

United Nations Security Council Membership and its effect on Dispute Initiation
What is the effect of a state's temporary membership in the United Nations Security Council in their involvement in dyadic interstate disputes?

Abstract:

Being a temporary member of the United Nations Security Council increases a state's soft power for the 2 years they hold a seat in the council, consequently turning it into a target ally for the Permanent 5 members – 5 of the most militarily capable nations in the world. As a result, a state may choose to cast its vote in alignment with that of a member of the Permanent 5 in exchange for favors such as military support in disputes. This study discusses the relationship between a nation's Security Council temporary membership and its involvement in disputes, in hopes of gaining an understanding as to whether being a temporary Security Council member has an effect on the likelihood of being involved in a dyadic dispute. Additionally, democracy, GDP Per Capita, and National Capability levels were used as control variables, being key variables of dispute initiation as supported by the literature on dispute initiation. The analysis of this data reached the conclusion that a country's Security Council membership decreases their chances of being involved in a dyadic dispute – irregardless of their role as initiator or target of the conflict.

By: Daniel Hawie

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Professor Alastair Smith
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Introduction

This project will be discussing the relationship between a nation's United Nations Security Council (UNSC) temporary membership and its involvement in disputes, in hopes to gain an understanding as to whether being a temporary UNSC member has an effect on the likelihood of being involved in a dyadic dispute. Disputes will be separated between the initiator state and the target state. In order to arrive at this project, however, I first had to understand the history, theory, and inner workings of the United Nations, to then zoom into the Security Council, which consequently led me to ponder on its relationship to dispute initiation.

After the end of World War II, the world got together and took the failed League of Nations and reinvented it. This new organization was created in an attempt to possess an international center for peacekeeping, policing, and conflict resolution of the world. This institution would not be governing over nations but rather facilitating interstate world governance. This organization came to be known as the United Nations.

Within the United Nations, 6 organs were created: The General Assembly, the Trusteeship Council, the International Court of Justice, the Secretariat, the Economic and Social Council, and the Security Council. These 6 organs each serve a specific purpose within the United Nations according to its charter. As the name suggests, the last of these – the Security Council – was put in charge of international security. As shown in Article 24 of the United Nations Charter: “its Members confer on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security”¹.

Being the council in charge of international peacekeeping and policing in the largest international organization in the world, being a member comes with certain responsibilities – as well as certain perks. When the Security Council was created, the 5 most powerful nations at the

¹ Charter of the United Nations and Statute of the International Court of Justice. 1945. New York: United Nations, Office of Public Information. Chapter V, Article 24.

moment – in 1945, after the conclusion of WWII – were given a permanent stance in the council. These were, as stated in Article 23 of the UN Charter, the United States, Russia, China, France, and the United Kingdom². These 5 countries were not only granted a permanent seat in the table, but also a veto power. This means that, while they don't have the power to unilaterally make any decision with regards to international security, they do have the power to unilaterally halt any action from being taken, by vetoing any resolution on the table.

Joining the Permanent 5 in the table are the temporary members, who are elected into the council. Election into the Security Council has evolved throughout the years, and it is an essential aspect to understand the organization of the Security Council. With the aforementioned 5 states being permanent members of the Security Council, all other seats are up for election for terms of 2 years for all other member states of the United Nations, and there have been adaptations in the process of seat allocation distribution since its inception in 1946.

Seat allocation has, for the most part, had one fixed condition – the regional allotment of spots. In 1946, the first Security Council had been elected, and it consisted of the aforementioned 5 permanent members, as well as 6 temporary members: Brazil, Mexico, Australia, Poland, Egypt, and the Netherlands. As can be seen, this group of temporary members included countries from different regions around the world, who would be members of the council for two years (for the most part). This structure was then followed the years to come when a seat was up for election, as the slots for membership were allotted in the following way:

Seat:	1	2	3	4	5	6
Region:	Latinamerica	Commonwealth	Eastern Europe	Middle East	Western Europe	

² Charter of the United Nations and Statute of the International Court of Justice. 1945. New York: United Nations, Office of Public Information. Chapter V, Article 23.

This rule held true for 20 years, with three main exceptions: Liberia’s shared two-year period with Ireland in the Western European seat in 1961, Côte d’Ivoire’s election into the Commonwealth seat in the 1964-1965 period, and the inclusion of Asian countries in the Eastern European slot since Philippines took the seat in 1957³. Given that election into the Security Council is made through elections, and that the Afro-Asian states were not included in the seat allotment at the time, Iron Curtain disagreements led to sabotaging – as the western and eastern states tried to take away the seats from each other by trying to get an Afro-Asian state into it instead⁴.

With a clear need for restructuring stemming from the misallocation and disagreements present in Security Council seat elections, action was finally taken. In 1963, the General Assembly passed resolution 1991, which dictated the expansion of the Security Council, adding 4 new temporary seats into the Security Council, and called for a reallocation.⁵ This reallocation was modeled after the structuring of the General Committee, passed as General Assembly resolution 1192 in 1957⁶. This expansion and reallocation of Security Council seats – now inscribed into the United Nations Charter – looked as followed:

Seat:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Region:	Africa & Asia-Pacific					Eastern Europe	Latinamerica	Western Europe & Others		

These groups have held true ever since the implementation of resolution 1991 in 1966. With this structure, states are elected for 2-year periods in which they are in the UNSC, attempting to pass or block resolutions at their convenience. As is the case with any multilateral negotiation, countries attempt to reach a compromise in order to pass resolutions. Out of the 15

³ Daws, Sam. “The Origins and Development of UN Electoral Groups.”, page 17.

⁴ Daws, Sam. “The Origins and Development of UN Electoral Groups.” page 17.

⁵ General Assembly. Resolution 1991.

⁶ Daws, Sam. “The Origins and Development of UN Electoral Groups.” page 17.

votes available, a minimum of 9 votes is needed in order to pass a resolution and no permanent member can veto it in order for it to pass⁷. Given this allocation of votes, the temporary members of the UNSC play an instrumental role, as the Permanent 5 would not be able to pass any resolution without them.

That being said, the effect of temporary UNSC members is considered to be very small. While they are important for passing resolutions, a single veto can block any attempt from them, which is a favor they cannot give in return. In turn, however, the effect of being the UNSC could be very big for these countries. When being in the Security Council one is not only a voice in all aspects of international security, one is also cooperating with the most powerful nations in the world. This aspect of the Security Council negotiations could bring fruition to many positive consequences for the temporary members. Given that the Permanent 5 need more votes for any resolution to pass, they could be considered a valuable ally for one of these countries during their 2-year period, which could allow these states to gain a certain degree of soft power in other negotiations outside the Security Council. Perhaps they need to secure a trade deal and want a sponsor, perhaps they want to win a conflict, perhaps they want to be heard in a debate but their voice is usually too small. Being in the UNSC and having powerful allies could change all of this.

Of the ideas given above, I am particularly interested in exploring the conflict resolution question. Many times states have unresolved tensions or conflicts with other states, and there can be a factor that could push them to go forward and try to work on obtaining what they need. Perhaps having an ally in a militarily capable country such as the US could shift the tide, allowing for a state to initiate a dispute as they will have powerful support in case the target does

⁷ Charter of the United Nations and Statute of the International Court of Justice. 1945. New York: United Nations, Office of Public Information. Chapter V, Article 27.

not submit. In contrast, if a country would be the target of a dispute, perhaps being needed by this powerful state for its votes could act as a deterrent for any other state to target them while they are in the UNSC. In order to determine whether these statements are true, a literature review was analyzed to understand the pre-existing theories on the UNSC and on dispute initiation.

Literature Review

Vote Trading

As previously explained, the research of this paper is deeply rooted in the idea of temporary members obtaining favors from the permanent members in the UNSC. This theory is one that James Vreeland and Axel Dreher discuss thoroughly in their book “The Political Economy of the United Nations Security Council”.

I am focusing on dispute initiation and military support in my research. However, Vreeland and Dreher’s research is focused on a more economic aspect. Regardless what the variable itself is, their research already finds that, when temporary states align with the United States while in the UNSC, there is an overwhelming amount of statistically significant evidence that these states in turn receive higher amounts of bilateral aid, as well as multilateral through programs within organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund⁸. While searching for a different aspect, their research already gives me the basis of support to sustain my theoretical intuitions: that there is evidence demonstrating the support given by the Permanent 5 to the temporary UNSC members. This piece of evidence will allow me to translate this assumption into the military case, and see the implications of UNSC membership in dispute involvement.

⁸ Vreeland, James Raymond, and Axel Dreher. *The Political Economy of the United Nations Security Council: Money and Influence*. Page 184.

Election to the Security Council

As explained earlier, election to the Security Council is a process that involves elections and regional allocations of seats. While elections seem to be a process which involves bias and influence, as Vreeland and Dreher display in their book, that is not the case for the most part. This is because the standard procedure involves the nomination of a country for the 2-year period by the regional caucasic groups. While there have been contestations throughout history, there is overwhelming evidence that these are the exception rather than the rule, with most caucasic groups averaging their uncontested nominations at around 82%⁹ – the African caucasic group having experienced the least contestations with 87% uncontested nominations¹⁰, and the Eastern European caucasic group having experienced the most with 76% uncontested nominations¹¹. Additionally, while any country can self-nominate, it is clear that, de facto, these contested elections tend to be lost by self-nominees and won by regional nominees¹².

With this information, Vreeland and Dreher also find that there is a relationship between size and influence and election, meaning that there is a higher frequency of election for more “significant” countries in the international scene. However, they conclude with evidence that there is a more rotational approach on average, given that despite the tendencies, there is a much higher chance of being nominated by the regional caucasic group into the UNSC the longer a state has been out of the UNSC¹³. Additionally, given that there is no way for a state to influence

⁹ Vreeland, James Raymond, and Axel Dreher. *The Political Economy of the United Nations Security Council: Money and Influence*. Page 100.

¹⁰ Vreeland, James Raymond, and Axel Dreher. *The Political Economy of the United Nations Security Council: Money and Influence*. Page 101.

¹¹ Vreeland, James Raymond, and Axel Dreher. *The Political Economy of the United Nations Security Council: Money and Influence*. Page 103.

¹² Vreeland, James Raymond, and Axel Dreher. *The Political Economy of the United Nations Security Council: Money and Influence*. Page 104.

¹³ Vreeland, James Raymond, and Axel Dreher. *The Political Economy of the United Nations Security Council: Money and Influence*. Page 133.

or predict their admission into the UNSC, then it is treated as pseudo-random, following a rotational approach but with slight tendencies of electing more significant countries. Given the unpredictability and the rotational aspect of the UNSC election, I will continue with the assumption that there is no external influence manipulating the election into the UNSC, as Vreeland and Dreher did¹⁴.

Dispute Initiation

To understand dispute initiation, the key element is to understand that there is no one single element that will trigger a country to initiate a dispute. Rather, it is a combination of different factors that will determine whether a country will decide to initiate a dispute or not. Additionally, assuming a realist perspective on the situation, it is necessary for a country to have an identified objective for the dispute to be initiated, and therefore all other factors will only alter the opportunity and consequence aspects of the dispute initiation question. While investigating the literature, four main factors came up in my research.

Firstly, and most essential for this project, a factor that is shown to greatly influence dispute initiation, is support from allies. As found in the research by Choong-Nam Kang, a country has more confidence to pursue a conflict if it has the support of an ally during the dispute.¹⁵ This finding is essential for my research, as the military support of a Permanent 5 member could affect the level of confidence of a state to initiate a dispute, making it more belligerent towards other states.

Furthermore, Kang found that a higher level of national capabilities from an ally is also a factor that increases belligerence, which once more is essential given that all 5 permanent members of the UNSC are both militarily capable and nuclear states. Additionally, Kang also

¹⁴ Vreeland, James Raymond, and Axel Dreher. *The Political Economy of the United Nations Security Council: Money and Influence*. Page 135.

¹⁵ Kang, Choong-Nam. "Capability Revisited: Ally's Capability and Dispute Initiation1 ." Pages 563-564.

alludes that, if both countries are at similar national capabilities as both sides might have powerful allies, there is a high chance of a dispute being initiated¹⁶. This finding complements the international relations theory on balance of power, which would suggest that when countries have similar national capabilities, the likelihood of a dispute being initiated is higher than when they are disproportionate.

Furthermore, another potential control variable that I found in my research is democracy. As discovered by Dan Reiter and Allan Stam, democracy levels play a role in dispute initiation.¹⁷ Having analyzed likelihoods of different regime types to be either targets or initiators of disputes, they concluded that autocratic regimes are very likely to target democracies in disputes, whereas democracies are less likely to target autocracies. This implies that, as initiators, autocracies are more likely to initiate a dispute than democracies. However, as targets, democracies are more likely to be targeted. But if the data is analyzed one can see that, while democracies have a high chance of being the target of an autocratic regime, they are very unlikely to be the target of a fellow democratic regime¹⁸. For this reason, while they themselves cannot reach a solid conclusion on the topic, their data seems to point at autocracies being more prone to dispute involvement, and democracies less so.

Finally, another key variable which affects dispute initiation is economic prosperity. Mark Souva and Brandon Prins analyze the role of economic development and dependence in dispute initiation. Their findings indicate that higher economic prosperity and interdependence – which are closely linked together – lead to a decrease in dispute initiation.¹⁹ This data is crucial as it

¹⁶ Kang, Choong-Nam. "Capability Revisited: Ally's Capability and Dispute Initiation1 ." Page 564.

¹⁷ Reiter, Dan, and Allan C. Stam. "Identifying the Culprit: Democracy, Dictatorship, and Dispute Initiation." Page 336.

¹⁸ Reiter, Dan, and Allan C. Stam. "Identifying the Culprit: Democracy, Dictatorship, and Dispute Initiation." Page 336.

¹⁹ Souva, Mark, and Brandon Prins. "The Liberal Peace Revisited: The Role of Democracy, Dependence, and Development in Militarized Interstate Dispute Initiation, 1950–1999." Page

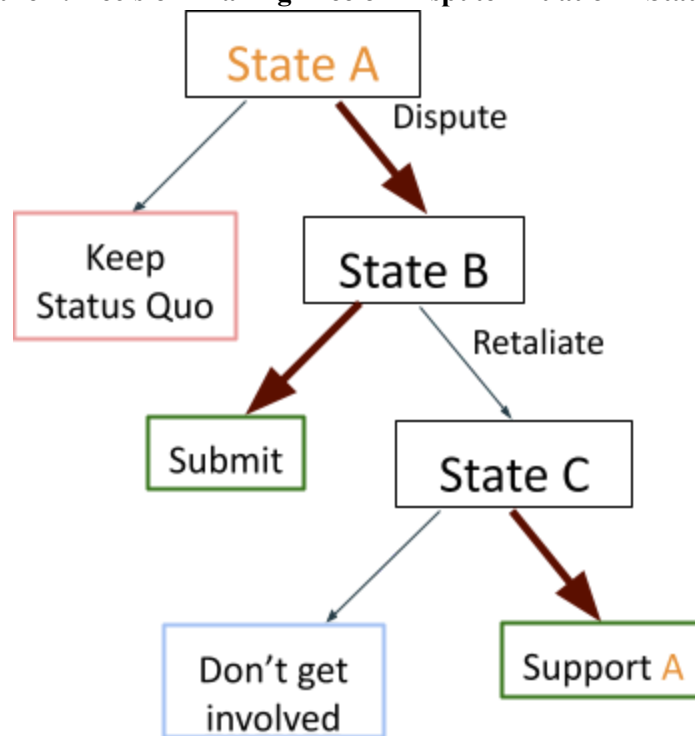
highlights that higher economic capabilities will make a country less prone to conflict in dyadic disputes, which proves to be a good control variable to analyze these dyadic disputes with.

UNSC Membership

Theoretical Intuitions

Given the literature in the subject, I believe that, if we were to follow Vreeland and Dreher's model on vote trading in the UNSC and apply it to military support, then a decision making tree following the decisions of all states involved – the initiator, the target, and the P5 – of to join the dispute or not, will follow this structure.

Figure 1: Decision-Making Tree on Dispute Initiation - State A in UNSC



This decision-making tree illustrates all possible paths that each state could take – with A being the initiator, B the target, and C the Permanent 5 state. The colored boxes illustrate the attractiveness of each outcome for State A, as anticipating a good outcome will lead to the

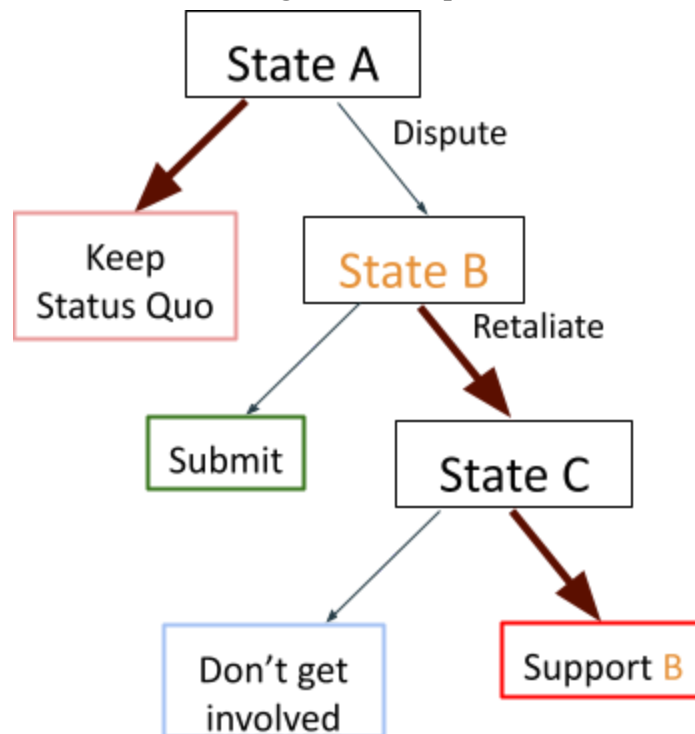
decision of whether or not to initiate a dispute. Green boxes represent a positive outcome for State A, red boxes negative outcomes, and blue boxes account for the uncertainty of the outcome. In the scenario in which State A is a member of the UNSC, we can see that keeping the status quo would give State A a negative outcome, due to the fact that they want to get something from State B, but would not be getting it if they do not engage in a dispute. In the case that they initiate a dispute, State B could decide to submit, which is shown in green in order to illustrate the fact that State A would get their desired gain from State B. However, if State B decided to retaliate, then State C would have the option of getting involved and supporting State A, or not interfering in the dispute. If State C were to stay out of the dispute, the outcome could not be foretold as State A and State B are placeholders for states at any level of national capabilities, for which the victor of the dispute cannot be predicted. If State C were to support State A, however, State A has a very high chance of winning the dispute and gaining what they need from State B – another positive outcome for the initiator. Following these principles, one could predict that State A would take the decision of initiating or not depending on its anticipation of whether the decisions of B and C will lead to a positive outcome for them. Similarly, State B must anticipate whether State C will get involved before it can make a decision to retaliate or not. Given that we are following the principle of vote trading as presented by Vreeland and Dreher, the underlying assumption is that State C will support the state in the Security Council – State A in this scenario. Anticipating this, I predict that State B would prefer to submit, as it would be the least costly option that will lead to the same outcome. Knowing that on both sides it is likely to get a positive outcome, and Kang’s findings on dispute initiation when allied to a powerful state, my theoretical argument is that State A will be more likely to be belligerent and initiate a dispute while in the Security Council.

By following this theoretical intuition, this study reaches its first hypothesis for the statistical analysis:

H₁: When a country is a temporary member of the UNSC, it is more likely to initiate a dyadic interstate dispute.

Conversely, to understand the flip side, the outcomes and probability arrows must be altered, and the probability tree illustrating State B as the Security Council member would look as follows.

Figure 2: Decision-Making Tree on Dispute Initiation - State B in UNSC



Similar to Figure 1, this decision making tree also depicts the same theoretical argument but from the perspective of State B as the Security Council member. Colored outcome boxes are still shown from the perspective of State A, in order to account for the expectation of initiation, and the colors still hold the same representation – with the exception of red which now has two

shades, accounting for the degree in which the outcome would be negative for State A. Here we can see that keeping the status quo, State B submitting, and State C not getting involved have the same outcomes. However, the key change comes from the harshly negative outcome that would come from State C supporting State B – who is in the Security Council instead of State A in this scenario. If State C were to support State B, then State A would have launched what could turn into a costly dispute that they would lose, for which they would be better off keeping the status quo. With this in mind, the probability arrows would also change, changing the outcome of this decision. For State C, once more following the literature on vote trading, it would decide to support State B in order to get their votes in the UNSC. With regards to State B, being aware of this, it will this time decide to retaliate if a dispute is initiated, switching the most probable arrow from the one in Figure 1. Consequently, with a most likely outcome of costly defeat in a dispute if initiated, State C's support acts as a deterrent of dispute initiation, and State A will decide to keep the status quo.

This theoretical intuition arrives to the second hypothesis of the study:

H₂: When a country is a temporary member of the UNSC, it is less likely to be targeted in a dyadic interstate dispute.

Data

To perform the analysis of these, I will be using a variety of datasets. Firstly, I will use a politically relevant dyad dataset in order to determine which states will be analyzed. Given that it is very unlikely that some specific pairs of countries will be in conflict with each other, I will only include in this study dyad pairs that satisfy the following conditions:

1. Pairs of countries that share a border
2. Pairs of countries within 400 nautical miles from each other

3. Any pair of country that involves a global superpower

Additionally, the following countries and country pairs will be excluded from the study:

1. Pairs of countries that involve any of the UNSC Permanent 5 members
2. Pairs of countries that involve a country that is not a member state of the United Nations
3. Pairs of countries that involve an observer state of the United Nations

In order to construct this dataset, two pre-existing datasets were employed in order to determine which countries met the criteria shown above. Firstly, the Correlates of War Direct Contiguity Dataset was gathered in order to determine politically relevant dyads with respect to borders and nautical proximity. Additionally, the Correlates of War State System Membership was gathered in order to identify the major powers at any given year as presented in the data. Identifying both Germany and Japan as major powers since 1991, these two countries were paired up with all other countries for each year between 1991 and 2010. The list of all existing countries in a given year was taken from the State System Membership dataset as well.

With this dataset now constructed, I accounted for all possible dyads existing twice. Given that I will be analyzing directed dyads, all dyads were doubled accounting for both possible scenarios of a dyad – as both states could be either the initiator or the target of the dispute. In addition, as explained in the criteria, all existing dyads that included any Permanent 5 state or any non-member or observer state of the United Nations were omitted from this dataset.

With my politically relevant dyad dataset done, I had to work on my Dispute data. I gathered the Dyadic Militarized Interstate Dispute (Dyadic MID) dataset from Correlates of War, and controlled for data which could skew my results. This is because the Dyadic MID dataset accounted for a plethora of factors and different types of dispute. Therefore, using the codebook

and the dataset, I controlled for several key variables. Firstly, as this study focuses exclusively on dyadic disputes, I made sure that both the initiator and the target had only one nation state – itself – present in its party. Given that different numbers of states were present in each side for different disputes, I made sure to filter out every dispute that had more than one state per side – creating a dyad. Additionally, in order to understand the role of UNSC membership in being either an initiator or a target of a dispute, the data must be directed – meaning that in every conflict, the state to take the role of State A must be the initiator. To do so, I filtered out all data for which State A was a target – given that the dataset presented every dyad twice, reversing the label of State A and State B. By doing so, I deleted all duplicates and ensured that State A always holds the role of the initiator of the dispute. Conversely, all data presenting State B as an initiator was also eliminated, controlling for State B being the target of the dispute. Furthermore, like with the politically relevant dyads, all disputes involving a Permanent 5 state or a state that is an observer or not a member-state of the United Nations were also filtered out. Finally, to account for repeated disputes, I employed the dispute number data. Given that every unique dispute has an identifier, it was possible for the dataset to show multiple conflicts within one dispute, and thus I filtered out all dispute numbers in the data that were present more than once, leaving the one with the earlier start date as it would indicate the real initiation of the dispute.

Having both datasets ready, I proceeded to merge them, giving each dyad in both the politically relevant dyad dataset and the dyadic dispute dataset a unique dyadic identifier, which was made to follow a “YEAR-STATEA-STATEB” pattern. Through the use of excel, this identifier was run through a function, which essentially searched for the identifier in the politically relevant dyad dataset within the dyadic dispute dataset. If a specific combination of a year, an initiator as State A, and a target as State B, was found in the dyadic MID dataset, it

would input a “1” in the politically relevant dyad dataset, as that dyad would have been involved in a directed dyadic dispute that year. If it was not identified, the column would show a - instead, meaning no dispute occurred in the structure presented above. With this, the dyadic dispute dataset – the dependent variable – was finally complete.

To create the Security Council membership dataset, I worked with the Correlates of War State System Membership dataset in order to identify all existing countries in a given year. Next, I utilized the United Nations database on past Security Council members, and merged the datasets. To do so, I used an excel function which looked up the country-year pairing of the state system membership and attempted to find its match in the Security Council dataset. If a given state was a member of the UNSC in a given year, the function would find it and input a “1”, whereas if it was not, it would input a “0”. This dataset now showed every country from the year 1946 to the year 2010, and indicated if they were in the Security Council for that year – showing a 1 – or if they weren’t – showing a 0.

With both my independent and dependent variable finally ready, it was time to do the final merge. To do so, every state in the Security Council dataset got an identifying index in the form “year-state-unsc”, with unsc being a 1 if in the security council and a 0 if not. Then, indexes were created for both State A and State B in all dyads in the dependent variable dataset. However, these datasets took the structure “year-state-1”, in order to be able to match exclusively the indexes with Security Council membership from the other dataset. To do this matching, I employed a formula which identified whether State A, the initiator in the disputes dataset, was in the UNSC that given year. I then applied the same process to State B, in order to identify targets of disputes who were members of the UNSC in that given year.

Methodology

With independent and dependent variables now merged into the complete dataset, it was time to run the data analysis. To do so, I employed a probability-unit analysis, which analyzed whether being in the Security Council increases or decreases the probability of State A to initiate a dispute and of State B to be targeted in one. However, before doing the probit analysis, I ran contingency tables which would allow me to get some preliminary results. Doing so enabled me to quantify and put the data into perspective beforehand.

Data Analysis

Contingency Table 1: State A's UNSC membership and Dispute Involvement²⁰

		Statea unsc		Total
		0	1	
Dispute?	0	51,212 98.49%	5,592 99.27%	56,804 98.57
	1	783 1.51%	41 0.73%	824 1.43
Total		51,995 100.00	5,633 100.00	57,628 100.00

After running a contingency table with the binary results for State A with regards to dispute involvement and UNSC membership, an interesting finding can be seen in the highlighted portions of the table. The yellow highlight indicates the percentage of politically relevant dyads that were engaged in a dispute where State A was not a member of the Security Council. This means that only 1.51% of all politically relevant dyads that match this criteria

²⁰ Table recreated by me from Stata to highlight findings. Original table present in the appendix.

engaged in a dispute. Revisiting H_1 , if we are seeking to accept the hypothesis, then the percentage of politically relevant dyads engaged in disputes when State A was in the Security Council should be higher – as the hypothesis predicts the initiator to be more belligerent while in the Security Council. However, the percentage decreases to 0.73% instead, as seen in the orange highlight, which would indicate that the opposite has happened.

Contingency Table 2: State B's UNSC membership and Dispute Involvement²¹

		Stateb unsc		
		0	1	Total
Dispute?	0	51,227 98.52%	5,577 99.01%	56,804 98.57
	1	768 1.48%	56 0.99%	824 1.43
Total		51,995 100.00	5,633 100.00	57,628 100.00

Conversely, this table shows the same methodology as Contingency Table 1, but shows the results for State B – the target of disputes. Here we can see the yellow highlighted figure – percentage of politically relevant dyads that engage in disputes when State B is not in the Security Council – as 1.48%. If H_2 were to be correct, the percentage should decrease when State B enters the Security Council – as states would be deterred from engaging in a dispute with them. As shown in the orange highlighted figure, the percentage decreased to 0.99%, which follows the theory of the hypothesis.

²¹ Table recreated by me from Stata to highlight findings. Original table present in the appendix.

With this information, it is now time to evaluate its statistical significance using a probit model. However, before doing so, controls for different variables that affect dispute initiation will be set.

Control Variables

Theoretical Intuitions

Following along with dispute initiation literature, three key variables that might affect dispute initiation are democracy, economic prosperity, and a balance of power. Setting each of these three variables as an independent variable – maintaining dispute involvement as a dependent variable – further probit analyses will be made, with the following hypotheses in place:

H₃: A higher democratic index will decrease the likelihood of a state being involved in a dyadic dispute.

H₄: A dyad involving two democracies will have a decreased likelihood of being involved in a dyadic dispute.

H₅: A higher GDP Per Capita will decrease the likelihood of a state being involved in a dyadic dispute.

H₆: A dyad with similar national capabilities will have an increased likelihood of being involved in a dyadic dispute.

Data

To perform these probit models, I first gathered information on yearly democracy levels for each country. To do so, I used the Polity V dataset, extracting the information for every country from 1946 until 2010 – the years for which the dispute dataset was gathered. However, given that Polity employs a measure of -10 to 10 to measure democratic levels, I decided to control for it by using the formula $((POLITYRAW+10)/20) = POLITY$, which fixed all data points within the index between 0 and 1.

With regards to GDP Per Capita, I used the Penn World Tables dataset, and controlled for the time frame 1946-2010. However, given that GDP was not always measured, and it can't be retroactively measured, there are several data points within the dataset missing. Additionally, this data gathered both GDP and population, but not GDP Per Capita, and so I had to divide GDP by Population in order to get the GDP Per Capita values for each state. With this data, I then took the logarithmic value of the data points in order to account for standardizing the difference levels of GDP Per Capita values.

Finally, in order to discuss the balance of power found through similar national capabilities, I used the Composite Index of National Capabilities (CINC) scores. This index allowed me to measure the relative power of a given country in a given year. However, as pure relative power levels are not a measurement I need, I decided to instead employ the formula $(CINCA/(CINCA+CINCB)) = CINCRATIO$. With this measurement, I would be able to determine the power differences between countries in a dyad. However, given that I am searching for a balance of power rather than an imbalance, I needed a measurement that would show me, if correct, that disputes accumulate towards the middle of the CINC Ratio index. In order to be able to determine this, I squared the CINC Ratios of all dyads, which would allow me to see a non-linear trend in my data when analyzed.

Having merged these three with my original Dispute-UNSC dataset, I was now able to run the probit models with regards to all my variables.

Results

Results Table

	UNSC b/se	Democracy b/se	GDPPC b/se	CINC b/se	All b/se
Dispute?					
statea unsc	-0.281*** (0.06)				-0.257*** (0.07)
stateb unsc	-0.162** (0.05)				-0.000 (0.06)
polity statea		0.151* (0.07)			0.413*** (0.09)
polity stateb		0.305*** (0.06)			0.491*** (0.08)
polity statea # po~b		-0.860*** (0.11)			-0.913*** (0.13)
loggdpa			-0.155*** (0.01)		-0.125*** (0.02)
loggdpb			-0.078*** (0.01)		0.008 (0.02)
cinc ratio				2.930*** (0.19)	2.794*** (0.24)
cinc ratio squared				-2.692*** (0.17)	-2.356*** (0.22)
constant	-2.154*** (0.01)	-2.135*** (0.04)	-0.224 (0.14)	-2.703*** (0.04)	-1.930*** (0.18)

* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

The focus of this project was to find the connection between UNSC membership and dispute involvement as either target or initiator, and the results given can be seen above. as well as that of the control variables. Running my merged dataset in Stata as a probit model, I managed to find the relationship between all variables as explained in my methodology and dispute involvement, as well as their significance level. Additionally, a final column was added with my independent variable and my control variables interacting with each other.

UNSC Membership

Firstly, the first column of the results table shows the most crucial finding of the paper – that of the relationship of temporary membership in the United Nations Security Council on dispute involvement. The contingency table for State A showed that when State A is a member of the UNSC, it initiates less disputes than it does when not a member of the UNSC. The analysis presented in the table above shows the same finding and demonstrates its statistical significance. To the $p < 0.001$ significance level, this statistically significant piece of data demonstrates the opposite of H_1 , for which the hypothesis must be rejected. With this information, it is clear that my theoretical intuitions on a state's belligerence during its time as a UNSC member were wrong.

Similarly, the contingency table on State B also demonstrated a decrease in dispute involvement while a member of the UNSC. The probit analysis confirmed that there is indeed a lower likelihood of dispute involvement for State B while being a member of the UNSC. While not as statistically significant as the data for State A, State B's statistical significance is still high at $p < 0.01$. Therefore, I fail to reject H_2 . By doing so, it appears that the data supports my theoretical intuitions regarding the deterrent effect of UNSC membership in being the target of a dispute.

Democracy

In addition, the second column of the above probit model shows the polity scores of State A, State B, as well as the joint polity scores of State A-State B. This was done in order to determine whether their increase would lead to an increase in their likelihood for dispute involvement. As seen above, both as initiator and target, a state is actually more likely to be involved in a dispute when their democracy index is higher. This is particularly true of State B –

in both coefficient and confidence level – meaning that a higher polity score makes one more likely to be a target of a dispute more so than an initiator. This is supported by the literature on dispute initiation. While the difference between the initiator and target supports the literature, the increase in involvement contradicts the literature. This is due to the fact that I was expecting to find a decrease in involvement from both State A and State B when their democracy index was higher. This statistically significant finding of an increase in both cases is the data needed to reject H_3 , as democracies are in fact more likely to be involved in disputes.

However, when discussing dispute involvement of a joint-democracy dyad, it is clear that the results are inverted. As supported by dispute initiation theory, democracies don't go to war with each other. This data supports the theory. With both statistical significance and a high negative coefficient, a higher joint democracy level is a clear indicator of a decreased chance at dispute involvement. This data supports the statement made in H_4 , and thus I have failed to reject this hypothesis.

GDP Per Capita

The third column presented as part of this probit model shows the relationship between the logarithmic value of GDP Per Capita with dispute involvement. Once more, to account for a potential disparity between initiator and target, State A and State B were both analyzed. As the table shows, however, both State A and State B have a lower likelihood to be involved in a dispute with an increase in their GDP Per Capita, with both values being of statistical significance. This supports the literature presented on the decreased likelihood of dispute initiation of more economically prosperous countries. Given this information, H_5 has failed to be rejected, as the data displayed above supports the hypothesis.

National Capabilities

The final control variable, shown in the fourth column of the results table above, shows the linear relationship of the ratio of CINC Scores between State A and State B with their involvement in disputes, as well as the quadratic one of the Squared Value of the CINC Scores. As the table displays, the linear relationship shows that an increased CINC ratio in fact leads to a higher chance of dispute involvement within a dyad, with statistical significance. However, most importantly to illustrate the point of a balance of powers leading to a conflict, the squared CINC Ratio demonstrates a statistically significant negative relationship, meaning that the higher the squared ratio, the lower the probabilities of dispute involvement for the dyad. This implies that CINC ratios situated around the middle, meaning those between two countries with similar CINC scores in a dyad, are more prone to conflict than both extremes. When there is a power disparity in favor of either State A or State B in a dyad, the likelihood of dispute involvement decreases. With these results, I fail to reject H_6 .

All Variables

Finally, the last column shows an interaction between all variables – UNSC membership, democracy, GDP Per Capita, and National Capabilities, with the likelihood of being involved in a dispute. This column demonstrates that, for the most part, all results stay the same when accounting for controls. State A's involvement in disputes while a member of the UNSC remains the same, while State B's involvement loses all correlation and statistical significance. Polity correlations become stronger, and the significance level of State A's polity score grows from a $p < 0.05$ to a $p < 0.001$, making the findings more conclusive. An increase in the GDP Per Capita of State A still demonstrates a decrease in dispute initiation, while State B's involvement in

disputes becomes positively correlated, albeit with no statistical significance. Finally, both measures of National Capabilities remain the same.

When all variables interact with each other, there are some changes in the results. I believe that this might be due to some skewed data present with the interaction of all variables. This is due to the fact that both the Democracy Index and GDP Per Capita measurements are not complete. With regards to Democracy, Polity does not measure scores for countries under circumstances such as transitional governments, occupied territories, or other measures where a sovereign democratic index cannot be truly accounted for. Therefore, several data points were lost for all other variables. I hypothesize that these might have affected the results of the other variables, given that I believe there to be a geopolitical relevance to the missing data points. For instance, most data points lost would come from regional issues, such as Sub-Saharan Africa's transitional governments, or Eastern Europe's post-Soviet independence. This might skew the information geopolitically, which could account for some inaccuracies in the information in the last column. Furthermore, given that GDP cannot be retroactively measured, the GDP Per Capita data loses most data points from several of the early years of the data set. Additionally, it also loses some more points, both older and more contemporary, from non-transparent – mostly autocratic – governments that do not report this data. Given that there is a geopolitical, linear, and democratic bias in this final column which loses around 20,000 data points, I believe that the data in the individual columns should be considered as the more accurate one. However, I still deemed the analysis of the interaction of all variables important for cohesion and to account for the controls.

Conclusion

With the exception of democratic levels and dispute initiation, all control variables failed to reject their hypotheses. This implies that the literature on the subject did indeed coincide with the data presented in the study.

Being a member of the Security Council decreases your likelihood to be involved in a dyadic interstate dispute. Whether that means as an initiator or target, this decrease is present and statistically significant.

In the case of the target, this lines up with the hypothesis presented based on Vreeland and Dreher's findings on vote trading and my own theoretical intuitions on its relation to dispute involvement. Given the findings of this paper, I would conclude stating that, being in the good grace of a Permanent 5 member – which is comprised of 5 of the most militarily powerful countries in the world, all with nuclear capabilities – acts as a deterrent for other states to initiate a dispute against them, and the Permanent 5 member get a 2-year supporter in all matters of worldwide policing and security.

However, with regards to the initiator in a dispute, the data did not line up with what was predicted based on the theoretical intuition and literature review. Conversely, instead of becoming more belligerent, there is a sense of appeasement present, as these states become less belligerent instead. While there is no one answer to the question, understanding the datasets used and the dynamics of vote trading may provide a few open endings that could be the starting point on further research on the subject. Firstly, a possibility is that being in the Security Council, perhaps the states attempt to become less polarized and not conflict with any other agenda, and so these states might decide to initiate less militarized disputes during their time there – opting instead for other forms of vote trading such as economic or diplomatic instead. Furthermore, another plausible scenario can be gathered from the analysis of the nature of the disputes logged

into the dataset. These disputes range from public threats all the way to war. However, these are all public knowledge, meaning that they existed in the knowledge of the international system. Another reason for which states might seem less belligerent is that they perhaps become more belligerent in private threats, using the expectation of the powerful military support they will get, and getting other states to submit before any conflict is even started – which would also show evidence of vote trading occurring militarily for the initiator.

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Appendix

Contingency Table 1: State A's UNSC membership and Dispute Involvement

Key
<i>frequency</i>
<i>column percentage</i>

Dispute?	statea unsc		Total
	0	1	
0	51,212 98.49	5,592 99.27	56,804 98.57
1	783 1.51	41 0.73	824 1.43
Total	51,995 100.00	5,633 100.00	57,628 100.00

Pearson chi2(1) = 21.8301 Pr = 0.000
 likelihood-ratio chi2(1) = 26.0975 Pr = 0.000
 Cramér's V = -0.0195
 gamma = -0.3518 ASE = 0.070
 Kendall's tau-b = -0.0195 ASE = 0.003

Contingency Table 2: State B's UNSC membership and Dispute Involvement

Key
<i>frequency</i> <i>column percentage</i>

Dispute?	stateb unsc		Total
	0	1	
0	51,227 98.52	5,577 99.01	56,804 98.57
1	768 1.48	56 0.99	824 1.43
Total	51,995 100.00	5,633 100.00	57,628 100.00

Pearson chi2(1) = 8.4098 Pr = 0.004
 likelihood-ratio chi2(1) = 9.3030 Pr = 0.002
 Cramér's V = -0.0121
 gamma = -0.1978 ASE = 0.067
 Kendall's tau-b = -0.0121 ASE = 0.004