Examining the Undemocratic Nature of the United Nations Security Council: An Analysis of Competing Call for Reforms

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Abstract
This paper examines the democratic question in the United Nations (UN) as a global institution, particularly Security Council (SC). This concern dates back to the foundations of the UN and is responsible for persistent clamour for reorganisation of the global organisation. This paper argues that the composition of the Security Council is non-representative and undemocratic for the image and purpose of the United Nations as a democratic institution with regards for sovereign equality amongst nations. The paper demonstrates this by drawing attention to long and subsisting clamour by members of the General Assembly for reconfiguration and recalibration of the global body. The study invoked decoloniality as its epistemic guide and relied on secondary data as the basis of analysis. The paper is organised thematically to reflect different strands of clamour, as well as their convergence i.e. the Group of Four (G4), Uniting for Consensus, and the Ezulwini Consensus.
Keywords: United Nations, Security Council, Democracy, G4, Consensus, Ezulwini, Reform

1. Introduction

The inaugural speech of Ban Ki-Moon, both first and second term in office as the United Nations (UN) Chief Scribe, disinterred the long craving of most members of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). On 14th December, 2006, asserts that the "most pressing issue" of the time in the life of the UN is reform and, his second term inaugural speech emphasised that, improving what and how the UN is on ground, how it does things, and the increasing question of accountability are issues of great concern to the body under his watch (Blanchfield, 2011). This is no news as scribes before him i.e., Boutros Boutros Ghali and Kofi Annan, had equally made far-reaching remarks admonishing the organisation on the imperative for reform (Maurer, 2006). What is however of concern here is that these calls echo the sentiments of a cross-section of membership of the organisation. Schlichtmann (2011) argues that from the recurring concern of the secretariats to the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) to the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges an Change, the thrust is the same – to alter, modify and or change operational mechanics of the organisation, particularly the Security Council.

Scholars have argued that though the imperative for reform is overdue as the time and reality of the organisation no longer support its foundational logic; they are nonetheless agreed that the Secretary General as agent provocateur for reform is limited by substantive and procedural requirements (Blanchfield, 2011; Maurer, 2006). According to Blanchfield (2011: 18), "*although, the Secretary General as the chief administrative officer of the United Nations can facilitate and advocate reform, the power to implement wide-ranging and comprehensive changes lies primarily with the U.N. member states.*" This, at face level, appears to be a somewhat straightforward issue as it requires the UN member states to call for reform and have it address or so. However, nothing can be as far from straightforward as this so long as the extant framework of the UN system is concerned. The existing framework of the UN system is such that any substantial change of its operational mechanics requires the agreement of the members of the Security Council. What this means is that to effect change in the workings of the Security Council simultaneously requires the approval of the Security Council including, but more importantly, the consent of the five permanent members (Szewczyk, 2012; Fassbender, 2005). It is in this sense, it is contended that any critical mind will "*note that despite diplomatic and political pressures from many countries, the United Nations has been slow to implement substantive reform*" (Blanchfield, 2011: 13) and this is because, in the main, it is yet to receive the express blessings of the permanent members.

However, this is not to say the wind for change is not blowing through the UN or the inner circle of the Security Council. For instance, the then president of United States of America (US) Barack Obama, in 2009 observed that "*the [Security] Council of today quite logically ought to be something… that looks a little bit different from the Council as it was created 60-plus years ago*" (ibid: 16). That is to say while the conditions that necessitated its exclusivist configuration and structural design then are no longer tenable now and, as such, its current being now begs for reform. Nevertheless, while submission of this sort is important to highlight the internal contradictions of the system itself, it is more important to note at this juncture that the bulwark for reforms has been predominantly championed by members of the GA, not the permanent five (P5) of the UNSC.

Also, important to note is that, while the need for reform shares broad consensus among members of the GA and is uncontestable, the clamour varies according to competing interests and values:

> Some critics focused on the regional imbalances which historically advantage North over South. Others focused upon the exclusion from permanent member status of several leading powers. More radically, some have sought to limit the concept of veto powers as inappropriate in a post-Cold war era. Opponents of reform cited the pre-eminent need for effective decision making over representative principles (Imber, 2006: 328).

Similarly, Dan Kraus (2011: 1) observes that even though the direction of reform cannot be easily foreseen, its inevitability is certain:

> While there is general international agreement that the United Nations needs to be reformed, there is also extensive disagreement on what this means. Although my crystal ball is a bit fuzzy, I can guarantee this: The UN will evolve. UN reform is not an event. It is a process that has been underway since before the organization was even founded.

These submissions appositely captured the multidimensional nature of issues underscoring the quest for UN's reform. Additionally, while the need for reform is unquestionable and the range of issues reflect the diverse interests that need to be addressed, the vitality to push it through will depend largely on the ability of such a proposal to command the Charter-based requirement of necessary two-thirds votes from the General Assembly and more importantly, the mandatory support of the P5. Nevertheless, in the context of this study, these competing interests and values are coalesced into three identifiable collectives, namely the Group of Four (G4), Uniting for Consensus and Ezulwini Consensus.

Nonetheless, this study critically examines these competing clamour for reforms from a broad section of the UN albeit limitations to highlight the dearth of representation and democratic values in the UN system. To achieve this objective, this work is structured into five thematic sections alongside this introduction, namely theoretical positioning, the Group of Four (G4), Uniting for Consensus, the Ezulwini Consensus, and towards a viable UNSC.

2. Theoretical Framework

This paper aligns with Decoloniality as a meta-theoretical attitude to contemporary sociopolitical analysis. Decoloniality is an epistemological tradition and methodology approach that interrogates the long-standing patterns of power and subtle structures of oppression that subsists long after the end of formal colonisation. Thus, given the perverse nature of coloniality, "decoloniality is the project that defines and motivates the emergence of a global political society delinking from rewesternisation and dewesternisation" (Mignolo, 2011: 281). According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2021: 51), decoloniality is a "science and methodology to understand contemporary replications of racism and colonial matrices of power at a world scale from a global South perspective". It is a meta-theoretical approach of global South's origins committed to emancipatory politics at global level from the continuing effect of racism, patriarchy, colonialism and capitalism. Similarly, Vazquez (2014: 173) posits that, decolonial thinking "has as a departure point the acknowledgement of the limits and exteriority of modernity". For him, modernity is not only limited and exclusionary, "modernity (with its modernities) cannot claim to cover all the historical reality. There is an outside, something beyond modernity…ways of living and inhabiting the world that come from other geo-genealogies, non-Western and non-modern" worlds.

Modernity has been defined as a specific moment in time in particular historical society, not all societies. According to Mignolo (2011: 279), modernity is "hegemonic narrative of Western civilisation … not ontological moments of universal history [and definitely] not the 'natural' unfolding of history." It is to this end, Mignolo (2011: 281) concurred with the Haitian anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot that modernity is historic specific and represents a moment in time in the development of, and projection, Western hegemony on a worldwide scale. For Trouillot, modernity "has to do with those aspects and moments in the development of world capitalism that require the projection of the individual or collective subject against both space and time. It has to do with historicity" (quoted in Mignolo, 2011: 281). Modernity thus represents, as noted earlier, not human progressive move from lower to higher forms of existence but a "… paradigm of discovery and newness that also included the gradual propagation of capitalism, racism, the modern/gender system" (Maldonado-torres, 2011: 1).

Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Chimbati, (2013: 5) introduce the idea of the the colonial matrix of power to illuminate discussions on modernity. They define the colonial matrix of power as "…a complete package with social, economic, cultural, ideological, aesthetic and epistemological contours that combined to reduce, silence, dominate, oppress, exploit and overshadow the non-Western world." When Europeans colonised other parts of the world they brought in their own knowledge which in the end brought in a lot of skepticism. Decolonial thinking stands in contradistinction to challenge what (Maldonado-torres, 2011) describes as "… dehumanizing forms of thinking that present themselves as natural or divine." In the same vein (Mignolo, 2007;163) views Decolonial thinking as "…intellectual projects and social movements confronting modernity/coloniality, unveils

its hidden complicity and sustain the claim that other worlds are possible."

In other words, what Decolonial thinking represents is to counter dominant and hegemonic narratives normalising notions that privileges the West over and above anything existing outside the purview of Eurocentric modernity as inferior. This paper progresses along these lines albeit on a lighter form to interrogate the undemocratic nature of the United Nation Security Council and continuing call for reform as a continuation of the decolonial resistance to the colonial matrix of power in its varied forms. The contention is that the domination of the United Nations Security Council permanent seats by European states and the conspicuous exclusion of Africa is an articulation of coloniality. This understanding underscores the rest of this paper albeit subtly applied.

3. The Group of Four (G4)

From its very foundation, the successor organisation of the League of Nations, the UN was fraught with contestations of varying kinds i.e. what should be the best composition, membership contribution to statutory organs and institutions, what should be its modus operandi, etc. (Bagchi, 2013; CFR, 2013). Just a decade after its inception, these concerns began to manifest as grey areas, contours and fault lines, particularly as it relates to its highest policy organ, the Security Council. By 1963, the UN underwent its first and, arguably, only major shake- up by expanding the membership of the non-permanent members of the Security Council from four to ten. Since then, some scholars have argued, it was as if there was an unwritten vow, never again to repeat reform of its structure even though its membership has quadrupled over time (Bailey and Daws, 1998; Bagchi, 2013).

The G4 is a coalition of states who share a common aspiration to be included in what they considered to be the most prestigious club of states. Its original impetus draws from the 'vanquished' of the second ethnie wars of Europe which it had drawn a cross-section of the globe into and styled World War II, particularly Japan (Quijano, 2007; Mignolo, 2011). It is partly due to this and other geopolitical factors that the G4 is often referred to as the "rising middle powers". At the initial stage, the G4 was unwavering on the issue of veto power. This group of states whose claim to ascendency to the Security Council lie not in the substance of the group but the merit of the individual members making up the group includes Japan, India, Brazil and Germany (Martini, 2009; Kraus, 2011). However, today, it is India that is by far the staunchest supporter, promoter and most meritorious among the members of the group.

The cause of contestation for this group, among other things, include the question of veto power, regional representation, size of an enlarged council, working method of the security council, relationship between the Security Council and General Assembly, and the closed nature of and non-representative character of both chambers of the Security Council – permanent and non-permanent category. The latter, particularly in relation to veto power, appears to be the core issue of concern. They couched their quest in a way that appears apologetic to other aggrieved interests within the UN system. Thus, they urged the Security Council to enhance the transparency, inclusiveness and legitimacy in its conduct if it will continue to remain the engine room of the organisation. For them, reforming the UN means expanding the membership of both categories of the Security Council. Specifically, they advocate for the creation of additional six new permanent seats and four non-permanent seats. And, in terms of conduct, they advocated for open, transparent and 'public' conduct of Security Council's business.

On the one hand, the proposal of the G4 is that, of the six new permanent seats, Asia gets two, Latin America gets one, Western Europe gets one and two goes to Africa corresponding to Japan and India, Brazil, Germany and two unspecified African countries (UNGA, 2005). In practical terms what this means is that the G4 four members i.e. Japan, India, Brazil and Germany, each gets a seat at the prestigious inner chamber of the Security Council while two unspecified African countries get the remaining two seats. On the other hand, they proposed the creation of additional four non-permanent seats following the same order i.e. one for Asia, one for Latin America, one for Western Europe and one for Africa. Additionally, the G4 recognises that though instances might arise where secrecy becomes necessary in its conduct; the general conduct of the Security Council should, as a matter of principle, be "open to all Member States of the Organisation" and substantive matters be communicated to the General Assembly before meetings (UNGA, 2005).

The G4 was not merely concerned with mere reconstitution of the Security Council; they advocated for reform that comes with substantive change in the UN system. For them, this can be achieved only when the new permanent members have the same power and enjoy the same privilege and responsibility as the current P5 (Martini, 2010; Okhovat, 2011). According to M. S. Puri (2001), India in particular was unwilling to compromise its stand; she was unwilling to trade genuine reform for cosmetic dressing. The contention is that an expanded permanent membership without corresponding veto power ab initio is mere reconstitution with no substantive change. Reform of the UN, for India, goes beyond expansion of membership of important councils; it is about under-representation, democracy and responsibility and, as such, requires corresponding power (veto) to perform that role (Puri, 2001; Pirozzi, 2011). This position was unflinchingly held by these states initially, but began to faulter over time. While Brazil and India remained dogged, Germany and Japan had recourse to soften

their stance.

However, the G4 quest for national membership appears to be both its blessing and Achille's heel. Though the blessing and curse were clearly polarised; it is instructive of the proclivity of the Council to maintain and uphold its closed character. Nevertheless, on one extreme, the national membership advanced by G4 court the blessings of some member of the P5 i.e., while the United State was sympathetic to India's cause, Britain and France do not seem to be hostile to Germany's quest (Blanchfield, 2017). On the other extreme, national membership forms the bulk of resistance it attracted from other members of the General Assembly, particularly the coalition of interests making up the Uniting for Consensus. They see the aspiration of G4 as a deliberate attempt to both further the undemocratic tradition of the UN and compound the already complicated workings of the Security Council (Kraus, 2018; Blanchfield, 2011).

Nonetheless, the initial tempo of the G4 seems to have relaxed in the face of mounting critique and opposition on many fronts, particularly against Germany and Japan, thereby reducing the momentum of G4 to G2 with Brazil and India as the thrust. Germany and Japan, on the one hand, have been accused of vainglory pursuit aimed at restoring their 'lost glory'. Though Japan is known to have been the brain behind the group of four, it is equally the first to diplomatically abandon its quest for a more liberal approach. Similarly, Germany has adopted a more prudent approach, striking a balance between national and regional membership quest (Kraus, 2018). It is important to note that, both Germany and Japan see opposition to their quest as a historical discontinuity whereby they were deliberately excluded from the Security Council whose membership is dominated by the victors of the European ethnic wars (Kraus, 2018; Blanchfield, 2011). The contention is that Germany and Japan are still viewed with the lens of aggressors that cannot be trusted with enormous power and responsibility even though both are major donor to the budget of the UN (Kraus, 2018; Okhovat, 2011). Thus, while Japan's chief claim to the Security Council being economic stability and contribution to the UN is rivaled by other rich countries, Germany's now relaxed and prudent approach stems from its advocacy for a permanent seat for European Union (EU), which she believes France and the United Kingdom will naturally defer to her (Martini, 2010).

Brazil and India, on the other hand, have remained vehemently opposed to internal suggestions or external critique that would derail the quest for substantive reform of the Security Council. Following the outcome of the Intergovernmental Negotiation of 2009, India however began to show willingness to accede to the intermediate solution which proposes the creation of an intermediate or transitional category of membership in the Security Council. This new category of seats seeks to expand the Council by admitting new members whose term is longer than the current two-year term of non-permanent members. At the end of the new elongated term, members will be subjected to review and favourable review means progression to permanent category while unfavourable review means retention of status quo (Krugel, 2009). Brazil has however expressed its dissatisfaction of the intermediate model due to, what it refers to as, "title without power and responsibility" given the lack of veto power during the interim period.

Nevertheless, the thrust of the Intergovernmental Negotiation seems to be tilting in favour of the G4, especially in terms of support, however cold, from P5 members such as the United Kingdom, France and, to a lesser extent, Russia and the US. The quest of the G4, it appears, has not gone well with other members of the General Assembly and, as such, has evoked contestations of other kinds. The G4 has been accused for downplaying the political relevance of other states as well as egoistic and self-seeking, who merely want to participate in the largesse of privilege in the Security Council with no intention to reform the UN for the good of all nations. One major group at the trail of the G4 is Uniting for Consensus.

4. Uniting for Consensus

The Uniting for Consensus (UfC), with over 80 states, is primarily dominated by the regional rivals of the G4. The UfC are considered "regional rival" to the rising middle powers who aspire to be admitted to the permanent cadre of the Security Council. Uniting for consensus refers to a coalition of interest as a political response from regional rivalries to the aspiration of Germany, Japan, India and Brazil to the permanent seat of the UN. Too this end, the UfC has in its rank countries such as Italy opposed to Germany; South Korea and China fiercely opposed to Japan; Pakistan fiercely opposed to India; and Argentina, Columbia and Mexico sternly opposed to Brazil. With the exception of China who is a permanent member of the Security Council, these states have mobilised themselves and supporters to form an opposition bloc known as Uniting for Consensus. It is an opposition bloc poised for democratic reform and committed to frustrating to aspirations of G4 which it describes as essentially parochial and an unjust attempt to increase their international relevance.

Uniting for Consensus premised their call for reform on the need to democratise the working of the UN. As an opposition bloc to the G4 which it has accused of masquerading under democratic guise to advance its members ascension into the permanent enclave of the Security Council, the UfC expectedly delivered a radically different proposal to that of G4 (Paul and Nahory 2005). In 2005, the UfC proposed a relatively fluid Council with enlarged non-permanent seats. For them, the democratic question needs to be reconciled with the issue of

collective security. What this means, for UfC, is that the imperative for democracy must not be confused with enlarged permanent membership (or veto power) and compromised for broadened framework of workable, efficient and effective Security Council (Guzzardi and Mullenbach, 2007; Freiesleben, 2009). For them, reforming the UN means strengthening its democratic institutions by expanding the membership of non-permanent categories of the Security Council. Specifically, they advocate for the creation of an expansion of non-permanent seats to reflect regions hitherto neglected. This, for them, is analogous to democratising the mechanics of the UN system as opposed to call for creation of additional permanent seats with veto powers which is egoistic and self-serving.

If the issue is democracy, then more permanent members with veto power is not the solution. Rather, representativeness, UfC argue is the answer (Schlichtmann 2011). The challenge of democracy can be resolved by expanding the membership of non-permanent category, not the admission of new permanent members – a situation which, according to them, is the very catalyst for the clamour reform. Thus, increasing exclusive privilege is not a substitute for representation and reform is not synonymous with reconstitution of who has veto power or not. Conversely, the UfC appeared convinced that once the expansion of the non-permanent category for the sake of adequate representation is attended to, the other major issue is the effectiveness of the Security Council. For them, effectiveness is relative to size; the larger the permanent members the less effective it will become and, the smaller it is the more effective it will be to address security and other global issues (Freiesleben, 2009). This way, Martini (2010) argued that the UfC is more or less concerned with how the Security Council will become more responsive and effective by having expanded membership of the non-permanent, without jettisoning the need to remove impediments to effective decision making which the veto power in the permanent category represents.

Additionally, the UfC proposes that, if the veto power cannot be addressed in terms of obstacle it represents in the determination of pressing global issues, then it is necessary to curtail it. The UfC is convinced that rather than increasing membership of the inner circle of the Security Council and thereby increasing veto-power wielding countries, veto should either be severely limited by express provisions relating to matters contained in Chapter VII of the UN Charter or completely abolished as it places unnecessary bottleneck to the operational mechanics of the UN (Schlichtmann 2011). Thus, they argue that an ideal Security Council be representative enough command the legitimacy of the entire organisation, not a sub-section of it (Martini, 2010; Schlichtmann 2011). In its proposal to the United Nations General Assembly in 2005, the UfC clearly emphasised "restraint on the use of veto" or "complete abolition of veto" as precondition for ensuring transparency, enhancing communication and promoting inter-institution and inter-agency cooperation of the UN (UNGA, 2005).
In this regard, Schlchtmann captured the scene when he puts it questioningly thus:

> *...Does the wording necessarily imply that the Security Council must expand by increasing the number of individual nation-state members, or could "increase in the membership of the Security Council" be taken to mean an increase in the number of states-like those joined in the EU-and the number of people represented? Foremost, isn't it "We, the Peoples of the United Nations" who are equitably represented, and who have a role to see that the principles of the United Nations are upheld and its purposes accomplished? The most important item on the agenda "Right of People to Peace" may be to see that the System of Collective Security, which the founders of the United Nations had envisioned, and which could guarantee that right, will put into effect. To achieve this, the composition of Security Council needs to be only changed slightly, reducing the European seats to one and admitting a prominent member from the hitherto unrepresented Global South (2011: 98).*

Schlchtmann (2011) highlighted several salient issues bothering on the democratic question of the UN, with the latter part as its burden. The contention is that in as much as there is concern for veto power, the question which precedes "veto" is, who constitute the Security Council P5? How representative is the P5 vis-à-vis the diverse peoples of the world to justify the organisation's claim of "we the peoples"? The issue here is that the legitimacy of the UN and its Security Council depends more on the representation of its P5 which is currently dominated by Europe then, this can be proceeded by the issue of veto. Some scholars have argued that it is in the spirit of concerns such as this that some of the permanent members have openly suggest their willingness and or unwillingness to support reforms (Paul and Nahory, 2005; Guzzardi and Mullenbach, 2007).

For instance, the United States has expressed its willingness to only support Security Council reform that is based on a broad consensus of members of the General Assembly. It has also suggested that is willing to support country-specific membership of the Council as a way of not merely pretending to be a democratic organisation, but to also be seen as promoting democracy by rewarding states imbibing democratic credos (Guzzardi and Mullenbach, 2007). The United States has further issued 'country-specific' criteria such as commitment to democracy and proliferation of democratic ethos, respect for and defense of human rights, support for peace, non-proliferation and counter-terrorism, military capacity and contribution to peacekeeping operations, commitment to financial obligation and financial contributions to the United Nations, geographic and regional

balance, and the size of economy and population. In the same vein, China has openly declared that it will block, by way of veto, the quest by Japan to secure permanent membership of the Security Council. China's position is that, besides the egoistic and putative quest to the status of regional opposition and rival power, Japan's push is not in any way related to the democratic question or issue of representativeness (Paul and Nahory, 2005; Schlchtmann, 2011).

However, the concerns of the permanent members notwithstanding, rising from a meeting hosted by Italy, the UfC arrived at a consensus that representation supersedes expansion in its quest for a reformed Security Council (Fassbender, 2015). For them, one of the defining characters of democracy is election, especially as it serves as a measure and check for performance and representation respectively. UfC contends that since at the core of demand for reform lies the democratic question, then an invaluable test is to subject members of the most important council of the UN to periodic validation. With firm insistence that "only periodic elections could ensure democratic and transparent criteria", the UfC invariably makes a case that permanence hitherto enjoyed by the inner circle of the council be subjected to re-validation after specific term (Stuenkel 2016; Fassbender, 2015). This for them is the true test of representation as it removes what had hitherto been, to use Stuenkel's (2015) phrase, "hereditary succession" of the five permanent members. Italy pushes further by urging member to think ahead in terms of changing geopolitical dynamics and calls for consideration of "regional dimension in a reformed Security Council". Similarly, Pakistan, alongside other UfC members believes no reform of the UN requires expansion of the Security Council save for Africa who, she asserts, deserves a permanent seat as recompense for centuries of "historical injustice", safeguard for continuing onslaught albeit subtle forms and, importantly, for representativeness and geopolitical balance (Pirozzi and Ronzitti, 2019). This, scholars argued, marks the convergence of position between UfC and the third bloc, Ezulwini Consensus (Pirozzi and Ronzitti, 2019).

5. *Ezulwini* Consensus – "the African Group"

This bloc, consisting mainly of Africans, takes its name from the city in Swaziland where African leaders converged to discuss the centuries of "historical injustice" meted against the continent by Europe which today manifests as Africa's magrinalised status and lack of representation in the world's most prestigious club. Ezuleini Consensus is a continental response to a range of issues that has led to Western hegemonic influence and systematic exclusion Africa in global affairs. Thus, Ezulwini Consensus is responding to a dysfunction UN system that ascribes superiority and power to the West leading to global structural imbalance reflected in the non-representative and undemocratic composition of the Security Council, as well as exclusion and marginalisation of non-European interests. Rising from its historic gathering in Swaziland, Ezulwini Consensus charged the United Nations Security Council and its P5 for being antidemocratic and high-handedness respectively. Speaking on the Paper titled: *"Question of Equitable Representation and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and other related Matters"*, the Group's representative, Sierra Leonean Ambassador, M. S. Touray asserts that:

> Time and again, the African Group has reiterated that the relevance, legitimacy and moral authority of the United Nations will ever remain undermined if the historical injustice caused by the fact that the continent of Africa is not represented in the Permanent Category of the Security Council is not addressed without further delay (UNGA 2009).

This draws directly from, and furthers the demand of, the 2005 proposal originally presented by the African Union through its South African representative. Unlike the other blocs, the African Bloc recognises the underrepresentation of Latin America as equally important to the democratic question. In its original proposal, Ezulwini Consensus demanded for the creation of additional seats in both the permanent and non-permanent category of the Security Council. For the non-permanent category, it demanded five seats reserved for Africa while for the permanent category, it demanded two seats with veto power *ab initio*. The latter, though by individual state in trust for the continent; the seats are occupied on regional basis with the African Union having exclusive right to determine who represent the regions (Afoaku and Okechukwu, 2014). This position however did not last long as there were allegations and counter-allegations that some members have traded their position for 'promising offers' by the G4 (Akpotor and Agbebaku, 2010).

At the behest of Nigeria, a high-level delegation of Ezulwini Consensus and G4 converged in London. In attendance were the then foreign ministers of Nigeria, South Africa, Egypt and Libya representing the African side, while foreign ministers of Japan, Germany, Brazil and India were all present as the full representation of the G4. The summit which was publicise as necessitated by the desire to find common grounds, promote consensus and ensure a win-win scenario for both blocs, turned out divisive for the African bloc (Afoaku and Okechukwu, 2014; Akpotor and Agbebaku, 2010). Nigeria, a frontline state of the Ezulwini Consensus and an unquestionable contender for the proposed permanent seat, acquiesced her position for the position of G4 – a permanent seat with no veto power, a position believed to have the unalloyed support of some members of the P5. For Nigeria, this is a more pragmatic approach to the debacle at hand, while for Egypt and Libya, it was a

betrayal of the highest order. For them, it is a betrayal because, not only was Nigeria a strong advocate of the African position; Nigeria was the brainchild of the 2005 proposal.

However, South Africa, Botswana and Ghana supported Nigeria as being practical and diplomatic. For them, according to Szewczyk (2012), "the fear of the permanent five (P5) is indeed the beginning of wisdom". Nigeria argument, she argued, was informed by, among other things, the fact that the G4 was not so keen in pushing further their concern for permanent membership with veto power. What this means, for Nigeria, is that Ezelwuini Consensus will be isolated in her demand for veto and, by so doing, fail to garner the required third-fifth membership to advance the cause of the group. This is a clear reversal or u-turn of its 2005 position which was re-asserted again in 2009 that Ezulwini insists on nothing "less than two permanent seats with all the prerogatives and privileges of the permanent category and five overall non-permanent seats" (UNGA, 2009). Nigeria's soft-pedalling or self-righteous lenient approach have been greeted with differing responses. For some scholars it is pragmatic, tactical and matching the rhythms of the P5 who appears more less willing to concede to permanent seat without veto power than permanent seat with veto power (Akinterinwa, 2015; Blanchfield, 2011; Akpotor and Agbebaku, 2010).

> *We now need more effective global governance than the UN is providing. The question can be asked, how often has the veto power been used and what were African losses? That the issues of colonialism, the Middle East, Apartheid and the Cold War that make the veto relevant are gone. That we secure the ordinary membership of the Security Council first, understand the dynamics of the council and the occupier of the seats and gradually talk to them, and gradually we can secure the permanent seat* (Akinterinwa, 2015: 53).

For others, the argument is simple: 'what is the use of power without responsibility'? For them, it is meaningless being among the permanent members of the Security Council without veto power (Krauss, 2018; Afoaku and Okechukwu, 2014). This, for them, begs for answer, especially given that Nigeria's Foreign Policy clearly situates Africa as its centre-piece, thus placing enormous responsibility on Nigeria necessitating a corresponding veto power in the inner circle of the Security Council.

Nevertheless, whatever side the argument swings, what is clear is that the viability of Ezulwini Consensus is at a crossroad. Though Africa's quest for representation and space in the permanent category of the Security Council is largely accepted as legitimate, the swavering position of one of its leading contenders is far from encouraging as it paints an image of lack of firmness – an invaluable characteristic of such high position. Moreover, Nigeria is already known for its pedigree of projecting, advancing and defending Africa's interest, both in policy and conduct, to begin to backslide at a crucial time like this when her doggedness is needed (Afoaku and Okechukwu, 2014).

6. Towards a viable UNSC

Thought there is almost near consensus that the UN Security Council needs to be reformed to make it more representative, more democratic and transparent, the direction the reform should take has been the very bane of the demand for reform. It is easy and states easily agree the Council's need for reform but disagree at every turn on a clear formula. Moreover, what is strikingly obvious and needs no pretense is the fact that the world's leading organisation subsists on a system that allows it to make legally binding resolutions based on the microscopic whim of 5 states in the Security Council while the resolutions of about 200 members of its General Assembly are not legally binding is beyond disbelief (Fassbender, 2019; Krauss, 2018; Akinterinwa, 2015). This is more troubling when weighed against the backdrop that some of the members of the P5 are the loudest advocates for democracy globally while sitting as a presiding member in a council that is historically and characteristically the most undemocratic global institution (Okhovat, 2011; Krauss, 2018; Akinterinwa, 2015).

These issues underscore the imperative for reform regardless of the contestations as to the direction of that reform. The numerical increase in the membership of the UN from 51 to 114, from 114 to 193 to 205 suggests that the organisation is changing which, by necessity, calls for corresponding change in the qualitative aspect of the organisation in terms of principles, rules and mode of conduct. More so, the events of the 1950s through the 21st century such as the flag independence of previously colonised societies, the disintegration of the former Soviet Union, the collapse of Berlin Wall, the demise of the Cold War era, etc., all serve as invitation to rethink and recalibrate the configuration and workings of the UN system should its claim to global status remain valid.

Article 2 of the UN Charter which declares that "the Organisation is based on the principle of the *sovereign equality of all its members*" cannot be easily dismissed as it serves as the foundational basis upon which a supposed peaceful global existence can be forged, and in which all members have responsibility to promote by way of active participation (UN Charter, 1945. Emphasis not in original). Thus, the reform is a much more anticipated one; to devise an acceptable package acceptable to all, or at least a reasonable support base to secure the mandatory third-fifth vote of the General Assembly is not as easy as recognising the imperative of a reform of the Organisation. The dearth of consensus on the path the reform should take notwithstanding, the compelling need to overhaul the UN Security Council from its current unrepresentative, non-democratic and opaque mode of

operation appears inevitable if the UN system is to continue to command the allegiance of its members and enjoy the legitimacy that comes with sense of inclusiveness.

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