaging in consequential peace-purveying mechanisms, including combatant separation, DDR, and direct observation. These mechanisms help resolve the commitment problems at the centre of the security dilemma that plagues civil wars (Walter 2002). This has been verified empirically, as larger troop deployments are associated with attenuated conflict recidivism (Hultman, Kathman, & Shannon 2016).

A close cousin of the peace maintenance work on UN peacekeeping is recent research on the ability of UN operations to reduce violence in active conflicts. Researchers have investigated peacekeeping effectiveness in the midst of war by examining whether it deploys to conflict hotspots and reduces combat fatalities. Studies have shown that UN operations deploy

their personnel to violent locations within civil war states, a necessary step toward reducing violence (Townsen & Reeder 2014; Powers, Reeder, & Townsen 2015; Ruggeri, Dorussen, & Gizelis 2018). Moreover, Hultman, Kathman, & Shannon (2014, 2019) have shown that larger peacekeeping troops deployments can engage in the separation, disarmament, and verification activities that are theorized to deescalate combat violence. With advances in data, these findings have been further corroborated at the location-level by not only reducing fatalities (Cil et. al. 2020) but also in shortening the duration of conflict (Ruggeri, Dorussen, & Gizelis 2016).

Reductions in atrocities committed against civilians is another first-order objective considered by existing scholarship.[5] Research has evaluated the effectiveness of peacekeeping on this dimension and found that peacekeeping can capably protect civilian lives (Hultman, Kathman, & Shannon 2013, 2019; Fjelde, Hultman, & Nilsson 2019), and this protection carries into post-conflict periods as well (Kathman & Wood 2016). In short, peacekeeping has demonstrated its ability to preserve human life, particularly given its theorized ability to engage in the mechanisms associated with pursuing peace.

Reducing the severity of violence amongst combatants and against civilians also crucially depends on the ability of PKOs to catalyze successful conflict resolution. The UN's ability to verify negotiated terms while also providing security guarantees to the parties helps overcome the distrust that plagues inter-combatant negotiations, an important hurdle to more lasting outcomes like power-sharing that can consolidate stability (Hartzell 1999; Hartzell & Hoddie 2003). To this end, research has found that UN peacekeeping enhances the likelihood of peaceful settlements among interstate disputants (Frazier & Dixon 2006), and UN PKOs can be highly effective in shortening the duration of civil wars to successful negotiated outcomes (Kathman & Benson 2019).[6]

Still another first-order peacekeeping objective pertains to preventing conflict contagion. With the effective engagement of peace purveying mechanisms, UN PKOs may restrict the spread of conflict. For instance, Beardsley & Gleditsch (2015) show that peacekeeping can contain combatants during the course of a conflict. Beardsley (2011) also finds that peacekeeping can reduce the risk of civil war onset in neighbouring countries.

[5]For a comprehensive discussion of the civilian protection norm, see Hultman (this forum).
[6]Peacekeeping and peacemaking may not always complement one another, as when peacekeeping reduces the sense of a mutually hurting stalemate (Greig and Diehl 2005).

Testing Mechanisms and Contextualizing Peacekeeping's Effect on Peace

While separation, legitimation, DDR, and compliance verification have been central elements of scholarly theorizing on the first-order conflict reduction capacity of PKOs, less in the way of testing these mechanisms has occurred in the literature. We therefore know little about their relative contributions to peace. Which mechanisms work most effectively in reducing violence? Further, what is the relationship between mechanisms, and is there a sequencing of mechanism implementation that makes peacekeeping more effective in ending conflict? More specifically, is separation a necessary condition for disarmament and demobilization? Does separation reduce battle violence only to engender instability in other regions or put civilians at risk behind the frontlines? Is demobilization only effective after separation and in tandem with compliance verification? Without a better empirical understanding regarding the role of particular mechanisms in their relation to violence processes, the correlation between peacekeeping and violence reduction will remain underappreciated. Work by Druckman, Mueller and Diehl (2022), which presents a way to measure (in)compatibility among different types of peacekeeping mandates ('missions') is an important step forward on which existing scholarship can build.

To better understand the application of these mechanisms, scholarship must address how peacekeeping efforts themselves continually develop. Indeed, recent operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Central African Republic, and Mali have engaged in more aggressive tactics by targeting particular combatant groups with force (Karlsrud 2015) and used such aggressive methods as arrests and cordon and search efforts (Holt, Taylor, & Kelly 2009). This evolution of PKO activities toward a more aggressive approach may call into question the continued effectiveness of peacekeeping given the break from the principles of self-defense, impartiality, and consent mentioned above. How does this change the theoretical and empirical relation between the relevant mechanisms and their effective pursuit of peace?

Finally, the first-order peacekeeping goal of violence mitigation is only a version of 'peace,' one that some would consider temporary and superficial without addressing the underlying, structural conditions that lead to conflict. This complementary conception of peace focuses on the quality of peace beyond the absence of war. It is to this form of peace that we now turn, as we discuss the application of peacekeeping mechanisms to outcomes associated with the second-order peacekeeping objective of improving the quality of the peace achieved.

Peacekeeping Mechanisms and Second-Order Objectives

Conceptions of peace extend beyond the occurrence and cessation of physical violence. Peace is a continuum, and its quality can improve or deteriorate. Peace quality tends to have complex structural, socio-political, and economic explanations. When the combat ends, further efforts are necessary to improve the quality of peace in PKO host states. Since war often degrades societal institutions, conflict management mechanisms like separation, DDR, and verification, useful for first-order objectives, are insufficient in themselves to explain second-order peace quality outcomes. Though the literature is still nascent in addressing the effect of UN efforts toward second-order outcomes, we review its development, noting the importance for future research to study the institutional mechanisms by which peacekeeping affects the quality of peace.

Peacekeeping and Human Security

The economic and financial health of a state and its people are dimensions of the quality of peace for which peacekeeping may be consequential. War is destructive to economic potential, which then recreates the conditions for additional, subsequent instability and violence, producing a 'conflict trap' in which the cycle of destitution and war persists (Collier et al. 2003).

Yet, even under dire economic conditions, peacekeeping can help. By reducing the level of combat violence and the duration of conflict hostilities, peacekeeping can preserve society's resources and institutions for more productive uses (Bove, Di Salvatore & Elia 2021). Moreover, and unrelated to mechanisms associated with first-order objectives, peacekeepers can directly improve economies by distributing essential aid and facilitating communication amongst key stakeholders in supporting the state's economic system (Carnahan, Gilmore & Durch 2007).

The economic benefits of peacekeeping have been questioned, however. While the arrival of a large operational deployments brings foreign capital that can improve the host state's short-term economic wellbeing, Jennings (2016) argues that peacekeepers often exclude locals from their economic transactions. Even if peacekeepers provide a quick boost to certain industries, when operations ultimately withdraw, the financial benefits may simultaneously depart, causing locals that left traditional jobs to be particularly affected (Beber et al. 2019). Even so, the benefits associated with ending the economic destruction of war should not be understated given the prospects for economic rejuvenation that result from peacekeeping's mollification of violence.[7] Future research would benefit from weighing these

[7]See, for example, Chapter 7 of Hultman, Kathman, & Shannon (2019).

counteractive forces against each other to determine the relative benefit of peacekeeping in both the short- and long-term, pointing to policy reforms that might mitigate the detriments of peacekeeping economies while still realizing the benefits of conflict resolution, reconstruction, institution building, and the economic revitalization in post-war states that these efforts engender.

Related to economic health, peacekeeping has the potential to shape public health outcomes. Frequently, peacekeeping mandates directly instruct peacekeepers to protect the health of civilians, and, on occasion, they have assisted in emergencies, such as in Ebola outbreaks (Davies & Rushton 2016). The literature on peacekeeping and health is still nascent, but ongoing work shows promise for both short- and long-term health outcomes. Peacekeepers have also been shown to increase civilian access to health care and improve maternal health outcomes (Gizelis & Cao 2021). Beardsley & Beardsley (2021) similarly find in Côte d'Ivoire, that peacekeepers reduced the harmful effect of conflict on malnutrition. It is then reasonable to believe that by ameliorating conflict, peacekeeping can improve access to medicines and health services, the quality of medical infrastructure, and the availability of food to meet local needs. Further, there is evidence of peacekeeping's beneficial long-term effect on health outcomes. By mitigating war's destruction via first-order conflict management mechanisms, the downstream effect of peacekeeping can be the attenuation of war's lasting effect on individual and community health so long as these mechanisms are teamed with additional second-order efforts (Benson et al. 2020). Future research should investigate whether the relevant second-order efforts are a good match for the resources and training that peacekeepers bring to bear, or if other international actors would be better suited to these efforts.

Another concern is that peace operations may inadvertently create an environment advantageous to organized crime and other violent criminal behaviour by impeding the development of local institutions (Cockayne & Pfister 2008; Cornell & Jonsson 2014; Di Salvatore 2019). Conflict creates opportunities for criminal groups to work with rebels, supplying them with weapons and other resources, and establishing black market networks that can be used for drugs, arms, and human trafficking (Cornell & Jonsson 2014). With government institutions weakened by war and challenges to their legitimacy, and with domestic security sectors lacking a monopoly of enforcement capabilities, criminality can run rampant (Deglow 2016; Gartner & Kennedy 2018). Peacekeeper efforts to confront these actions are made difficult in de-institutionalized environments that often define postwar societies, particularly when security sectors have been degraded (Bara 2020). Here again future research can push the literature forward by considering the specific mechanisms by which peace operations can be

surrogates for institutional building (Blair 2021) and the specific mechanisms by which peace operations can stunt local institutional development.

While the UN can take such actions as providing additional police units for the benefit of securing communities behind the frontlines, deploying ever greater numbers of UN personnel can have perverse impacts as well. Revelations of sexual abuse committed by peacekeepers has stained the practice's reputation. Large peacekeeping deployments can increase demand for sex work, fuelling organized crime, human trafficking and forced prostitution (Smith & Smith 2011; Beber et al. 2017; Bell, Flynn, & Machain 2018). Apart from their own acts of sexual abuse, peacekeepers still lack the ability to curtail sexual abuse by most actors, particularly among weak and fragmented actors (Johansson & Hultman 2019).

Future research can inform policy reform in this regard. For instance, peacekeeper attitudes regarding gender have been revealed as an important variable in explaining their conduct. Karim & Beardsley (2016) find that when countries that champion gender equality provide peacekeeping troops, sexual exploitation and abuse are less frequent. They also reveal that including more women in PKOs has the same attenuating effect. Building upon this work, research might consider the various ways in which gender balancing, mandates confronting sexual violence, and operational mechanisms for tracking and enforcing punishments for abuses can influence the effectiveness of missions in protecting civilians from sexual abuse.

Healing Divides, Building Democracy

Skeptics of peacekeeping have claimed that pursuing first-order objectives by catalyzing a premature end to the hostilities merely prolongs the deeper contentions that pervade society (Luttwak 1999). Experimental evidence, however, points to ways peace operations can contribute to second-order, restorative objectives via a variety of mechanisms not well connected to first-order objectives. Peacekeepers as third-party monitors and enforcers have been shown to increase prosocial behaviour between rivals (Mironova & Whitt 2017). Page & Whitt (2020) similarly find that ethnocentrism was widespread throughout Bosnia preceding the deployment of peacekeepers; in regions where there was a peacekeeping operation, ethnocentrism declined. Furthermore, dialogue between rivals – facilitated by peacekeepers – can attenuate their negative biases, thus reducing communal violence (Smidt 2020a). The perceived impartiality of peacekeepers helps to induce trust between the peacekeepers and local communities, thereby reducing insecurity and animosity that may spark communal violence (Nomikos 2022).[8] For

[8]However, when PKOs engage in peacebuilding efforts that directly support the state, PKOs can inadvertently increase local instability (see Nomikos and Villa's contribution to this forum).

peacekeepers to help reduce intergroup tensions, they must be able to communicate with local populations. When peacekeeping personnel deploy to areas in which the blue helmets themselves are culturally and linguistically similar to local populations, missions are more effective (Bove & Ruggeri 2019).

Peace operations also strive to bolster non-violent intergroup dialogue via election monitoring and democratization efforts. Most directly, peacekeepers convey information about how democracy and elections work. This institutional support helps prevent electoral violence, which in turn increases democratic participation (Smidt 2020c). Peacekeepers organize and protect elections, deterring those who seek to manipulate the vote through violence and intimidation (Smidt 2020b). Importantly, their effect on democratic elections continue after the ballots have been cast, as peacekeepers help prevent violence and instability from re-infecting society when elections yield unfavourable results for one side (Brancati & Snyder 2011). All of these mechanisms allow for more general progress in democratic institution building (Steinert & Grimm 2015). Recent research has specifically shown that democratic reform can result from peacekeeping efforts (Joshi 2013), and peacekeeping can contribute to the rule of law during post-conflict peace (Blair 2021). Yet, more work is needed on how complex socio-political processes interact to affect governing outcomes over the long-term, especially given temporal distances between the point of PKO withdrawal and observed democratic outcomes.

Identifying Mechanisms in Pursuit of Second-Order Peace Objectives

We suggest means by which future research might contribute productively to the existing literature. Especially because the second-order objectives do not cleanly follow from the first-order objectives, research on second-order peace goals would benefit from a focus on mechanisms by which peacekeeping is capable of improving the quality of peace. For second-order goals, which at first glance are rather heterogenous, a central element is the de-institutionalization wrought by war and the necessity of rebuilding institutions, or creating them anew. Whether it be the governing regime institutions, financial/economic institutions, or communal/social institutions, these facets of society are central to the quality of peace experienced in post-conflict states. Research on UN peacekeeping would benefit from a focus on the institution (re)building capacity of UN operations.

Of course, these institutions are varied, including such physical institutions as a state's security sector and such normative institutions as intergroup trust. Understanding how these institutions are (re)built requires further theorizing and testing. This includes improving our understanding of peacekeeping's short- and long-term effects. PKOs do not remain deployed indefinitely post-conflict. How can we link operational efforts to institutional

development during deployment? How do we account for the fact that institutions, by their nature, develop slowly in relation to the peacekeeping activities that are meant to support their development? Adding to the complexity, how can we assess PKO performance in the maintenance and consolidation of institutions well after the point at which those PKOs have been withdrawn?

These are difficult questions. While first-order conflict management mechanisms are insufficient for improving our understanding of these second-order processes, theorizing on first- and second-order objectives would benefit from a common starting point. Future work on second-order peace efforts should recall the central elements of UN peacekeeping referenced from Howard (2019) that make UN efforts unique in pursuit of peacekeeping goals: UN operations are (a) impartial, (b) seek the consent of the belligerents, and (c) tend to avoid using force short of self-defense. With this as the starting point, theorizing on peace- and institution-building efforts is likely to distinguish UN operations from other third-party efforts. With a common starting point to research on first- and second-order peace goals, scholarly cumulation is more likely even as the mechanisms employed for their achievement will necessarily differ.

Unintended Consequences: Reconsidering the Effects of UN Peacekeeping on State-sponsored Violence

William G. Nomikos and Danielle N. Villa

Introduction

The ongoing civil war in Mali (2012-2021) began as a separatist conflict in the northern part of the country. MINUSMA, the UN peacekeeping operation in the country, deployed explicitly in response to this conflict. Yet, in recent years violence has spread to central Mali, drawing in members of the Peulh ethnic group. What accounts for the spread of violence in Mali and the salience of a new ethnic cleavage despite the support of robust peacebuilding operations? Likewise, why does violence persist, evolve, or emerge in other contexts featuring UN peacekeepers?

We suggest that United Nations peacebuilding operations may inadvertently incentivize local-level violence. UN peacebuilding operations materially support domestic governments' efforts to maintain order following conflict. However, domestic governments and their armed forces often use their power to settle local scores rather than keep the peace. The governmental abuse of power may thus instigate a new local-level cycle of violence divorced from the original conflict.

This essay makes three contributions relevant to debates about peacekeeping in academia and the policy-world. First, it highlights the wide range of actors that peacekeepers interact with, encouraging scholars to understand a broader range of peacekeeper-armed actor dynamics. Second, we explain how UN support of formal state institutions can unintentionally contribute to local-level conflicts in peacebuilding operations. Third, the essay highlights alternative peacebuilding strategies for analysts and practitioners of peacebuilding operations alike. Ultimately, our essay complements the contribution by Newton et al. in this forum to further unpack the nature of the 'peace' that UN peacekeepers maintain in post-conflict settings.

How the UN Promotes Peace

How does peacebuilding work? Existing cross-national research on peacekeeping is largely optimistic about operations' likelihood of success. Scholars have emphasized how international peacebuilders can help belligerents overcome commitment problems (Walter 2002; Fortna 2008). As Newton et al. discuss in their essay in this forum, UN peacekeeping is an especially effective tool for crafting *negative* peace, understood as the absence of violence. Subsequent expansions have applied these theories to local-level outcomes (Ruggeri, Dorussen, and Gizelis 2016) as well as to civilian protection, both in wartime and after conflict (Hultman, Kathman, and Shannon 2013; Hultman, Kathman, and Shannon 2014). These studies have shown that UN peacekeepers prevent violence from breaking out both nationally as well as sub-nationally.

Yet moving from a negative peace to a *positive* peace, understood as addressing the structural conditions for conflict, has proven more elusive, as Newton et al. also show in their contribution to this forum. Much of the existing work assumes that statebuilding is the most effective means to promote the rule of law. Statebuilding refers to international efforts to support a post-conflict state's capacity to resolve future conflicts peacefully. Statebuilding can bolster institutional legitimacy, improving long-term prospects for peace (Blair 2017). International actors can lend legitimacy to post-conflict states, as well as support public goods provision (Lake 2010).

However, existing research suggests international actors lack the capacity (Beardsley 2008), legitimacy (Lake 2016), or local know-how (Autesserre 2010; Autesserre 2014) to help consolidate gains from peace into successful statebuilding at the end of which local populations view the state as legitimate. Others have pointed out that UN peacebuilding features a liberal concept of state-society relations. Scholars criticize universal peacebuilding models as fundamentally unsuited to many post-conflict contexts (Lynch 2013) or failing to account for local-level failures (Autesserre 2014). Thus,

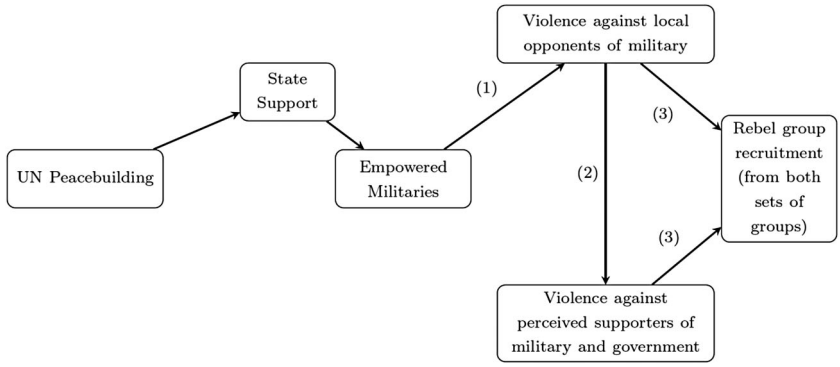

Figure 3.1. Diagram of argument, how UN peacekeeping inadvertently creates new salient conflicts.

a key tension is the discrepancy between the optimistic cross-national evaluations of peacebuilding and recent critical approaches; we directly address this tension. We show that UN peacebuilders effectively stop existing conflicts but may also increase the prospects of new types of conflict breaking out.

Moving Away from the State

We suggest that UN peacebuilding efforts can create incentives for new conflict in a post-conflict state. In particular, we identify a pathway by which statebuilding can create new conflict in unintended ways. UN operations are fundamentally state-centric. Many peacebuilding operations are tasked with extending the authority of the state[9] and provide benefits to increase state capacity (Di Salvatore and Ruggeri 2020). Likewise, peacekeepers in civil wars deploy where their military benefits can best support host governments (Villa 2021). Strong states can better maintain the monopoly on the use of violence and thus reduce violence against civilians (Zimmerman 2020).

However, UN peacebuilding operations may in this way also unintentionally incentivize local-level conflict through their support of central government and their militaries (Duursma 2021). The UN prioritizes the creation of order and security in post-conflict zones, often delegating this task to domestic states and their armed forces. Governments use UN-provided support, resources, and legitimization to create and maintain order. However, in most developing states, governments rely on non-

[9]Missions such as those in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and the DRC (MONUSCO) have been mandated to re-establish, extend, or consolidate the authority of the state.

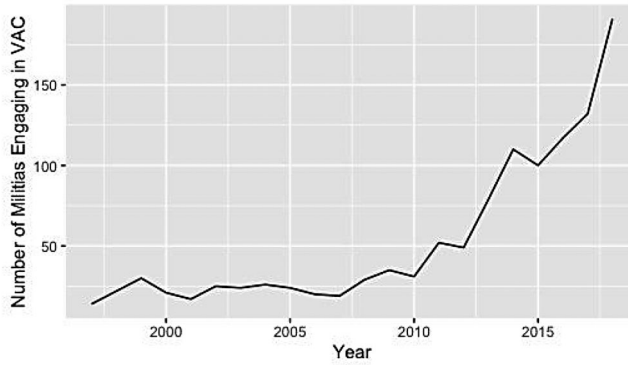

Figure 3.2. The Number of Militias Engaging in Violence Against Civilians in African Countries Hosting a Peacekeeping Operation, 1997-2018.

professionalized militaries, warlords, and paramilitary forces to keep the peace. These groups create conflict and perpetuate grievances that lead to further local-level violence.

Violence against civilians can motivate and prompt new cycles of conflict. A new violent conflict cycle can occur through three sequential processes, as diagrammed in Figure 3.1. First, non-professionalized armed groups commit violent acts against civilians. Although the UN empowers these armed groups to keep the peace and prevent rebel groups from attacking civilians, they often use their newfound power to settle local scores. For example, members of the Malian military (Forces Armées Maliennes or FAMA), predominantly members of Mali's dominant ethnic groups, have frequently victimized civilians from ethnic group competitors since the deployment of the UN.

Second, local populations retaliate against supporters of the armed groups and vice versa. Retaliation cycles are common and easily triggered following civil war violence (Bateson 2013). Victims of armed group violence do not feel like they can rely on the government or the UN, since these actors supported the perpetrators. As a result, they resort to attacking perceived supporters of the armed group, the government, or the UN. The victims of this violence retaliate, perpetuating an all-new cycle of local-level conflict. Returning to the example of the Malian military, victims of military violence have retaliated against civilians that they believe support the government.

Third, new armed groups emerge to meet the demand for new violence, recruiting from ethnic groups attacked by state-supported militaries or from ethnic groups facing retaliatory attacks. As a result, UN support of a central government can inadvertently create new fronts of violence that can threaten the entire state's stability. The groups carrying out this violence

are ubiquitous in conflict, are highly violent, and contribute to overall disorder (Carey and Mitchell 2017). Figure 3.2 demonstrates the rise of militias engaging in violence against civilians in the African countries hosting peacekeepers between 1997-2018.[10]

Our contention is not that this cycle of violence always occurs, that UN peacekeeping operations inevitably incentivize new conflicts, or that when it does occur the vicious cycle outweighs the positive elements of UN peacekeeping entirely. Along the lines of the Newton et al. essay in this forum, we merely wish to identify a possible and important challenge to positive peacebuilding.

Alternative Approach

We do not argue that the United Nations should entirely abandon programmes that support the state or that attempt to build the state-security apparatus. Rather, policymakers should consider shifting peacekeeping resources away from post-conflict governments. In particular, three non-state centric peacebuilding strategies hold great promise moving forward: (1) local-level peace enforcement by United Nations police forces and peacekeepers; (2) training of local police forces and security brigades independently of the state; (3) cooperation with traditional and religious authorities.

First, instead of empowering governments and their non-professionalized militaries to enforce local-level peace in post-conflict states, UN peacekeepers and UN police can directly enforce local-level peace. Peacekeepers use a strategic posture in order to stop current violence and deter future violence. From the perspective of the local population, the practical implication is that violence is no longer considered a feasible strategy for solving a local-level dispute. This is because of the high likelihood that the UN will stop or punish the violence later, which citizens assume the military would not do. Recent evaluations at the micro- and sub-national levels suggest that direct UN enforcement can effectively increase interethnic cooperation and reduce violence (Nomikos 2021; Ruggeri, Dorussen, and Gizelis 2016).[11] Direct UN enforcement of local-level peace can alleviate the need for central governments to rely on their non-professionalized security forces. It can also provide the UN time to help governments professionalize and reform the security sector (Karim and Gorman 2016).

Second, the UN should continue to embrace non-state centric peacebuilding operations. In particular, the UN should cooperate with non-state authorities that carry a great deal of legitimacy in developing country settings.

[10]Burundi, CAR, Chad, Cote D'Ivoire, DRC, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Liberia, Mali, Morocco, Sierra Leone, Sudan, and South Sudan. These data come from Raleigh et al. 2010.

[11]See Autesserre, *The Trouble with the Congo* for a critique of UN operations in the Democratic Republic of Congo because they de-emphasized local-level security.

Traditional authorities typically play a central role in resolving disputes in these contexts, particularly in small rural communities. These leaders can facilitate aid provision and peacebuilding in post-conflict societies (Baldwin 2015; Blattman, Hartman, and Blair 2014). Similarly, recent research suggests that religious leaders can mobilize collective action in post-conflict settings, especially when embracing Qur'anic scripture (Condra, Isaqzadeh and Linardi 2017; Masoud, Jamal, and Nugent 2016; Grossman, Nomikos, and Siddiqui 2021).

Finally, in conflict settings that necessitate some degree of local order-building, the UN should shift resources away from formal institutions such as militaries to local security institutions comprised of local volunteers trained by UN experts. The United States has achieved above-average peacebuilding outcomes with such programmes—the Sons of Iraq and Afghan Local Police (ALP) programmes in Iraq and Afghanistan. The effectiveness of these local security institutions derives from those community members who volunteer to serve in the police force and the community leadership that helps international peacebuilders recruit volunteers. This is no easy task. The peacebuilder—in this case the UN—must identify and monitor potential local leaders that can serve as agents that can help recruit volunteers. These leaders must be competent, carry a great deal of legitimacy and community-level trust, and must be interested in community-level peace. Once American peacebuilders selected training sites for the ALP programme, local police would be trained by American advisors but governed by local councils (shuras) and tasked strictly with keeping local-level peace. The shuras would designate leaders that would oversee the ALP. The shuras, which are viewed as legitimate actors by the local populace, would bestow legitimacy on the security personnel. The ALP-leadership would be vetted by government officials, who would impose their own preferences on selecting leaders. Thus, American leaders had to have enough information to select suitable training sites, shuras, and government officials to vet police leaders and volunteers. While such programmes do not entirely eliminate the state, they incorporate local, non-governmental stakeholders that can minimize the involvement of non-professionalized militaries.

In this essay, we have suggested that UN peacebuilding operations may unintentionally create incentives for new conflict. Our essay thus complements the essay by Newton et al. (this forum) to highlight potential challenges in crafting a positive peace in post-conflict settings. In her contribution to this issue, Hultman (this forum) discusses how the UN has over the past 75 years moved away in its doctrine from a focus on state security to a focus on human security. We have outlined a key challenge that UN peacekeeping practice may still face in implement this doctrinal shift. At the same time, we also make the case that the incentivization process that may be triggered by UN peacekeeping operations is avoidable. With some shifting of

resources and strategic prioritization, the UN can help prevent the unintentional creation of new local-level cycles of violence.

The UN and the Development of Friendly Relations based on Equal Rights: The United Nations and Great Power Politics

Martin Binder

Introduction

The dominant view among scholars and observers of the United Nations (UN) has been that the organization's actions and decisions are largely determined by its great powers China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. These powers enjoy permanent membership on the United Nations Security Council, and they have a veto right that allows them to block any action that goes against their interests. Both the permanence of their membership and the veto right were a 'sine qua non' at the creation of the UN after World War II – 'the smaller states understood that they had to choose between an organization with great power privilege, or no organization at all' (Krisch 2008, 136). In this short essay, I will argue that the five permanent Council members (P5) exert significant influence over UN actions and decisions, but that their power is constrained by the Council's decision-making procedures and its need for legitimacy. To support this argument, I first identify the P5's formal and informal sources of influence in the Council and examine how permanent member interests affect the UN's response to conflicts and crises. I then discuss how the P5's interests are constrained by the UN's normative and organizational principles and by the interests of the Council's ten non-elected members (E10). I conclude by identifying some avenues for future research.

The Sources of Great Power Influence

Given their vast military and economic power and their institutionalized privileges in the UN, the five permanent Security Council members and their various interests have dominated research on the UN. Some scholars have argued that the P5 form an 'elite club' (Voeten 2005) or a modern-day 'concert' (Bosco 2014) that – when acting together – has unparalleled power and influence over the UN while also preventing potentially dangerous tensions among them. As Chapman argues in this forum, it is precisely the military and economic dominance of the P5 that also allows them to collectively inform other states about (the limits of) appropriate behaviour in

international politics. To empirically assess the P5's dominance in the Council, scholars have calculated their formal voting power to find that 'a fair approximation as far as voting is concerned is that the Council has five members' (O'Neill 1996, 235; Hosli et al. 2011).

But it is not just the formal veto that matters, the P5 can also use a 'hidden veto'— the threat to make use of their veto right—to control the Council's agenda (Nahory 2004). Moreover, because their membership is permanent, the P5 enjoy important informal advantages over elected members in terms of institutional memory about previous substantive and procedural issues as well as a better knowledge of the rules of the game in the Council. The permanent members also regularly interact and coordinate in informal meetings (Sievers and Daws 2014,126-27). Some permanent members can wield additional influence over Council decisions by threating to use outside options and to act unliterally. This can influence decisions in the Council in their favour if the other permanent members disagree with the action but nevertheless prefer the great power to act through the Council (Voeten 2001). Finally, a number of studies suggests that permanent Council members can exercise influence in the Council by buying votes from elected members in exchange for bilateral and multilateral aid (Kuziemko and Werker 2006). Elected members in the Security Council also receive favourable treatment from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank (Vreeland and Dreher 2014), suggesting that permanent members which control these institutions use them to buy off elected Council members.

How do the P5's formal and informal sources of influence affect UN actions and decisions? Scholarship on the UN has long argued that the Security Council's agenda and the way the body responds to various threats to international security are largely determined by the interests of its permanent members (e.g. Jonge Oudraat 1996; Boulden 2006). However, because P5 interests are indeterminate and have been used to explain both action and inaction of the Council, recent quantitative studies have looked at various measures of P5 interests to more systematically assess their impact on the deployment of UN peacekeeping missions, the organization's response to interstate conflicts and humanitarian crises, as well as on agenda-setting in the Council (Gilligan and Stedman 2003, Mullenbach 2005, Fortna 2008, Beardsley and Schmidt 2012, Allen and Yuen 2020, Binder and Golub 2020). Collectively, these studies find that the UN is significantly less likely to become involved in conflicts that occur in a P5's sphere of influence or in conflicts that involve a major power, including another permanent member. This research further suggests that formal alliance ties between a P5 and a potential target state significantly reduce the likelihood of UN action.[12] Likewise, if a conflict involves P5 economic interests – measured in arms transfers from a permanent member to a conflict state and in the

trade between a P5 and a conflict state – this significantly reduces the likelihood that a conflict enters the Council's agenda. By contrast, these studies found no evidence that the UN was more or less likely to act on permanent members' dependence on natural resources by intervening in conflicts states that control oil, nor does it matter for UN intervention whether a conflict occurs in a former colony of a permanent member. Taken together, these studies agree that P5 interests matter, and that they *reduce* the likelihood of UN involvement in a conflict. When the permanent members have a stake in a conflict, they tend to keep the UN out.

However, because the P5 have a veto right, any SC action needs at least some level of agreement among them. Scholars have therefore looked beyond individual P5 interest to focus on the extent to which P5 interest in the Council overlap (Beardsley and Schmidt 2012). Using various measures, including S-scores and ideal point estimates based on voting in the General Assembly, these studies find that higher levels of preference homogeneity among the P5 make it easier for them to agree on the deployment of peacekeeping mission (Passmore 2020) and peacekeeping mandates (Allen and Yuen 2014); renders the UN more able to act in international crises (Beardsley and Schmitt 2012); and increases the speed with which civil conflicts enter the Council's agenda (Binder and Golub 2020).

The Limits of Great Power Influence

While P5 interests clearly matter, there are limits to which the P5 can use the Council to advance their interests. This is because, ultimately, the Council has value for the permanent members only if other UN member states accept it as legitimate and support its actions and decisions. No sanctions can be successfully imposed, no peacekeeping missions deployed without the compliance and support of the wider UN membership. The need for legitimacy requires the Council to respond to normative pressures and to fulfil the UN's organizational mission. It also opens up a channel of influence for its non-elected members.

Several recent studies suggest that factors other than narrow P5 interests matter for UN action. Scholars have found that higher numbers of civilians killed in a conflict increase the likelihood that the Council authorizes a peace operation, suggesting that the UN acts in line with a civilian protection norm (Hultman 2013, see Hultman's essay in this forum for a detailed discussion of the influence this norm has on the behaviour of the UN Security Council and beyond). Studies have also shown that various forms of UN intervention are more likely in deadly conflicts to argue that UN intervention is also driven by

[12]The study by Beardsley and Schmidt (2012), however, finds no such relationship in the post-cold war era.

humanitarian considerations and principles (Gilligan and Stedman 2003, Fortna 2008, Binder 2017). One study has specifically examined whether the level of UN involvement in inter-state crises is better explained by P5 interests or by the UN's organizational mission to promote international peace and stability (Beardsley and Schmidt 2012). The authors find that both motivations matter, but that measures of the UN's willingness to uphold its organizational mission – crisis severity, crisis duration, and the number of actors involved in a crisis – statistically outperform measures of P5 interests.

The Council's need for legitimacy also provides a lever for the Council's elected members that have no veto right and, according to conventional wisdom, have little or no influence in the Council. However, not only do Council resolutions require at least nine positive votes, and hence the support of at least some elected members. But in practice the Council also makes great efforts to secure unanimous resolutions, helping it to appear as the legitimate 'voice of the 'international community' as a whole' (Krisch 2008, 139). This quest for legitimacy increases the influence of the elected members beyond their formal voting power. That the P5 care about the Council's legitimacy is further supported by recent research showing that they make systematic efforts to legitimate the Council in public debates in the UN General Assembly (Binder and Heupel 2021).

As the essay by Allen & Yuen show in detail, elected Council members can act as 'policy entrepreneurs' to influence the Council's agenda. The E10 exert influence by introducing thematic resolutions, promote new norms, and acting as penholders for resolutions. Moreover, elected members, including small countries, were able to exercise leadership in the Council (Keating 2015) and to advance their national interests (Langmore and Farrall 2016). Recent research has sought to analyze the influence of elected members in a more systematic way. Quantitative studies on SC agenda setting – where the permanent members have no formal veto right – suggest that E10 security and trade interests and the distribution of preference among the E10 have a significant effect on the speed with which civil conflicts enter the Council's agenda (Binder and Golub 2020). There is also systematic evidence that the E10 put more thematic issues on the Council's agenda and schedule nearly twice as many thematic issue meetings than the permanent members. (Allen and Yuen 2022). But research suggests that the E10 exert influence also at the decision-making stage. Scholars have shown that EU members, while serving as elected members, engage in issue linkage across international organizations to promote the security interests of other European states (Mikulaschek 2018), whereas elected African members use their influence to successfully push the Council toward deploying peacekeepers to civil conflict theatres in Africa (Carnegie and Mikulaschek 2020). Taken together, these studies challenge the

conventional wisdom that the elected members have no influence in the Council or that they entirely trade away their influence in exchange for bilateral and multilateral aid.

Summary and Avenues for Future Research

The great powers enjoy unique institutional privileges in the UN – permanent membership on the Security Council and a veto right – as well as informal sources of power that allow them to exert disproportional influence over the Council's actions and decisions. If their interests are at stake in a conflict or crisis, they tend to the keep the UN out. However, the great powers do not fully control the Council. To understand UN actions and decisions, it is important to consider the ways in which the influence of the P5 is constrained. These constraints arise from the distribution of preferences among the permanent members, the UN's normative and organizational principles, as well as the interests of the Council's elected member. This leads to several avenues for future research. First, scholars have assessed preference heterogeneity among the permanent (and elected) Council members in terms of S-scores, affinity scores and ideal point estimates based on voting in the General Assembly. Future research could develop measures that more directly tap into the preference distribution in the Council, for example by estimating ideal points based on speeches in Council debates (Bailey, Lee and Voeten n.d.).[13] Second, extant research has looked at important aspects of elected member influence in the Council, but this research is limited to specific regional groups among the E10 and to the Council's response to civil conflict. Further research is required to assess the conditions of E10 influence across a wider range of issues. Finally, future research should explore the potential link between the distribution of preferences in the Council and the effectiveness of UN policies by analyzing whether more aligned preferences in the Council lead to increases in contributions to peacekeeping operations and to more successful peacekeeping missions.

Agenda Setting and the Empowerment of Non-P5 States

Susan Allen and Amy Yuen

[13]See Mahmood & Tucker (this forum) for recent advances in quantitative text analysis relevant to the study of the UN

Rules and procedures in international organizations matter. The agenda-setting process laid out in the UN Charter and the provisional rules for the Security Council offers the opportunity for a wide range of actors, even non-member states, to bring an issue to the attention of the Council. On the other hand, nothing in the Charter obligates the Council to act on every issue brought to its attention. Council members decide what they discuss because they are granted the purview to schedule meetings and draft resolutions. Member states have a great deal of influence over when and whether the Council acts.

In this essay, we will explore agenda-setting in the Security Council and the unique opportunities it provides elected members to shape the Council's actions. Agenda-setting behaviour is an important factor that drives Council outcomes. Exploring these decisions can enable scholars to make clearer arguments about multilateral intervention, foreign policy substitution, and the role and effectiveness of international organizations. While we usually think of the veto members as carrying unusual influence, the agenda-setting process also affords opportunities to the elected members to act as policy entrepreneurs, a term that comes from the scholarship on American politics and is used 'to describe actors who use their knowledge of the process to further their own policy ends. They 'lie in wait in and around government with their solutions at hand, waiting for problems to float by to which they can attach their solutions, waiting for a development in the political stream they can use to their advantage" (Kingdon 1984, 165-6). After discussing the agenda-setting process and the idea of elected member entrepreneurs, we utilize the newly introduced SCAID data (Allen and Yuen 2020) to provide evidence of ways that elected members are enhancing their influence.

Agenda-Setting Power in the Council

The UN Charter calls upon the Security Council to respond to 'threats to international peace and security,' but a quick look at the agenda in any year since 1945 clearly shows that the Council cannot and does not respond to every such threat. Which issues do and which issues do not appear on the Council's agenda are a matter of strategic choice by Council members.

The Security Council has many of the characteristics of a legislature, and acknowledging this fact allows us to more directly explore how legislative processes influence the outcomes of international organizations (Conrad and Monroe 2020). Early studies of the Council did not fully explore this fact – often focusing tightly on the role of the veto and the preferences of the permanent members (e.g. Mullenbach 2005, Bosco 2009, Thompson 2009). While the permanent members do have an outsized influence

because of their veto power, other institutional factors also matter (Allen and Yuen 2022).

If we were to try to predict what the Council acts on, we might expect members to discuss only issues that directly serve their own interests. Because the agenda-setting power is reserved for Council members, the issues brought for discussion must attract their attention. There is truth to this element, though the scarcity of plenary time in the Council also means the delegation setting the agenda will select issues that they hope can eventually lead to a formal resolution or other desired outcome rather than taking time in discussion with no hope of progress. Further, because a resolution cannot pass if a permanent member decides to veto it, the broader impression is that the interests of the permanent members drive action in the Council. This impression, however, masks the points of entry to Council consideration and action that have generated a more diverse catalog of discussions and resolutions in the Council (for a comprehensive discussion of veto member influence, constraints, and legitimacy, see Binder's essay in this forum).

Elected and permanent members have the same agenda-setting power because the delegation that holds the Council presidency sets the agenda. The presidency rotates monthly by an alphabetical rule, though delegations can negotiate switching slots if they so choose. Each elected Council member gets at least one or two opportunities to sit in the Council presidency and determine the agenda. Since there are 10 elected members, the Council president is an elected member most of the time.

The monthly agenda is subject to discussion and negotiation among the delegations, so we might expect informal pressures to affect the agenda, but no delegation is immune. Even the permanent members have incentives to work with the other members who share in the vote, the perception of legitimacy, the material contributions, and the policy coordination that are often required to pass and implement resolutions. Binder and Golub (2020) show systematic evidence that elected member interests influence how quickly issues reach the Council's working agenda. Further, the descriptive evidence suggests that there is independence in setting the agenda based on the notably different patterns of issues we observe when permanent and elected members hold the presidency (Allen and Yuen, N. d.). Permanent members tend to focus on national issues, agenda items that address crises or concerns that specifically reference a particular member state, while elected members tend to be more open to discussing thematic issues without specific reference to a member state. Elected members also tend to schedule more meetings about countries with similar foreign policy preferences rather than those in their immediate region while permanent members schedule meetings on countries outside of their spheres of influence (Allen and Yuen 2022). These differences suggest that the variety

of interests among the Council members is observable in the agendas, meaning there is opportunity for the elected members to nudge the Council on issues beyond just those that the permanent members would discuss.

Policy Entrepreneurs

Other initiatives show that the elected members have sought to increase their influence in the Council, and the Council has responded. For example, the Council has been under pressure for several decades to make reforms that would increase representation. While major reforms to the UN Charter have gone nowhere, the Council has made changes to their behaviours around transparency and reporting to provide more information to member delegations and the broader public, particularly by increasing the number of formal public meetings at the expense of informal consultations (for example, Costa Rica and Uruguay both tried to hold all public meetings during their months in the Council presidency in 2008 and 2017, respectively). The pressure to meet publicly has swayed the agendas more towards public meetings, though informal consultations do still occur and are considered necessary for difficult discussions (Security Council Report 2019). Further reforms included listing meetings in the daily UN Journal and the issue under discussion, trying to limit how many issues were discussed in a single meeting, and improve the detail, standardization and circulation of decisions and reports (Council Presidential Statement S/2006/507).

Today the Security Council is a place for creating and refining global norms (Keating 2015; Hultman, this forum). In the past thirty years, the Council has expanded its definition of international security beyond matters of war and peace to include human security, climate change, and HIV/AIDS. As the Council's view of its mandate has broadened the member states have been more strategic about how and when they will take up particular issues. One clear example of both of these changes is the Council's Resolution 1325, which has shaped discussion about gender equality and peace for the past twenty years.

Elected members have used their influence to bring attention to many of these broader issues of war and peace. In fact, the Council's view of its mandate has broadened, in part, because member states have used the arena to call attention to issues beyond traditional notions of international threats to peace and security. Clear examples of this include the focus on agenda items like Women, Peace, and Security, Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict, and Children and Armed Conflict. Largely unknown during the Cold War, in 2019, broad thematic issues were the focus of more than a quarter of the public meetings held by the Council with the

remaining three quarters devoted to traditional national issues (like 'the Situation in Libya'). The thematic issues discussed in recent years cover a broad range of topics including climate change, HIV/AIDS, non-proliferation, as well as a number of human security issues. Here, the elected members of the Council have seen an opportunity to take the lead on issues and have seized it (Thorhallsson 2012). Canada's leadership on the doctrine of Responsibility to Protect (R2P) is a strong example of such action (see also Hultman's essay in this forum).

For the elected members, thematic issues offer an opportunity to engage in policy entrepreneurship on the Council (Keating, 2015). In the context of the Security Council, the elected members can act as policy entrepreneurs by placing ripe issues on the agenda in order to help shape and advance international norms. This type of policy influence goes beyond the symbolic power that Hurd (2002) attributes to holding an elected seat on the Council as it helps shape the way the Council considers its mandate as well as how it responds to national issues going forward. Nadin (2016) notes that the elected members who are able to influence the Council most are able to do so via innovation and seizing opportunities when they arise.

What motivates elected members to run for a seat on the Council? Past scholarship on the elected members has focused primarily on how seats on the Council might generate side payments connected to how that member votes in the Council (Dreher, Sturm and Vreeland, 2009a, b; Kuziemko and Werker, 2006). There is also anecdotal evidence that holding the presidency might motivate states to run for a seat on the Council (Malone 2000). Mikulaschek (2018) also finds that holding a seat on the Council may confer leverage in negotiations within other institutions like the European Union. When surveyed, diplomats at UN missions stated that influencing the agenda was their top priority (Ekengren et al 2020). A case study of Australia's experience on the Council also details how they sought to increase their influence, both through transparency reforms using the agenda-setting powers we described above (Langmore and Farrall 2016). Whether elected members are trading votes for side payments or directly influencing the agenda, there is evidence that the procedures of the Council allow for elected members to have an impact.

Allen and Yuen (2022) demonstrate systematic evidence that elected members are introducing more thematic issues to the Council's agenda and scheduling more meetings on these topics. Anecdotal evidence and simple analyses indicate that elected members schedule more thematic agenda items (Allen and Yuen 2020), but at this point, we know very little about the broader impacts of elected members' leadership on thematic issues. There is a great deal of room for more research in this area. Do elected members choose thematic items distinct from those selected by the permanent members? Secondly, do presidents from the same region

advance similar issues or do national interests lead elected members to focus on unique thematic issues? Under what conditions are elected members able to get resolutions on thematic issues to pass? Answering these questions will help us measure and understand the size of the Security Council bureaucracy and explore how it reaches beyond our more traditional understandings of international peace and security.

Assessing the Evidence

While a great deal of theorizing about the Council has come about through qualitative work (examples include Thompson 2006, 2015) and formal work (Voeten 2001), testing these ideas empirically has lagged behind because of a lack of data. The UN has increasingly made information on its activities accessible to the public, but until recently data on the activity of the Council has not been collected for scholarly purposes.

To understand the strategic decision-making Security Council members engage in, we need more information about Council's legislative process. The Security Council's agenda has two parts – the Summary Statement of Matters on Which the Security Council Is Seized and the Programme of Work (the official term for the Council's working agenda). The Summary Statement is a complete list of all the topics that have ever been brought to the attention of the Council but have not been deemed fully resolved. The power to bring issues to the attention of the Council is broad – any UN member state or the Secretary-General can propose an issue – but nothing obligates the Council to act (Bailey 1994).

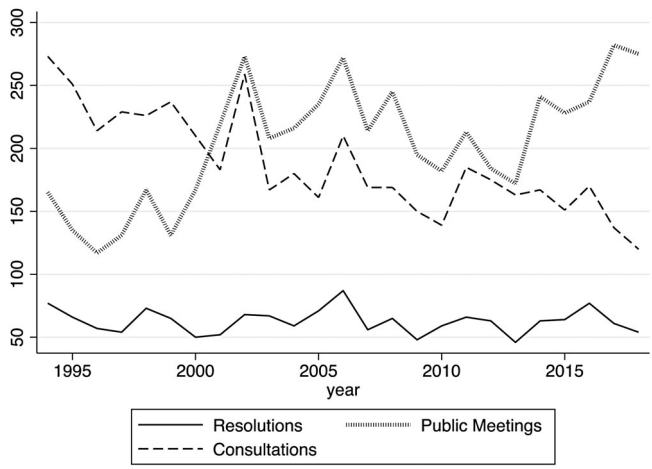

Figure 5.1. Security Council Activity, 1994-2018.

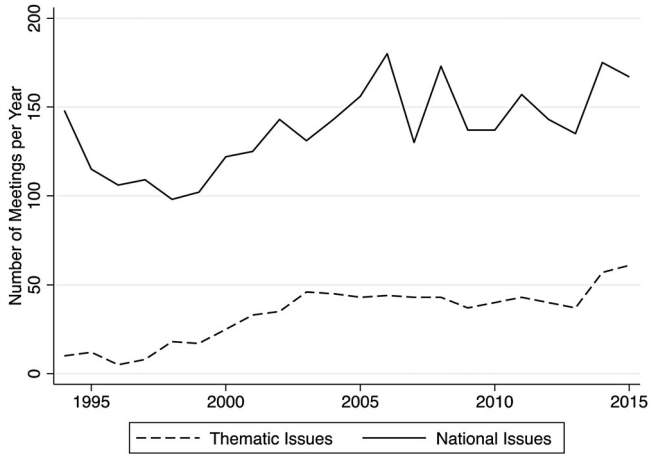

Figure 5.2. Annual Number of Public Meetings by Agenda Item Type.

Given the strategic factors that go into setting the Council's working agenda, their relative impact could be examined with appropriate data. To trace the Council's agenda and the progression of individual issues, Allen and Yuen (2020) collected daily agenda-item level data for the Council from 1994-2015. The Security Council Agenda-Item Data (SCAID) data include information on the dates and frequencies of closed-door consultations, public meetings, resolutions, presidential statements (which can only pass by consensus), and vetoes. These data also include information concerning when issues were first introduced in the Council. In Figure 5.1, we show that while the number of resolutions has remained fairly consistent over the past twenty years, the ways that members have used public and private diplomacy through public meetings and consultations has fluctuated over time.

Using data collected at the agenda item level, scholars can develop new insights about the strategic agenda-setting process of the Council. These data can also shed light on the amount of bargaining needed to establish new peacekeeping missions or to create and maintain sanctions regimes measuring the time it takes for resolutions to be crafted and passed as well as the frequency of meetings on a particular topic.

In Figure 5.2, we illustrate how the number of meetings on thematic issues has increased over time. The number of meetings held on national issues has been more varied but coverage of thematic issues has consistently with elected member presidents scheduling nearly twice as many thematic issue meetings than their permanent member colleagues (Allen and Yuen n.d.). This supports our assertion that elected members are taking advantage of this opportunity to serve as policy entrepreneurs.

SCAID allow scholars to look behind the outcomes that have dominated previous work – resolutions, vetoes, peacekeeping missions, and sanctions regimes. What factors shaped these outcomes? Because these data are more fine-grained than simply looking at resolutions or votes on resolutions, it is possible to explore how particular issues have been handled over time and can shed light on the difficulty that may arise in the negotiating process on specific issues or resolutions. In particular, we can measure issues that are chosen for discussion but end with no formal action. These data are also valuable for testing ideas about international institutions more generally, such as the effects of different institutional features like a rotating presidency (an apolitical process for determining the agenda-setter) to assessing the durability and legitimacy of an institution based on its usage and even to examine the spread and growth of institutions and their scope of actions (e.g. expanding the notions of international threats to peace and security).

Additionally, and most crucially for studies that focus on outcomes, the SCAID data show us what the Council discusses and what they ignore, helping to account for the selection effects that generate the patterns of output in the Council. Avenues for future research can now be process-driven as well as outcome-driven.

Conclusions

Because major structural reform of the Security Council is unlikely to occur in the near future, a potentially more fruitful area for reform proposals might be to identify the avenues of influence available to the elected members and strengthen those in order to increase the effectiveness of these members (Langmore and Thakur 2016). In addition to bringing thematic issues to the attention of the Council, elected members have also begun to take on more responsibility as penholders on resolutions. The Council has an informal practice of *penholding,* which means that one (or more states) take political ownership for drafting resolutions on a particular topic. Historically, permanent members (especially the Western Three) have dominated these roles, but more recently elected members have begun to step into these roles. Understanding the informal ways that the permanent members enforce their dominance is essential to expanding the influence of other members (Gifkins 2021). Expanding the opportunities for elected members to influence the writing of resolutions as well as recognizing when elected members can be most effective as policy entrepreneurs can help increase the legitimacy of the Council as well as its representativeness.

While SCAID data helps us answer questions about how and why some issues are discussed and others ignored, further data collection efforts that add to this effort would be quite useful. For example, we do not currently

have information on the 'penholder', that is, the delegation primarily responsible for writing the draft resolution that comes up for a vote. Increasingly, we know that there are multiple penholders, and while it is often led by a permanent member of the Council, the influence and independence of elected members might be assessed more directly with penholder data. Second, we can conduct analyses to understand why the Council puts a given issue on the agenda, but we do not know much about the process or motivation for removing items from the agenda. In recent years, the Council has developed procedures for removing languishing agenda items, but we do not have systematic data on agenda item removal which in itself could be a political act. Finer data collection around the agendas and the active policy-making can open further avenues to examining whether and how the Council manages threats to peace and security.

The UN and Cooperation to Solve Economic, Social, Cultural and Humanitarian Problems and to Promote Human Rights: Collective Action and UN Functionality as a Public Goods Provider

Timothy J.A. Passmore and Megan Shannon

Public Goods and the UN

The United Nations provides to the international community public goods, or benefits that are non-excludable and nonrival. Public goods provided by the UN include enhanced security and responses to 'problems without passports,' such as environmental damage and the spread of deadly viruses. States have delegated public goods provision to the UN with the understanding that some problems, particularly those with wide-reaching global implications, are most efficiently addressed by a centralized and independent organization (Abbott and Snidal 1998). Yet the UN faces several collective action problems that hinder its ability to provide public goods. First, because the goods the UN provides are nonexcludable, their provision is subject to free-riding: some countries enjoy the benefits of the UN's efforts without contributing to their production. This leads to under-funding and underprovision of goods. Second and relatedly, some states choose not to support public goods out of domestic concerns and a desire to maintain sovereignty over policy. To analyze the extent to which collective action problems affect the UN, we consider two of the UN's core activities: peacekeeping and facilitating global responses to public health crises. In the case of peacekeeping, the UN is fairly successful in centralizing its public goods

provision and garnering contributions from its members, though it consistently experiences shortfalls in personnel and finances. Coordinating responses to global health crises is more difficult for the UN.

It is not always clear why countries choose not to contribute to public goods provided by the UN – are they free-riding on the efforts of others, or are they constrained from contributing by domestic politics? Research can do more to identify the motivations behind states contributing and not contributing to public goods. We conclude the essay by suggesting several areas in which researchers can continue to assess collective action by the UN.

The Provision of UN Peacekeeping

Peacekeeping is a good example of the collective action dynamic within the functioning of the UN. Peacekeeping produces a number of outcomes that can be considered public goods, such as regional security, promotion of democracy, mitigating humanitarian and refugee crises, and preventing conflict escalation (see Newton et al., this forum). States have invested fairly heavily in peacekeeping, as it comprises by far the largest expenditure of the UN. Its 2020–21 budget of $6.58 billion was more than double the amount approved for the UN's regular budget of a little more than $3 billion (United Nations 2019a, 2019b). Peacekeeping has proven to be an effective way for the international community to mitigate violence (Walter, Howard, and Fortna 2020; Hultman, Kathman, and Shannon 2019). Moreover, it is a cost-effective alternative to unilateral intervention for states (Howard 2017; GAO 2018; Hultman, Kathman, and Shannon 2019).

The success of peacekeeping depends heavily on voluntary contributions of finances and uniformed personnel by member states. While the UN can compel its members to contribute to collective security through the Security Council, peacekeeping is not an area where the UN is likely to force members to contribute. Yet, we do observe states consistently supporting the public good of peacekeeping, and many scholars have identified factors that lead states to contribute. While states often participate in peacekeeping for private benefits (Bove and Elia 2011; Gaibulloev et al. 2015; Kathman and Melin 2017; Passmore 2020; Uzonyi 2015), there is ample evidence that states support peacekeeping out of a genuine desire to contribute to public goods. The UN tends to send missions to harder cases and more severe conflicts (see Fortna 2008; Gilligan and Stedman 2003; Newton et al. in this forum), and in crises reflecting the organizational goals of the UN (Beardsley and Schmidt 2012). Gaibulloev et al. (2009) find that financial contributions are driven mostly by states' obligations under the UN's assessment scale, while non-UN peacekeeping is funded largely in response to the

private interests of select states. Personnel contributions are likewise often driven by public goods incentives, such as a commitment to democratic and humanitarian norms (Andersson 2002; Perkins and Neumeyer 2008) and a willingness to mitigate severe conflict (Bove and Elia 2011). These findings bode well for the collective action behind peacekeeping. They suggest the UN is an appropriate body for addressing conflicts that might otherwise be ignored and that the UN is largely effective at rallying broad collective support from states for such operations.

Yet recent studies reveal that peacekeeping is not without problems of production. The UN does not have a centralized standing army, but relies on voluntary personnel and financial contributions from members. This model has led to under-provision of both personnel and financing. Between 1990 and 2010, peacekeeping operations experienced an average monthly personnel shortfall of 21.6% (Passmore, Shannon, and Hart 2018: 366). Financial shortfalls have also plagued operations, where the budget has experienced arrears in excess of $1 billion consistently since the mid-1990s (Passmore, Shannon, and Nadeau, n.d.: 27). What is not readily apparent is: why do such shortfalls occur, and are the shortfalls the result of deliberate free-riding and shirking of the public good? We have some evidence of free-riding, as Passmore, Shannon, and Hart (2018) find that a greater number of contributors to a mission and a greater number of states contiguous to the conflict country creates larger overall shortfalls in personnel provision (see also Shimizu and Sandler 2002). But much remains to be uncovered regarding the decisions of individual states to shirk their commitments to peacekeeping.

Not only can researchers explore the determinants of free-riding behaviour in peacekeeping, they can also uncover the factors that make states more likely to support the public good. This can potentially inform collective action efforts in other areas by the UN. Studies can consider the role of powerful states such as the permanent five members of the UN Security Council (P5) as agents to rally contributions from others, particularly since the P5 have an outsized role in UN politics. They might also consider how less powerful players work behind the scenes and use institutional channels to support public goods. For instance, as Binder (this forum) points out, elected African members to the Security Council have used their influence to compel peacekeeping involvement in civil wars in Africa (Carnegie and Mikulaschek 2020). This is perhaps not surprising to astute observers of Security Council politics, who note that elected members have just as much power to put peacekeeping on the agenda as do the P5 (Allen and Yuen, this forum). It is worth learning more about how actors with private incentives to coordinate peacekeeping and other public goods strategically use the Security Council to pursue those interests. Finally, scholars can explore the political dynamics of personnel recruitment amid mission

establishment, and how the perceived payoff of peacekeeping contributions affects future contributions.

Emerging Issues: Public Health Promotion through Responding to Global Pandemics

The UN faces many of the same collective action problems in promoting global public health that it does in providing peacekeeping, and in fact, the challenges may be even more severe in the realm of public health. Compared to peacekeeping, the promotion and governance of global public health works through a broader network of organizations and actors. In cases of public health emergencies, the UN coordinates global responses to disease outbreaks through its specialized agency the World Health Organization (WHO) under the guidance of International Health Regulations (IHR) (Worsnop 2017).[14] The WHO itself has a less centralized structure than the UN's organization for peacekeeping, with numerous autonomous field offices to coordinate. Generally speaking, the more actors to coordinate, the more difficult the provision of the public good. Moreover, the World Health Organization does not have much power to compel countries to follow public health guidelines. The IHR give legally binding international rules for reporting serious public health events to the WHO, which feed into the organization's functions as a central depository that gathers and disseminates information. But the WHO does not have the power to independently monitor disease outbreaks, nor does it give financial assistance to countries for surveillance of public health problems.

During an infectious disease outbreak, an important global collective good is information regarding the source, spread, and severity of the outbreak. The coronavirus pandemic reveals the weaknesses of UN-brokered efforts to provide such a public good, and the decisions of states not to contribute. Like most international collective action efforts, there are no sanctions for countries who do not comply with directives of international institutions regarding public health. For example, China did not allow the WHO to investigate Hubei province during a key early phase of the COVID-19 outbreak (Buranyi 2020). This fits a general pattern where states often do not comply with organizational directives to report outbreaks (Youde 2015). Many states also did not follow the trade, travel, and other advisories from the WHO on the transmission of COVID-19 (Davies and Wehnam 2020). Lacking a centralized structure, resources, and autonomy, the WHO did not respond strongly to states' resistance to follow its COVID-19 advisories (Van Hecke, Fuhr, and Wolfs 2021). Some argue

[14]The WHO has declared six public health emergencies of international concern (PHEICs) since 2009.

that the WHO was similarly weak in its response to the Ebola outbreak in West Africa in 2014 (Moon et.al 2015; Youde 2018).

The primary reason the WHO and the UN have trouble addressing public health crises such as COVID-19 is that UN members have not given the organization sufficient resources to do so. It has been suggested that the WHO do more to independently gather information on public health crises and disseminate necessary information about state responses (Davies and Wenham 2020; Kickbusch and Leung 2020). However, the global health regime lacks the necessary funding. The WHO has a paltry annual operating budget, 'smaller than that of most university hospitals, and split among a dizzying array of public health and research projects,' (Buranyi 2020; see also Youde 2015). For comparison, in 2014 the WHO budget was $3.97 billion, while the peacekeeping budget was $8.6 billion. Moreover, most of this funding is non-discretionary, as much of the World Health Organization's budget comes from voluntary contributions by states for specific projects (Youde 2015).

Instead of strengthening support for the WHO during the Covid-19 pandemic, states have targeted the WHO in an unprecedented manner (Buryani 2020). Countries have politicized the organization, and have largely chosen to preserve their sovereignty rather than delegate to international institutions and contribute to public health as a collective good (Davies and Wenham 2020). What remains to be seen is if and how the pandemic will affect overall collective action by the UN. While some observers believe the pandemic is a short-lived disruption to global order (Drezner 2020), others predict the pandemic will profoundly shift the distribution of power and global politics (Campbell and Doshi 2020), which may alter if and how the UN provides public goods. For example, leading countries may be unable or unwilling to compel others to contribute. This could happen, for instance, if the pandemic erodes the United States' soft power. Conversely, if countries such as China are empowered by the pandemic (Campbell and Doshi 2020), they may step up to support UN-provided collective goods where the U.S. does not.[15] And another possibility is that efforts at collective action outside of the UN receives a boost. An interesting line of research therefore is to explore if the COVID-19 pandemic is an inflection point for international cooperation across a number of collective action efforts, such as climate change and the promotion of human rights.

One consideration that scholars should make in studying collective action after the pandemic is that resistance to globalization and institutions was occurring well before the pandemic. It may be that the pandemic has only exacerbated, rather than independently caused, a backlash to international institutions and collective action. It is important to better

[15]See Youde (2018) for an analysis of China's role in global health governance.

integrate nationalism and identity into international relations theory to understand the backlash to international cooperation before and after the pandemic (McNamara and Newman 2020). Scholars should similarly consider how nationalism and identity influence the decision of countries to support collective action efforts by the UN (Copelovitch and Pevehouse 2019).

Like the decisions of states to contribute to UN peacekeeping, an area of research is to further explore the decisions of states to delegate their public health policies and responses to organizations like the WHO (Davies and Wenham 2020). There is consistently a two-level game at work, where domestic politics constrains the decisions and ability of states to cooperate with international collective action efforts (Putnam 1988), and this was made apparent by states' resistance to pandemic cooperation. But while the backlash against international institutions is quite visible, states do often comply with global health regulations, and such efforts deserve more attention (Youde 2018). To gain insight into the willingness of states to cooperate with international health regulations, one might explore the voluntary invitations of states to allow the WHO to conduct joint evaluation exercises of their compliance with IHR standards (Davies and Wenham 2020). We can then get a sense of if there are unique conditions or circumstances that make states more or less likely to cooperate in the realm of global public health, or if similar factors affect public health cooperation as they do climate change, peacekeeping, and other collective action efforts. This could then inform scholars and policymakers of the best ways to pursue additional global health efforts, such as more independent evaluations by the WHO of disease outbreaks.

Conclusion

The UN possesses many institutional features that allow it to produce public goods more efficiently than states acting unilaterally. We have observed states delegating to and supporting the UN's efforts to provide the public good of peacekeeping, though shortfalls in personnel and finances do plague peacekeeping. On the other hand, global efforts to provide the public good of health and infectious disease outbreak response are more challenging, as the coronavirus pandemic has revealed. However, there are lessons that we can take from the provision of one public good to another. Peacekeeping is arguably a more successfully provided public good because UN members have created a centralized structure in the Security Council for making decisions surrounding the use of peacekeeping, and in the Department for Peace Operations (DPO) for the deployment of peacekeeping. UN members have also given peacekeeping a robust budget. Contrast this with the World Health Organization, which is a more fragmented

organization with many autonomous regional offices. The WHO has a very small budget, and little ability to compel UN states to comply with its directives, such as providing information surrounding public health outbreaks. To more effectively provide public health as a public good, UN members might look to the successes in the provision of peacekeeping. Researchers can also do more to uncover the motivations of states to support public goods in these issue areas. Overall, many opportunities exist to expand our understanding of political dynamics within and between states that reduce the organizational efficacy of the UN, particularly as international problems spread and threaten global stability.

The UN and the Civilian Protection Norm

Lisa Hultman

The Civilian Protection Norm

For 75 years, the United Nations (UN) has been a central actor in promoting international peace and stability. During much of its lifetime, the UN has focused on stability in the international system (based on the state sovereignty norm) – but since the end of the Cold War, we have witnessed a shift from a state-centric focus on international security to a more civilian-centric focus on human security (see Nomikos & Villa, this forum). Along with this, a new norm of civilian protection has merged. This protection norm is manifested in multiple policy developments within the UN, most notably the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine, the Protection of Civilians (POC) in UN peace operations, and the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda. These are often referred to as separate norms that have developed in parallel and/or conjunction (Rhoads and Welsh 2019; Hunt 2019; Bellamy and Davies 2019). I prefer to view them as policies reflecting a more general protection norm. While these policies all have wider ambitions reflecting a wider normative content than the focus described here, the political agreement and much of the implementation of these policies has centred on the common feature of protection from physical violence. This works as a cross-fertilizer across the three fields and strengthens the civilian protection norm.

In this essay, I scrutinize the extent to which these policies – and in effect also the more general protection norm – influence the behaviour of the UN Security Council (UNSC). We can understand norms as 'a standard of appropriate behaviour for actors with a given identity' (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998: 891). The protection norm is thus an agreement on the appropriateness of international action to protect civilians from violence. The

strength of this norm can be defined by international concordance with the norm, as well as the level of institutionalization (Ben-Josef Hirsch and Dixon 2020) – represented by the three policies explored here, and the political processes around them. While I judge the protection norm to be rather strong, this does not always equal norm compliance if we consider how the international community responds to civilian atrocities. I briefly describe how these policies developed and review the literature on UNSC responses to various protection needs that correspond with the three policies. While these policies have developed within the UN, and to a great extent been advocated from within the organization, it is possible to observe effects beyond UN headquarters. The last section of this essay reviews the wider impact of the protection norm and discusses limitations in its application that demand further critical attention from the academic community.

R2P: A Joint Responsibility to Stop Atrocities

The Responsibility to Protect (R2P) has been described as 'the most dramatic normative development of our time' (Thakur and Weiss 2009). It is the idea that governments have the primary responsibility to protect their own citizens, but when proven unwilling or unable to do so, the international community has a responsibility to protect civilians (Bellamy 2009). The International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), initiated by the Canadian government, outlined the concept and operationalization of R2P, building on the already existing idea of 'responsible sovereignty' (Acharya 2013). UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and the main proponents of R2P made a significant effort to gather sufficient support and, despite disapproval by several states, R2P was adopted as a principle by the General Assembly in the World Summit 2005 (Bellamy 2009).

R2P has brought about a new form of 'politics of protection', with visible effects in the 2011 UNSC authorization of the military intervention in Libya, and in the robust response of the UN peace operation in Côte d'Ivoire to the escalating violence following the presidential election (Bellamy and Williams 2011). The Libyan intervention, in particular, is often seen as the direct result of R2P. It also spurred debate around the principles of R2P: while the primary goal, under R2P, must be to protect civilians, the NATO members seemingly shifted towards the ultimate goal of ousting President Gaddafi (Bachman 2015). This time period has also witnessed a number of severe atrocities where the R2P has not been invoked. Whereas the non-response to the Syrian crisis illustrates the limitations of R2P in the situations with strong P5 interests, the international discourse indicates the continued robustness of the norm as such (Welsh 2019).

In a way, R2P is the policy that has had the least visible direct impact on the actual behaviour of the UNSC. However, if we think of R2P as a

manifestation of a more general protection norm, it is possible to ask whether humanitarian concerns more generally shape the responses by the UN. One finding is that the severity of a humanitarian crisis (alongside sunk costs in the form of previous international involvement) increases the coerciveness of any UN response (Binder 2015). The number of deaths further increase UN attention in the form of UN resolutions (Frederking and Patane 2017) and UN intervention (Beardsley and Schmidt 2012), which can be taken as evidence in favour of the UN acting to support civilian protection.

POC: Deploying Where Civilians Are at Risk

The concept of Protection of Civilians derives from the same underlying normative development as R2P and has evolved in parallel, but refers to the obligations of UN peace operations to protect civilians from physical violence (Hunt 2019). The UNSC first authorized a UN mission to use force for the purpose of protecting civilians in 1999, when violence against civilians was escalating in Sierra Leone. The mandate was justified with the need to offer protection to innocent civilians, but also with reference to 'women and children' – a common trope for mobilizing support for civilian protection (Carpenter 2005). It has since become common practice in UN peacekeeping and the Department of Peace Operations have developed guidelines. Critics of R2P, like China, have accepted and endorsed POC as a useful 'framework for action' (Shesterinina 2016). However, POC through peacekeeping can sometimes mimic R2P action, if government consent is weak as in Côte d'Ivoire in 2011 (Bellamy & Williams 2011), or be justified with the language of R2P, as in the case of Darfur in 2006 (de Waal 2007).

Although POC as a policy is geared towards guiding the priorities and activities undertaken by peacekeeping operations once deployed, it also affects the expectation on which conflicts the UN should engage with. Research suggests that peacekeeping is more likely when there are high levels of violence against civilians – in particularly after the shift to Protection of Civilians mandates in 1999 (Hultman 2013). However, the implementation of the POC agenda comes with strategic considerations. When the UN has authorized a peace operation with a POC mandate, violence against civilians does influence the deployment patterns of UN bases – but with a bias towards violence by rebel groups (Fjelde, Hultman, and Nilsson 2019). Moreover, both the language in UNSC mandates and the conditions on the ground tend to favour protection of certain groups of civilians over others (Shesterinina and Job 2016) and it furthermore varies how much troops prioritize protection (Bode and Karlsrud 2019). Taken together, it seems like the general norm of civilian protection draws the attention of

the UNSC to situations where civilians are most at risk, although with certain limitations.

WPS: Putting the Spotlight on Sexual Violence

The WPS took shape with UNSC Resolution 1325 in 2000, which was the outcome of pressure from transnational women's advocacy groups together with work within the UN (True 2016). While 1325 has a much broader ambition than only protection, the WPS agenda has highlighted the issue of protection of civilians from conflict-related sexual violence, reinforced by the developments of R2P and POC (Hultman and Sellström 2018). This has created almost a 'fetishization of sexual violence' (Meger 2016), as well as a narrative that has excluded vulnerable groups such as men exposed to sexual violence (Carpenter 2005). Nevertheless, this framing of sexual violence as a threat to international peace and security is one factor that has enabled the international spread of the norm (Davies and True 2017).

The WPS Agenda has spurred reactions by the SC when conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) is reported. For example, CRSV increases the chance that the SC issues a resolution in relation to a specific conflict, thereby putting the spotlight on the ongoing violence (Benson and Gizelis 2020). It furthermore increases the likelihood that the SC decides to deploy a peacekeeping operation to a conflict (Hultman and Johansson 2017; Kreutz and Cardenas 2017). In the subsequent step, once there is a decision to deploy an operation, conflicts with reported CRSV are more likely to get peacekeeping mandates that include gender-mainstreaming (Kreft 2017). WPS has also been integrated into peacekeeping, with several positive developments but also severe remaining challenges, e.g. regarding sexual violence and abuse by peacekeepers (Karim and Beardsley 2017).

A Global Norm beyond the UN?

I have argued that these three major policy developments – R2P, POC, and WPS – all share some common ground in a more general norm of civilian protection. Research indicates that the norm has had some impact on the overall behaviour of the UN, although with limitations since UNSC member state interests ultimately play a significant role (see Binder and Allen & Yuen in this forum) and collective action problems may inhibit effective implementation (see Passmore & Shannon in this forum). While the norm has been institutionalized within the UN, the question is to what extent it has spread beyond UN Headquarters. The UNSC can serve to legitimize behaviour by other actors in world politics (see Chapman in this

forum). It is possible to identify at least partial expressions of the protection norm and the three policies beyond the UN, indicating an ongoing process of international socialization (cf. Finnemore and Sikkink 1998). Here I will just briefly mention a few examples that indicate such a process and its limitations.

The American public displays support for humanitarian intervention justified by moral obligations and concern for civilian harm (Kreps and Maxey 2018). However, geo-strategic interests still trump humanitarian concerns in determining actual US intervention (Lee and Ducci 2020). Regional organizations such as African Union and European Union are incorporating the language of 'protection of civilians' into their military doctrines, indicating norm alignment with the UN; however, the implementation of these at the operational level still differ significantly (Dembinski and Schott 2013). AU has even expressed commitment to R2P, but with a lack of corresponding action it can best be understood as organized hypocrisy (Zähringer and Brosig 2020). Moreover, while NATO talks about protection of civilians, it refers primarily to minimizing harm from their own forces, and not the active protection of civilians from armed actors as suggested by the UN framework (Keenan and Beadle 2015). When it comes to the impact of the WPS, there are some visible effects, such as international mediation being more likely in the face of CRSV (Nagel 2019) and regional organizations being more likely than the UN to respond to wartime sexual violence (Kreutz and Cardenas 2017). One important aspect of WPS is the adoption of National Action Plans to implement UNSC Resolution 1325. While there is progress, many states have chosen to frame the problem as one of making 'war safe for women', rather than demilitarization, which runs counter to the original idea of 1325 (Shepherd 2016).

While we have learned much about these developments and their effects (and this essay is not able to do justice to the whole research field), it is a normative development still in the making – with progress and setbacks. As a research field we therefore need to continue asking questions about the status of the protection norm and the conditions under which it does – or does not – influence the behaviour of states and major security organizations. Future research should also explore further possible tensions that arise with a strict focus on civilian protection from physical violence, that may be less effective for protecting civilians (Johnson 2019). A potential risk of the positive development towards a protection norm is that it draws attention away from preventive action and more fundamental political transformations that are necessary to truly support human security.

The UN and the Harmonization of Actions: Common Conjectures and the Role of the UN Security Council in Legitimation of Foreign Policy

Terrence L. Chapman

What do we know about how the United Nations (UN) legitimizes behaviour in world affairs? At least since Inis Claude's seminal essay in the early pages of *International Organization* (1966), scholars have noted the UN Security Council's (UNSC) role in legitimizing the use of force and other foreign policy initiatives. More recently, a wave of scholarship has examined various causal arguments for this process. These arguments cover a range of theoretical perspectives, from rationalist to constructivist. But I argue that they agree about much more than is typically acknowledged. Specifically, all deal with influencing actors' beliefs about future events and whether those events fit within common understandings of the acceptable use of force and in world politics. They all either explicitly or implicitly argue that Security Council decisions influence expectations about the consequences of foreign policy as well as shared understandings about how relevant actors are likely to respond. This process of belief coordination allows actors at multiple levels to condition their behaviour on better informed expectations of others' behaviour.

To develop this argument, I summarize prevailing explanations of the Security Council's ability to legitimize foreign policy. I then discuss why the common threads of these explanations are similar to how game theorists conceptualize the common understandings that allow actors to coordinate behaviour.

In short, equilibrium strategies are said to be 'common conjectures.' Actors choose their best response to other actors' equilibrium strategies, and those strategies are common knowledge. This should not be confused with 'complete information,' which assumes that actors know the state of the world or 'types' of other actors.[16] Rather, the common conjectures assumption is what allows us to think about an equilibrium — a situation in which no actor has an incentive to deviate from its strategy given all other actors equilibrium strategies — in strategic settings that have multiple equilibria. For instance, when driving in the U.S., driving on the right side of the road is the best response, given the expectation that opposing traffic will

[16]Types are differentiated by the value of parameters in their utility functions. For example, a resolved type is typically modeled as facing lower costs for action than an irresolute type. States of the world also influence utility functions. For instance, a country may be in severe crisis or moderate crisis, where the level of severity affects actors' payoffs.

drive on the right side of the road. But other arrangements are possible.[17] In many countries drivers drive on the left side of the road. Or we could drive on the right on Mondays, Wednesday, and Fridays, but drive on the left all other days. The latter seems unnecessarily complicated, but is a possible arrangement as long as everyone understands what others will do.

How do drivers know which side to drive on? It is a common conjecture, but one created by laws establishing the correct side of the road to drive on. Laws, then, coordinate behaviour by influencing shared understandings (see Basu 2018). Similarly, high-profile decisions of the Security Council can be thought of as one source of information shaping shared understandings in international affairs. These understandings are more complicated than what is required to avoid head-on collisions because actors have many different, often competing motivations in international relations. And because states may reject the legitimacy of Security Council decisions because they conflict with their goals, not everyone will play by the coordinated equilibrium. Just as some drivers will violate the rules of the road in order to achieve specific goals, like getting to work faster, some states will openly violate established norms when it suits them. Nonetheless, as actors search for their best response to unfolding international events, they often look around for clues as to how other actors will behave. Decision-making on the Security Council, which reflects the preferences of states with considerable military and economic influence, are useful clues.

Theories of Legitimation

Legitimation is the process of declaring a law or behaviour appropriate or acceptable. How does an international institution develop the authority to declare the use of force and other foreign policy initiatives legitimate? One answer lies in the UN Charter itself. Chapter VII grants the Security Council the sole authority to pass resolutions regarding the 'maintenance of international peace and security' and those resolutions are binding on all members. Some legal scholars point to such language to argue that legitimacy emanates from 'rational legal authority' (Franck 1990). And there is more than a grain of truth to this claim, in so much as the law coordinates beliefs about appropriateness and the behaviour of others (Basu 2018).

This perspective is related to theories about symbolic legitimacy. For instance, Hurd argues that though the Security Council's legitimacy has waxed and waned over time, its legitimacy inheres in the shared belief that the institution is worth listening to. As Hurd puts it, 'When an actor believes a rule is legitimate, compliance is no longer motivated by the simple fear of retribution, or by a calculation of self-interest, but instead by an internal

[17]This example borrows from Wagner (2007) and many others.

sense of moral obligation: control is legitimate to the extent that it is approved or regarded as 'right' (Hurd 1999 quoting Suchman 1995, 574 and Habermas (1979)). Hurd argues that beginning with the drafting of the UN Charter, the process of establishing and maintaining legitimacy has been part a central part of the UN mission (2007; see also Barnett and Finnemore 1999). In this sense, legitimacy is very much a social construct that resides in the eyes of outside observers. The Council and its constituent states must actively work to maintain its legitimacy within the community of states.

Franck's (1990) position is rooted in the compliance pull of international law, which establishes expectations about how states should behave. For Hurd (2007), the Council's legitimacy stems from its ability to persuade, the prominence its afforded in the UN Charter, and even its procedures, which aim to establish 'fairness' in deliberation. And Claude, writing in the 1960s, saw the Council's legitimacy as a direct product of the political process of collective decision-making. Voeten (2005) surveys these explanations and finds them all wanting. He points out that the Security Council is not a majoritarian institution. The permanent members (P-5) hold privileged positions and disproportionate voting power. Thus, legitimacy cannot be explained by the Council's representativeness. Second, Voeten argues procedural fairness is unlikely to explain the power of legitimation, as outside observers know very little about the procedures of the Council and because of its unrepresentativeness compared to the General Assembly. Third, Voeten rejects the argument that rational legal authority explains the Council's legitimacy since it is not a court and its decision-making process is inherently political, not relying on established legal principles or precedent. Fourth, Voeten writes 'it is widely recognized that the SC falls far short of Habermasian conditions for effective communicative action' (2005, 537), which casts doubt on explanations that suggest the process of deliberation explains the legitimation.

Voeten opts for an explanation based in the logic of elite pacts. This argument sees the Council's influence stemming from its role as a coalition of great powers, similar to the Concert of Europe. Despite reform proposals that criticize the structure of the Council as an outdated representation of the distribution of power, the P-5 remain some of the only states with nuclear arsenals and, perhaps more importantly, they collectively possess considerable economic and military tools for the *projection* of power. As such, they help coordinate expectations about the limits of unilateral action and about the likelihood of open, armed conflict with each other. Consent from the Council signals that a given foreign policy is seen as acceptable to this coalition of great powers (as well the elected rotating members), whereas opposition or failure to garner consent signals that there is likely to be at least some opposition.

The elite pact explanation invokes the notion of a 'focal point' equilibrium that is self-enforcing as well as the logic of signalling to foreign and domestic publics (Voeten 2005, 543-544). Chapman (2007, 2012), Fang (2008), and Thompson (2006, 2009) expand on the latter. Fang argues that the Security Council can provide information about a leader's bias to domestic audiences. In a similar argument, Chapman suggests that the Council can help domestic audiences overcome informational asymmetries about the likely consequences of foreign policy. Domestic audiences tend to be risk averse when it comes to foreign policy but are less informed than their leadership about its likely consequences. The Council's decisions can provide information that affects domestic support for foreign policy. Thompson makes an informational argument focused on the signalling role the Council plays for *foreign*, rather than domestic audiences. Each of these accounts situates legitimation in its ability of the Council to convey information to audiences that helps shape their beliefs. In turn, actors can better condition their responses on the likely responses of other actors.

It need not be the case that Security Council decision-making alters observers' beliefs in the same way across the globe, or that there is a uniform acceptance of Security Council legitimacy, in order for this process to operate. But the Council's ability to even partially coordinate expectations about international events can avoid the worst 'head-on' collisions. Indeed, Voeten (2005) concludes that perhaps the greatest success of the Security Council is the avoidance of major power war in the post-WWII period. The public signal of positions taken in the Council, whether supportive or oppositional, is a good indication of what powerful actors think about a foreign policy. And by extension, it is a signal of what those states' allies and client states likely think. Thus, 'conjectures' about others' strategies are likely to be more widely shared when the Council publicly deliberates or votes on a resolution.

Common Conjectures and Cooperation

Repeated games allow theorists to develop insights about the prospects for cooperation in social settings in which actors will interact for the foreseeable future. Repeated games are especially useful for thinking about the emergence of norms (Bendor and Swistak 2001) because they model stable long-run behaviour as well as reciprocal punishment of deviating from that behaviour. Norm enforcement is the collective punishment of deviations from norms (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998). In repeated games, stable, long-run equilibria are possible only because of shared understandings about punishments for deviations from that behaviour.

Yet because common conjectures are assumed, the theory of repeated games is not focused on where they come from. One can think of these as

based in the sum total of an actor's experiences, the information they receive in real time, and any information they receive about what is likely to happen in the future. They constitute widely shared understandings about how the game will be played. Scholars of norms use a very similar definition but include a moral caveat: norms are widely shared expectations about how actors *ought* to behave (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998; see also Hultman in this forum). Social expectations are therefore central to the identification of norms (Bicchieri 2017). These social expectations can come from many places, sometimes arising from informal understandings based on religion, culture, or the guidance of authority figures. Hultman (this forum) discusses how several UN initiatives have strengthened norms about protecting civilians.

Social expectations may also arise from the codification of understandings. For instance, Morrow (2012, 2014) argues that laws of war are a way of formalizing, and thus strengthening, conjectures about acceptable conduct in war. Or, perhaps codification establishes conjectures about how everyone will behave, much like the rules of the road establish what side we drive on. These common conjectures structure actors' understandings of reciprocal punishment, which then condition equilibrium cooperation over the ethical treatment of prisoners, proscriptions against targeting civilians, and other standards of appropriate behaviour.

How can Security Council decision-making inform common conjectures, and what does this have to do with legitimation? Recall that theories of legitimation focus on the role the Council plays in structuring *beliefs* among diverse actors, ranging from foreign leaders to domestic audiences. Those beliefs may be about the appropriateness of foreign policy, the likely response of major powers and other states, or about the possible outcomes of foreign policies. By shaping beliefs, the Security Council can inform expectations about what is likely to happen on and off the 'equilibrium path.' That is, they can influence shared understandings of long-run behaviour and the punishments for straying too far from this behaviour. Behavioural responses may vary depending on the actor but the process of legitimation emerges from the role the Council plays in structuring widely shared beliefs, allowing for coordination amongst outside actors on acceptance or rejection of foreign policies.

The UN at 75 and Looking Forward

Looking back at 75 years of UN history, one is struck both by how perceptions of the institution have changed in response to political events as well as the endurance of its legitimation role. Voeten (2005) argues that the rise in perceived legitimacy after the Cold War can be explained by the nature of the unipolar moment: when the U.S. emerged in the position of sole

'superpower,' actors needed guidance as to what to expect. The 'elite pact' of the Security Council provided that guidance, allowing for coordination on notions of acceptable use of unipolar force.

Some see the UN's status lessened as a result of 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq, where the U.S. proceeded despite public rebukes from veto-wielding members of the Security Council. Yet in a testament to its relatively unique ability to shape expectations, states continue to consult the Council over a range of issues – from civil wars to non-proliferation to humanitarian crises – and Security Council decisions continue to be high profile. How likely is it that the Council's legitimation role persists? Existing theories provide some guidance. First, to the extent that the P-5 remain some of the most economically and militarily powerful countries in the world, their collective decision-making will inform notions of appropriate behaviour in the international system and expectations about responses to international events. Notably, this is not because the Security Council is especially representative (see Binder, this forum), but rather because its permanent members have the capabilities to materially influence other countries and coordinate interventions, even in geographically distant locales. They have the power to enforce norms. Second, this ability is likely to persist even when public opinion about the UN or the Security Council turns negative. This is because the Security Council's ability to legitimize foreign policy does not rely on observers believing the institution is infallible or worthy of adulation in a purely moral sense. Instead, it relies on the body's ability to shape expectations about what is acceptable as well as reactions to violations of those limits.

The Security Council's ability to shape expectations might decline if a state or states, outside of the P-5, gained the ability to project power through economic or military coercion while some, or all, of the P-5 states saw those abilities diminish. In such a case, the ability to shape expectations might gradually shift to the outside power(s) and we would witness the legitimation function of the Security Council decline. But since the U.S.'s prime competitor, China, remains a member of the Council, such a scenario seems unlikely. A more plausible scenario might be that as China increases its power projection capabilities, it begins to eschew institutional participation through the Council altogether, opting instead for unilateral initiatives or action through regional security arrangements like the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. In that case, the legitimation function of the Council might decrease and we would see the emergence of a 'legitimation rivalry,' whereby some actors look to the Council for cues while others look to China and its preferred institutions. Indeed, we may be witnessing this subtle change as China seeks to bring more states under its influence. Yet patterns in consultation of the Security Council suggest that it remains

a key source for the establishment of common conjectures in world affairs (see Mahmood & Tucker, this forum).

The Content of United Nations Engagement: U.N. Resolutions and Speeches as Frontiers for Empirical Study

Zuhaib Mahmood and Colin Tucker

Over the past decade, there has been a growing interest in analyzing new sources of information regarding both the specific content[18] and the broader patterns[19] of international engagement with the United Nations. One source of rapid advancement has been the proliferation and analysis of new data sources: from evaluating UN peacekeeping effectiveness via micro-level data on UN Peacekeeping operations[20] to measurements of state interests derived from UN General Assembly voting[21], examples abound of how scholars have leveraged these data sources into a deeper understanding of the UN and international politics more broadly.

In this essay, we overview two such sources of data: resolutions passed by the United Nations Security Council, and speeches delivered by the United Nations. These types of data sources provide both a *measure of* and a *window into* the content of member state behaviour and the broader United Nations. This content, in part, can include the norms and objectives around which member states (and the broader institution) harmonize their actions—particularly those which are either unspoken or continually evolving (Chapman, this forum). Especially given the richness of the data sources themselves, speeches and resolutions serve as a frontier for understanding both institutional priorities and individual member state priorities. This provides a range of opportunity for the future of understanding the United Nations and its role in world politics.

To this end, we briefly review both sources of data, and how they have been used in the recent years in which they have been available. We also highlight gaps in both the data themselves—including highlighting recent

[18]For example, here we might include the way countries speak on certain issues (Baturo et al, 2017a; Pomeroy 2017), the selection of issues the UN Security Council takes on (Allen & Yuen 2020), and/or the particular category of action taken in a UN resolution (Beardsley 2013).
[19]For example, here we might include the number of speeches or meetings over time (Schönfeld et al, 2019), patterns of alignment in UN General Assembly voting (Voeten 2013), and/or the political correlates of where UN resolutions are authorized (Beardsley & Schmidt 2012).
[20]Kathman (2013)
[21]Bailey et al (2015)

and ongoing efforts in this data collection—as well as gaps in knowledge which these data can be used to answer. Finally, we point to areas where scholars can contribute in meaningful ways to both continued collection and use of this data.

Disaggregating *Behaviour* by Leveraging *Content*

Early work on disaggregating behaviour into *content* was primarily focused on targeted questions about the impact of UN behaviours. Beardsley (2013), for example, disaggregated resolutions into a gradient of behaviour based on their content: low-level actions (such as condemnations); medium-level actions (such as diplomacy and mediation); and higher-level actions (such as peacekeeping and use of force). While the primary goals of this work were not the data themselves, it does serve as an early example of how explicitly using the content of behaviour can lead to more concrete understandings of both the behaviour itself and the impact of it.[22]

In another example of leveraging content, Allen and Yuen (2014) find that as Permanent Five (P5) interest in conflict countries increase, UN peacekeeping operations are granted greater autonomy in how they conduct their operations—reflected in lesser regulation of operations within resolution text. This further highlights the complex process of harmonizing the interests of member states with even the smallest details of institutional output—in this case, the level of regulation of peacekeeping operations. This harmonization can serve as the basis for additional measurement: for example, Benson and Kathman (2014) show that the bias shown in resolutions through lauding and condemnation can be used to predict later authorization of peacekeeping forces, depending on fatalities for the lauded or condemned parties.[23] Hauenstein & Joshi (2020) provide a similar finding, where the level of attention paid to parties in a conflict (through words indicating condemnation; resource provision; and peacekeeping coordination) is related to an increased rate of peace agreement implementation.[24] Taken together, this line of work demonstrates the way in which scholars have been able to connect the *coordinated expression of* standards, opinions, and interests to more robust understandings of eventual behaviour.

[22]For example, his work was able to isolate condemnations as having little impact on a conflict's propensity for relapse, raising further questions about why they exist at all. His other work with this data included focused study on the effectiveness of diplomatic engagement on non-violent self-determination movements (Beardsley 2015) or on other civil wars occurring nearby (White, Cunningham, & Beardsley 2018).

[23]Their data is limited to a sample African conflicts, though it provides a promising design example to merge *content* and *behavior* via the text of UN Security Council resolutions.

[24]Their data is limited to the period 1989-2016, and further restricted to the 34 countries with peace agreements.

This expression of standards, opinions, and interests by the United Nations *writ large* has recently been even further disaggregated into similar expressions by individual state actors at the United Nations. Namely, the use of speech data at the United Nations provides a unique opportunity to zoom in to individual state preferences. In their efforts to do just that, Baturo (et al, 2017a) have collected one of the largest corpora of text on the United Nations to date: the text of speeches delivered by world leaders at the UN General Assembly, during General Debate.[25] This data contains a single speech per year, per country, with an average speech length per country of around 2572 words (IQR: [1954, 3043]).[26] Given the complexity of the data, this literature in its present form has primarily focused on revealed patterns from the data, ranging from understanding the substantive topics under discussion (and political determinants thereof),[27] to identifying 'semantic networks' within communities of nations with respect to discussion,[28] to a historical analysis of economic openness and the modern Liberal order.[29]

Beyond the UN General Debates, there have been recent efforts to collect additional corpora of text on the United Nations. For example, Pomeroy (2017) collects a more focused dataset specifically on speeches delivered at the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, providing scholars a uniquely specific lens to view a relatively new frontier in both international diplomacy and conflict. More recently, Schonfeld (et al, 2019) has introduced a corpus of United Nations Security Council speeches from 1995-2017, containing over 65,000 speeches over almost 4500 meetings. This data complements decades of ongoing work to more precisely understand how individual countries interact with the UN Security Council, and also the broader literature on the centrality of the UN security Council to international politics.[30] These data provide not only an opportunity to provide a higher resolution picture for the content of international politics, but also as a new way to measure international engagement with the UN specifically.[31]

[25]The data is available both as a web-browsing tool (http://ungd.smikhaylov.net/) and on Harvard Dataverse (https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/0TJX8Y)
[26]Data analysis done using R 4.0.3. (March 2021)
[27]Baturo et al (2017b)
[28]Gurciullo & Mikhaylov (2017)
[29]Kentikelenis & Voeten (2020)
[30]For example, the data show that speeches at the UN Security Council have increased over time, with a larger and larger share of those speeches belonging to non-P5 countries, especially in the past 5 years.
[31]For example, Czaika (2008) argue that diplomats can use the UN Security Council to attract development aid, showing that the number of speeches delivered at the UNSC by a given country is strongly related to the amount of aid dispersed to that country.

Opportunities and Future Directions

The rich content of both UN resolutions and UN speeches open up a vast space of opportunity for identifying and measuring politically relevant actors, concepts, and interests. For example as research on civil wars has begun to extend its focus beyond countries and increasingly to the civil war actors themselves, there are opportunities to map a similar level of granularity to both UN resolutions and UN speeches—for example, the condemnation of specific parties in a broader conflict. Similarly, the content of this text also provides a micro-level view of specific trends in how the UN in aggregate (via UN resolutions) mandates operations, and how individual member states (via UN speeches) perceive individual UN operations. Given the richness of the content for both speeches and resolutions, this provides an opportunity to track changing international norms by using the content of these mandates (Hultman, this forum; also see Newton et al., this forum). Finally, it provides an opportunity to track how countries frame conflicts and international events over time—be it individually (speeches) or as an aggregate (resolutions)—including the boundaries of acceptable discourse[32] or the emergence of new norms under which actions can potentially take place.[33]

Figures 9.1 and 9.2 provide insight into data translating these details in content into valuable information about the UN's tendencies over time with respect to civil conflicts.[34] Figure 9.1, for example, details the number of resolutions conveying condemnation or praise, distinguishing them as being directed towards either the government or rebel factions of a conflict. Two findings are immediate: (1) the Council has abstained from such sentiment until recently and (2) there appears to be a clear bias against rebel factions, reflected by the disproportionate number of condemnations towards rebels and lauding of governments. Drawing from the same project, Figure 9.2 provides a temporally disaggregated view of how peacekeeping mandates change over time, charting the frequency of different mandates at the *initial* stage of a UN peacekeeping operation and at the *fullest* (i.e. after mandates have been updated over time) stages. In both cases, we are able to highlight the value and potentially useful content present in the text of these resolutions, and how these can not only provide further insight into existing questions (such as the nature of UN peacekeeping operations), but also the opportunity to raise potential questions that were previously unknown.

Figure 9.3, for example, highlights another such puzzle drawn from data on United Nations General Assembly speeches. Namely, while total engagement with the General Debate topic at the UN General Assembly has

[32]Chapman, this forum
[33]Hultman, this forum
[34]Benson & Tucker (2022)

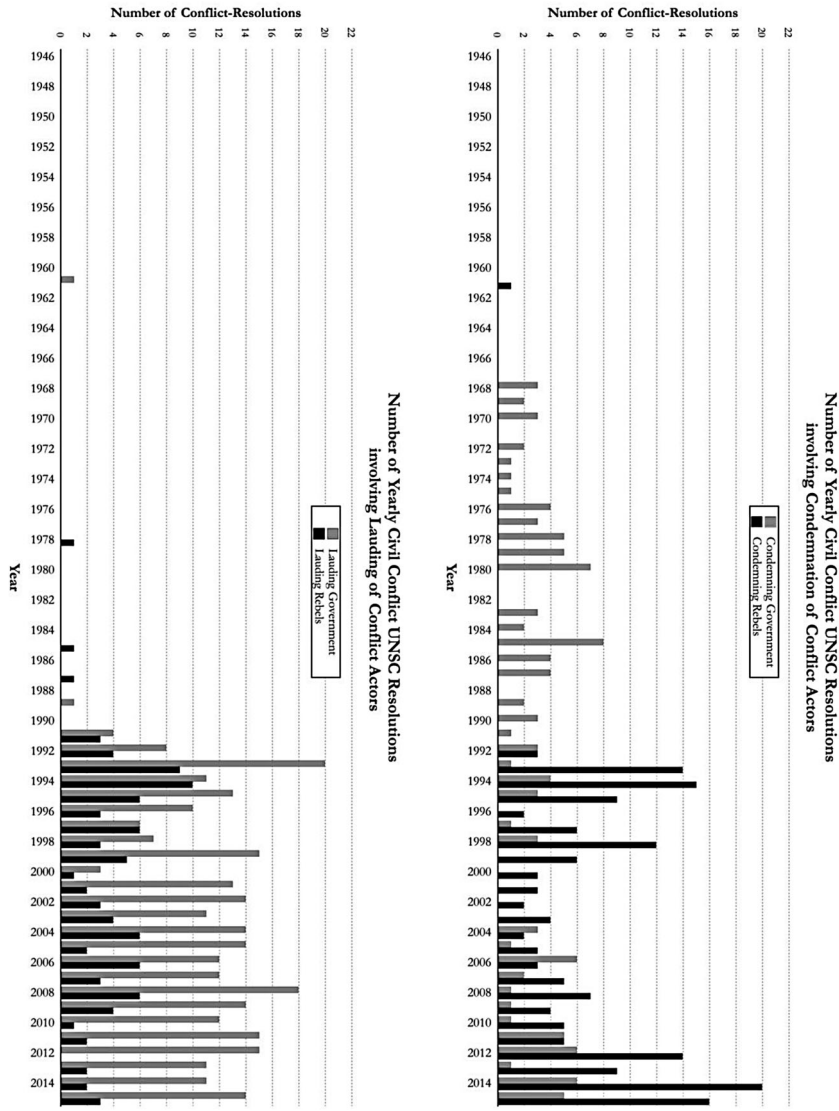

Figure 9.1. Condemnation or praise of government or rebels in civil conflicts, over time.

decreased over time (drawing on Baturo et al, 2017), total engagement with the UN General Assembly more broadly has *increased* over time.[35] This example highlights that even extremely simple characteristics of this content—in this case, simple word counts—can open avenues for further inquiry. In this case, these differences suggest a changing role of the UN

[35]Data on broader UN General Assembly engagement is drawn from Mahmood (2020)

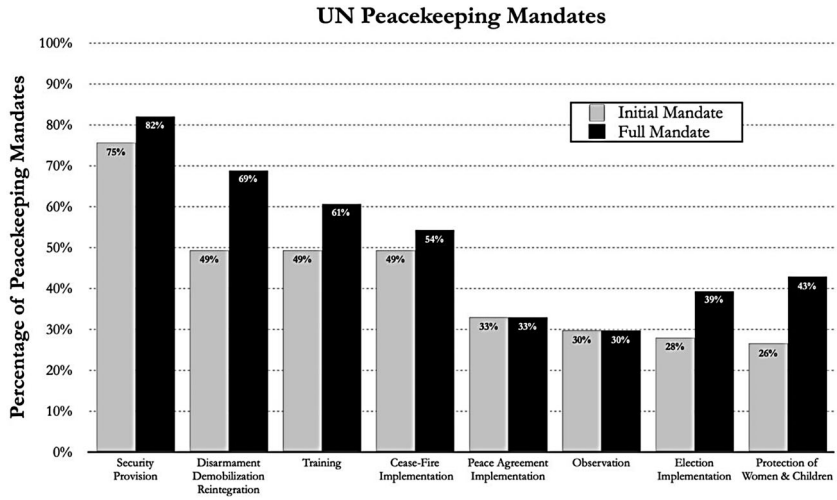

Figure 9.2. Comparing initial stages to full stages of peacekeeping missions across different categories of UN peacekeeping mandates.

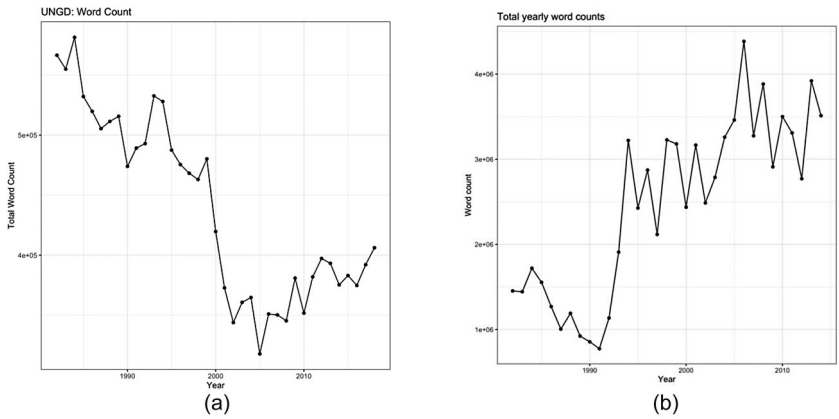

Figure 9.3. Comparing (a) yearly UN General Debate word count to (b) yearly UN General Assembly word count.

General Assembly—and particularly the UN General Debate—over time, which points to additional avenues for research on how countries choose between the different public forums the UN General Assembly provides. Alternatively, it may point to an increasing bureaucratization of countries, since General Debate statements are generally delivered by heads of state, while a variety of representatives can speak for a country across the General Assembly as a whole.

Finally, especially in the case of speeches, the text *itself* can serve as an important phenomenon of interest. As Baturo (et al, 2017a) correctly point out, policymakers and state leaders routinely use public speeches—particularly at the United Nations—as a method to 'influence international perceptions of their state', where they 'choose what issues to discuss or ignore, or how strongly to emphasize certain issues'.[36] Preliminary evidence has shown that political factors like regime type (Baturo et al, 2017b) are correlated with the issues countries choose to discuss. Thus, the question naturally arises of whether these texts actually capture useful information at all about the underlying interests of countries.

While initial evidence does suggests that the broad similarities and differences in speech patterns are not strongly correlated with voting patterns,[37] this correlation between speech and political behaviour may change under certain strategic conditions.[38] Moreover, similarities between the issues countries emphasize tends to correlate with mutual interests as measured by major foreign policy decisions—for example, mutual involvement in the same conflicts.[39] The question of why countries speak the way they do, and the reasons for which they speak, remains a critical opportunity for theory building in this literature, given that these political processes inform how speeches can and should be interpreted with respect to the countries speaking.

Concluding Thoughts

Overall, the examples of UN resolutions and UN speeches highlight a broader trend to both *disaggregate* the observed actions taken by the UN (for example, moving from condemnations directed at a conflict to more specific condemnations to individual actors), as well as to *disentangle* the content of these actions from the action itself (for example, identifying political bias in resolutions or measuring countries interests by the content of their speech). It also provides scholars two empirical paths moving forward for understanding the UN as an institution: in one case, continuing to more precisely identify actions we observe from the United Nations by leveraging the content associated with that action,[40] and in the other case, developing more robust theory and methods to translate observed content (e.g. text or actions) into *unobserved* political content (e.g. bias or state interests).[41]

[36]Baturo (et al, 2017b; pg. 3)
[37]Ibid. (pg. 10)
[38]Mahmood (2020)
[39]Ibid.
[40]This includes Resolutions, but also may include other associated content such as Secretary General reports associated with individual peacekeeping operations, or even statements by NGOs or other actors who are involved on the ground in particular conflicts.

It also provides an opportunity to leverage data for building stronger theoretical foundations. For example, given the relative independence between countries in the process of delivering speeches to the same institution (in this case, the United Nations), overlapping content in speeches across issues could provide a window into the norms and priorities (what Chapman, this forum, refers to as 'common conjectures') around which countries harmonize their political behaviour at the United Nations. Thus, there are also opportunities to use these data to give grounding to theories on the anchors driving coordination at institutions such as the United Nations.

Forum Conclusion

Zuhaib Mahmood and Kyle Beardsley

Over the past 75 years, there has been considerable advancement on knowledge about the United Nations. Throughout this forum, we have endeavoured to reckon with the state of this knowledge: from the state of general knowledge based on prior work to the state of current research and debates. From this reckoning, this forum has charted a course for future knowledge, guiding scholarship from here. We thus conclude by highlighting some of the fruitful paths for research going forward.

Starting with peacekeeping—one of the UN's most visible functions—the scholarship has generally converged around its capacity to both ameliorate conflict and to prevent relapse. However, there are currently ongoing discussions on whether and how these operations can create more *lasting* and *sustainable* peace (Newton et al., this forum), and even some cutting-edge work challenging some of the foundational relationships between United Nations peacekeeping and national governments (Nomikos & Villa, this forum). Thus, as research on this topic converges on the immediate impact of peacekeeping on one aspect of conflict, current and future work begins to branch into additional arguments on the impact of peacekeeping on others.

This process of convergence blossoming into new avenues for research can be seen even in some of the most conventional pieces of wisdom about the United Nations. By virtue of institutional design, and supported by decades of research, much work has focused on how the five permanent powers exert influence over the actions of the United Nations—particularly at the Security Council (Binder, this forum). However, this conventional

[41] This could include using the text itself (e.g. by way of various text analysis methods) or by linking the text to observed behavior, and developing theory on the conditions under which this occurs.

wisdom creates a puzzle about the remaining ten members of the Security Council, leading to current lines of research exploring the different ways smaller powers can still exert influence. For example, this line of work has begun to identify agenda-setting as one of these vehicles for influence, providing insight into the types of issues these countries focus on, and also generating a new data source for future scholarship to leverage (Allen & Yuen, this forum). Further work might explore if related formal and informal rules and processes in the UN Security Council might confer legitimacy onto the Council's work even in the face of criticism that the allocation of veto power is unfair in today's context.

The forum also addresses some of the key challenges inhibiting the UN's work in resolving some of the most difficult challenges across the globe. Well-studied issues of free-riding and public goods provision remain a key point of inquiry about the United Nations, given its status as a vehicle for the international community to execute policies on issues of human security and public health (Passmore & Shannon, this forum). A novel domain of inquiry for future scholars comprises comparisons of why the UN better coordinates on meaningful action related to some issues rather than others. A similar question exists on foundational norms of the UN, such as the protection norm: while the norm itself is well-established in the UN's history, it has evolved continuously over time in its definition (Hultman, this forum). From protecting against state atrocities, to the safety of civilians, to the prevention of sexual violence in conflict, the continued evolution of these norms provides a roadmap for future scholarship to both evaluate best practices for promulgating these norms, and to understand the conditions under which these norms are successfully implemented.

Finally, at a foundational level, the very concept of a *United* Nations rests upon the question of whether and how the institution is able to translate *individual member state* interests into harmonious output. This includes identifying core values and principles that are not only shared by member states, but perhaps more importantly those that are *agreed upon* by member states—the focal points around which the various member states can legitimately conduct their behaviour (Chapman, this forum). A lens of seeing the UN as a vehicle for legitimation paves the way for new branches of research specifically related to understanding the *content* of these shared values, whether through new data sources (Mahmood & Tucker, this forum) or through case studies of individual applications. Identifying the concepts and ideas around which states (and the UN) harmonize their actions serves as a ripe area for future scholarship.

In closing this forum, we are both inspired by the lengths to which previous and current scholarship has developed (and continues to develop) our knowledge about the United Nations, and we are excited for the opportunities these lines of work have opened up for future scholarship to develop.

From the evaluation of operational impact, to the analysis of norm development, and to the continual mining for richer data sources, scholarly inquiry on the United Nations over its 75 year lifespan has proven to be fruitful.

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