

I. Introduction

Voting in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) has attracted scholarly attention right from the UN's inception. Renowned scholars such as Hayward Alker, Robert Keohane, Arend Lijphart, John Mueller, and Bruce Russett made their early marks with analyses of UN voting. These early studies viewed the UNGA as an arena in which broader patterns of behavior in world politics could be observed. Inspired by the behavioral revolution and methodological advances in the study of roll-call voting, these studies sought to identify voting blocs and dimensions of contestation in world politics.

In the 1970s this research program came under fire from scholars who argued that it was methodologically rather than conceptually driven and that it provided little justification for focusing on the UNGA as a microcosm for world politics (Keohane 1969; Alger 1970; Riggs et al 1970; Dixon 1981). Robert Keohane accused studies of UN politics of suffering from the "Mount Everest syndrome:" that the UN is studied because it is there without asking relevant and important theoretical questions. Arguably, the UN also had become a less significant venue by the 1970s and suffered from what Ernst Haas (1982) called "regime decay."

Consequently, the study of the UN was put on the backburner. A good indicator is the number of articles published in the primary sub-disciplinary journal, *International Organization (IO)*, as well as the primary journal for the entire discipline, the *American Political Science Review (APSR)*. Riggs et al. (1970) counted 247 articles in *IO*, and 16 in *APSR* from 1950 to 1969 whose main topic was an investigation of some aspect of the UN. In the 1970s, 32 articles on the UN appeared in *IO* and 4 in the *APSR*. Between 1980 and 2000 only 8 articles that explicitly investigated the UN were published in *IO* whereas the *APSR* had not published an