Bribery and Fair Representation on the United Nations Security Council

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Abstract

Aid from the United States to nonpermanent members spikes during their time on the United Nations Security Council, leading scholars to conclude that Washington distorts policy outcomes with its economic power. I develop a model in which states elect nonpermanent members and the U.S. bribes the winners. Rather than pick the pivotal voter, the electorate chooses a state further away from Washington's ideal point, anticipating that the bribe will shift the realized policy back to the pivotal voter's preference. Thus, bribery and fair representation can coexist. Comparative statics further reveal that the U.S.'s payoff decreases in the ease of giving bribes, as Washington must run faster to stay in the same place. Consequently, bureaucratic hurdles that complicate efficient disbursement of tainted aid may counterintuitively enhance American welfare.

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1 Introduction

Recent empirical research has shown an extensive connection between foreign aid and nonpermanent membership on the United Nations Security Council. The United States is the biggest donor, increasing its bilateral aid and using its influence in the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the Asian Development Bank to deliver funds. Researchers have also implicated Germany and Japan, two other rich and politically powerful countries. The obvious conclusion is these privileged states use their financial capacity to buy favorable votes on Security Council resolutions.[1]

If true, bribery on the Security Council has important normative implications. The charter for the United Nations confers to the Security Council the "primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security." Swapping money for support of matters of war and peace would seem to compromise that responsibility. Fair representation—defined as implementation of the policies that would occur in the absence of bribery—would seem impossible here.

Nevertheless, I argue that bribery and fair representation can coexist. To explain this apparent contradiction, I develop a model of Security Council elections and subsequent bribery over votes. The game begins with a collection of states choosing a representative. Afterward, the United States offers a bribe. The elected country can accept it and implement the American-mandated policy or reject and choose a policy of its own.

Surprisingly, strategic voting counteracts the bribery. In equilibrium, the pivotal voter does not form a coalition that selects itself as the representative. This is because such a coalition internalizes the forthcoming American bribe and corresponding policy distortion. The pivotal voter instead forms a coalition that elects a representative with an ideal point further away from the United States. In turn, the equilibrium American bribe effectively undoes this distortion, resulting in a policy that reflects the pivotal voter's preferences. The extremist representation and bribery cancel each other out, indicating that scholars must study elections and bribery together to draw sensible

[1]See Vreeland and Dreher 2014 for the most thorough treatment of aid and nonpermanent membership. On bilateral aid, see Kuziemko and Werker 2006 and Dreher, Nunnenkamp, and Schmaljohann 2015. For influence over aid organizations, see Dreher, Sturm, and Vreeland 2009a, Dreher, Sturm, and Vreeland 2009b, Dreher, Strum, and Vreeland 2013, and Lim and Vreeland 2013.

conclusions about fair representation of the Security Council.

The equilibrium has unexpected implications for welfare. Intuitively, one would imagine that the United States' position improves the more it cares about an issue and the easier it is to bribe a nonpermanent member. Instead, the pivotal voter endogenously responds by electing a representative even further away from the American ideal point. The United States must therefore work harder just to stay in the same place. Consequently, American welfare would improve if bribery were impossible and the pivotal voter simply elected itself. However, the U.S. cannot credibly commit to abstain from distorting the vote, forcing the pivotal voter to proactively elect a more extreme representative.

2 The Model

The game consists of a continuous mass of states that serve as the electorate to the Security Council and the United States.[2] Each actor has an ideal point on a one dimensional policy interval. Let $u \in \mathbb{R}$ represent the United States' ideal point and $n_i \in \mathbb{R}$ represent an arbitrary state from the electorate i's ideal point. Further, suppose the function $f(i)$ gives the probability density function of the electorate's ideal points, where f is strictly positive on the interval $[\underline{n}, \bar{n}]$ and 0 everywhere else. Lastly, let $u > \bar{n}$, meaning that the United States has the rightmost ideal point of all states. This is consistent with the notion that the U.S. is generally at the end of the ideological spectrum (Bailey, Strezhnev, and Voeten 2015).

Play occurs over two phases: election and policy voting. In the election phase, the continuum of states elect a nonpermanent member. For simplicity, I model voting as plurality rule.[3] Thus, whichever state receives the largest portion of votes wins. It will therefore be useful to define the median voter's ideal point as m as the unique

[2]The continuous mass simplifies the optimization problem. Later, I discuss how the results transfer to discrete states.

[3]In practice, the election process is more complex. The formal rules state that a country requires two-thirds of the General Assembly's vote to become a nonpermanent member, with new members originating from the regional group with an opening. However, regional groups often recommend only a single country per open seat, leading to unanimous or near-unanimous General Assembly votes. It is unclear how that recommendation process works, though one may reasonably suspect that the regional members discuss the implications of electing any particular state, as the forward-thinking actors do in this model. For this paper, in the absence of a clear *de facto* nominating process, I use plurality rule because it cleanly illustrates the mechanism. The causal logic holds across voting rules.

solution to $F(i) = .5$. In words, m is the point in the policy space for which half of the electorate's ideal points are on the left and half are on the right.

In the policy phase, the United States begins by simultaneously proposing a policy $x \in \mathbb{R}$ and a bribe $b \geq 0$. The elected nonpermanent member accepts or rejects. Accepting implements the proposed policy x and pays a transfer of b from the U.S. to that member.[4] If the member rejects, it then selects a policy of its choosing from $\mathbb{R}$.

Payoffs are as follows. Each of the non-elected members of the electorate simply have a policy payoff, which I represent using negative squared distance between the policy outcome and the state's ideal point.[5] That is, such a state has a payoff of $-(x - n_i)^2$. The elected nonpermanent member also has this policy preference but can benefit from a bribe as well. As such, that state's payoff is $-(x - n_i)^2 + \alpha_n b$, where $\alpha_n > 0$ is a scalar representing how much the electorate values policy versus monetary payoffs; higher values of α_n indicate greater desire for money and lesser desire for its preferred policy.[6] Finally, the United States has a similar policy preference but also must potentially pay the bribe giving it a payoff of $-(x - u)^2 - \alpha_u b$. As before, α_u measure the United States' relative evaluation of money versus policy.

2.1 Optimal Bribery

Because this is a sequential voting game with complete information, I search for coalition-proof subgame perfect equilibria (CPSPE). Subgame perfection ensures that players only believe and execute credible threats and is standard for any extensive form game. I use the coalition proof refinement because simultaneous-move voting subgames otherwise allow for *any* outcome to occur in equilibrium. For example, all voters voting for everyone's least favorite outcome is an equilibrium because no single voter can deviate and change the outcome of the vote. The coalition proof refinement ensures that vot-

[4] In this manner, the United States credibly commits to paying the bribe in exchange for implementing that policy. This part of the interaction is not modeled, but one could imagine that it follows from repeated play (Vreeland and Dreher 2014, 37; Tomz 2007). Although the game here only occurs once, the United States faces this dilemma multiple times during each cycle and with future nonpermanent members. It also reflects the empirical record, with the United States paying those complicit and punishing those who deviate.

[5] In practice, states may have payoffs orthogonal to policy, such as valuing some amount of rotation on the Council. I abstract away from these preferences to show that the strategic elections cancel out the effect of bribery for the policy matters.

[6] I assume that α_n is identical across all the states in the electorate. As I explain in the robustness section, this assumption does not drive the results.

ers cannot reorganize themselves in a way that would make the collection of deviators strictly better off. It also leads to identical results as if there were only a single pivotal voter that made the electoral decision by itself.

Regardless, the election process depends on how bribery affects the ultimate policy position. The following lemma therefore describes the behavior of the chosen nonpermanent member and the United States:

Lemma 1. *Let n be the ideal point of a selected nonpermanent member. In all CPSPE, the United States offers a bribe equal to $b^* \equiv \frac{\left(\frac{u+\frac{\alpha_n n}{\alpha_u}}{1+\frac{\alpha_n}{\alpha_u}} - n\right)^2}{\alpha_u}$ and policy position $x^* \equiv \frac{u+\frac{\alpha_n n}{\alpha_u}}{1+\frac{\alpha_n}{\alpha_u}}$. The nonpermanent member always accepts that offer.*

Despite the complicated formulas of the optimal bribe and policy position, these values result from an intuitive series of counterfactual decisions. Working backward, if the nonpermanent member rejects the United States' bribe, it may select any policy. Because the nonpermanent member's utility strictly decreases moving away from its ideal point, its selects that ideal point. This creates a baseline that both the nonpermanent member and the United States can compare to a bribe and a revised policy.

Now consider the nonpermanent member's accept/reject decision. Because the nonpermanent member's policy utility is the negative squared distance between the implemented policy and its ideal point, it receives a flat 0 for rejecting. (The imposed policy is the its ideal point.) Thus, the nonpermanent member is willing to accept an alternative policy position x if the policy utility loss is less than the weighted gain from the bribe. Formally:

$$-(x-n)^2 + \alpha_n b \geq 0$$

Because the bribe b is unconstrained, this inequality shows that the United States can always buy the nonpermanent member's policy position. The question is whether it would want to. Furthermore, if the United States decides to manipulate the policy, it must also decide exactly which policy to choose. There is an added level of strategic complexity here because distorting the policy increasingly further from nonpermanent member's preference leads to increasingly great utility loss for the nonpermanent member. This means that the United States can cheaply buy small distortions, but each unit further requires increasingly large bribes.

How does the United States resolve its dilemma? The key is to realize that, holding the demanded policy x constant, the United States would not want to overpay to buy the nonpermanent member's compliance. This is because the United States need not give an unnecessary concession if a smaller bribe would also generate the same policy outcome. More subtly, this logic implies that the previous inequality must hold with equality (i.e., $-(x-n)^2 + \alpha_n b = 0$ in equilibrium). From here, the United States can solve for the bribe value b. It can then place this into its utility function for a successful bribe, which is $-(x-u)^2 - \alpha_u b$. The optimal policy demand given the bribery constraint is $x^* = \frac{u+\frac{\alpha_u n}{\alpha_n}}{1+\frac{\alpha_u}{\alpha_n}}$, which appeared in the lemma.[7]

A few remarks are appropriate before moving to the election phase. First, the ultimate policy falls strictly between the ideal points of the nonpermanent member and the United States. That the parties agree to a policy within the Pareto set should be unsurprising. However, it is noteworthy that the United States will at least pay a minimal bribe to shift the policy to some degree.

In fact, the relative weights between money and policy determine the agreement within the Pareto set. When $\alpha_u = \alpha_n$ (that is, when each cares equally about the policy), those weights cancel each other out within the equilibrium policy $x^* = \frac{u+\frac{\alpha_u n}{\alpha_n}}{1+\frac{\alpha_u}{\alpha_n}}$. Indeed, some arithmetic shows that the policy is $\frac{u+n}{2}$, which is the midpoint between the two ideal points.

That said, the substantive literature indicates that the United States tends to care more about the issues in front of the Security Council than most permanent members. In the language of the model, $\alpha_u < \alpha_n$. Under such circumstances, the equilibrium policy $x^* = \frac{u+\frac{\alpha_u n}{\alpha_n}}{1+\frac{\alpha_u}{\alpha_n}}$ falls closer to the American ideal point that the nonpermanent member.[8] Moreover, as the the United States begins to care only about the policy outcome (i.e., as α_u goes to 0), the policy goes to the American ideal point.

These remarks should not be surprising. Nevertheless, the policy ultimately implemented after accounting for elections may be unexpected. Likewise, I will later show that the United States' utility counterintuitively declines as it becomes easier to bribe.

[7]Note that the coalition proof part of CPSPE has no bite here because there are no simultaneous actions. Thus, the strategies given here are the unique SPE strategies as well.

[8]This claim is contingent on the symmetric specification of the loss function. For example, if the nonpermanent member's policy utility was $-(x-n)^4$ and the United States' remained $-(x-u)^2$, then $\alpha_u < \alpha_n$ does not guarantee that the equilibrium position will be closer to u than n. The outcome still moves closer to u as α_u decreases, though.

It is therefore critical to show that these results are not a function of some strange specification of the bribery subgame. The straightforward remarks above build confidence in that regard.

2.2 Optimal Elections

We now know how bribery plays out. Anticipating that outcome, how do the states handle the election? The game has a unique CPSPE outcome. Depending on how diverse the electorate's preferences are, one of two outcomes are feasible. I start by analyzing when those preference are diverse:

Proposition 1. *If the electorate's preferences are sufficiently diverse (i.e., $m - \frac{\alpha_n}{\alpha_u}(u - m) \geq \underline{n}$) the continuum of states appoint a nonpermanent member with ideal point $m - \frac{\alpha_n}{\alpha_u}(u - m)$. The policy ultimately implemented is m, the median voter's ideal point.*

The electorate faces a classic principal-agent problem: it wants to choose a state that will enact its desires, but the agent can enrich itself with a bribe at the expense of the policy implemented. Picking an agent tougher to sway is a common solution to such a problem, and it is the strategy the electorate adopts here. If the electorate were to pick the median, the bribery phase showed that the ultimate policy adopted would fall strictly to the right of the median. But this implies that a coalition of states could profitably deviate by choosing a state slightly to the left of the median. In fact, the only way for a such a coalition to not exist is if the bribe places the implemented policy back to the median's ideal point. The state with ideal point $m - \frac{\alpha_n}{\alpha_u}(u - m)$ fulfills this role, and that ideal point is strictly left of the median's.

Writing the chosen nonpermanent member's ideal point in this manner immediately yields three empirical insights. First, as the median voter's ideal point moves closer to the United States', the chosen nonpermanent member's ideal point moves closer to the median's. This is because the bribery's distorting power hurts less when the median and the United States are ideologically aligned. Second, as the United States' relative cost of bribery increases (i.e., as α_u increases), the chosen nonpermanent member's ideal point again moves closer to the median's. This is because the United States' bribe shrinks, thus reducing the distortion of the nonpermanent member's position. Finally, as the nonpermanent member's relative value of bribes increases (i.e., as α_n increases),

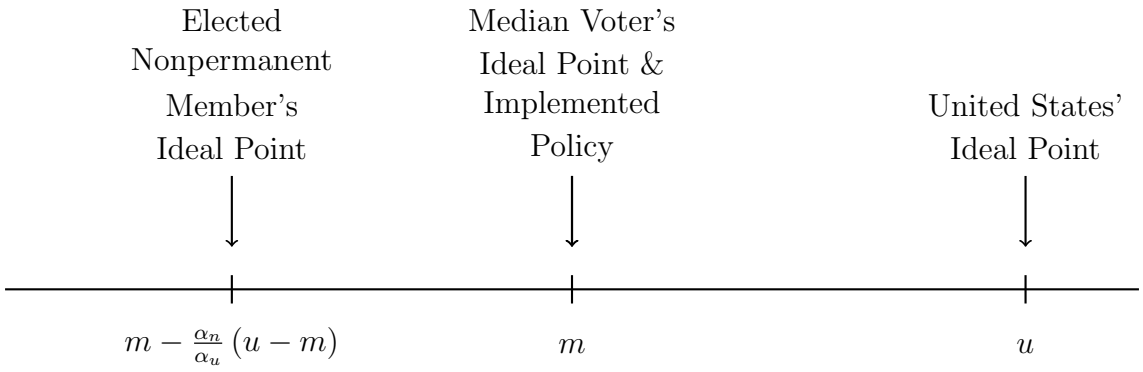

Figure 1: Illustration of key decision makers and actions in the equilibrium outcome of Proposition 1.

the chosen nonpermanent member's ideal point moves away from the median's. This is because the United States can more easily buy the nonpermanent member's compliance, forcing the median to choose a state further to the left to counteract that effect.

All told, the equilibrium shows that bribery and fair representation can coexist. The policy imposed is exactly the same as in a world where the median voter chooses the outcome. In a world without bribery, the coalition would choose the median voter to obtain this outcome. But because the United States cannot credibly commit to abstain from bribing, the coalition must proactively select a nominee further to the left. The bribe ultimately becomes a wealth transfer rather than a meaningful method of policy manipulation.

These results help explain some otherwise perplexing elections. Many extreme countries—e.g., Cuba (1989), Syria (2001), Libya (2007), and Bolivia (2016)—have found their way onto the Security Council despite having preferences far more contrarian to the United States than a representative country from their region or the General Assembly. Further, in each of these cases, the regional groups had only recommended the country in question. Absent counter-bribery strategies, it is hard to explain why the regions or the General Assembly would wish to place these countries onto the Council.

However, Proposition 1's outcome requires that a state with ideal point $m - \frac{\alpha_n}{\alpha_u}(u - m)$ exists. The following proposition explains what happens if this does not hold:

Proposition 2. *If the electorate's preferences are insufficiently diverse (i.e., $m - \frac{\alpha_n}{\alpha_u}(u - m) < \underline{n}$) the continuum of states appoint a nonpermanent member with ideal*

point $\underline{n}$. The policy ultimately implemented is strictly to the right of the median voter's ideal point.

For the unraveling process to properly work, the electorate must contain a state sufficiently extreme that the United States' bribe does not overwhelmingly influence the policy. Proposition 2's parameter space fails to meet this condition. The electorate mitigates the damage by nominating the most extreme state available, and the U.S. responds with a bribe. This time, the policy shifts to the right of the median voter's ideal point, meaning that bribery has impacted fair representation on the Security Council.

While this parameter space exists mathematically, the substantive record casts doubt on its empirical relevance. Indeed, Vreeland and Dreher (2014, 35 and 73-80) argue that extreme enough states exist that the United States cannot unduly influence them. This suggests that the outcome described in Proposition 1 more accurately reflects what we observe empirically. And even if such states were to disappear in the future, bribery is less damaging than it might appear because the electorate can choose a nonpermanent member resistant to the U.S.

2.3 Welfare

The fact that the United States bribes nonpermanent members to distort their votes on the Security Council suggests that the U.S. is the ultimate beneficiary of the manipulation. The following proposition states that this intuition is wrong:

Proposition 3. *Suppose the electorate's preferences are sufficiently diverse per Proposition 1. The United States' payoff is decreasing in its marginal cost to bribe α_u.*

Put differently, the cheaper and more desirable it is to bribe a nonpermanent member, the *worse* off the United States is.

The appendix gives a formal derivation of the result. However, an explanation emerges from a simple examination of Proposition 1's outcome. When preferences are sufficiently diverse, the electorate can always choose a nonpermanent member that will result in the implementation of the median state's ideal point. That is, regardless of its ability to bribe within the parameter space, the United States always ends up with the same policy. In turn, if it were completely impossible for the United States to bribe,

it would simply received a payoff of $-(m-u)^2$. But when it is possible, the United States pays a cost yet receives the same policy outcome. It is therefore worse off.

This result leads to some unexpected positive implications for the United States. To maintain the aura of legitimacy, the United States cannot directly disperse aid for votes. According to former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations John Bolton, the United States instead uses its influence in other international organizations to make payments (Vreeland and Dreher 2014, 25). This requires extra work to navigate, adds transaction costs, and generally handicaps the United States' ability to pay (Vreeland and Dreher 2014, 19-21 and 55). Intuitively, one would suspect that these obstacles are bad for Washington. Yet Proposition 3 shows the opposite: these limitations induce the electorate to nominate someone closer to the U.S.'s ideal point, which more than offsets the reduced capacity to bribe.[9]

Of course, Proposition 3 indicates that the United States would be even better off with greater restrictions. However, a couple barriers to greater reform exist. As it stands, the United States rarely makes an overt connection between aid and votes.[10] Thus, any domestic laws to prohibit bribery suffer from a monitoring and enforcement problem, as such an enforcement body would have to observe an increase in aid to a nonpermanent member *and* tie it to voting.[11] Moreover, such enforcement would come from an actor that does not have incentive to follow through.[12] In sum, domestic solutions suffer from commitment issues.

Even if credible laws were possible in theory, the nonpermanent members may ultimately be the greater obstacle to reform. The results of the voting phase indicate that electorate can undo any policy damage that the United States' bribe would cause. Consequently, the states at large are not losers here. In fact, the lucky state that receives nonpermanent membership is a great winner—it implements the same policy as in the

[9]One may wonder about the welfare results for the corner solution of Proposition 2. Although the United States ultimately moves the policy to the right of the median voter's ideal point, the U.S. may still be strictly worse off than paying no bribe and receiving the median's ideal point. Reforms would nevertheless be easier under these conditions because everyone to the left of the median (and some just to the right) would have a vested interest in obtaining the median policy.

[10]Yemen's nea of the Persian Gulf War is the notable exception.

[11]Another solution is to outlaw foreign aid entirely, but that is undesirable to many for its own reason.

[12]That is, once the electorate chooses a nonpermanent member, the United States' payoff is increasing in its ability to bribe. The opposite relationship in Proposition 3 is due to the electorate's anticipation of bribes.

absence of a bribe, plus it receives a cash payout. As a result, potential nonpermanent members have a vested stake in maintain the current system.

2.4 Robustness

All models make simplifying assumptions. A reader thus may wonder whether these results extend to other stylized versions of nonpermanent member elections and bribery. Fortunately, the central result—that the pivotal voter can shift the realized policy toward its ideal point despite bribery—is robust to other specifications. I discuss a few of the more prominent ones below.

First, the literature has identified multiple states that increase aid allotments to nonpermanent members. The model, in contrast, only had the United States play during the bribery phase. The median voter's decision generalizes here. Rather than have the United States unilaterally bribe the winner, suppose that some number of states play a bribery subgame with the nonpermanent member. As long as that subgame has an equilibrium with a policy outcome strictly increasing in the member's ideal point and preferences are sufficiently diverse, the electorate can still choose a state that will ultimately unravel everything back to the median's ideal point. Even the welfare implications of Proposition 3 carry over here, as all states that pay a bribe in the bribery subgame are strictly worse off than if bribes were illegal.

As a practical matter, the real world has a finite number of discrete states rather than the continuum in the model. Relaxing this assumption means that the electorate cannot locate a state that would exactly unwind the policy back to the median ideal point following the bribery subgame. The electorate must instead choose the country that is closest to this optimal location. This may ultimately result in a policy further to the left that the median's ideal point, meaning that bribery from the United States can place the realized policy further *away* from the American ideal point than in a world with no bribery at all. But this is the result of a discrete choice space and thus does not have any great theoretical implications.[13]

Finally, Vreeland and Dreher's model of bribery cautions of shifting importance of policy matters. That is, the General Assembly chooses nonpermanent members up to

[13]The electorate may also be unable to find the perfect candidate if each state has a unique preference weight. Here, the best option remains to select the state that will place the policy as close to the median's ideal point as possible.

two years before the Security Council decides important issues. For the electorate to perfectly unravel the effect of the American bribe, it must correctly identify a potential nonpermanent member's preference weighting for bribes versus policy. This may prove difficult if such a weight is realized after the election phase. The electorate must then choose the nonpermanent member that will unravel the bribe closest to the median's ideal point in expectation.[14] Again, this can result in policies to the left or right of the median. But this is a consequence of the uncertainty and would also be true even without bribery. As such, it does not say anything deep about the effects of bribery.[15]

3 Conclusion

This paper argued that we cannot study bribery and fair representation on the United Nations Security Council without also considering how bribes impact elections. Anticipating that bribes distort future policy decisions, the electorate chooses a state further away from the United States' ideal point than the median voter. The bribe then shifts the policy back to where the median voter wants it. Although the bribe pushes the policy closer to the United States' preferred outcome, the effect is ultimately detrimental for the U.S. due to the electorate's endogenous adjustment during the election phase.

My model is not the final word on fairness and bribery on the Security Council. For elections to undo the distortions from cash payoffs, the actors must internalize the consequences of an appointment and strategically respond in the selection phase. Substantive research on that remains underdeveloped, though there is some evidence that some states do not exert much effort in determining the best candidate.[16] Under-the-table payoffs in the election phase could simply shift the problem up a step.[17] Potential

[14] As I noted in the discussion of Proposition 1, states with lower preference weights for bribes generally make more reliable agents. Accordingly, wealthy countries from their regional groups (e.g., Japan, Brazil, and Argentina) often win nonpermanent membership.

[15] This is also how the electorate would solve a situation with incomplete information about preference weights rather than the mutual uncertainty of a move by nature to draw the weights following the election phase.

[16] Malone (2000, 13) finds that a third of election votes come from ambassadors who ignored or never received instructions their home governments. Relatedly, the African Group appears to rotate its membership, with Nigeria and Ghana occasionally receiving extra slots (Vreeland and Dreher 2014, 147-148). That said, only pivotal nonpermanent members matter for determining formal Security Council policy, so some electoral decisions might not alter outcomes.

[17] Fortunately, the model indicates that if bribery is present at both levels, cleaning up just the elections phase will result in the legitimate policy.

nonpermanent members also spend significant resources to win election (Jayakumar 2011, 65), suggesting that less powerful states may distort the ultimate policy. Future work ought to investigate these issues by obtaining a better understanding of the unwritten rules of nonpermanent member elections.

4 Appendix

4.1 Proof of Lemma 1

I solve by backward induction. Suppose that the electorate has chosen a member with ideological position n. If that member rejects the U.S.'s bribe, then it trivially selects n as the policy. (Any other policy leads to a strictly negative payoff.) In turn, that member is willing to accept a bribe valued at b that shifts that member's implemented position to x if:

$$-(x-n)^2 + \alpha_n b \geq -(n-n)^2$$
$$b \geq \frac{(x-n)^2}{\alpha_n}$$

The U.S.'s optimization problem is more complicated because it must maximize the policy outcome with the bribe constraint, subject to the nonpermanent member being willing to accept the bribe. If the member accepts, the U.S.'s payoff equals $-(x-u)^2 - \alpha_u b$. Fortunately, the problem becomes much simpler after recognizing that the above constraint must hold with equality in any subgame perfect equilibrium in which the United States makes an acceptable offer. To see why, suppose not. Then a bribe amount exists strictly between the proposed equilibrium amount and $\frac{(x-n)^2}{\alpha_n}$ that the member strictly prefers to accept holding fixed the proposed policy position. This is a profitable deviation because the U.S. maintains the same policy position but pays strictly less, completing the proof by contradiction.

As such, in equilibrium, the U.S. must maximize x subject to $b = \frac{(x-n)^2}{\alpha_n}$. So the objective function is:

$$-(x-u)^2 - \frac{\alpha_u (x-n)^2}{\alpha_n}$$

And the first order condition is:

$$-2x + 2u - \frac{\alpha_u}{\alpha_n}(2x - 2n) = 0$$

$$x^* \equiv \frac{u + \frac{\alpha_u n}{\alpha_n}}{1 + \frac{\alpha_u}{\alpha_n}}$$

Note that this solution is strictly on the interior.[18] This is because the bribe b must be greater than 0. Substituting x^* into the constrained bribe value yields:

$$\frac{\left(\frac{u + \frac{\alpha_u n}{\alpha_n}}{1 + \frac{\alpha_u}{\alpha_n}} - n\right)^2}{\alpha_n} > 0$$

$$n < u$$

This is true because the U.S.'s position is to the right of the member. □

4.2 Proof of Proposition 1

To begin, note that:

$$\frac{u + \frac{\alpha_u\left[m - \frac{\alpha_n}{\alpha_u}(u-m)\right]}{\alpha_n}}{1 + \frac{\alpha_u}{\alpha_n}} = m$$

That is, selecting a state with ideological position $m - \frac{\alpha_n}{\alpha_u}(u - m)$ yields a policy position of m following the bribery subgame.

Let n^* represent the ideal point of the state chosen in equilibrium. I proceed with proof by cases. First, suppose that $n^* < m - \frac{\alpha_n}{\alpha_u}(u - m)$. By Lemma 1, ideological position ultimately implemented is less than m. Call that position i'. Then the coalition of states with ideal points greater than $\frac{i'+m}{2}$ could instead choose $m - \frac{\alpha_n}{\alpha_u}(u - m)$. They form a majority. Therefore, by Lemma 1, this yields an ideological position of m, which is strictly closer to all such states' ideal points. This is a profitable deviation, and thus n^* cannot be less than $m - \frac{\alpha_n}{\alpha_u}(u - m)$.

Now suppose that $n^* > m - \frac{\alpha_n}{\alpha_u}(u - m)$. By Lemma 1, ideological position ultimately implemented is greater than m. Call that position i'. Then the coalition of states with ideal points less than $\frac{i'+m}{2}$, excluding the state to be chosen, could instead choose

[18] It is also a maximum because the second derivative is $-2 - \frac{2\alpha_u}{\alpha_n}$.

$m - \frac{\alpha_n}{\alpha_u}(u - m)$.[19] They form a majority. Therefore, by Lemma 1, this yields an ideological position of m, which is strictly closer to all such states' ideal points. This is a profitable deviation, and thus n^* cannot be greater than $m - \frac{\alpha_n}{\alpha_u}(u - m)$.

The remaining case is $n^* = m - \frac{\alpha_n}{\alpha_u}(u - m)$. By Lemma 1, ideological position ultimately implemented equals m. No coalition can profitably deviate to a value less than n^*, as each non-elected member of majority coalition from the first case receives a strictly worse payoff. No coalition can profitably deviate to a value greater than n^*, as each non-elected member of the majority coalition from the second case receives a strictly worse payoff. Thus, this is an equilibrium.

To be clear, many such equilibria exist. As long as either the block to the left of and including the median or the block to the right of and including the median all nominate the state with ideal point $m - \frac{\alpha_n}{\alpha_u}(u - m)$, any positive mass of states on the opposite side of the block may also select $m - \frac{\alpha_n}{\alpha_u}(u - m)$ in equilibrium. □

4.3 Proof of Proposition 2

There are two cases to consider here. First, suppose that $n^* > \underline{n}$. By Lemma 1, the ideological position ultimately implemented is greater than m. Call that position i'. Then the coalition of states with ideal points less than $\frac{m+i'}{2}$ could instead choose $\underline{n}$. (They cannot choose $m - \frac{\alpha_n}{\alpha_u}(u - m)$ because no such state exists.) They form a majority. Therefore, by Lemma 1, this yields an ideological position strictly between m and n^*, which is strictly closer to all such states' ideal points. This is a profitable deviation, and thus n^* cannot be greater than $\underline{n}$.

Second, suppose that $n^* = \underline{n}$. This yields a policy position strictly greater than m. However, any change to the nonpermanent member chosen yields a policy strictly greater than that. Call this new position i'. No coalition can profitably deviate to this because the coalition of states with ideal points between $\underline{n}$ and $\frac{m+i'}{2}$ forms a strict majority and prefers $\underline{n}$ instead. Thus, this is an equilibrium.

As with Proposition 1, many equilibria exist here. The requirement is that the group of states between $\underline{n}$ and any value greater than m vote for $\underline{n}$. □

[19] The would-be appointed state must be excluded because it receives a monetary bonus from the bribe. This is inconsequential, however, because a single state has measure zero.

4.4 Proof of Proposition 3

The proof requires examination of a derivative after substituting for equilibrium decisions. Recall that the United States' objective function is:

$$-(x-u)^2 - \alpha_u b$$

For the non-corner solution, the equilibrium policy implemented is m, the equilibrium bribe is sized $\frac{(m-n)^2}{\alpha_n}$, and the equilibrium nonpermanent member's ideal point is $m - \frac{\alpha_n}{\alpha_u}(u-m)$. Placing these into the United States' objective function yields:

$$-(m-u)^2 - \alpha_u \frac{\left(m - \frac{\alpha_n}{\alpha_u}(u-m)\right)^2}{\alpha_n}$$

The first derivative of this with respect to α_u is:

$$\frac{\alpha_n (m-u)^2}{\alpha_u^2}$$

The United States' payoff is therefore increasing in α_u. As such, the more difficult it is for the U.S. to bribe the nonpermanent member, the higher the payoff is for the United States. □

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