

# Reform of the UN Security Council and Veto Player Theory

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# Summary

When the United Nations was founded in 1945, the Security Council were given primary responsibility for international peace and security. The quest for reform of the Council started about ten years after. In 1965, a reform of the Council took place, when the Council was enlarged from six to ten non-permanent seats. Since then, no efforts to reform the Council have been successful. Even though the veto powers have welcomed the discussion and the UN General Assembly has debated a Council reform for decades, they have so far not been able to reach agreement. The process of reforming is still in a deadlock, despite years of debate and several demands for reform.

In this thesis I review the historic process of reform efforts of the Security Council and consider three specific reform efforts. These are: the reform that took place in 1965, the 1997 proposal submitted from prior chairman of the Open-Ended Working Group, Ismael Razali, and the 2005 proposal outlined in Kofi Annans report “In Larger Freedom”. I furthermore discuss these reform proposals in light of a game theoretic approach, namely George Tsebelis’ “Veto Player Theory”. Tsebelis defines “veto player” as “one who has in his power to prevent a change from the status quo”. Furthermore, a change of the status quo requires an unanimous decision by all veto players. One of the theory’s main argument is that if any of the veto players have incentives to block a change of the status quo, the status quo will prevail.

My aim in this thesis is to answer how the veto powers affected the reform processes and to what extent the outcomes can be explained by the veto player theory. I show how the permanent members’ reluctance towards a change of status quo has made a reform of the Security Council seem impossible in the two latter cases. Furthermore, I conclude that while the veto player theory can be seen as a useful tool for explaining the process and the outcomes in 1997 and 2005, the theory’s explanatory power concerning the reform in 1965 is rather limited.



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The mistakes and shortcomings of the thesis are entirely my own.

Elida Rønnaug Hole Wirkola

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Theme of the thesis

Without a reform of the Security Council the United Nations` global role will diminish and the organization will find itself less and less relevant in world affairs (Krastev 2008).

This was declared by prior Secretary-General of the UN, Kofi Annan, when he left office in 2006. Annan was not the first of the UN Secretary-Generals advocating for reform of the most powerful organ within the United Nations: the Security Council. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the Secretary-General from 1992 to 1996, and present Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon, have both taken action to reform the Council, but with limited success. In 1965, a reform of the Council actually did take place, when the Council was enlarged from six to ten non-permanent seats, but since then no efforts to reform the Council have been successful. Even though the veto powers have welcomed the discussion and the UN General Assembly has debated a Council reform for decades, they have so far not been able to reach agreement. Since the reform in 1965, a change in the status quo of the Council seems to be impossible.

In this thesis I first review the historic process of reform efforts of the Security Council and then consider three specific reform efforts: the reform that took place in 1965, the 1997 proposal submitted from prior chairman of the Open-Ended Working Group, Ismael Razali, and the 2005 proposal outlined in Kofi Annans report “In Larger Freedom”. I furthermore discuss these reform proposals in light of George Tsebelis` “Veto Player Theory”. My aim in the thesis is to answer how the veto powers affected the reform process and to what extent the veto player theory is a suitable tool for analysing the outcomes of these reform proposals. As a definition of the concept “reform of the Security Council” I use what UN-expert (and since 2008, Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon`s Special Adviser at the Assistant Secretary-General level), Edward Luck, has described as “the attempts and/or acts of modifying the composition, the status and the voting powers of the members as well as the decision-making procedure of the Security Council” (Bourantonis 2005: 2).

## **1.2 Background**

In 1945, with the ending of World War II, a pattern of winners and losers occurred. That same year, the United Nations was founded, and the founders aimed for the organization to play a central role as the leading forum for managing threats to international order (Bourantonis 2005: 4). To do this they needed the victorious countries of the war to play an active part in the organization. The Security Council was therefore established, as the organ with primary responsibility for international peace and security. In the Council, the five great powers in the aftermath of the war, The United States, The Republic of China, The Soviet Union, France and The United Kingdom were given permanent seats and the right to veto any Council decision in which they disagreed. In addition to the permanent five, known as the P5, there were six non-permanent members, distributed among the other members of the United Nations according to a certain pattern (section 4.3). The non-permanent members did not have the right to veto decisions. It soon became clear that the ones that mattered in the Security Council, were the P5. Through their permanent seats and their veto power, they were able to control the Council.

The quest for reform started already about ten years after the United Nations was founded. In 1965, after years of efforts, four non-permanent seats were added to the Security Council. The membership now counted 15 members, including the P5. The P5 in the Security Council agreed to a reform in 1965, even though this reform to some extent diminished the power of the P5 (Leigh-Phippard 1998: 428). Although the quest for reform had been met and the geographical representation to some extent had improved, it did not take long before the debate flared up again. However, apart from small adjustments in working methods and membership (section 3.4 and 3.5.1), the Security Council has largely remained unchanged since 1965. The process of reforming it has been in a deadlock for decades, despite years of debate and several demands for reform. Although the reform debate might be in a deadlock, it is certainly not dead.

### **1.3 Veto Player Theory**

As a theoretical framework for my analysis I apply a game theoretic approach, namely the Veto Player Theory. Veto player approaches have come to occupy a central place in comparative politics and political economy. George Tsebelis stands for the most elaborate and prominent approach (Ganghof 2003: 1). His “Veto Player Theory” has been used to analyze policy output and outcomes within political systems and political institutions. In Tsebelis` book “*Veto Players: How to analyze political institutions*” a veto player is described as “one who has in his power to prevent a change from the status quo” (Tsebelis 2002: 4).

The theory argues that the shape of legislative policies is influenced (only) by veto players. The veto players will use their power to further their interests and hence veto policies that go against these interests. Therefore, if many players have substantially different interests, they will likely find it difficult to agree on a change of the present policy. Hence, the status quo prevails (Ganghof 2003: 2-3). Tsebelis` veto player theory has mainly been used to study political outcomes within the European Union. The theory uses the notion of veto players to build a comprehensive rational-choice institutionalist theory of comparative political institutions (Ganghof, 2003: 7-8). It claims that a political system`s potential for policy change mainly depends on the (1) number of veto players, (2) the distances between these players` policy ideal points and (3) the player`s internal cohesion (ibid).

### **1.4 Research Question**

I work from the assumption that in the Security Council, there are five significant players which have the power to prevent a change of the status quo and therefore qualify as veto players. These players are the states that have a permanent seat in the Council, including the right to veto decisions, namely The United States, Russia, China, The United Kingdom and France, in other words the P5. I show examples of the P5 using their veto power, both directly and indirectly, and discuss how such use

has affected the reform process of the Council, in light of the veto player theory. As mentioned in section 1.1, the reform efforts I will consider is the reform in 1965, the Razali Reform Paper from 1997 and Secretary-General Kofi Annans` reform proposals from 2005.

My research question is as follows:

**How has the veto powers in the Security Council affected the reform process in these three cases, and to what extent can the outcomes be explained by the Veto Player Theory?**

### **1.4.1 Limitations**

In order to discuss the more broad applicability of the theory when it comes to Security Council reform processes, I have chosen to study three reform proposals. As follows, I cannot go into all aspects of the theory within the scope of this thesis. Rather I will focus on the theory`s main arguments and apply it to three different cases.

Furthermore, as will be explained in section 2.2, I make the assumption that I deal with states as rational, unified actors. I also make the assumption that the states` national interest is given. In this case, national interest is seen as states seeking to increase their power and influence in the Security Council.

## **1.5 Literature review**

The efforts and debate concerning reform of the Security Council has been the subject of many academic articles. Much of the literature concerning the United Nations as an institution, also discuss the quest for reform of the Security Council. The historic reform process of the Council was thoroughly reviewed in Dimitri Bourantonis`, book “The history and politics of UN Security Council” from 2005. Bourantonis book is one of few books dedicated only to the history of the reform process (Borantonis 2005: 1). Furthermore, especially the veto power is subject of academic articles and discussions.



Most of the academic literature on reform of the Security Council is of a descriptive character, in the way that it describes outcomes of the reform efforts.

Apart from academic analyses on the subject, reform of the Council has been reviewed and advocated in several UN documents. Among them are the reports submitted by the Open-Ended Working Group on Security Council reform, as well as well as former Secretary-General, Kofi Annan`s report from 2005. The question of *enlargement* of the Council is among the most central subjects of these reports.

I aim to contribute on the field of literature on Security Council reform by using a specific theory, the veto player theory, to analyze the outcomes of three reform efforts. This theory has not to a high degree previously been applied to studies of the Security Council. I will therefore use this theory in the analysis to interpret the course of events. Furthermore, I discuss to what extent the outcomes of the reform efforts is in accordance with the veto player theory.

## **1.6 Methodological framework**

The thesis will be a comparative case study of three specific reform proposals; one which succeeded and two which did not.

The comparative method is seen as a strategy for conducting post hoc research that seek to control potentially confounding variables through careful case selection and matching (Freundreis 1983: 255). The method refers to many different research strategies, two of them being the Most Similar Systems Design (MSSD) and the Most Different Systems Design (MDSD). The MSSD is a well-known method for choosing cases in comparative research. The method employs a minimum of two cases and in its purest form the chosen pair of cases are similar in all respects except the variable(s) of interest (Gerring 2007: 131). In this study the values on the dependent variable are reform and not reform. Contrary to the MSSD, the MDSD is looking for cases that are most different instead of most similar. Furthermore, while MSSD seeks to *identify relevant* systemic factors, MDSD seeks to *eliminate irrelevant* systemic factors. Here

the dependent variable is constant across the cases and those variables that show variation among the cases are eliminated (Frendreis 1983: 262-264). I have chosen three cases of which two have the same outcome (reform did not succeed) and one which has different outcome (reform succeeded). For this reason I find the MSSD a suitable framework and will therefore use this approach.

Among the best known proponents for MSSD is Arend Lijphart. He introduces the comparative method as one of the basic methods in comparative politics, the others being the experimental, the statistical and the case study methods (Lijphart 1971: 682). Furthermore, the study could either be exploratory (hypothesis-generating) or confirmatory (hypothesis-testing). The purpose of MSSD may change in the process, depending on whether the researcher moves from an exploratory to a confirmatory mode of analysis. John Gerring argues that when using MSSD, regardless of whether one begins with an exploratory or a confirmatory mode of analysis, the results of the research looks like a hypothesis-testing research design (Gerring 2007: 131-132).

One example of a study where MSSD has been used is Leon Epstein's study of party cohesion. This study focuses on two supposedly similar countries, Canada and the United States, which differ in that Canada has highly disciplined parties whose members vote together on the floor of the House of Commons, while the United States has undisciplined parties whose members often defect on floor votes in Congress. What could explain this difference? Epstein concludes that the difference may be explained by one constitutional feature; Canada's political system is parliamentary while that of the United States is presidential (ibid). Similar to this, I aim to uncover why reform was possible in 1965 but yet has failed to succeed since. At a first glance, the same conditions seem to apply today as then. However, my thesis is limited to consider only to what extent the veto player theory can contribute to answering this question, and how the veto powers affected the reform processes. The answer to why reform was possible in 1965, but not today, is a question outside the scope of this thesis.

Critics of the comparative method, have focused on this method's weak capacity to sort out rival explanations and the problem of "many variables, few cases" (Collier 1991: 107). In addition, critique against this explicit way of choosing cases has for instance been that it entails a limited potential for generalizations because it seeks to discover relationships that are limited to the similar systems (Frendreis 1983: 266). Furthermore, as other methods of case selection, the comparative method is prone to problems of non-representativeness and problems concerning potential biases in the chosen cases (Gerring 2007: 139). Finally, there is the problem concerning the difficulty of finding comparable cases. John Stuart Mill for instance, argued that these methods were not to be used in the social sciences because sufficiently similar cases could not be found. Giovanni Sartori on the other hand, rejects this by referring to it as "over-conscious thinking" (Ljiphart 1971: 688).

As previously mentioned, MSSD in its purest form requires a pair of cases which are similar in all respects except the variable(s) of interest. However, in reality this is an impossible quest. Dankwart A. Rustow argues that "comparability is a quality that is not inherent in any given set of objects; rather it is a quality imparted to them by the observer's perspective" (ibid). I intend to show that the similarities between the cases are important enough to make them comparable, while at the same time uncover the most significant differences that might explain the outcome.

## **1.7 Plan**

Chapter 2 elaborates on the main arguments of the veto player theory in addition to a further explanation as to why I consider the theory a suitable framework for my analysis. The chapter also includes a short outline of the game theoretic approach and the concept of rational actors. Furthermore, I outline some examples on use of the veto player theory and mention some of the main critique against game theoretic approaches in general. Chapter 3 contains an empirical background of the reform process of the Security Council. This chapter also includes a broader presentation of how the theoretical definitions translate into practice and can therefore be seen as an

introduction to the analysis. Chapter 4 offers an analysis of the reform in 1965. I present the course of events leading up to the reform and discuss to what extent the outcome could be explained by the veto player theory. Chapter 5 offers an analysis of the reform proposals which did not succeed; starting with the Razali Reform Paper from 1997, and followed by the proposal submitted by Kofi Annan in 2005. I present the proposals and discuss them in light of the veto player theory. Chapter 6 offers the main conclusions concerning the reform in 1965 and the two reform proposals which failed. My aim is to answer how the veto powers affected the reform processes and to what extent the outcomes can be explained by the veto player theory. I show how the P5's reluctance towards a change of status quo has made a reform of the Security Council seem impossible in the two latter cases. Furthermore, I conclude that while the veto player theory can be seen as a useful tool for explaining the process and the outcomes in 1997 and 2005, the theory's explanatory power concerning the reform in 1965 is rather limited.

## **2 The Veto Player Theory**

### **2.1 Introduction**

We are better in tune with a political system if we start our study from the policies are implemented, and then work backward to discover how these policies defeated the alternatives. What were the preferences that led to these outcomes, and how were certain preferences selected over others by the political system? (Tsebelis 2002: 6).

The basic argument of the veto player theory is that the shape of policies is influenced by veto players and if any of the veto players have incentives to block a change of the status quo, change will not occur (Ganghof 2003: 3). The Security Council has five main players controlling the outcomes. I therefore consider the veto player theory a suitable framework for this thesis.

Section 2.2 provides a brief introduction to the game theoretic approach and one of its core concepts, rationality. Sections 2.3 and 2.4 outline the veto player theory in short. Section 2.5 provides some examples of use of veto player theory applications. Finally, section 2.6 considers three critical arguments against veto player theory.

### **2.2 The game theoretic approach**

Veto player approaches have come to occupy a central place in comparative politics and political economy. The concept “Veto Player Theory” refers to a game theoretic approach, developed by George Tsebelis. The main framework of the theory is found in Tsebelis’ book “Veto Players. How political institutions work” (2002). This theory is known as one of the most elaborate and prominent of this kind of approaches (Ganghof 2003: 1). The theory has mainly been applied to analyze policy output and outcomes within political systems and political institutions. Empirically, the theory is best known for being applied to study political outcomes within the European Union.

Game theory is the theory of interaction among rational decision makers (Hovi 1998: 3). There are several different ways to define “rational”. “A rational decision maker

can be defined as an actor which has consistent beliefs and preferences, and acts in a way consistent with these reasons” (Hovi 1998: 4). This definition is based on Jon Elsters “thin” definition of rationality. Utility maximizing is another central concept in game theory. John C. Harsanyi claims that “rational behavior consists in utility maximization or expected- utility maximization” (quoted in Hovi 2008: 17).

Furthermore, Harsanyi defines game theory as “the theory of rational behavior by two or more interacting rational individuals, each of them determined to maximize his own interest, whether selfish or unselfish, as specified by his own utility function” (ibid.).

Another common assumption in game theory is that one deals with unified actors. This may be obvious when dealing with individuals, but in political science, where one often works with states and governments, this assumption could be problematic.

George Tsebelis distinguishes between individual and collective veto players.

According to this, an individual veto player can be an individual in possession of a great deal of power, for example the president of the United States. A collective veto player can refer to for example a parliament or a political party, where decisions are made collectively (Tsebelis 2002: 38). In the analysis I do not take into account internal decision making within the states, hence, I treat the players as individual veto players.

The perception of the state as a rational, unified actor is one of the main criticisms of game theory. This criticism is hard to reject completely. However, one can argue that despite this obvious problem, it is still fruitful to use game theory to analyze political relations and outcomes. One argument for this is that it could be sensible to start with a simplified case, and after analyzing this, continue to use similar methods on more complex cases (Hovi 2008: 24). A game theoretical approach that to some extent takes this critique into account is the two-level games approach. I will not discuss this debate further in this thesis. I do, however, consider it important to bear in mind when working with game theoretic approaches.

## 2.3 Introduction to Veto Player Theory

Policy outcomes result from; the preferences of the actors involved and the prevailing institutions. Policy outcomes will vary depending on who controls political power and where the status quo is located (Tsebelis 2002: 17). In the Security Council, where the five veto powers hold significant power, this will be particularly clear. The status quo in this institution will be the absence of reform.

Similar to many theories, the veto player theory aims to explain outcomes, in this specific case the outcomes of a policymaking process. To explain such outcomes, it is necessary to know the preferences of the veto players, the identity of the agenda setter and the position of the status quo (Tsebelis 2002: 3). The less one knows about these factors, the more difficult it is to explain outcomes. For example, focusing only on institutions, with limited knowledge about the actors that produce them, the theory might be able to explain whether and why policy change is, or is not, possible, but it will not be able to explain actual change. Whether it occurs or not will be a matter of the specific choices of the actors themselves and even though one might identify the necessary conditions for change to occur, these conditions might not be sufficient for change to occur (Tsebelis 2002: 17).

### 2.3.1 Key concepts

Before I elaborate on the veto player theory, it is useful to define a few key concepts:

*Veto players* are individual or collective actors whose consent is necessary for a change of the status quo. A change in the status quo requires an unanimous decision by all veto players (Tsebelis 2002: 19).

An *agenda setter* is a specific veto player that presents “take it or leave it” proposals to the other veto players and that has significant control over the policies that might replace the status quo (Tsebelis 2002: 2).

The *winset of the status quo* is the set of outcomes that can replace the status quo. The number of veto players and the ideological distances between them are factors that

affect the winset. The size of the winset of the status quo has specific consequences on policymaking; the smaller the winset, the more difficult it is to make significant departures from the status quo (ibid).

*Policy stability* describes the impossibility of significant departures from the status quo. The higher policy stability, the smaller the role of agenda setting (ibid).

*The unanimity core* refers to the set of points that cannot be defeated if the decision is unanimous. An alternative, and maybe more common, name for unanimity core is “Pareto Set” (Tsebelis 2002: 21).

The *absorption rule* explains under what conditions an additional veto player will make a difference or is going to be absorbed by the existing ones (Tsebelis 2002: 26).

## **2.4 The theory`s main propositions**

In addition to the basic arguments outlined in section 2.3, I will briefly mention a few propositions, explained in Tsebelis` book, that I consider relevant for this study.

### *Proposition 1:*

The addition of a new veto player increases policy stability or leaves it the same (either by decreasing the size of the winset of the status quo, or by decreasing the size of the unanimity core, or by leaving both the same) (Tsebelis 2002: 25).

The winset of the status quo and the unanimity core are the two proxies for policy stability. While the winset of the status quo is the set of policies that can replace the status quo, the unanimity core refers to the set of points that cannot be defeated if the decision is unanimous. Policy stability refers to, as previously mentioned, the difficulty of achieving significant change to the status quo (Tsebelis 2002: 21). A new veto player is the same as a new player with the power to hinder changes. This is relatable to the situation in the Security Council and can offer an explanation of the P5`s resistance against a change of the status quo.



When the status quo is far away from all veto players' ideal point, its winset is large. Large winset means low policy stability. As the status quo approaches one of the veto player's ideal point, policy stability increases, since the winset of the status quo includes only the points that this veto player prefers over the status quo. Thus, policy stability crucially depends on the position of the status quo (Tsebelis 2002: 22-23).

While adding another veto player could never expand the winset of the status quo, it could indeed diminish it and even eliminate it. In addition there is also a possibility that the winset will stay the same, depending on the position of the new veto player. The winset is empty if no point can defeat the status quo (Tsebelis 2002: 23). To sum up; if the winset of the status quo exist, its size decreases or remains the same with the addition of a new veto player, while the size of the unanimity core increases or remains the same with an additional player. This argument assumes that the other veto players remain the same after the new veto player has been added. The only difference is that there is now one more player in the game (Tsebelis 2002: 24.25).

*Proposition 2:*

If a new veto player, D, is added within the unanimity core of any set of previously existing veto players, D has no effect on policy stability (Tsebelis 2002:28).

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, the addition of a new veto player does not necessarily mean that the winset of the status quo is reduced. The reason for this is explained by the absorption rule (Tsebelis 2002: 28). The basic argument is that the new veto player's preferences are absorbed among the other players. In other words; when a new player is added inside the segment connecting existing veto players (the unanimity core), it does not affect the winset of the status quo. One can also turn the argument around and say that when the addition of a new veto player does *not* affect the winset, it is located inside the segment defined by the existing veto players, more specifically; their unanimity core (Tsebelis 2002: 27). This does not take into account prospective transaction costs, meaning that it is assumed that there is no difference in cost for the veto players whether they interact with few or many different players. However, this is not to say that the transaction cost does not exist (Tsebelis 2002: 29.)

### *Proposition 3:*

The veto player who sets the agenda has a considerable advantage: he can consider the winset of the others as his constraint, and select from it the outcome he prefers (Tsebelis 2002: 34).

In political systems certain political actors make proposals to others who can then accept or reject them. To analyze these sequences of moves and predict the outcomes, it is not only necessarily to know the identity of the agenda setter, but also its preferences.

Given that both players try to achieve their ideal point, or come as close as possible to it, if veto player A makes a proposal to veto player B, he will select out of the whole winset the point (PA) which is closest to him. Similar, if B makes a proposal to A, he will select point PB (Tsebelis 2002: 33).

This leaves the player that makes the proposal with a great advantage; he can set the agenda and the other players have to choose from the alternatives already proposed by the agenda setter. In cases with only one veto player, this player automatically becomes the agenda setter (*ibid*).

Furthermore, as policy stability increases, or in other words; as the winset decreases, the significance of agenda setting declines. More specifically; if the winset shrinks, the agenda setter has to select the point that he prefers inside this smaller winset. This means that the best option for the agenda setter is likely to be further away from his ideal point than when the winset was larger (*ibid*).

## **2.5 Examples of veto player theory applications**

Tsebelis draws lines to the work of Montesquieu and James Madison, although they did not use the exact same terminology. The idea behind the system of checks and balances is used as an example of early use of the veto player approach. The way the legislative body is divided into two different chambers opens up the opportunity for the two chambers to veto each other. This was seen as the safest way to avoid abuse of power (Tsebelis 2002: 9).

As Tsebelis mentions in his work; veto players are not unknown phenomena in political science, especially not in analysis concerning legislative decision-making (Ganghof 2003: 4). As an example of a qualitative study using veto player terminology, one could mention Ellen Immergut (1992) and her study of health politics in the United States and France. The emphasis in her study lies on how veto points provide opportunities for interest groups to block health care reform. Other researchers who have used the terminology of veto players is Giuliano Bonoli (2000) in his study of pension reform in Europe (ibid).

At the more quantitative end of the scale, a well-known example of the veto player approach analyzes welfare states and redistribution. Huber (1993) distinguishes two types of veto players or points; parties in government are assumed to matter only insofar as they influence the ideological orientation of the government while institutional veto points such as strong second chambers or federalism are assumed to hinder welfare state retrenchment. There is also literature, mostly written by economists, that uses veto player approaches to analyze and explain budget deficits. These examples show that the veto player theory have been used in combination with many different methods, and for different purposes.

## **2.6 Veto player theory; a critical glance**

Beside the more general critique towards game theoretic approaches, briefly mentioned previous in section 2.1, the veto player theory also meets more specific critique. Ganghof (2003) points to what he sees as three main problems. The first is what Ganghof refers to as *the problem of identification*. How does one distinguish the veto players from other potentially influential actors? Ganghof claims that Tsebelis' rules for identifying veto players are questionable because they are based on what he considers "disputable assumptions" (Ganghof 2003: 17). He outlines what he considers a neglect of the difference between outcome and policy preferences and holds this as problematic for important questions, such as "does this actor have

effective veto power?” and “how likely is this actor’s ideal point located in the unanimity core of other veto players?” (Ganghof 2003: 13).

The second problem is *the problem of measurement*. Tsebelis assumes that actors have fixed policy preferences, but fails to be precise concerning what these policy preferences are. His distinction between policy preferences and policy outcomes is also unclear, according to Ganghof. Furthermore, Ganghof questions whether veto player theory should be considered a coherent theoretical framework, rather than an empirically testable theory (Ganghof 2003: 10). As my analysis includes a case where the explanatory power of the veto player theory on the outcome is questionable, I briefly mention an alternative theory, the Theory of Rational Communication (section 4.6).

The third main problem outlined by Ganghof goes under the name of *the problem of equivalence*. What is meant by this is whether all veto players are similar in all respects apart from their policy preferences, or whether one needs to distinguish between different types of veto players (Ganghof 2003: 3). Although there are ways to distinguish different types on a theoretical basis, Ganghof admits that this is not an easy exercise. However, when working with small samples, which veto players that are treated as equivalent could make quite a difference. It could therefore be problematic for the validity of the study to treat them as equivalent (Ganghof 2003 19-20).

## **3 Empirical background**

### **3.1 Introduction**

[...] The Council must be not only representative but also more able and willing to take action when action is needed. Reconciling these two imperatives is the hard test that any reform must pass (UN 2005 art.168)

The Security Council has primary responsibility, under the UN Charter, for the maintenance of international peace and security (UN 2010a). Furthermore, it is designed to maintain international peace and security in accordance with the principles and purposes of the United Nations (UN 2010b).

In this chapter I first outline the main efforts made to achieve a reform in the Security Council during the last decades. Furthermore, I review the main debates and the cluster areas of disagreement as well as the most central groups of actors. This chapter also offer the introduction to the analysis in chapter 4 and 5. In the analytical part of this chapter I consider the reform debate in light of veto player theory. I explore to what extent this theory is suitable as a framework for explaining and understanding this complex, and highly relevant, debate.

### **3.2 The purposes and functions of the Security Council**

By adhering to the Charter of the United Nations, all Member States recognize that the Security Council has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and agree to be bound by its decisions. It is therefore of vital importance, not only to the Organization, but to the world, that the Council should be equipped to carry out this responsibility and that its decisions should command worldwide respect (UN 2005 art.167).

When the United Nations was established in the aftermath of World War II, the Security Council was designed to enable the world body to act decisively to prevent and remove threats. The founders of the United Nations conferred primary responsibility to the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security. The Council was designed to be a responsible and representative body and

has the capacity to act in an effective and decisive way. The five victorious countries at the end of the war were given privileges in terms of permanent membership and the right to veto any decision they disagreed with. In exchange for such privileges the five members were expected to shoulder an extra burden in promoting global security and to contribute a great deal to the organization (UN 2004 art. 244).

According to the Charter of the United Nations the Security Council is “so organized as to be able to function continuously, and a representative of each of its members must be present at all times at UN Headquarters. The Presidency of the Council rotates monthly, according to the English alphabetical listing of its member States” (UN 2010a). The Council consists of fifteen members. Apart from the permanent five there are ten elective members, each of them elected by the General Assembly for a period of two years and five of them on election each year. The ten elective seats are distributed between the regions. The distribution of seats in the Security Council is as follows:

Table 1. Distribution of seats

Region:	Permanent seats	Non-permanent seats	Total
Africa	0	3	3
Asia	1	2	3
Latin America	0	2	2
North America	1	0	1
Wester Europe and others	2	2	4
Eastern Europe	1	1	2

As for voting, there is a divide between procedural matters and other matters. On procedural matters, a majority of at least nine members make decisions. Rulings of the President, convocation of an emergency special session of the General Assembly, order of items and invitations to participate are examples of matters treated as procedural in the Council (Bailey and Daws 1998: 226). On all other matters however,

this majority of nine must also include the five permanent members either by their confirmative votes or they must choose to abstain from voting (Baehr and Gordenker 2005: 25). Non-procedural matters are also known as substantive matters. The discussion on whether a matter is procedural or substantive is paradoxically counting as a substantive matter. A prospective reform of the Security Council will by this definition count as a substantive matter.

### **3.3 Efforts to reform the Security Council**

“Since the Council was formed the threats and challenges to international peace and security have changed, as has the distribution of power among members. But the Security Council has been slow to change” (UN 2004 art.245).

The Security Council is unquestionably the most powerful organ of the United Nations. Unfortunately, as pointed out in the quote above from the High-Level Panels report, the Council has so far not been able to adjust to the world scene in modern time and its legitimacy has several times been brought under question. The Council is often described as undemocratic and unable to represent the world of today (Bourantonis 2005: 87). The critique also concerns the practice of closed working methods, and not least is it aimed at the five permanent members and their veto power. Call for a reform of the Council have been made for decades and several of the Secretary-Generals, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Kofi Annan and presently Ban Ki-Moon, have highlighted the importance of such a reform. Nevertheless, although there is a general agreement that the Council needs to be reformed there is extensive disagreement on how to do so (Fassbender 2004: 341).

#### **3.3.1 The early years**

The Security Council held its first session on 17 January 1946. The Council then consisted of a total of eleven members; the P5 and six non-permanent members chosen on a regional two-year basis. As the membership of the United Nations grew in numbers during the 50s and 60s, the call for an expansion of the Council began. In

1965 the number of non-permanent members was expanded from six to ten and to this date, this has been the only major reform of the Council during its 65 years of existence.

During the Cold War, the Security Council was paralyzed by the East-West conflict and the steel front between two of its permanent members, the United States and the Soviet Union. However, after the end of the Cold War in the late 80s, the activity in the Council increased. It engaged in conflicts such as the Iran-Iraq war, the Gulf War and fighting in Cambodia, Angola and Namibia. In the beginning of the 90s, Japan and Germany became the second and third largest contributors to the UN budget and they both began working towards gaining more influence in the Council, and for permanent seats. In the wake of this process, other countries also advocated their interest in joining the powerful group, among them Italy, Brazil, India, Nigeria, South-Africa and Egypt. It soon became clear that a prospective expansion of the Council was a highly controversial subject (Freiesleben 2008: 2). Three main blocks of actors were soon established:

*“The Group of Four” (G4)* consisted of India, Brazil, Japan and Germany. They based their claims for permanent seats on (1) being major donors (Japan and Germany), (2) having one of the world`s largest populations and economies as well as being third largest contributor of troops to UN peace-keeping missions (India) and (3) being the largest country in terms of population, economy and territory in South-America (Brazil) (Freiesleben 2008: 3). In recent years the G4 has however shown willingness to modify its claim to a certain extent, for example has the option of non-permanent seats with the prospect of being permanent in time been discussed.

As an opponent to G4, Italy, Spain, Argentina, Mexico, Canada, South Korea and Pakistan formed the group *“Uniting for Consensus”* (formerly known as the “Coffee Club”), claiming that an addition of permanent seats would create new centers of power and violate the principle of sovereign equality (ibid). This group has more or less maintained its position during the reform debate.



A third group entering the struggle for seats was the “*African Group*” which represented the African Union (AU). This group claimed, and still claims, two permanent seats with the right to veto. Even though representatives both outside (for example the G4) and within the AU have tried to negotiate and modify the claim for veto power, the African Group is to this day maintaining its position.

### **3.4 Key issues in the reform debate**

Former president of the General Assembly, Sheikha Al Khalifa, introduced in 2007 what he considered to be the “five key cluster areas” in the reform debate. These were; the size of the council, categories of membership, questions concerning veto power, regional representation, and the working methods of the Council and its relationship to the General Assembly. The cluster areas overlap and are mentioned in different combinations, but as of today, all proposals currently on the table build on the structure of these five areas (Lund 2010: 1).

#### **3.4.1 The size of the Council**

The issue of an expansion of the Security Council has been on the General Assembly’s agenda since 1979 but was not formally discussed until 1991 (Daws1997: 415). The main argument for expanding the Council is the need for it to be more representative and more effective. The proportion of the Council members to total UN members is currently less than 8 percent as opposed to more than 20 percent at the founding of the organization. Proponents of an extensive enlargement argue that decisions made by an enlarged Council would have more authority and legitimacy and hence, would be more effective (IPA1997: 434). The opponents of such an expansion point out their concern for whether an expanded Council will be able to carry out its work efficiently. It has been argued that without the Cold War polemics, the Security Council is now working far more effectively than ever before, taking decisions and authorizing UN operations on an unprecedented scale while the use of the veto has been reduced (Leigh-Phippard 1997: 421). The representative of the Netherlands in 1999-2000, Peter Walsh, stated in

a commentary in the Financial Times that “no one can seriously believe that a council with 24 members can be more effective than one with 15, but it has been politically incorrect to point this out” (Paul and Nahory 2005: 4). (The number 24 is taken from the as of today most elaborate proposal on the table, two expansion options known as Models A and B. These are explained briefly on the next page and more thoroughly in the analysis). Even though the status quo, non-expansion, is a highly realistic option, this is not seen as an actual option in the debate. The options that are considered are the “Low-Twenties Option” (20-23 members), the “Mid-Twenties Option” (23-26 members) and the “High-Twenties Option” (more than 26 members). Efficiency is held as the main argument for the “Low Twenties Option”. The United States, for instance, has been skeptical to any further expansion than 20-21 and is therefore a proponent for the “Low Twenties Option”. However, the aim of a representative Council is difficult to achieve if choosing the Low-Twenties Option. The “Mid-Twenties Option” is probably the option that would be able to cover most of the different proposals currently on the table. But while the argument of more representativeness is covered to a greater extent in this option, concern about the Councils efficiency is rising. The Security Council can only ever be as effective and efficient as its Member States want it to be. Cooperation among the permanent members is a key issue, as history has shown that they act in pursuit of their respective interest and not necessarily in accordance with the ideals and aspirations set out in the UN Charter (Leigh-Phippard 1997: 421).

In the report from the High-Level Panel for Threats, Challenges and Change from 2004, “A more secure world; our shared responsibility”, two models for reforming and expanding the Council were proposed. These are usually referred to as Model A and Model B. Both models suggest an expansion of 9 more seats in the Council, distributed regionally between four areas, Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and America. Adding 9 new seats will increase the number of members from 15 to 24. These two models were also proposed by the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, in his report from 2005. However, neither Annans report nor the report of the High-Level Panel take a stand concerning which of the models they prefer. These models concern

both the question of expansion and the question of membership categories. As for the veto, the reports do not say anything except that they do not recommend any more veto powers in the Council.

### **3.4.2 Membership: permanent versus non-permanent**

The G4 welcomes an expansion in the permanent member category. The African Group also welcomes this and maintains their claim for veto power as well. This has on several occasions stopped the G4 and the African Group from cooperating in the reform process. A lot of effort, both from the G4 and representatives inside the African Group have been made to make the African Group drop, or at least postpone its claim for veto power but as to this date the group has been difficult to convince. The Uniting for Consensus Group repeats their argument that adding permanent seats will only create new power centers. Should an expansion of the Council succeed, they argue, the only way to make it more efficient is to increase the number of non-permanent seats. Adding more permanent seats will merely serve the purpose of giving a higher number of countries the opportunity to stall important processes. There is also another option, the “Intermediate Model” which opens up for non-permanent seats with the opportunity to be permanent in time (Lund 2010: 2-3).

However, even if the membership reaches agreement upon a prospective expansion in permanent seats, the difficulty also lies in agreeing on which countries that should be granted the privilege of permanency. As noted in the presentation of the three main blocks earlier in this chapter, the disagreement concerning this subject is extensive. Large or powerful countries support an inclusion of new permanent members, mainly themselves, while their regional rivals prefer adding more non-permanent seats (Freiesleben 2008: 3). There is also disagreement among the P5. Even though they all welcome new permanent members (at least in theory) the disagreement concerns which states they wish to give permanent seats. For instance:

- France is a member of the Group of 8 (G8) and welcomes the G4 as permanent members.

- The United Kingdom is also a member of the G8 and they too welcome the G4 as permanent members.
- The United States is also a member of the G8 and welcomes Japan as a permanent member of the council.
- Russia is a member of the Eastern European Group (EEG) and welcomes a representative of this group as a permanent member of the Council.
- China is a member of the Group of 77 (G77) and welcomes a representative from Africa as a permanent member (Evans 2008).

### **3.4.3 The veto**

It has often been argued that the use of the veto has blocked the ability of the Council to take effective, timely action to safeguard peace and prevent the massive loss of life (Lund 2010: 4). Only the P5 of the Council have the opportunity to cast a veto (and only on non-procedural matters). When this is done the member exercising the veto is not required to explain for what reasons the negative vote (the veto) has been cast. The report from the High-level Panel states that “even outside the use of the formal veto, the ability of the P5 to keep critical issues of peace and security of the Security Council’s agenda has further undermined confidence in the body’s work”.

Furthermore, the report states that “the institution of the veto has anachronistic character that is unsuitable for the institution in an increasingly democratic age”, but sees “no practical way of changing the existing members’ veto powers” (UN 2004 art. 256).

Apart from the formal veto there is the double veto, the hidden veto and the abstention from voting.

- *The double veto* concerns the discussion on whether a matter is procedural or substantive. Any member of the Council has the opportunity to insist that a particular proposal is substantive and if this is accepted the proposal is liable to veto (Bailey and Daws 1998: 240). The first veto means preventing a question from being considered

procedural and the other means defeating the proposal as a substantive question (Patil 1992: 16).

- The threat of a formal veto is called the *hidden veto*. The hidden veto is mainly used by the P5 in closed-door informal consultations rather than in official open meetings. Even though this has been known to happen to a great extent, it is difficult to keep track of, due to the secrecy surrounding it. The hidden veto is thus consequently heavily criticized. Consider the United States` constant use of a hidden veto on Security Council actions critical of Israel. Critics argue that the use of the hidden veto generally worsens international crises (Nahory 2004: 1).

- *Abstention of voting* is divided into obligatory abstention and voluntary abstention. If a member is part to a dispute being treated in the Council this member should abstain from voting (obligatory abstention). In practice this has however shown to be difficult as the permanent five are reluctant to give up their right to veto also, and might one say especially, in disputes close to home (Fassbender 1998: 190-191). Voluntary abstention concerns substantive matters where members do not wish to vote either in favor of or against. They may then abstain from voting and this is not considered a negative vote (Bailey and Daws 1998: 250).

Arguments such as “democracy” and “equality” are common themes in the debate concerning the veto. If the Council were to become expanded with more permanent members, should these members also be given the power to veto decisions in the Council? Many of the states advocating new permanent seats in the Council hold that they in principle are against the veto but because it is already in use, the new permanent members should have the same right (Lund 2008: 4). On the other hand, their opponents argue that extending the veto power to more states will make the Council paralyzed and, as every state has different interests, the Council will in the end not be able to take action at all in world politics and crises.

Another option on the table is that the P5 refrain from using the veto in cases of genocide, crimes against the humanity and serious violations of international humanitarian law (Lund 2008: 4). This option has good intentions but is not at the time

a very realistic option. First, one would have to agree on what kind of situations that would apply to these definitions. Second, how to get the P5 to agree to this kind of reform which obviously will diminish their power? By limiting the privileges of the P5 there is a risk that one would undermine the whole functioning of the Council, if the P5 should choose to work around it or even withdraw themselves completely. Abolishing the veto is another option but in reality the P5 are reluctant to modify, and refuse to abolish the veto. One can draw lines to the League of Nations which the United States and other powers refused to join because of their status as major powers did not give them privileges. Many see this as the main reason for the League of Nations limited success (Patil 1992: 3-4)

#### **3.4.4 Regional seats**

Increased geographical representation will also mean an expansion of the Council and the pros and cons are therefore similar. Apart from the obvious pros of regional seats, such as representativeness, there are also some obstacles that are difficult to overlook. First, which countries within the regions would hold the permanent seats and how should they be chosen? Whether the seats should be country-specific on a permanent basis or rotate is another issue to decide before taking stand on the regional seats debate. Critics argue that a country will always protect its own interest before others` and it will therefore be difficult for one country to represent a whole region. Proponents argue that regional seats are the only way to ensure a more representative, democratic and fair Council and that this will make the Council more legitimate and also more functional.

#### **3.4.5 Working methods of the Security Council**

During the 90s, as the struggle for seats seemed deadlocked, the working methods of the Council and the way the Council interacted with the General Assembly began to engage several countries. This was also seen as an important subject on the agenda when the “The Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other

Matters related to the Security Council”, more generally known as the Open-ended Working Group (and later the Never-ending Working Group) was established in 1993. Three major concerns were highlighted; transparency, accountability and participation (Freiesleben 2008: 4). That the P5 should explain every veto to the General Assembly and that the Council should hold more open meetings was also requested. Although there is willingness among some of the P5 to work towards a more open and transparent Council, there is also opposition from Council members against any interference in how they work (Freiesleben 2008: 17). The number of open meetings has actually gone up in recent years and there have also been more meetings between the president of the General Assembly and the Council. However, some representatives maintain that certain questions have to stay within the closed doors of the Council for it to maintain its efficiency (Lund 2008: 4). Others have feared that a focus on working methods would draw attention from the question of an expansion of the Council. As of today, this has not happened. For instance, both questions concerning expansion, membership and working methods have been on the agenda for the General Assembly the last year.

### **3.5 The reform debate and veto player theory**

The shape of policies is influenced by veto players; and therefore, if many players have substantially different interests, they will likely find it difficult to agree on a change of the status quo policy (Ganghof 2003: 3).

According to the quote outlined above, the status quo is the most realistic outcome in a setting with many players with different interests. This is similar to the problem of Security Council reform. One could also draw a line to the argument that a more representative Council (expansion) will make it less efficient. I will in this section focus on who the veto players are, what their interests are, and how these interests affect reform of the Security Council. The most elaborate reform proposals largely concentrate largely on questions concerning enlargement and categories of membership and I will therefore centre my analysis on these topics. However, questions concerning the veto and working methods are also under debate and will to

some extent be touched upon as well. I consider the P5 to be, as I will explain more thoroughly in section 3.5.2, in practice the only veto players to reckon with. Therefore I will focus on their interests, and only briefly mention the interests of other members.

### **3.5.1 The procedure of reforming the Security Council**

The Security Council has been through three major changes since it was founded in 1945. In 1965 it was expanded from six to ten non-permanent seats, in 1971 the People`s Republic of China replaced the Republic of China as Chinese representatives, and in 1991 the Russian Federation replaced the former Soviet Union. Whereas the first change could be characterized as a membership reform, the latter two were more issues of representation rather than of membership reform (Daws 1997: 415).

Any reform of the Council will require amendment of the UN Charter. Chapter 18, article 108 of the Charter states the following concerning amendments:

Amendments to the present Charter shall come into force for all Members of the United Nations when they have been adopted by a vote of two thirds of the members of the General Assembly and ratified in accordance with their respective constitutional processes by two thirds of the Members of the United Nations, including all the permanent members of the Security Council (UN 1945 art. 108).

This means that the General Assembly can adopt resolutions without the consent of the P5, but the resolutions will not be valid until a majority of two-thirds of the UN member states, *including the P5*, deposit their instruments of ratification with the United Nations.

The reform in 1965 came from a resolution adopted by the General Assembly that approved amendments to Article 23 and 27 of the UN Charter. The former “Special Political Committee of the General Assembly” (now The Fourth Committee: Special Political and Decolonization) prepared the draft resolutions before recommending it to the General Assembly (Bourantonis 2005: 25). The amendments came into force after being ratified by two-thirds of the UN member states, including the P5 in the Council (IPA 1997: 427-428).



### **3.5.2 The veto players in the reform procedure**

Decisions concerning the organization of, and the functions of the Council as an organ, are made in the General Assembly. As amendments to the UN Charter requires all the P5 to deposit their instruments of ratification with the UN, this makes the P5 veto players. Each one of the P5 has the power to stop a reform of the Council. In addition to the P5 there is the possibility of a sixth veto player, consisting of a coalition of minimum one more member than a third of the General Assembly. As the United Nations today consists of 192 member states this means that at least 128 of them must vote in favor of the reform. If 65 member states reject the proposed reform they function as a veto player and the status quo is sustained. The latter is, however, not very likely to happen. The P5 is not a unitary block and consists of members from both the G8 (United States, France and United Kingdom), the G77 (China) and the Eastern European Group (Russia). When and if the P5 agrees on a proposal there is a high probability that they have already gathered the sufficient support. Another aspect is that standing up against one of the P5 is a challenge, never mind standing up against all five. Therefore, even though there is the potential of a sixth veto player concerning this matter, I choose to take this out of the equation as I consider this potential a largely theoretical one. The focus will therefore be on the other, and more likely, veto players; the P5.

Matters decided *in* the Security Council also face five possibly veto players, the P5. In addition, there is also in this UN organ the potential of a sixth veto player (at least theoretically), consisting of a coalition of seven non permanent members, who can agree to block a proposal also if all the P5 are voting for it. The amendments from 1965 had a radical effect on the voting patterns in the Council. The adding of the four new seats challenged the United States` dominant position in the Council by giving a group in opposition (a combination of Soviet, East Europe and Afro-Asian votes) for the first time the opportunity to cast the now seven (before five) votes necessary to defeat any resolution, both substantive and procedural. Another aspect to the reform was that, as long as the veto was not used, the non-permanent members had sufficient votes between them to pass a resolution without the permanent members. From now

on, the non-permanent members were not dependent on support from the P5, although they still had to avoid any of the P5 opposing (IPA 1997: 427-428).

### **3.5.3 The interests of the veto players**

The UN Millennium Declaration of September 2000 states that “there is a global agreement on the need for a comprehensive reform of the Security Council” (Fassbender 2004: 341). However, the conflicting views of member states continue to block a solution. The P5’s interest in a reform of the Council and the interests of the former, present and future elected non-permanent members (E10) are, however, somewhat similar. The main interest is to have power in the Council, the P5 want to keep their power and the E10 want to increase theirs. For all member states in the organization, the national interests of the state have shown to be the first priority (Mahmubani 2004: 262-264).

The roles of the P5 and the E10 in the Council are very different as reflected both in their interests and their behavior. The P5 were given the privilege of veto and permanence because of fear that without such benefits the great powers would walk away from the organization. This has proved successful; none of the P5 have left the Council or the UN. Kishore Mahbubani, the representative from Singapore to the Council 2001- 2002, claims in his essay “*The Permanent and Elected Council Members*” that the P5 act as if they own the Council and that they treat the E10 as “tourists” (Mahbubani 2004:260). He argues furthermore that the Council’s decisions corresponds to whatever at that time is in line with the interests of the P5 and especially the United States, often referred to as the permanent one, P1, in the corridors of the Council. As an example he uses how Afghanistan went from being referred to as a “strategic orphan” to a “strategic priority” in the aftermath of the attack on the Twin Towers in September 2001(Mahbubani 2004:259).

The P5 have been given power without responsibility whereas the E10 were given responsibility but no power. Thus, the principal causes of the failures of the Council, such as in the Balkans and Rwanda, were actions or nonactions of the major powers (Mahbubani 2004: 256-257).

Broadly speaking, the debate concerning enlargement, membership and veto has stagnated over three issues:

- Most UN member states appear to want more non-permanent seats, but they differ concerning how many.
- A majority wants more permanent seats but disagree regarding whom to include.
- A majority wants to abolish or curtail the right to veto; the P5, however, is not included in this majority. Whether the prospective new permanent members should get the right to exercise the veto is also under debate (Fassender 2004: 341-342).

The question of reform could to some extent be considered as an example of a North-South issue. Industrialized states in the North have four of the five permanent seats and three of the ten non-permanent seats, the two Latin American seats not included. As an enlargement of the Council would mean a decrease of the North's relative power, the North has generally been more reluctant to accept an enlargement in seats. The South has, on the other hand, been more eager to advocate a strong increase of seats in the Council, an increase which would increase the South's power and influence (Fassbender 2004: 345).

There is also disagreement concerning whether member states support a permanent seat for a neighboring state. The main interest for states without a permanent seat in the Council is to get one. For most states, however, this has never been a realistic option, due to for example size, population or contributions to the United Nations. Such states have instead the option to seek power through a neighboring state. Fear that a regional competitor could get too much power and influence in the Council has, however, lead states to work against each other rather than to cooperate. India and Pakistan, Brazil and Argentina, Italy and Germany are examples of states that are working almost as hard to prevent their neighbor from getting a permanent seat as they are working to getting a permanent seat of their own. The two permanent members, United Kingdom and France, have also been skeptical to granting Germany a

permanent seat as they fear that this would give the country an advantage and more influence in the European Union (this has, however, modified the in later years).

The African Group, which claims two permanent seats including the right to veto, can serve as another example. Although the question of the veto has been debated several times, the African Group stand by their claim, knowing that the veto makes their claim for permanent seats an even greater challenge. African leaders have mentioned that the group's insisting on the right to veto might have just as much to do with the fact that the majority of the African states knows that even if permanent seats would be granted to the region, these seats would not be granted to them. Therefore they are retaining their claim for veto rights, knowing that this claim would make it more difficult for their neighbors to get a permanent seat (Lund 2010: 19).

### **3.5.4 Use of veto and agenda setting**

The veto player theory stresses the advantage of being an agenda setter (proposition 3, section 2.4). In the Council, there are two ways of agenda setting; putting matters *on* the agenda and keeping matters *off* the same agenda. The hidden veto is of great significance in this context. Although the formal veto is rarely used in the Council, its informal use in closed consultations has not diminished. Kishore Mahbubani also offers examples of the veto being used on procedural matters, although the Charter specifically states that it is for substantive matters only. This argument contradicts the impression that the Security Council is working towards a higher degree of consensus, an impression one might get from the fact that the formal use of veto has diminished dramatically in recent years:

- The use of the formal veto has declined drastically after 1995. After 1995 it has only been used 19 times while it was used 242 (+43 vetoes that were used to block nominees for Secretary-General but these were cast during closed sessions and are not included in the official statistics) times up until 1995. This gives an average on 4.8 vetoes a year until 1995, and only 1.4 vetoes a year after.

- Before 1965 the veto was mainly used by Russia and from 1966 until 1996 mainly by the US (but also by United Kingdom (2) and France (3) and Russia (4)).
- China has only used the veto 6 times, while Russia and the US have used it 124 and 82 times, respectively.
- After 1996 (and until 2009) the US has used the veto 12 times, China 4 times and Russia 3 times.
- 59 vetoes have been used to block admission of member states (for example ex-enemies after World War II such as Italy and Japan etc) (Global Policy Forum 2010).

Because of the extensive use of the double and hidden vetoes, the P5 controls the topics being subjected for discussion in the Council. Although they claim that the veto should remain a “last resort”, they use the hidden veto constantly, making them powerful agenda setters in the Council (Nahory 2004: 2). The hidden veto is exercised to a great extent through informal sessions and since the late 80s the Council has mainly conducts its business in such private settings. Contrary to the very public official sessions of the Council, such informal settings are surrounded by secrecy with no records being taken. This gives the P5 the opportunity to exercise the veto, more specifically the threat of the veto, without having to face public opinion. One example is Russia and matters concerning Chechnya, another is China and matters concerning Tibet. A well known, but hardly as typical example of a hidden veto is France`s threat to block a resolution authorizing a war against Iraq in 2003. Contrary to most hidden vetoes, France made this one public, depending on the worldwide support for its action and expecting other members of the Council to follow its example (Nahory 2004: 1).

The hidden veto is known to have a significant impact on the Council`s work, making the P5 able to control the Council`s agenda. The double veto, used to decide whether a matter is procedural or substantive has already been mentioned. At this point, the agenda is already under the P5`s control. Non permanent members, after facing one hidden veto after another, is in that way discouraged from bringing up topics they know will be met with dislike from the P5, and this is creating what can be considered

a “double hidden veto”. Hidden vetoes are not only used to block action, but also to weaken the definitions of crises under international law, seen for example during the Rwandan genocide in 1994. As the word “genocide” would have required intervention by parties to the 1948 Genocide Convention, the atrocities in Rwanda was instead defined as “acts of genocide”, a definition not requiring such severe action. This was mainly due to France`s interest in Rwanda and support for the government, as well as the United States reluctance to use the amount of money that such an intervention would require. The outcome was that action was withheld until after the worst months of killing were over and the catastrophe was a fact (Nahory 2004: 2). Former president of the United States, Bill Clinton expressed regret, in a speech come to known as “the Clinton Apology”, for not acting earlier in Rwanda.

### **3.5.5 The Security Council`s use and utility to the Permanent Five**

The Security Council is the only forum of its kind; a forum able to address, if not resolve, security challenges of international concern and, crucially, to confer near-universal legitimacy on the actions of states or groups of states in a way that no alternative candidate or agency, real or proposed, has been able to do (Berdal 2003: 8). The P5 have, for different reasons, been eager to ensure that the Council`s role, status and authority in international affairs are not weakened. The intense diplomatic effort by the United States and the United Kingdom to ensure authorization for use of force in Iraq in 2003 serves as an example of the Council`s key status in ensuring legitimacy which is important even to powerful states. Before elaborating on the concrete reform proposals I will first outline some reasons for why and how the Security Council is important to the P5:

#### *The United Kingdom*

The status of the United Kingdom as a great power is often questioned. With its history as a major colony power the United Kingdom is now a shadow of its prior power. In the United Nations, the United Kingdom compensates for this declining power by often assuming leadership on key issues and making contributions, larger

than necessary, to UN activities in the security field. Their permanent membership in the Council gives them a disproportionate power on the world stage, a power of high significance to the United Kingdom. For this reason they constantly stress the importance of the Council (Berdal 2003: 8-9).

### *France*

The Security Council is important for France largely for the same reasons as for the United Kingdom. A factor often being stressed from the French view is that they wish to function as a counterbalance to the United States assertions of hegemony. For example, the United States' unsuccessful efforts to gather support in the Council before invading Iraq in 2003 could in great extent be traced down to the French resistance (ibid).

### *Russia*

Like the United Kingdom and France, Russia recognizes that permanent membership in the Council has become an essential element in its claim to Great Power status. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, it has become important for Russia to prove that it is still a great power to be reckoned with.

While the Security Council is important for the United Kingdom, France and Russia for somewhat similar reasons (they want to maintain their status as a Great Power), it is also important for the two powers whose Great Power status is not in question, namely China and the United States (Berdal 2003: 10).

### *China*

The Council functions for China as a useful tool of exercising its increasing power. China has a strong interest in protecting the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of member states and is eager to prevent support for Taiwan's claim to full independence. China is concerned about the United Nations' growing involvement in the internal affairs of member states and in particular with what appeared to be an increased readiness to invoke Chapter VII (use of force) in the case of humanitarian

emergencies and massive human rights violations. This concern is reflected in China`s voting behavior in the Council (ibid).

### *The United States*

As a powerful state, the United States does not necessarily need the Council to the same extent that its co-members do, but as resolutions from the Council gives legitimacy, the United States continues to work for achieving them, as they did in the Iraq-case. Acting without such a resolution, the damage to a state`s reputation can be severe, as this case showed. In this sense the Council is still important to the United States. This may also explain why the Barack Obama administration has shown reengagement in the United Nations (Berdal 2003: 11).



## **4 The 1965 reform**

### **4.1 Introduction**

In August 1965, the only reform to ever have been achieved in the composition of the Security Council, entered into force. The Council was increased with four non-permanent seats and from now on it counted ten non-permanent seats, in addition to the five permanent seats. By ratifying the amendment making the reform possible, the P5 approved a reform that actually increased the influence of the non-permanent members at the expense of their own (Leigh-Phippard 1997: 428).

In this section I first outline the main events leading up to this reform, the consequences for the Council as a whole, and especially for the P5. I then review the position of each P5 member concerning this reform and discuss their positions and actions in light of the veto player theory. The main questions in this section, is whether the P5 had incentives to stop the reform. Furthermore, if they did, to what extent can this be explained by the veto player theory?

### **4.2 The reform process in outline**

In 1955, as a consequence of the United States and the Soviet Union agreeing not to block any future applications for membership to the United Nations, the membership of the organization started to increase rapidly. With more members of the United Nations, the demands for enlargement and a more representative Council also increased. The non permanent seats in the Council were at the present time distributed according to an informal “gentlemen`s agreement” between the P5, which gave the Latin American countries two seats, and the British Commonwealth, the Middle East, Western Europe and Eastern Europe one seat each. The East European seat was, however, from time to time occupied by non East European countries, such as Greece, Turkey and the Philippines. African and Asian states pressed for a redistribution of the non-permanent seats, better in tune with the increased membership of the organization

(Bourantonis 2005: 13-14). This made the Latin American states, afraid of losing their two seats, raise the question of enlargement of the Council. In the following years, several draft resolutions concerning an increase of the non permanent seats was put forward. Especially the Latin American, African and Asian states advocated such an enlargement. However, the P5, and the Soviet Union in particular, were critical to a reform of the Council. The question concerning which regime representing China in the United Nations was an important factor in this debate. Both the nationalist Republic of China, supported by the United States and its allies, and the communist People`s Republic of China, supported by the Soviet Union, claimed to be the legitimate Chinese government and the Soviet Union refused to discuss reform of the Council before this matter was settled.

On December 13, 1963, the draft resolution that eventually succeeded was brought forward by 37 Afro-Asian states and was soon supported by the Latin American States. The draft resolution proposed an increase in the non-permanent seats from six to ten, of whom five would be drawn from African (3) and Asian (2) states, two from Latin America and the Caribbean states, two from Western Europe and others, and one from East European states.

The attitude of the P5 towards this draft resolution was at first skeptical, and the reform process stagnated for two more years. However, in August 1965, the amendments that approved the increase of the non permanent seats, were ratified by the required two-thirds of the UN member states, including all of the P5. The first reform of the Security Council was a fact.

### **4.3 The former and present distribution of non-permanent seats**

The “gentlemen`s agreement” on the distribution of the non-permanent seats was never endorsed by the General Assembly but it was nevertheless used as a guidance for the P5 concerning the distribution of non permanent seats. However, even though Africa and Asia were not given non-permanent seats in the Council, they still had a

fair chance of being elected via the British Commonwealth and the Middle East seats. The least favored region was Eastern Europe, as the General Assembly often gave this seat to states outside the region. This was looked upon with dissatisfaction by the Eastern bloc, including the Soviet Union.

The non permanent seats in the Council were, and are, distributed as shown below:

Table 2. Distribution before 1965

Before 1965	
Region:	Non-permanent seats
Latin America	2
The British Commonwealth	1
The Middle East	1
Western Europe	1
Eastern Europe	1

Table 3. Distribution after 1965

After 1965	
Region:	Non-permanent seats
Latin America	2
West Europe and others	2
Eastern Europe	1
Africa	3
Asia	2

#### 4.4 The attitudes of the P5 towards the reform

##### *The Soviet Union*

In the years leading up to the reform, the Soviet Union stated that they would never ratify amendments to the UN Charter without the participation of the communist China (the People`s Republic of China) as a full member of the United Nations and a permanent member of the Security Council (Bourantonis 2005: 16). The Soviet government also made it clear that they would not support any enlargement of the

Council that did not guarantee in writing that the East European non permanent seat would be distributed to East European states only. The Security Council, as well as the rest of the United Nations, was in these years a forum divided between East and West. The Soviet Union believed that the United States would not risk that a potential reform of the Council remained in a deadlock because of their negative stand towards the People`s Republic of China. Linking reform of the Council to the Chinese representation was therefore seen as a strategy for forcing the Western states into recognizing the People`s Republic of China.

In addition, the Soviet Union also made it clear that it would accept no amendment to the UN Charter unless the UN Secretariat was reorganized to represent three groups; the Eastern states, the Western states and the non-aligned states. The Soviet Union proposed the so called “troika proposal” which advocated a change in the office of a single Secretary-General into a collective executive consisting of three persons, one from each of the regions, and each with a right to veto the others (Bourantonis 2005: 20). However, this demand was later dropped by the Soviet Union, due to great resistance from the non-aligned states (refers to states that are not aligned formally with or against any of the major power blocs in the United Nations).

The Soviet Union was initially the P5 member, most eager to express its opposition towards the proposed enlargement. This negative attitude made reform seem unlikely. However, after China declared its support to the reform, the Soviet Union changed their attitude and in 1965 they became the first of the P5 to deposit their instruments of ratification with the United Nations, and thereby making an enlargement of the Council possible.

### *The United States*

While the Soviet Union made its negative stand against the reform public, the United States expressed support for a limited expansion of the Council. In contrast to the hard line attitude of the Soviet Union, the US attitude was considered moderate. However, as the draft resolution from 1963 was debated in the Special Political Committee, the US response was somewhat more negative. The US representative stated that it was

authorized to vote in favor only of amendments to the Charter providing for a thirteen member Council and that it had no authority to support any other proposals (Bourantonis 2005: 23). Nevertheless, this meant that the United States was prepared to vote in favor of an enlargement, and was only reluctant towards the number of seats proposed (a similar view was expressed by the United Kingdom and France).

When the draft resolution was put to a vote in the Special Political Committee, it was adopted by 96 to 11 votes with 4 abstentions. The United States and the United Kingdom were among those who abstained, even though they had declared that they would vote against the draft. However, in August 1965, after both the Soviet Union and China had expressed their support for the amendments, the United States deposited their instrument for ratification.

#### *The United Kingdom*

The United Kingdom had, together with the United States and France, expressed support for a limited enlargement of the number of non-permanent seats in the Council. However, during the debate in the Special Political Committee they took a critical stand towards a Council with more than thirteen members. For the United Kingdom it was of particular importance that if the Council were to be enlarged to fifteen members, and the seats were to be distributed according to the draft resolution, this had consequences for the British Commonwealth's seats. The new distribution of seats would, in effect, entirely remove formal Commonwealth representation from the elective seats of the Security Council (Bourantonis 2005:23). When the draft resolution was put to a vote in the Special Committee in December 1963, the United Kingdom abstained along with the United States. In August 1965, their attitude was, however, different and they deposited their instruments of ratification of the amendments together with the other permanent members.

#### *France*

Even though France for a long time had declared its support towards a limited expansion of the Security Council, it nevertheless voted against the draft resolution

when it was put to a vote in December 1963. While the United States and the United Kingdom, who in the same vote chose to abstain, explained their voting concerning the draft resolution, France did not. It was, however, assumed that France's negative vote had more to do with the proposed number of seats than with the country being against enlargement as such. Despite its initial negative attitude, France chose to join the other permanent members in ratifying the amendments in 1965.

### *China*

Due to the confusion concerning which government was the legitimate government of China, the Chinese attitude towards an enlargement of the Council, and the draft resolution proposed by the Afro-Asian and Latin American countries, was for a long time unknown. The Soviet Union claimed however that they had approached the Chinese government in order to get them to clarify their position concerning the reform. As a response to this approach, they had on 12 December 1963 received an official reply from the government which stated that the People's Republic of China favored a redistribution of the existing seats instead of an enlargement of the Council (Bourantonis 2005: 24). This statement also signaled support of the Soviet stand that an enlargement of the Council had to be seen in connection with the question of the Chinese representation in the UN. This new statement contradicted, however, a previous statement from the People's Republic of China, communicated to many of the Afro-Asian states in September 1963. In this previous statement China declared that "the question of restoring China's legitimate rights in the Council and the question of revising the UN Charter concerning the number of seats in the Security Council were two matters of an entirely different nature". Furthermore, they stated that the two matters neither should, nor needed to, be bundled together (Bourantonis 2005: 25). The day after the vote in the Special Political Committee, which ended with 96 to 11 votes (with 4 abstentions) in favor of the draft resolution, the General Assembly adopted it by a vote of 97 to 11 (also with 4 abstentions), as Resolution 1991A. The one new positive vote was from the nationalist government of Republic of China, which did not participate in the vote in the Special Political Committee. The

Resolution called on the member states to ratify the proposed amendments by September 1965. For the ratification to be valid it required all the P5 to participate. 18 December 1963, the day after Resolution 1991A was adopted in the General Assembly, the communist government of People`s Republic of China declared through a newspaper expressing government policy that;

If it proves necessary to amend the relevant articles of the UN Charter, we shall of course, in accordance with the position which we have always taken, support such amendments so that the demand of the Afro-Asian countries can really be met (Borantonis 2005: 27).

With the vote in the General Assembly and the statement in the newspaper, China became the first of the P5 to express their unconditional support to the Resolution. The first P5 member to ratify the Resolution, was however, as mentioned before, the Soviet Union.

#### **4.5 Why did the P5 agree to reform?**

After China, being the key player in the 1963 reform debate, expressed its support to Resolution 1991A, the Soviet Union`s attitude changed and it soon stated that it were prepared to agree to the amendments. In February 1965 they ratified, urging the other permanent members to do the same, which they did, in August the same year.

Had any of the P5 incentives to reject the proposed reform? If they did, according to the veto player theory, the status quo would prevail. The veto players in the reform efforts in 1965 were the same as today, namely the P5. One might argue that their status as veto players was even stronger in 1965. Only twenty years after the founding of the United Nations, the Security Council gave a more accurate picture of the power relations in the world than reflected in the Council today. The P5 could, to a varying degree, still claim their status as great powers. One might therefore ask why the P5 approved of a reform that decreased their privileged position in the Council, at a time when their status was not questioned to the extent we see today. Another argument could be that due to its short existence, the rules and behavior concerning the Council

had not had time to harden and it was therefore more flexible than seen today. At this time, the use of informal sessions was yet to be introduced and the positions of the P5 on matters treated in the Council were publicly known, and could therefore more easily become subject to critique from other UN members.

The Soviet Union was in the beginning of the process the most negative of the P5 but as mentioned, its position changed after the People`s Republic of China expressed its support to reform. As its sudden change in position was never explained in detail, one can only speculate. First, as the “gentlemen`s agreement” failed to secure a non permanent seat to the Eastern bloc, the Soviet Union was somewhat positive towards the pattern of geographical distribution, first proposed by the Latin American states. Further, the Soviet Union assumed that the question of the Chinese representation would reflect negatively on the United States, as they were the ones opposing the recognition of the government of the People`s Republic of China. By doing that, the United States made the reform of the Council impossible for the Soviet Union to accept. However, while a large number of members were in favor of solving the Chinese matter as soon as possible, the same states did not accept the connection of this matter to the matter of enlargement. There is possible to speculate whether facing this amount of resistance, especially from the Afro-Asian states, many which had friendly relations with the Soviet Union, was an important factor in what made the Soviet Union change their mind. These states were well-organized and appeared as a strong bloc advocating for Council reform. The Soviet Union`s anti-reform policy had led to a severe breach between them and the non-aligned states, especially the Afro-Asian states, and was taken as a hostile political act against them. In the light of the Cold War, the Soviet Union needed supporters in the United Nations. One could only speculate whether these factors were what in the end made the Soviet Union approve the reform. The Soviet Union certainly had incentives to keep the status quo in the Council, but it also had important incentives to permit a change.

The United States was not as eager as the Soviet Union to express its resistance towards s reform. Quite the opposite, the US stand opened up for reform; its negative attitude was related to the number of seats. As the relationship between the United



States and the Soviet Union was tense, one could ask whether the Soviet reaction to the draft resolution made the United States more positive. After all, as the Soviet Union faced anger from member states, the US stand appeared moderate and negotiable. The United States also enjoyed amiable relations with the Latin American states which were eager proponents of Council reform. Being a veto player in the Council it could certainly oppose reform. One can also assume that the United States was comfortable with the status quo and the privileges the United States achieved from it. However, as both the membership of the United Nations and the pressure for Council reform grew, the incentives to keep status quo probably decreased. A limited increase of non permanent seats in the Council posed no severe threat to the United States` position in the Council. Maybe rather the opposite, considering the Cold War and the Soviet Union`s hostile attitude towards reform.

Both the older Commonwealth states and the West European states welcomed an enlargement of the Council as it meant a broader representation from these regions. The veto players in the Council belonging to, or having relations with, these regions, the United Kingdom and France, were initially reluctant to accept an increase that opened up from a broader representation from their allies. Their reluctance is not hard to understand, what is interesting is the sudden shift in attitude. As mentioned concerning the United States, one might ask whether the combination of the Cold War, the attitude of the Soviet Union, and the need to be in line with their allies, were reasons explaining this sudden shift. An important factor is that at the time of this reform debate, the position from all the Western veto players, was not negative towards a reform in itself, but skeptical to the proposed number of seats.

China`s attitude toward the reform is perhaps the easiest to explain. As the Chinese government(s) remained quiet until 1963 one does not know their attitude while the debate was at its most intense. The Soviet Union`s interpretation of the Chinese stand proved to be wrong. With the problem concerning Chinese representation in the Council, the People`s Republic of China needed the support from its allies. As the non-aligned states had the numerical strength to press for its expulsion from the Council, the nationalist government of the Republic of China did not want to provoke them

(Bourantonis 2005: 26). The communist government of the People's Republic of China, on the other hand, also depended on the support from the African and Asian states. For these tactical reasons one can understand China's positive attitude toward Council reform. The prize for going against it would probably have been high in the long run.

#### **4.6 The explanatory power of the veto player theory**

The reform in 1965 came into force, mainly because of the combined voting and lobbying power of the expanded African, Asian and Latin American groups in the General Assembly (Leigh-Phippard 1997: 427). Why the veto players in the Security Council, the P5, did not vote against the reform is however a difficult question to answer. They all had incentives to do so, as the adding of the four non-permanent seats to some degree, did decrease their privileged position in the Council. However, although the reform to some degree increased the influence of the non-permanent members in the Council, it was at the same time the least possible change in the structure of the Council, as it did not involve an expansion of permanent seats or redistribution of the veto power. The P5's ability to prevent the Council from taking decisions would not be weakened, only the ability to get a Council resolution adopted. This ability was however affected, but only to a minor degree. Due to the increase in UN membership, imbalances in representation had become so obvious that enlargement of the Council seemed inevitable. As a rejection of the proposed reform could to an upsurge of pressures for an even more enlarged Council, the P5 appeared to consider accepting the addition of the non-permanent seats as their best option (Bourantonis 2005: 89).

As the P5 accepted the reform despite their incentives to block it, the veto player theory might not be the most suitable tool for analyzing. A theory that might be more suitable for this matter is the Theory of Communicative Rationality (Habermas 1984). This theory stresses the power of the argument in negotiations. If the arguments against reform do not have legitimacy, for example if they are based in pure self

interest, it might be difficult defending such a negative position against critique. As a consequence of that, reform might be somewhat more difficult to reject (Hernes 1999: 344). Drawing lines to the outcome of the 1965 reform efforts, one can question whether rejecting a reform in 1965 was more difficult for the P5 than today. As this was before the practice of informal consultations, the arguments being presented might have had to face the public eye in greater extent. However, this theory is only mentioned as an alternative theory that might be more suitable for analyzing the outcome in 1965, than the veto player theory. To go any further on this discussion is outside the scope of this thesis.

## **4.7 Conclusion**

The reform in 1965 succeeded despite the veto players incentives to block it. I have in this chapter outlined the P5`s reactions towards the proposed reform and discussed their actions as well as their possible reasons for not rejecting it. I have argued that even though the reform decreased the P5`s influence in the Council, this was to a minor degree. However, even though the decrease in the P5`s privileges was minor, the veto player theory`s explanatory power concerning the outcome in 1965, I have argued, is limited. One of the theory`s basic arguments is that a veto player will block a change if this is not in the veto player`s interests. In this case, the veto players accepted such a change. It could therefore be useful to apply an alternative theory, as an example on this I have proposed the theory of rational communication.



## **5 The unsuccessful reform proposals**

### **5.1 Introduction**

As the membership of the United Nations grew steadily, the demands for an even more thorough-going reform of the Council than the one in 1965 soon began to rise. In 1990, the Open-Ended Working Group on Security Council Reform was established to discuss solutions to the debate. In 1997, the chairman of the working group, Ismael Razali, submitted an elaborate reform plan, proposing an increase of nine seats, of which five would be permanent. The proposal was, however, never put to a vote.

In 2005, former Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, submitted a report proposing a comprehensive reform for the United Nations, including two alternative models for an expanded Security Council. Annan urged the member states to agree on a model and that it would be adopted by the General Assembly within the year. Neither this proposal was put to a vote and is, so far, the last of the comprehensive efforts to reform the Security Council.

In this chapter I outline the two proposals and discuss the P5's responses towards these. Furthermore I consider to what extent their behavior can be explained by the veto player theory. I review the proposal separately in chronological order, which means that I start with the Razali Plan.

### **5.2 The Razali Reform Paper**

The Razali Reform Paper, commonly known as the "Razali Plan", is one of the most coherent and important reform proposals concerning the Security Council (Bourantonis 2005: 74). In this section I first outline the main changes proposed in the reform paper. Furthermore, I review the P5's attitudes and reactions towards the proposal, in an effort to explain why the proposal did not succeed, and to what extent its failure can be explained by the veto player theory.

### **5.2.1 The course of events**

In March 1997, the then President of the General Assembly (and chairman of the Open-Ended Working Group), Ismael Razali, introduced a three-stage reform plan aiming to break the deadlock of the reform of the Security Council, after decades with discussion. The Razali Plan recommended that the Council should be enlarged with five new permanent members and four new non-permanent members. The five permanent seats were to be distributed between Africa (1), Asia (1), Latin America and the Caribbean (1), and the industrialized states (2). The non-permanent members were to be elected from Africa (1), Asia (1), Eastern Europe (1) and Latin America and Caribbean (1) (UN 1997: 7). The first stage in the plan was for the General Assembly to vote over a resolution concerning such an enlargement. This would ideally happen between June and September 1997. The selection of the specific candidate states would happen in the next stage and was scheduled to happen by 28 February, 1998. Although Japan and Germany were not mentioned by name it was clear that they were the most likely candidates from the industrialized states (Bourantonis 2005: 75). None of the new permanent members would have veto power and the current P5 would be encouraged to limit their use of the veto to concerns under Chapter VII of the Charter, which is the chapter providing for enforcement measures. In the third and final stage of this reform process the General Assembly was to vote on a resolution that implemented the two previous resolutions as Charter amendments. This was to take place no more than a week after the second resolution (ibid). For the resolutions to be valid, however, it was required that a majority of two-thirds of the states in the United Nations deposited their instruments for ratification. This majority had to include the permanent five (UN 1945, art.108)

In addition to an enlargement of the Council, the Razali Plan also included a series of modifications in the Council's working methods and procedures. This comprehensive package of reform proposals were believed to reflect the mainstream of the current reform debate and were therefore expected to be a possible place to start negotiations. The Razali Plan goes under the Mid-Twenties Option, representing a middle ground and is also similar to the majority of the proposals currently on the table.

Officially, it was not the P5 that blocked the Razali Plan. Due to severe disagreement between the different groups in the United Nations the proposal was impossible to implement. The argument, which will be accounted for below, is however that in practice, the P5 blocked the proposal by making contradictive demands. This contributed to a delay in the reform process and as an outcome of this, (among other factors), the Razali Plan was never put to a vote.

**5.2.2 The distribution of seats before and after the Razali Plan**

States from the North and West (in this particular case this also includes Eastern Europe) are currently holding 7 of the Council’s seats, 9 if one counts in the 2 Latin American seats (Fassbender 2004: 345). 4 of these seats are permanent. This leaves a total of only 6 seats to the Southern states, including China’s permanent seat.

The distribution after the Razali Plan would give Western and Northern states a total of 10 seats, 6 of them permanent. If one were to include Latin America the total would be 14 seats, 7 of them permanent. As for the Eastern and Southern states the new total of seats would be 10, including 3 permanent seats.

The distribution of seats before and after the Razali Plan is showed below:

Table 4. Distribution of seats before the Razali Plan

Before the Razali Plan			
Region:	Permanent	Non-permanent	Total
Africa	0	3	3
Asia	1	2	3
Latin America	0	2	2
Europe/ North America/ Other industrialized states	4	3	7

Table 5. Distribution of seats after the Razali Plan

After the Razali Plan			
Region:	Permanent	Non-permanent	Total
Africa	1	4	5
Asia	2	3	5
Latin America	1	3	4
Europe/ North America/ Other industrialized states	6	4	10

The Razali Plan would to some extent equalize the ascendancy that the Northern states currently holds, but not in a radical way, as these states still would have in their possession 6 of the 10 permanent seats, 7 if one count the Latin American permanent seat. Roughly one can say that the Razali Plan would give Northern states 60% of the permanent seats, and the Southern 40%, as suppose to a distribution of 80% and 20% respectively according to the current situation.

**5.2.3 The attitude of the P5 towards the Razali Plan**

*The United States*

The United States did not reject the proposal immediately although their reaction was somewhat reserved. Bill Richardson, the United States` chief diplomat at the United Nations at that time, welcomed the stage-by-stage part of the plan and repeated the United States` support for Japan and Germany as permanent members. He also took a positive attitude towards an increase of three named or rotational developing states in the Council. However, the diplomat warned that the United States would oppose any increase above a total of 20 or 21 members in the Council; more specifically he stated that the United States “had no flexibility above and beyond 20 or 21 seats on a reformed Council” (Bourantonis 2005: 76). The US support for Germany and Japan had for a long time been firm and the US ambassador in the General Assembly, Edward Gnehm (1996) referred to permanent seats for these two countries as a “sin qua non” from an American point of view. Furthermore, the United States opposed an



increase in non-permanent seats only. The United States also stated that it would support a broader representation from the development countries, though it did not express this with the same clarity as it did in their other claims (Kausikan 1997: 1). Concerning the veto, the United States simply stated that there should be no change in the “status and prerogatives of the current permanent members”. This statement was later more or less echoed by the others with permanent seats in the Council.

The United States` support for Germany and Japan could be explained by the fact that the two countries from the US point of view were regarded as both economically potent and as stable Western democracies. After the Cold War the United States had great influence, but also responsibility towards the world as the only superpower, a responsibility it was eager to share, at least economically. Japan and Germany were seen as candidates to this task. In 1995 it stated that it “could not agree to a Council enlargement that did not result in permanent membership for Japan and Germany” (Fassbender 2004: 346). This statement could also explain the US reluctance towards an enlargement in non permanent seats only.

The veto player theory`s proposition 2 (section 2.4); the absorption rule explains whether a veto player will make a difference concerning the policy stability. If the new veto player`s preferences are absorbed among the other players, the new veto player will have no effect on the winset of the status quo. It is possible that permanent membership of Germany and Japan could be seen in this respect. US firm support for Japan and Germany can to some extent be explained in a similar way. As Germany and Japan were allies of the United States, it is unlikely that their preferences on a general basis would contradict the US interests. Their possible permanent presence in the Council was not an instant threat to the US, should an enlargement succeed. This is not to say that Japan and Germany necessarily would achieve the status as new veto players. As long as the veto power of the P5 was obtained, their privileged position was ensured.

However, the Razali Plan did not advocate an enlargement of non-permanent seats only, neither did it oppose to the potential membership for Japan and Germany, in fact

it did rather the opposite. Therefore, these could not be the reasons explaining the US skepticism. The amendments from 1965 had a radical effect on the voting patterns in the Security Council. The adding of the four new seats in 1965 gave, as mentioned earlier, the opposition the opportunity to cast the seven votes necessary to defeat any resolution, both substantive and procedural and the potential of a sixth veto player was by that created. As stated earlier, the probability of seven non-permanent members rejecting a proposal all P5 votes in favor of is low. One could, however, speculate how an enlargement, as the one proposed by Ismael Razali in 1997, would affect this scenario. Seen from the United States` point of view, a broader representation of the developing world in the Council could perhaps increase the possibility of new strong coalitions functioning as veto players, and by that create more unpredictable voting patterns.

A Council of maximum 21 members (as proposed by the United States), including Japan and Germany, would do little to shift the balance between the United States and its current and potential rivals. In fact, 6 of the permanent seats would be in the possession of Northern states, at least 5 of which one could assume would be, in varying degree of course, in line with the United States and its main focuses and values. With only four more seats to distribute, there was a slim chance of a severe loss of power to the United States. Nevertheless, any enlargement of the membership in the Council would mean more opinions, discussions and considerations. In light of this, it is no mystery that the United States probably preferred the status quo, although not publically stating this.

The Razali Plan did not suggest an abolishment of the veto, but encouraged the P5 to limit their use of the veto. The Clinton administration`s response was that the United States “would oppose any solution that would infringe on the prerogatives of the current permanent members” (Fassbender 2004: 347). In 1997, when the Razali Plan was presented, the United States was the only superpower to reckon with, after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Because of its unparalleled position in the world, it had nothing to gain, only power to loose from a reform of the Council. By presenting

claims, that contradicted the Razali Plan it made sure this potential loss of power did not happen.

### *The United Kingdom*

The United Kingdom's attitudes towards the Razali Plan was similar to those of the United States, although somewhat more vague. For example the United Kingdom avoided being as specific when it came down to the number of members in the Council but made it clear that an increase of the Council's membership would have to be kept modest, and that the proposed enlargement to 24 members was considered too large. This was stated by Sir John Weston in a meeting in the Working Group March 20, 1997. The United Kingdom also supported Japan and Germany as permanent members, although it did not state this as clearly as the United States did. Instead, the United Kingdom welcomed "the wide support" to the two countries but did not explicitly say that they themselves supported them (Kausikan 1997: 2). Further, the United Kingdom pointed out the need for an enhanced representation of the developing countries but did not specify how this should be done. Thus the United Kingdom's support for the development countries was put even more vaguely.

As an enlargement of the Council would mean a relative loss of global power for the United Kingdom, its skepticism was understandable. For much of the same reasons as the United States, keeping the status quo was in the best interest for the United Kingdom. Knowing it did not enjoy the same position in the world as the United States did, the United Kingdom did not make suggestions of its own, but mainly supported the US proposal. By doing so it did, in practice, reject the Razali Plan.

### *France*

The immediate impression concerning the response of the Razali Plan was that, of the permanent five, France was the most positive, or should one say the least negative. However, a closer look shows that the response was in fact quite similar to the others. The permanent representative of France, Alain Dejammet, stated in his speech to the General Assembly on 29 October 1996 that "a little more than 20 members in the

Council should be the maximum” (Kausikan 1997: 1). Japan and Germany received the support to become permanent members of the Council. Furthermore, France called for an increase where no regional groups were left out and that secured an improved representation of the developing countries (Kausikan 1997: 3). The ambassador did not mention anything specific in his speech about whether the developing countries in the Council should be given permanency. The then president of France, Jacques Chirac, had on a previous occasion stated that the permanent members should include some large states from the south, in addition to Japan and Germany (Tan 1997: 1).

One could ask why states such as the United Kingdom and France welcomed Germany as a permanent member in the Council as this would decrease their relative position in Europe and the European Union. Earlier in the process both the United Kingdom and France rejected Germany. However, as both states knew their seats in the Council were based on past times, they were more careful than, for example, the United States in how they presented themselves. And as the United States they were eager to keep the northern ascendancy in the council. Like the United Kingdom, France had important incentives to reject the Razali Plan. And, same as the United Kingdom, it did so by following the US lead.

### *Russia*

In a speech to the General Assembly, on 29 October 1996, the representative of the Russian Federation used the phrases “a limited increase” and “a Council of around 20 members” to describe what they understood as an acceptable increase (Kausikan 1997: 1). Later, in response to the Razali Plan, Russia stated that a Security Council of 24 to 26 members was “rather a lot” (Tan 1997: 3). Contrary to the states previously mentioned, Russia did not at the time place support for Germany and Japan as permanent members on written record. Instead, it expressed support for a balanced Council with improved representation from the developing world. Whether this representation should be permanent or not was not stated.

As Russia was the only permanent member representing Eastern Europe, its lack of support to Japan and Germany is understandable as such membership would increase

the already dominant representation from the Western states. The Razali Plan meant a new seat for Eastern Europe but this seat was not a permanent one. It is not even certain that Russia wanted a potential regional rival in the Council at all. The proposed enlargement did not present Russia with any benefits, quite the contrary, it rather diminished its already existing privileges by distributing the power in the Council between more states. Therefore, just as its co-members, it rejected the proposal.

### *China*

China was the least specific of the P5 in its response to the Razali Plan and towards what kind of council it preferred. It used phrases such as “an appropriate expansion” without offering further specification. China did, however, advocate a broader representation of developing countries in a more explicit way than the other permanent members did, both in the time leading up to the Razali Plan and after. In a speech to the General Assembly, on 30 October 1996, Ambassador Wang Xuexian stated that “a reform of the Security Council must focus on redressing imbalanced regional representation” and that “no reform plan that excludes or discriminates against developing countries will ever be accepted by the general membership of the United Nations, including China” (Kausikan 1997: 3).

China presents itself as a representative of the developing states (Fassbender 2004: 346). As the Razali Plan, if not improving, but certainly not diminishing the position of Western capitalist states in the Council, one might expect China to oppose it. Even though the proposal increased the total representation of developing states, the power of the permanent members was still controlled by of the Northern (Western) states. The broad support for Japan as a new permanent member did not include China, as Japan was seen as a regional rival and an ally to the United States and the West. One could argue that of all the P5, China, as a member of the G-77, was the one that would benefit the least from the Razali Plan. The proposal did not shake the balance in the Council, it opened the possibility for Japan to become a permanent member and it decreased the power of the P5, as any enlargement would do. If this was the case, one can ask why China did not downright reject the proposal, before it could go any

further. However, as it quickly became clear that other forces in the Council would reject the proposal, China did not need to formally reject it. As the proposal would, at least to some extent, broaden the representation of the developing states, one could speculate whether a Chinese rejection could have been somewhat difficult to justify.

#### **5.2.4 The veto players preferences**

As a reform of the Security Council requires the affirmative votes of all P5, unless one or more of them choose to abstain from voting, every one of the P5 can be considered a veto player. When the Razali Plan was outlined it required the support from five veto players. The distance between the veto players were somewhat diverse, but not particularly large. The United States and the United Kingdom were quite similar in their response to the proposal. Their response was highly critical, especially when it came to the size of the Council. The United States, being the most specific of the veto players, even went as far as to threaten to exercise its veto if the Razali Plan, advocating a Council of 24 members, was put to a vote. France's position was not far from its co-members, neither was Russia's. China was more unclear, but one can assume that one reason for it not to engage in debate to such extent is because it did not need to, as the others did. The Razali Plan was therefore never a threat to its privileged status as a permanent member.

The P5, with the United States in particular, acted as agenda setters by making "take it or leave it" proposals to the other members of the United Nations (proposition 3, section 2.4). Looking at the proposal outlined in 1997 and the response from the veto players, one could ask whether the veto players in reality wanted a reform of the Council at all. Although they stated that they did and spoke up for both enlargement in permanent seats and a more representative Council, they also came up with claims that contradicted these statements. For example, if the Council was to be increased with a maximum of 6 members, 2 of which were already given to Germany and Japan, this would mean a Council where at least half of the Council, possibly a majority, represented industrialized countries in the west. That leaves only 4 remaining seats to be distributed among the world's other regions. If one takes into account that neither

Africa nor Latin America have a permanent seat in the Council, and that Asia have only 1 (hypothetically 2 with Japan), it is possible to argue that a Council with broader representation of the development countries is hard to achieve if one only accept an increase of 6 new seats.

### **5.2.5 Conclusion**

As stated in section 5.2.1, it was not the P5 that officially blocked the Razali Plan. However, looking at the responses from the P5 towards the reform paper, one can ask whether the proposal ever had a chance. Despite that the P5 did not formally reject the proposal (although the United States threatened to), they made claims, contradictory to the original proposal to the extent that one could regard them as rejections. Even if the P5 did not reject it explicitly, they did so implicitly by making their claims.

The Veto Players Theory aims to say something about whether the necessary conditions for change is present or not, and not necessary explain actual change. What it does argue, however, is that if one of the veto players have incentives to stop a proposal, the status quo will prevail. As not only one, but all of the veto players had incentives to stop the proposal, they did. Hence, the veto player theory could be considered a suitable tool for understanding the outcome in 1997; the Security Council remained at status quo.

## **5.3 The Secretary-General's reform proposal**

### **5.3.1 Introduction**

Two years ago, I declared that in my view no reform of the United Nations would be complete without reform of the Security Council. That is still my belief. The Security Council must be broadly representative of the realities of power in today's world (UN 2005 art.169).

In 2005, the year of the United Nations 60th anniversary, Kofi Annan, the Secretary-General, put forth an ambitious reform program. His report "In Larger Freedom" (2005) includes reform proposals, both on security, development, human rights and international institutions. Among these reform proposals were also two concrete models for enlargement of the Security Council. Kofi Annan urged the member states of the United Nations to consider his proposals and to adopt them at a UN Summit in September 2005. Annan's reform proposals caused heavy debate and involvement among the member states and for some time it looked as if a solution to decades of reform debate was near. However, as September came close, the Secretary-General reluctantly had to admit that the possibility of reaching an agreement in the near future was slim.

Annan's reform proposals and the draft resolutions that followed are so far the last elaborate reform proposal concerning the Security Council. In this section, I highlight the main events and the main players reacting to the models proposed by Kofi Annan. I especially concentrate on the draft resolution presented by the G-4, as the reform debate in 2005 soon centered around this specific proposal. Finally I review the stands of the P5 and consider to what extent their positions, and thereof the faith of the reform proposal, can be explained by the veto player theory.

### **5.3.2 Model A and Model B**

The proposed models of reform were taken from the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change from 2004. The report from the High-level Panel stated that a reform of the Security Council should;



- a) increase the involvement in decision-making of those who contribute most to the United Nations financially, militarily and diplomatically,
- b) bring into the decision-making process countries more representative of the broader membership, especially of the developing world,
- c) not impair the effectiveness of the Security Council,
- d) increase the democratic and accountable nature of the body (UN 2004 art. 249).

The Secretary-General supported these goals in his own report and presented the two models, referred to as Model A and Model B. Both models suggested an expansion of 9 more seats in the Council, distributed regionally between four areas, Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and America. Adding 9 new seats would increase the number of members from 15 to 24.

*Model A*

This model proposed 6 more permanent seats and 3 two-year term non-permanent seats. After adding the 9 new seats, the seats in the Council would be distributed as follows, according to Model A:

Table 6. Model A

Model A			
Region:	Permanent seats	Non-permanent seats 2 years (non renewable)	Total
Africa	2	4	6
Asia and Pasific	3	3	6
Europe	4	2	6
Americas	2	4	6

*Model B*

This model proposed no new permanent seats but created a new category of 8 four-year renewable term seats and 1 new two-year non-permanent seat. These seats would, as model A, be distributed amongst the four regions. The distribution was as follows:

Table 7. Model B

Model B				
Region:	Permanent seats	Non-permanent seats 4 years (renewable)	Non-permanent seats 2 years (non-renewable)	Total
Africa	0	2	4	6
Asia and Pasific	1	2	3	6
Europe	3	2	1	6
Americas	1	2	3	6

Neither Annans` report nor the report of the High-Level Panel took a stand concerning which of these models they preferred. The models concerned both the question of expansion and the question of membership categories. As for the veto, the reports did not say anything except that they “do not recommend any more veto powers in the Council” (UN 2004 art. 256).

As a response to the two models proposed by the Secretary-General, two major blocs took shape in the United Nations, favoring different versions of the proposed models. These rivaling blocs were the Group of Four (G-4), composed of Japan, Germany, India and Brazil, and Uniting for Consensus, which consisted of several large countries in opposition to the G-4, among them Italy, Argentina and Pakistan. While G-4 was advocating for an increase of permanent seats (Model A), the Uniting for Consensus favored an increase in non-permanent seats only (Model B). The G-4 submitted a draft resolution, proposing an enlargement of six permanent seats with veto power (this demand was later dropped), of which four would be given to the members of the G-4 and two to African states. The Uniting for Consensus group proposed to expand the Council to 25 seats, 20 of them non-permanent. During the spring of 2005 the G-4 gained most of the attention and the main focus in the reform debate soon became whether to support their draft resolution or not.

### **5.3.3 The stands of the P5**

The P5 were divided towards the reform proposal. While China and the United States were skeptical and in the end allied up in threatening to veto it, France and the United Kingdom expressed their support for the G-4 as permanent members. Russia's position was unclear. An interesting aspect of this new picture is seeing the old and the upcoming super powers teaming up in an unusual alliance to protect their positions in the Council. The United Kingdom and France on the other hand, being the two small states in the Council, supported an expansion. From this picture, clear conclusions can be drawn about the power relations in the Council in 2005.

#### *China*

Of the P5, China was the most skeptical to the proposed enlargement and the G-4 draft resolution. China's Ambassador, Wang Guangya, called the proposal "dangerous" and expressed fear that it would split the membership of the United Nations. Furthermore, he stated that the deadline set to September could not be met, as a proposal of this importance should be reached by a unanimous vote in the General Assembly and not just by the two-thirds votes required (Lederer 2005). Liu Jianchao, the spokesman of the Foreign Ministry of China, later stated that China would object to a permanent membership for Japan in the Council. Over 22 million Chinese had by then signed a grass-root campaign to keep Japan out of the Council until the state formally apologized for actions committed against China during World War II (Kahn 2005). Jianchao also expressed that in China's view, an enlargement of the Council should focus on increasing the power of development countries, rather than that of the rich industrialized countries (ibid).

In August 2005, China stated that they had reached an agreement with the United States to block the proposed enlargement (Lederer 2005).

### *The United States*

The United States stated that it needed more time to consider the proposal and opposed to what was referred to as “artificial deadlines” (Deen 2005). It also backed China’s demand that a resolution should be adopted by consensus. However, the US and Chinese demand for consensus do not find support in the UN Charter. Article 108 states that amendments to the Charter require two-thirds affirmative votes by the members of the General Assembly, including the affirmative votes of the P5. Thus, the US and Chinese demand itself would in fact require an amendment to the Charter. The two permanent members’ argument could however be interpreted as stressing the importance of an informal consensus towards the proposed enlargement, and not necessary as a demand for amendments to the present Charter.

Furthermore, the United States endorsed Japan as a permanent member and referred to the fact that Japan contributes more financially to the United Nations than France, the United Kingdom, Russia and China combined (Farley 2005b). The United States did not say anything about which other state it supported for permanent membership. However, the US Ambassador, Anne Patterson, expressed that Germany’s opposition to the US-led invasion of Iraq made it difficult for Washington to back Germany’s bid for a permanent seat (Farley 2005a). The United States also stated that it would oppose to any claims for veto power in the Council and that it could only support an enlargement of five to six new members, two of which could be permanent. Finally, in August 2005, the US Ambassador, John Bolton, stated that the United States and China had agreed to block the current proposals for an enlargement of the Security Council (Gardiner 2005).

### *Russia*

Russia’s position concerning the proposed enlargement of the Council and the G-4 resolution remained unclear for a long time. In June 2005 however, it sided with China and the United States in their efforts to delay a vote to expand the Council before the summit in September the same year. Russia later expressed support for keeping the

Council as it was, for the time being (Farley 2005b). It did not, however, threaten to block a resolution, as China and The United States did.

#### *The United Kingdom and France*

The United Kingdom and France took a joint position towards the proposal for enlargement and the G-4 resolution. Both states expressed support for the G-4 resolution and France, after the demand for veto was withdrawn, agreed to co-sponsor the enlargement measure (Heinlein 2005).

#### **5.3.4 The two alliances of veto players**

Similar to previous draft resolutions, the proposed enlargement had to be approved by two-thirds of the General Assembly to be adopted and then the new permanent members had to be elected by a similar two-thirds of the votes. Finally, a two-thirds majority of the member states in the General Assembly had to deposit their instruments of ratification, this majority including the P5 (Lederer 2005). Whereas the P5 had no veto power in the first two stages of the process, they had total control over the last, and most difficult, stage. Similar to the other reform proposals, each one of the P5 had the position as a veto player.

Eight years earlier, when the Razali Reform Paper was proposed, the P5 all had similar responses. The United States was the most specific and the rest of the P5, with the United Kingdom and France in particular, followed its lead. China's position to the proposal was the most unclear. Although the P5 welcomed the proposal, their demands and modifications made it impossible for the proposal to survive. The strategy in 1997 seemed to be to let the proposal die in a blur. In 2005, the strategy was different. Contrary to the Razali Proposal, the P5 this time expressed themselves in plain words. The United States and China opposed the proposal, the United Kingdom and France supported it, and Russia's position was somewhat unclear, but leaned towards rejection.

According to the veto player theory, when the distance between the veto players is large, change is hard to achieve. Concerning this proposal the distance was large, favoring those opposing change, namely the United States and China.

China's fear of its regional rival, Japan, gaining a stronger voice in the United Nations was reason enough to oppose the proposed enlargement. In addition to being one of the largest contributors to the organization financially, Japan was also a close ally to the United States and had US support in their efforts towards permanency. In addition, Japan represented Asia, but shared a lot of similarities with the Western world, which made Japan an obvious candidate for any enlargement of the Council. It would be difficult to find neutral arguments to reject Japan's bid for permanency. Although China gave historical reasons for its opposition to Japan as a permanent member, China's main argument for rejecting the proposal was that it was "dangerous" for the United Nations as it split the organization into blocs. Therefore a consensus was needed, a consensus that was unlikely in the near future. Another argument against Japan and the rest of the G-4 was that by giving permanent seats to this group, one did not achieve a broader representation of developing states. The Chinese arguments against the enlargement were presented as a protection of the United Nations and its unity and as a fight for the rights of the developing states.

However, China did not go out of its way to make the impression that the rejection was not in its own self interest. One can speculate if this lack of effort can be tracked down to the country's growing power. China emerged as an upcoming super power, which probably made it secure of its status in the Council and its right to control the agenda. China, being the most powerful member of the G-77, had a lot of supporters in the General Assembly. One can speculate whether any of its group members would have dared go against China's will in the Assembly. If not, the proposal had a good chance of being killed already at the first vote. As noted, the P5 had no veto power in the first and second votes, only in the third where the proposals were to be ratified. If China had the power to control the agenda already in the first round, it would qualify as a powerful agenda setter, a role usually associated with the United States.

The United States first expressed its support for Japan, but as it came close to a vote, it teamed up with China to block Annan's enlargement proposal. The United States, the P1 in the Council, was used to be able to control the agenda in the Security Council, and to some extent the United Nations as a whole, after the ending of the Cold War. However, the Council rejected the US efforts to get a resolution allowing the invasion in Iraq in 2003 and one can ask whether the United States' control over the Security Council was in decline. And if the United States had trouble controlling a council of fifteen members, a council of twenty-four would certainly not be any easier to handle. These are, however, only speculations. What is clear is that even though the United States was a close ally to Japan, the status quo was still preferable, as any other outcome would diminish its power. Having another ally in the Council would never outweigh that. Another aspect is that even though the United States sided with China (and Russia) in this matter, it is questionable if the two states would be able to agree on whom to include as permanent members, even if they were to agree on an enlargement. As the United States' Western allies, the United Kingdom and France, supported the proposal, one might ask how comfortable it was for the United States to side with the Eastern powers in this matter. However, under the Bush administration, the United States' relationship with the United Nations was a rather negative one. This may have affected the United States' will and flexibility to improve the organization. One can only speculate if its position would have been different today, under the present Obama administration.

The United Kingdom and France supported the proposal, even though an enlargement of the Council would mean a decrease of their power. However, the Security Council reflects the world as it was in 1945, and the power relations among the states have changed since then. The United States had since 1990 been the only super power, but in later years China have emerged as a potential rival. The fact that their power in the world had declined might explain the UK and French' positive attitude towards the G-4 proposal. Another aspect is that as members of the European Union, it might be difficult to reject support to Germany, one of the most powerful states in the EU. The United Kingdom and France also expressed their support to Germany in the debate

concerning the Razali Plan, the United Kingdom in somewhat unclear words. In 1997, however, neither the United Kingdom nor France stated that they would vote in favor of such a resolution. This could be interpreted as the European states' support for Germany as a permanent member was on the increase. As the United States kept its power and China increased its own, the European influence in the Council was in decline. In that respect, more allies in the Council were maybe considered a strengthening of their own positions, as well as a strengthening of the EU's position. In addition it could serve as a defense against other member states questioning their right to a permanent seat in the Council. On the other hand, as mention before, granting Germany a permanent seat in the Security Council might increase the country's influence, also in the European Union. One can question whether this was preferable to the United Kingdom and France. As it early became clear that at least one of the P5, China, and maybe also the United States, would reject the proposal, it is possible to question whether the UK and French support for Germany were sincere. As their fellow P5 members opposed to the reform proposal, supporting Germany was never a threat to the European states' positions in the Council, as the proposal in practice was already blocked.

One can argue that China and the United States blocked the proposed enlargement because they already were great powers, both within and outside the United Nations. An enlargement of the Council could never increase their power, only decrease it. To them, the status quo was therefore preferable to any other option. The United Kingdom and France on the other hand, could perhaps strengthen their positions in the Council by taking a more flexible line towards an enlargement. One can argue that while the status quo was clearly preferred by the great powers, it is possible that the small powers might favor an adjustment of this status. However, according to the veto player theory, if one of the veto players decides to block the proposed change, the status quo will prevail. Similar to 1997, the status quo prevailed in 2005.



### **5.3.5 Conclusion**

In 2005, the veto players disagreed in their response to the reform proposal. The distance between the players had increased and two of them actively warned that they would veto the proposed enlargement. Contrary to 1997, the veto players this time played a more active part in blocking the reform proposal. Although the veto player theory can explain the US and Chinese positions towards Annan's proposal, it is questionable if it can explain the UK and French support for the G-4 draft resolution. As an increase in permanent seats would decrease their power in the Council, it is somewhat unclear why the United Kingdom and France chose to support such an enlargement. However, as discussed in section 5.3.4, there could be other reasons for the European states' support of the draft resolution.

The veto player theory can be applied as a useful tool for explaining the outcome in 2005. The theory does not, however, explain all the factors in the reform process leading up to this outcome.



## 6 Conclusion

The reform process of the most powerful organ in the United Nations, the Security Council, is in a deadlock. Decades of debate, criticism and several proposals for change have not lead to a solution. My aim in this thesis has been to consider how the veto powers in the Council have affected the reform process in the three chosen cases, and to discuss to what extent the outcomes can be explained by the veto player theory. The veto player theory argues that if any of the veto players have an incentive to block a change of the status quo, the status quo will prevail.

In 1965, as a consequence of the quest for reform, four non-permanent seats were added to the Security Council. The Council was thus expanded from 11 to 15 members. The reform was largely due to the combined lobbying and voting power of the Non-Aligned states, which demanded a broader geographical representation in the Council (Leigh-Phippard 1998: 427). The P5 at first opposed (in varying degree) such an enlargement, as it meant a decrease of their power. However, in the end, all P5 deposited their instruments for ratification of the amendments to the articles 23 and 27 of the UN Charter, which made such an enlargement possible. The 1965 reform is considered the only major reform of the Security Council (Daws 1998: 415).

In 1997, the chairman of the Open-Ended Working Group on Security Reform, Ismael Razali, submitted one of the most coherent reform proposals in the history of reforming the Council. The Razali Plan proposed an enlargement of the Council to a total of 24 seats, whereas ten would be permanent. This time however, the reform efforts did not succeed. The members of the United Nations did not manage to agree and although the P5 did not reject the plan, their demands soon made it clear that the proposal was not going to be accepted.

In 2005, Secretary-General Kofi Annan highlighted the importance of a Council reform in his report "In Larger Freedom". In Annan's report two models for an expanded Council were outlined, known as Model A and Model B. Inspired by these models, the reform debate again flared up and new blocs of states were established. The most active of them was the G-4, advocating permanent seats for India, Japan,

Germany and Brazil in addition to two African countries yet to be decided. Neither this effort to reform managed to succeed however, due to disagreement amongst member states and resistance from members of the P5. While the United Kingdom and France supported the G-4 proposal, the United States and China threatened to veto it. The proposal never reached a vote in the General Assembly, and the Secretary-General reluctantly admitted that the efforts to reform the Security Council had yet again failed.

## **6.1 Main findings**

This thesis has led to the following main conclusions:

Firstly, concerning the reform in 1965, the veto player theory might not be the most suitable tool for explaining the veto players' shift in positions towards the reform. The empirical evidence contradicts the theory's argument that if any of the veto players have incentives to block a proposed change, the status quo will prevail. However, as the reform in 1965 involved only a minor decrease in the P5's power, it is important not to read too much into their acceptance of this reform. The P5 are, without a doubt, still the most powerful members of the Security Council. I have, however, suggested that it might be more fruitful to apply a different theoretical approach in order to explain the outcome in 1965, in which the theory of rational communication could be a possible approach.

Secondly, although the veto player theory to some extent lacks explanatory power concerning the 1965 reform, I have argued that it is a useful tool for explaining the veto powers' reactions and the outcome of the reform debate in 1997 and 2005. As these reform proposals involved a decrease in the veto players' power, the P5, directly and indirectly, made efforts to block the proposed changes of the status quo.

Concerning the Razali Plan, I have argued that even though the P5 were not the ones officially blocking the proposed reform, their demands contradicted the original reform proposal to such a degree that this could be considered a rejection. In 2005, the

P5 were divided in their positions towards Annan`s proposal. The United Kingdom and France expressed their support for the G-4 as permanent members, while the United States and China threatened with exercising the veto. However, the veto player theory argues that it is sufficient for the maintaining of the status quo that one of the veto players have incentives to block a change of the status quo. The Chinese and US opposition to this proposal was therefore sufficient for the status quo to prevail.

Despite the lack of explanatory power regarding the 1965 reform process, applying the veto player theory in these different cases illustrate the main reason why reform of the Security Council seems impossible: If only one of the powerful P5 is not willing to change the status quo, reform is not likely to happen at all.



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