

The Agency of Ecuador as a Non-Permanent Member of the United Nations Security Council in the Periods 1991-1992 and 2023¹

La agencia del Ecuador como miembro no permanente del Consejo de Seguridad de las Naciones Unidas en los períodos 1991-1992 y 2023

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Abstract

This research investigates the participation of Ecuador as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council in the periods of 1991-1992 and 2023. It examines the role of international organizations, especially the Security Council, and how they influence the behavior of a small country like Ecuador, which seeks to maintain a role in the system. The analysis highlights the evolution of the international system from the Cold War to the present, focusing on the effects of polarity and alliances in the decision-making process. Previously, unanimity predominated in the Council voting. There is a greater discrepancy among the powers, which presents an additional challenge for Ecuador, which seeks to maintain its agency without yielding to external pressures. Throughout the different votes, it can be observed that Ecuador has maintained its policy of non-alignment, based on respect for international law, in order to navigate an ever-changing global system.

Keywords: International System, Non-Aligned Movement, Institutions, Polarity, Small Country.

Resumen

Esta investigación se enfoca en la participación de Ecuador como miembro no permanente del Consejo de Seguridad de las Naciones Unidas en los períodos de 1991-1992 y 2023. Examina el rol de las organizaciones internacionales, especialmente, el Consejo de Seguridad, y su influencia en el comportamiento de un país pequeño como Ecuador, el cual, busca mantener un rol en el sistema internacional. Se destaca la evolución del sistema desde la Guerra Fría hasta la actualidad, resaltando los efectos de la polaridad y las alianzas en la toma de decisiones. Previamente predominaba la unanimidad en las votaciones, ahora existe una mayor discrepancia entre las potencias, lo que presenta un reto adicional para Ecuador, quien busca mantener su agencia sin ceder a presiones externas. A través de las votaciones se observa que Ecuador ha mantenido su política de no alineamiento, basada en el respeto al derecho internacional, para así, poder navegar en un sistema internacional cambiante.

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Palabras clave: Sistema Internacional, Agencia, Movimiento de los Países No Alineados, Polaridad, País Pequeño.

Introduction

The Security Council is one of the six main organs of the United Nations (UN), primarily responsible for maintaining international peace and security (Carranco, 2022). It comprises five permanent members: the United States, France, the United Kingdom, China, and Russia, along with ten non-permanent members that rotate every two years and are elected by the other member countries. The permanent members hold veto power, meaning resolutions can only pass if none of them vote against it. Although the other countries do not have the same power, they also hold a privileged position since their ability to vote demonstrates their national stance and integrates them into various aspects of the international system—the relations within it.

This paper will study the last period when Ecuador was part of the Security Council in 1991 and 1992, as well as its current role, which began in 2023. It is essential to analyze both periods as the configuration of the international system has evolved over the years to its current state. By conducting this analysis, it will be possible to observe Ecuador's agency in different contexts to determine whether its actions change according to the environment or if they remain consistent. This will help to understand the functioning of the country's foreign policy within an international organization.

Ecuador's last period in the UN Security Council was characterized by a certain uniformity following the polarization between the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) that arose after the end of World War II. These countries competed for global domination in all areas, leading to constant tension until 1991, when the USSR officially dissolved, and the United States emerged as the leader of a unipolar world (Rodríguez, 2014). With a weakened USSR in 1991, followed by its dissolution, and Russia already acting in the Security Council in 1992, the balance shifted in favor of the United States. This was demonstrated within the Security Council, as the influence of the USSR, and later Russia, was no longer the same. During Ecuador's term in those years, the United States and Russia were no longer direct enemies. Russia did not have the capacity to fulfill its political agenda in this international body, leading to more unanimous decision-making within the Security Council with very few disagreements and even no vetoes. This can be observed in the Council's votes in 1991 and 1992 (United Nations), as Russia and the United States, the main powers until that date, did not act against each other.

Ecuador rejoined the United Nations Security Council in 2023, but now the international landscape is different. Many consider that we are living in a time of change, where militarily, the United States continues to dominate. However, economically, it is no longer the sole power as there are other emerging powers that have altered the international system and its behavior (Foreign Affairs, 2023). Currently, there is a total reorganization, where power is more globally distributed, and states are no longer the only agents of power. Thus, "a group of emerging powers contend and act in alliances to achieve a new distribution of world power, trying to end the unipolar coalition led by the United States" (Rodríguez, 2014, p. 58). This change is also observed in the Security Council's votes, where it is increasingly difficult to approve resolutions due to constant disagreements and vetoes from the powers as part of their struggle for power. Unlike in the past, when voting in the Council was straightforward as most acted similarly, today Ecuador must be careful navigating the international system. As a small country heavily dependent on the powers, it requires the assistance of the most powerful states to boost its economy.

The international system is "a set of actors, factors, processes, and patterns that interact frequently in a specific space and time; under certain rules and based on a guiding axis" (Velázquez, 2011, p. 159). This limited position of Ecuador within this international system is why it has been part of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) since 1981. A movement created for countries that decided not to take sides during the Cold War, based on principles such as respect for human rights, sovereignty, integrity, non-intervention in internal affairs, and the promotion of international cooperation (Fabara Espín, 2021).

Being part of the United Nations Security Council implies that the country is, in a way, part of the structure that governs the rest. For Ecuador, as a small country, it is an exceptional moment that increases its agency, helping to understand that while the capacity for action is limited. There must be a line or action plan to follow in these moments to reap benefits from the circumstance. Understanding the contexts in which the periods of 1991-1992 and 2023 occur, along with non-alignment, this research aims to reveal Ecuador's actions within the Security Council during both periods. Reference will be made to actions such as the manner of voting to see if this has respected non-alignment or its stance to understand how an increasingly conflictive world has been

navigated. In turn, understand the country's diplomatic line and whether it has had continuity.

This paper will provide a more profound understanding of Ecuador's stance in different contexts, as within International Relations, change is constant, and states must adapt to it. It will also delve deeper into the decision-making process for a country with less relevance in the system, within an international organization such as the UN. This analysis will contribute to the studies on foreign policy, specifically concerning small countries like Ecuador, on which there is no extensive literature. This will lead to understanding the agency or the state's ability to act independently, primarily considering its needs.

Theoretical Framework

The international system is composed of actors such as States and International Organizations that interact with each other. This research will be guided by institutional liberalism, which understands international organizations as actors that stabilize the system through cooperation, even while living in anarchy. By doing so, these organizations regulate state behaviors to achieve common objectives that promote positive relationships among all parties (Pease, 2007). Within these parameters, all States can exercise some degree of agency within the framework of cooperation. The analysis will focus on Ecuador as a small country acting under institutional liberalism, where organizations influence state behaviors, which can be reflected in exceptional periods when the country's agency increases.

A Small Actor in the International System

Regardless of their characteristics, all states are part of the international system. States vary in size, economic power, political influence, and military strength, among other intrinsic differences. Understanding these characteristics, Keohane (1969) classifies States into four groups: those that determine the system, those that significantly influence it without dominating, those that can affect the system through alliances, and those ineffective in acting. While this division aids in understanding the functioning of the international system, it does not put into perspective the position of small countries like Ecuador.

Keohane (1969) specifically references small countries, defining them as "a State whose leaders consider that they cannot, by themselves or in small groups, have a significant impact on the system." This concept implies that a small country is much more dependent than a fully developed one. For the purpose of this research, factors such as population, Gross Domestic

Product, and military strength will be set aside, focusing instead on how a small country is defined based on its participation in foreign policy. Besides what has been mentioned by Keohane, East (1973) and Hey (2003) argue that a small country is one that has low participation in global affairs but a high level of participation in international or regional organizations (multilateralism). It is also a country that focuses on morality in its foreign policy, thus highly respecting legal norms or international law. This demonstrates that a small country finds opportunities in multilateralism to position itself in the international arena, though its agency remains limited.

To increase the participation of such States in the international system, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) was officially established in 1961 as an alternative during the Cold War for those countries seeking to better position themselves internationally. Without aligning with one of the era's superpowers. This was based on the ten principles of Bandung, which include respect for human rights, territorial sovereignty, non-intervention in internal affairs, and the promotion of international cooperation (MNOAL, n.d.). This movement is founded on justice and adherence to international obligations, which in turn allows for the better implementation of the other principles.

The Role of Institutions According to Liberalism

Liberalism in international relations views the State as a decentralized actor but not the only one, recognizing that non-state actors can have equal or greater importance. While the system is inherently anarchic, it considers humanity to be good and believes that the desire for cooperation and mutual aid through regulatory organizations can overcome this selfishness (Lozano, 2016, p. 52). It also explains that cooperation is possible due to complex interdependencies, which avoid the notion of self-help and conflict in pursuing individual interests (Gonzalez, 2003). It is a theory that sees the world in a cause-effect manner, where certain actions generate predictable reactions in the international context.

International relations are conflictual, and the structure in which we live is anarchic. However, this power struggle can be controlled due to the cooperation demonstrated through multilateralism. Institutional liberalism or institutionalism is a theory that aims to explain the various factors resulting in processes of international cooperation. It views institutions as resources for agents or members of the international system to achieve their objectives (Lallande, n.d.). International cooperation occurs when "actors adjust their respective behaviors to the preferences of others through a process of political coordination" (Keohane, 1984). However, institutionalism also understands that this

process can only be carried out when these international bodies are seen by States as facilitators of their objectives.

Institutions and State Behavior

Institutions demonstrate that through specific processes they can achieve predictable results in the pursuit of common objectives and can standardize state behaviors due to their ability to set and enforce the rules of the game. They establish public order, the rule of law, and collective goods (Krasner, 2010). Given the anarchic nature of the system, institutions are the best tool to combat this since nothing else can govern the behaviors of all. Participation in these bodies is voluntary but brings with it the obligations imposed by the institution. This implies that to reach agreements on various issues, countries must converge and make concessions to arrive at joint solutions. However, the benefits of being part of this outweigh the costs (Keohane, 1984).

It can be understood that States influence the functioning of institutions but also that institutions have the power to modify state behaviors. International institutions are “persistent and connected sets of rules (formal and informal) that prescribe roles of behavior, constrain activities, and shape expectations” (Keohane, 1984). Institutions allow for order within the international system because, being normative, they can influence the conduct of States. These institutions, being created in various areas of action where there is a collective interest, ensure that those within them follow predictable behavior. States usually act based on the principles of different organizations, not necessarily out of conviction, but because increasing cooperation ties offers greater possibilities of addressing common needs dictated by the same institutions (Lallande, n.d.). Thus, the United Nations can be understood as a persuasive phenomenon that modifies state preferences, leading to greater cooperation and less conflict.

Methodological Framework

According to Keohane’s division of states, not all countries had the same role within organizations. This theoretical framework was reflected in the real case of Ecuador, a small country that required aid and alliances in the international landscape to achieve its own objectives. According to liberalism, we lived in a world full of anarchy, where total chaos would ensue due to power struggles if not for institutions that helped regulate the behaviors of states within a framework of common objectives. In this context, the United Nations, as the greatest example of global governance, was responsible for regulating state behaviors based on equality, sovereignty, and international law, among others.

Institutions were understood to modify the behaviors of member states, who, by accepting to be part of these institutions, also accepted their principles and rules to increase cooperation for mutual benefit. Therefore, this research sought a causal relationship between institutions and their effect on the actions of a small country. This involved understanding Ecuador as a small country with limited agency, but one that increased its decision-making capacity when part of a larger structure like the United Nations Security Council. However, the institution still influenced decision-making, making decisions based on what was right according to the context to maximize gains.

This research aimed to understand Ecuador’s actions as a non-permanent United Nations Security Council member. It sought to establish if there were determinants in the country’s voting behavior to understand its agency and limitations. For this purpose, a descriptive analysis of the voting behavior in the periods 1991-1992 and 2023 was first conducted, observing the resolutions that took place and the behavior of the Security Council, specifically Ecuador’s stance on these issues. From this analysis, two main questions arose: what was the international system like during these periods, and how did it affect this organization, and how were Ecuador’s votes constructed and their implications for a small country?

To answer these questions, two main variables were proposed: the effect of institutions on power, and second, the agency of a small country. As qualitative research, it focused on identifying observable patterns through the collection and analysis of data that demonstrated a cause-and-effect relationship between these variables and Ecuador’s behavior within this organization (Jatobá, 2013).

To materialize the concept of an institution in the mentioned context, information about the distribution of power and how institutions influenced it during the periods of 1991-1992 and the present was needed. Understanding the world in these two contexts showed how this division impacted conflicts and the system in general, specifically the role of international organizations like the UN. This was demonstrated by the number of resolutions approved or vetoed in the mentioned years.

Secondary sources, including various prominent actors in international relations, were used to obtain this information. Analyzing power and institutions in these contexts fulfilled the first objective of the research, achieving an understanding of these two periods. How the world functioned, how power was distributed, and especially the role of an institution such as the United Nations in shaping this.

Then, to materialize Ecuador's agency as a small country, non-alignment was used as a reference, observed through Ecuador's actions in the Security Council. Information about the country's participation in this international body, specifically its voting behavior in both periods, was needed. This was collected from various UN databases, including the data library and the voting section of the Council.

Once the information was obtained, it was systematized into tables where the information was placed according to the name of the resolution, the country that proposed it, the main topic, votes in favor, votes against, vetoes, and abstentions. The emphasis was on Ecuador's votes in relation to the world powers of each period.

Data collection was carried out through triangulation between primary and secondary sources documentation, and an analysis reflected through descriptive charts with the previously mentioned information. Once this systematization was done, the second question could be answered, revealing the incidence of active non-alignment and how, in general, the institution affected state behavior. In the case of Ecuador, if non-alignment was maintained, this implied that institutions did impact the state, contrary to if this foreign policy strategy was not followed, which would indicate that there was UN influence on the country's behavior. By analyzing the tables, Ecuador's agency in the respective periods could be defined.

Presentation of Results

Changes in the Configuration of the International System

Within the systemic institutional framework of International Relations (IR), polarity is a key concept that refers to the distribution of capabilities within the international system. This distribution determines state behavior, as power is one of the factors shaping their actions (Buzan, 2018). Polarity explains how power is distributed among states within the system, and this configuration has changed over time, influenced by different historical contexts.

Various types of polarity have prevailed in recent history. From the onset of World War I in 1914 until the end of World War II in 1945, the world was multipolar, meaning that more than two states had similar power capabilities. Bipolarity, represented by the United States and the USSR, emerged at the end of World War II and lasted until 1991 with the conclusion of the Cold War. Finally, unipolarity arose with the collapse of the USSR, dominated by the United States. However, this absolute hegemony has been debated, as the influence of the

United States has declined and new powers such as China, the European Union, Japan, and India have emerged (McGlinchey et al., 2022).

Polarity is important because it demonstrates how power is divided and balanced, allowing predictions about how states will behave within the system. This involves not just economic or military dominance but also an ideological factor that shapes alliances. These alliances enhance the power of dominant states by generating trust, as the leading country will safeguard the interests of its group in the event of conflict (Buzan, 2018). Consequently, alliances operate flexibly and opportunistically in a multipolar system, more rigidly in a bipolar system, and are nearly nonexistent in a unipolar system (Buzan, 2018).

For the purposes of this research, we focus specifically on the Cold War period and the post-Cold War era, emphasizing how this distribution is reflected within the United Nations Security Council. The UN was established in 1945, ushering in a long period of relative peace marked by the absence of direct conflicts between major powers. Malone (2004) notes that the degree of influence of different powers over the years can be measured through their participation in international organizations such as the United Nations. Within this framework, the permanent members of the Security Council possess the greatest influence and power over other members and decision-making. Consequently, in a multipolar world, there would be multiple axes of influence and resistance; in a bipolar world, only two distinct axes; while in a unipolar world, there are minimal disagreements.

The creation of the UN coincided with the Cold War, a period characterized by polarization between the USSR and the United States. From its inception, the UN's purpose was to ensure global peace, with the Security Council tasked with making decisions. Due to the existing polarization, the Council's ability to resolve issues was diminished. This is evident from the UN Library data, which shows that during the first forty-five years of the organization, 193 resolutions were vetoed, hindering cooperation. In contrast, from 1990 to June 2003, only 12 vetoes occurred, reflecting greater willingness among Council members to work together. This period was marked by the Cold War's inefficacy in the Security Council, while from 1987 or 1991, when the Cold War officially ended, there was unprecedented efficiency (Malone, 2004).

Data from the UN Library reveals voting patterns of Security Council members during the specified periods. In 1991, 42 resolutions were passed out of 42 proposed, with six not put to vote due to the inclusion of new members. There were only four abstentions, from China, India, Yemen, and Ecuador. Five votes against were cast, primarily by Yemen and Cuba, and one by Zimbabwe.

The year saw zero vetoes from permanent members, resulting in thirty resolutions approved with the majority of possible votes (15) from both permanent and non-permanent members (Table 1).

Table 1. Votes Against and Abstentions in 1991

Tema	Fecha	País que propuso	Votos en contra	Abstenciones
Iraq y Kuwait	Mar. 2, 1991	Estados Unidos, Bélgica, Francia, Rumania, URSS, Reino Unido e Irlanda del Norte, Zaire	1 (Cuba)	3 (China, India, Yemen)
Iraq y Kuwait	Abril.3, 1991	Francia, Rumania, Reino Unido e Irlanda del Norte, Estados Unidos	1 (Cuba)	2 (Ecuador, Yemen)
Iraq y Kuwait	Abril. 5, 1991	Bélgica, Francia, Reino Unido e Irlanda del Norte, Estados Unidos	3 (Cuba, Yemen, Zimbabwe)	2 (China, India)
Iraq y Kuwait	Mayo. 20, 1991	Reino Unido e Irlanda del Norte, Estados Unidos, Bélgica, Francia, Rumania, URSS, Zaire	Ninguno	Cuba
Iraq y Kuwait	Agos. 15, 1991	Bélgica, Francia, URSS, Reino Unido e Irlanda del Norte, Estados Unidos	Cuba	Yemen
Iraq y Kuwait	Sept. 19, 1991	Bélgica, Francia, Rumania, URSS, Reino Unido e Irlanda del Norte, Estados Unidos	Cuba	Yemen

Source: Dag Hammarskjöld Library

In 1992, the situation was similar, with 73 proposed resolutions, all approved. Of these, 12 concerned the inclusion of new members in the UN. Table 2 shows ten occasions of abstentions, primarily by China, India, and Zimbabwe, but also including Ecuador. There was only one vote against, cast by the United States, which chose not to use its veto power, and no country exercised this

option. Finally, all 15 members voted in favor of 50 resolutions, representing most of the total (Table 2).

Votes Against and Abstentions in 1991

Tema	Fecha	País que propuso	Votos en contra	Abstenciones
Territorios árabes ocupados	Ene. 6, 1992	Palestina	Estados Unidos	4 (Bélgica, Francia, Hungría, Reino Unido e Irlanda del Norte)
Libyan Arab Jama	Mar. 31, 1992	Francia, Reino Un	Ninguno	5 (Cabo Verde, China, India, Marruecos, Zimbabwe)
Yugoslavia	Mayo. 30, 1992	Bélgica, Francia, Hungría, Marruecos, Reino Unido e Irlanda del Norte	Ninguno	2 (China, Zimbabwe)
Yugoslavia	Agos. 13, 1992	Belgica, Francia, Rusia, Reino Unido e Irlanda del Norte, y USA	Ninguno	3 (China, Zimbabwe, India)
Iraq y Kuwait	Agos. 26, 1992	France, Rusia, Estados Unidos, Reino Unido e Irlanda del Norte	Ninguno	Ecuador
Yugoslavia	Sept. 19, 1992	Belgica, Francia, Marruecos, Estados Unidos e Irlanda del Norte	Ninguno	3 (China, Zimbabwe, India)
Iraq y Kuwait	Oct. 2, 1992	Belgica, Francia, Rusia, Reino Unido e Irlanda del Norte, Estados Unidos	Ninguno	China
Bosnia y Herzegov	Oct. 9, 1992	Austria, Belgica, Francia, Rusia, Reino Unido e Irlanda del Norte, Estados Unidos	Ninguno	China
Bosnia y Herzegov	Nov. 16, 1992	N/A (Course of councils consultation)	Ninguno	China, zimbabwe
Cambodia	Nov. 30, 1992	Belgica, Francia, Japon, Rusia, Reino Unido e Irlanda del Norte y Estados Unidos	Ninguno	China

Source: Dag Hammarskjold Library

The current period, 2023, considers only the Security Council's voting data for that year. There were 62 proposed resolutions, of which 49 were approved. While this number represents a majority, it indicates a trend

contrary to previous years. Of all proposed resolutions, 27 saw abstentions, mostly from permanent Council members but also from others. There were eight votes against, and the veto was used five times. Unlike previous periods, unanimity occurred only 35 times, just over half of the total for the year, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Number of Vetoes in 2023

Tema	Fecha	País que propuso	Abstenciones	Veto
Palestina	Dic. 8, 2023	Co-sponsorship 97 países	Reino Unido e Irlanda del Norte	Estados Unidos
Israel/ Palestina	Oct. 25, 2023	Estados Unidos	2 (Brasil, Mozambique)	Rusia, China
Israel/ Palestina	Oct. 18, 2023	Brasil	2 (Reino Unido e Irlanda del Norte, Rusia)	Estados Unidos
Mali	Agos. 30, 2023	Francia, EAU	1 (China)	Rusia
Syria-Turquía	Jul. 11, 2023	Brasil y Suiza	1 (China)	Rusia

Source: Dag Hammarskjöld Library

In summary, Ecuador's role as a non-permanent member of the Security Council during the periods of 1991 and 1992 illustrates a time when the Security Council operated smoothly under unipolarity, with no vetoes and few abstentions or votes against. In contrast, in 2023, the weakening of U.S. hegemony and the rise of new powers suggest a multipolar world, leading to increased discrepancies in the Security Council. Blockages in resolutions result from the competition between powers seeking to expand their influence. Understanding Ecuador's role in these two distinct periods highlights how its agency has evolved.

Non-Alignment in Ecuador's Voting Behavior

For a small country, navigating shifts in the distribution of power poses challenges for its foreign policy, as taking sides may not always be advantageous, especially when relying on support from others for development. During the Cold War, the world was polarized between the United States and the USSR. However, less influential countries needed cooperation mechanisms and ways to secure their position within a conflict-ridden system without losing independence. The solution was to adopt a strategy of “alternatively positioning themselves in either anti-communist or anti-capitalist stances to gain support” (Fabara Espín, 2021, p. 121). This led to the establishment of principles and motivations during the Bandung Conference in 1955, which eventually gave rise to the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) for countries considered part of the Third World.

Ecuador joined the NAM in 1981, first, because it had more in common with Third World countries; second, because it sought to reduce its commercial and economic

dependence on major powers; and third, due to a conflict with Peru, where Ecuador decided to shift its foreign policy from territorial claims to a more expansive approach, including efforts to enhance its international standing (García Sayán, 1988). Thus, the NAM became a tool for building new relationships and obtaining benefits while adhering to commitments to the organization.

Ecuador's participation in the UN Security Council provides a platform to demonstrate agency or positioning within the system, applying non-alignment as a decisive factor in its voting. During 1991-1992, when the United States was the hegemon and consensus was almost universal among Council members, Ecuador largely aligned with the majority. However, there were two notable exceptions where Ecuador abstained from voting, reflecting its adherence to non-alignment principles despite pressure from major powers. These instances occurred with Resolution 687 of 1991 and Resolution 773 of 1992, both related to the Gulf War. Ecuador abstained because the Security Council lacked the authority to define or delineate borders between Iraq and Kuwait and that such matters should be addressed by the International Court of Justice (S/PV. 3108). Thus, Ecuador utilized its agency to uphold international law and non-alignment principles.

In 1991, Ecuador voted in favor of 35 out of 42 approved resolutions (excluding six where no vote was cast), like other Council members, particularly the permanent ones. In only one instance did, Ecuador abstain alongside Yemen, with Cuba voting against and the rest in favor. During 1992, Ecuador supported 60 out of 73 resolutions (excluding 12 on new member inclusion), aligning mostly with other countries, including major powers, but abstained once, being the only country to do so against 14 affirmative votes (Table 4).

Table 4. Impact of non-alignment in the 1991-1992 Period

Tema	Fecha	País que propuso	Voto Ecuador	Votos a favor	Votos en contra	Abstenciones	Vetos
Iraq y Kuwait	Abril.3, 1991	Francia, Rumania, Reino Unido e Irlanda del Norte, Estados Unidos	Abstención	12	1 (Cuba)	2 (Ecuador, Yemen)	Ninguno
Iraq y Kuwait	Agos. 26, 1992	Francia, Rusia, Estados Unidos, Reino Unido e Irlanda del Norte	Abstención	14	Ninguno	Ecuador	Ninguno

Source: Dag Hammarskjöld Library

In 2023, Ecuador voted in favor of 55 out of 62 proposed resolutions, aligning with those that received majority or unanimous support. Notably, Ecuador abstained in eight cases, primarily in resolutions where major powers, especially China and the United States,

had divergent views. The analysis focuses on these instances where decisions were less clear. Table 5 shows that Ecuador's abstentions occurred in resolutions where the Security Council, particularly the major powers, were divided, reflecting Ecuador's commitment to international norms and non-alignment principles.

Table 5. Impact of Non-Alignment in 2023

Tema	Fecha	País que propuso	Voto Ecuador	Votos a favor	Votos en contra	Abstenciones
Israel/ Palestina	Oct. 25, 2023	Rusia	Abstención	4 (China, Gabon, Rusia, EAU)	2 (Estados Unidos, Reino Unido e Irlanda del Norte)	9 (Ecuador, Albania, Brasil, Francia, Ghana, Japón, Malta, Mozambique, Suiza)
Israel/ Palestina	Oct. 18, 2023	Brasil	Abstención	6 (China, Brasil, Gabon, Mozambique, Rusia, EAU)	1 (Estados Unidos)	8 (Albania, Ecuador, Francia, Ghana, Japón, Malta, Suiza, Reino Unido e Irlanda del Norte)
Israel/ Palestina	Oct. 18, 2023	Brasil	Abstención	7 (China, Brasil, Gabon, Mozambique, Rusia, EAU, SUIZA)	1 (Estados Unidos)	7 (Albania, Ecuador, Francia, Ghana, Japón, Malta, Reino Unido e Irlanda del Norte)
Israel/ Palestina	Oct. 18, 2023	Brasil	Abstención	7 (China, Brasil, Gabon, Mozambique, Rusia, EAU, Suiza)	1 (Estados Unidos)	7 (Albania, Ecuador, Francia, Ghana, Japón, Malta, Reino Unido e Irlanda del Norte)
Israel/ Palestina	Oct. 16, 2023	Rusia	Abstención	5 (China, Gabon, Mozambique, Rusia, EAU)	4 (Francia, Japón, Reino Unido e Irlanda del Norte, Estados Unidos)	6 (Albania, Brasil, Ecuador, Ghana, Malta, Suiza)
Mali	Agos. 30, 2023	Rusia	Abstención	1 (Rusia)	1 (Japón)	13 (todos los demás, incluyendo Estados Unidos)
Syria-Turquía	Jul. 11, 2023	Rusia	Abstención	2 (Rusia, China)	3 (Estados Unidos, Reino Unido e Irlanda del Norte)	10 (todos los demás)
Nordstream pipeline	Mar. 27, 2023	Bielorusia, China, República democrática de Corea, Eritrea, Nicaragua, Rusia, Siria, Venezuela	Abstención	3 (Brasil, Rusia, China)	Ninguno	12 (Incluyendo Estados Unidos)

Source: Dag Hammarskjold Library

Ecuador's decision to abstain stems from non-alignment, which involves not taking unconditional stances with a major power but making decisions based on the country's principles, such as respect for international law. These abstentions occurred in resolutions where the Security Council, especially the major powers, were divided, demonstrating Ecuador's

agency in adhering to international norms and non-alignment principles.

Conclusions

The configuration of the international system has demonstrated a changing nature throughout history. This research reflects this through the balance of power theory and its evidence, but also in the overall functioning of the

structure, as seen through the United Nations, specifically in the Security Council. The results of this study clearly denote a change in the configuration of the international system over the last period and the current one.

In this context, data exist that allow for various conclusions that help address the objectives of this research. As previously mentioned, during the Cold War period, 193 resolutions were vetoed, demonstrating constant friction within the Council because of the relationship between the USSR and the United States at that time. This contrasts with only 12 vetoes in a 13-year period since 1990, indicating a change in how power was managed in the period leading up to the end of the conflict, where, as is well-known, the North American power emerged victorious. Finally, it is observed that in 2023 alone, there were 5 official vetoes, not counting repeated instances where this term was not applied because resolutions did not reach the necessary minimum. This indicates that the system is changing again, as the conflicts that dominated the Council in past years are on the rise.

Consequent to the actions of the Security Council members, particularly the powers—China, the United States, France, Russia, and the United Kingdom—there is a greater difficulty for smaller countries like Ecuador in making decisions in the current period compared to the previous one. This is because the positions of the permanent members are no longer always aligned, and there are occasions where two "camps" exist. This situation did not occur in 1991-1992 during the USSR's dissolution and the Russian Federation's emergence. Thus, Ecuador must understand the panorama correctly so that it does not affect its bilateral or multilateral relations with other states when voting on a resolution. Since 1981, Ecuador has chosen to use non-alignment as a strategy to maintain a similar distance from the dominant powers of that time. In this way, it strengthens its ties with others while still pursuing its national interests. This principle has prevailed since then and is evident in the voting patterns of the two periods studied in the data collection.

The votes from the 1991-1992 period were relatively straightforward, speaking of a Security Council era when the United States controlled the world, leading to unanimity in most resolutions and, especially, similar votes by the powers. For Ecuador, this meant clear decisions, a defined path, and no controversies or issues regarding the exercise of its agency. Nevertheless, as demonstrated in the example of Chapter 2 and resolutions 687 and 773, the country has always adhered to the principles of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the Bandung Conference, based on international law, justice,

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human rights, and non-intervention, among other aspects also mentioned in the United Nations Charter.

This position is currently valid and remains constant within its actions in a less homogeneous Security Council than in the past period. For Ecuador, this implies not adopting the perspective of power regarding international conflicts but rather analyzing them based on its principles dictated by respect for international norms present in the non-alignment. This has been manifested since the previous period and continues to be evident in Ecuador. 2023. The research conducted shows that voting has been consistent with the dictates of non-alignment, helping the country achieve a favorable position in the international system.

Both in the 1991-1992 period and in 2023, Ecuador has acted similarly, respecting non-alignment and maintaining a firm stance on the principles that guide its behavior in the international arena. As a member of the Security Council, Ecuador has limited agency due to being a small country that requires alliances to achieve its national objectives and, therefore, must maintain friendships with all powers, as demonstrated by its voting behavior. It can also be said that the influence of institutions on the state, as dictated by institutional liberalism, is evident since the country has consistently used international law and its mandates as a reference for what is right and wrong. When voting in the Security Council, Ecuador has maintained this non-alignment position, which also demonstrates the effect that international organizations have on Ecuador's actions.

In this way, Ecuador has managed to use its agency within the Security Council to maintain a clear position in the international system, defending its principles while maintaining alliances with the powers to maximize benefits.

It is necessary for Ecuador to maintain a solid diplomatic line that does not vary according to the elected president, but rather focuses on training professionals with a profound understanding of these issues. Taking a side may be counterproductive given the constantly expanding world and the importance of alliances, especially in times of crisis. Ecuador should remain a country that respects international law and the principles of the NAM, which, although no longer as relevant, continues to seek ways to adapt to the new needs of smaller countries.

Conflict of interest

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