

An analysis on the decline in the authoritative powers of the Papacy and its application to challenges to authoritative powers faced by the permanent membership of the UN Security Council

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Abstract:

The organizational authority of the Papacy in the Roman Catholic Church and the permanent membership of the UN Security Council are unique from institutions that are commonly compared with the UN, like the Concert of Europe and the League of Nations, in that these institutional organs possessed strong authoritative and veto powers. Both organs also owe their strong authority during their founding to a need for stability: The Papacy after the crippling of Western Roman Empire and the P-5 to deal with the insecurities of the post-WWII world. While the P-5 still possesses similar authoritative powers within the Council as it did after WWII, the historical authoritative powers of the Papacy within the Church was debilitated to such a degree that by the time of the Reformation in Europe, condemnations of practices within the Church itself were not effective. This paper will analyze major challenges to the authoritative powers of the Papacy, from the crowning of Charlemagne to the beginning of the Reformation, and compare the analysis to challenges affecting the authoritative powers of the P-5 since its creation. From research conducted thus far, I hypothesize that common themes affecting the authoritative powers of the P-5 and the Papacy would include: major changes in the institutions organization (i.e. the Avignon Papacy and Japan's bid to become a permanent member); the decline in power of actors supporting the institutional organ (i.e. the Holy Roman Empire and the P-5 members); and ideological clashes affecting the institution's normative power (i.e. the Great Western Schism and Cold War politics).