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**EXPLAINING OUTCOMES OF REFORM PROPOSALS IN THE UN SECURITY
COUNCIL: A NEOREALIST APPROACH**

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Abstract

The composition of the UN Security Council reflects the distribution of power in 1945. There were many attempts in the history of the UN to change the working methods and extend the membership of the Council. The only successful reform occurred in the 1960s and after that all the reform proposals failed. This topic is not entirely explored by IR theories and I claim that neorealism is the most relevant choice to explain the outcomes of different reform processes. The change in the distribution of power is important, but the change in the interest of great powers and groups of states had the greatest impact on the outcomes of reform proposals. I show causal explanations through process tracing between events in the three historical cases of reform endeavors (1963–1965, 1990s and 2003–2005) in order to show the relevance of neorealism and map out the answers to the research question: what are the causes, factors and circumstances that led to failure or success of a reform attempt in the Security Council? Many UN member states started to use representation as power when they formed large groups around their common interest. I conclude that institutional change in the Council is more likely to occur, when the interest of great powers and/or the interest of large groups of states change.

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Introduction

“Excellencies, we have come to a fork in the road. This may be a moment no less decisive than 1945 itself, when the United Nations was founded.”¹ (Kofi Annan)

These were Kofi Annan’s famous words in 2003 when he launched his initiative of “radical reform” of the United Nations.² Nowadays there is only one universal organization in the world, which is the UN with its 193 member states. Since its creation, there has always been a debate about the possible change in the working methods and composition of the main organs, first and foremost, the Security Council. The Council seems to be a timeless institution at least from the perspective of its five permanent members (P5). The United States of America (US), the Russian Federation, the People’s Republic of China, the United Kingdom (UK) and France, the winning coalition of World War II, have veto power over all decisions in the organization (decisions “shall be made by an affirmative vote of nine members including the concurring votes of the permanent members”).³ But there are non-permanent members in the Council as well elected on the basis of “contribution to the international peace and security” and on “equitable geographical distribution.”⁴ This body should reflect and represent the whole membership of the world community; however, it depicts the circumstances and distribution of power in 1945. Since the number of member states started to grow in 1955, there has always been a desire to reform the Council. Among several reform proposals and attempts from various sources, only one can be found which was

¹ The Secretary-General, Address to the General Assembly, New York, 23 September 2003, Source: <http://www.un.org/webcast/ga/58/statements/sg2eng030923.htm>, Access: 31.01.2013, 15:53

² Simon Maxwell: *How to Help Reform Multilateral Institutions: An Eight-Step Program for More Effective Collective Action*. Global Governance 11 (2005), p. 415

³ Vaughan Lowe, Adam Roberts, Jennifer Welsh, Dominik Zaum (eds.): *The United Nations Security Council and War, The Evolution of Thought and Practice since 1945*. Oxford University Press, New York, 2008, pp. 4–6

⁴ Charter of the United Nations, Article 23, Source: <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/intro.shtml>, Access: 29.01.2013, 21:10

successfully passed and ratified in 1963–1965, when the number of non permanent seats was extended from six to ten.⁵ All the other efforts to change the working methods (rules of decision-making) or composition of the Council have been failures.

Officially launched changes in international organizations are more or less outcomes of a well-established policy recommendation and almost always come from the desire of the majority of the membership.⁶ This thesis aims at investigating the causes, factors and circumstances of possible success and failure in the field of reforms and changes in the UN Security Council as a unique and important international organ tasked with governing the world order. The UN is an exceptional organization, which means that it is not comparable to any other organizations, because of its size and scope. Therefore the findings of the thesis can be used for possible policy explanations only within the UN.

However, it is still a good case to test existing theories of international relations. In the first chapter I show that international relations theories do not really tackle this question. There are some theoretical works about it, but they concentrate mainly on the latest, albeit greatest reform effort in the 2000s. The majority of the research on this issue is descriptive, with little theoretical explanation. There are theoretical frameworks that try to explain changes and reforms in international organizations in general. I claim that neorealism can explain both success and failure neatly over time in the history of the Council. I give a succinct overview about alternative explanations (neoliberal institutionalism, principal-agent theory and norm entrepreneurship) and show that all of them are less applicable to the case of Council reform attempts than neorealism. Then I formulate my neorealist hypothesis about the possibility of change, reform and the causes that leads to them in order to be able to test it on the three cases of Council reforms. I apply the ideas of two very important scholars from the

⁵ Natalino Ronzitti: *The Reform of the UN Security Council*. Istituto Affari Internazionali, 2010, Source: <http://www.iai.it/pdf/DocIAI/iai1013.pdf>, Access: 07.05.2013, 09:51, p. 4

⁶ Edward C. Luck: *Blue Ribbon Power: Independent Commissions and UN Reform*. International Studies Perspectives 1, 2000, p. 95

neorealist field of international relations: John Mearsheimer and Joseph Grieco. They put emphasis on the importance of the distribution of power and capabilities,⁷ and the concept of relative and absolute gains.⁸ I use the method of process tracing of the connection between the most prominent reform campaigns in the Council's history and their outcomes in order to show that there always were causal relations between events and circumstances that led to success or failure of a reform proposal in the Council. On the basis of the findings I provide evidence that the neorealist hypothesis is viable and can explain real world events. I found that maybe the distribution of power matters, – as predicted by many neorealist scholars – the interest of great powers and the aggregate interest of large groups of states are much more important when it is about the outcome of reform attempts in the Security Council.

The second part of the thesis is divided into three separate chapters. In the second chapter, the reform of 1963 is discussed, the only case when the membership of the Council was extended in its most successful reform effort. By that time, the membership of the UN had doubled and there was a pressure on the P5 to extend. In that sense representation in the UN can be seen as “power of the less powerful.” The working methods and the veto power of the P5 remained unchanged. With the addition of four new non-permanent seats, the relative gains of the P5 deteriorated only very little, so the expansion was not risky, but its symbolic importance was big. In the third chapter I elaborate on the failed attempts to reform the Council in the 1990s. In this period a large number of proposals were made, some of which were quite serious and gained much attention. Individual states or groups of states and distinguished persons dedicated time and effort to make a change in the composition and working methods of the Council. The most important document was proposed in 1997 and known as the Razali Plan after its drafter, Razali Ismail who was the President of the General Assembly that year. The effect of the Razali Plan on the whole UN membership is also

⁷ Mearsheimer (1994/95, 1995)

⁸ Grieco (1988), Grieco, Powell, Snidal (1993)

important, because it facilitated the formation of interest groups around Council reform. In the fourth chapter the biggest reform attempt in the UN's history is addressed, which was not merely about the Security Council, but the whole structure and functioning of the UN between 2003 and 2005. The role of initiator was played by the then Secretary-General Kofi Annan who was highly enthusiastic about the reform of the UN. There was a heated debate about the necessity and possibility of such a great overhaul. A High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change was established and it made more than a hundred recommendations about the change of the UN, including Council reform. The initiative, however, failed in 2005 at the World Summit, when the heads of state and government refused to vote on the well-prepared recommendations about a more efficient UN.

By means of neorealist theoretical explanations I show that the outcomes were not surprising for certain reasons and in the conclusion I provide with some policy implications and circumstances to be taken into account when considering change and reform of the Security Council.

1.1 Definition of reform process and change in the UN Security Council

Reform is extremely slow and cumbersome in the case of the UN, because according to Article 108 of the UN Charter, any kind of amendment of the Charter “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.”⁹ Thus even the smallest institutional change requires Charter amendment, so not just the P5, but the whole membership of the UN can block a change.

There is a debate about the contentious relationship between legitimacy and effectiveness.¹⁰ It is said that the Council is not entirely legitimate, because it does not represent the whole membership – either geographically, or on the basis of financial contributions, and contributions to the maintenance of international peace and security, as stipulated in Article 23 of the UN Charter.¹¹ However, increasing the number of seats in the Council (permanent, non-permanent or both) would slow down or maybe even impede the decision-making. This is the biggest dilemma of the reform process, because the key question has never been “what” or “why,” but “how” to reform the Council.¹² Now there are fifteen members of the Security Council that should reflect and represent the whole membership; but the Council depicts the circumstances of 1945. However, even if enhancing legitimacy might impede effectiveness, it is still really important, so well-formulated and timely reform attempts should improve both at the same time.

⁹ Charter of the United Nations, Article 108, Source: <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/intro.shtml>, Access: 29.01.2013, 21:10

¹⁰ Thomas G. Weiss: *Overcoming the Security Council Reform Impasse. The Implausible versus the Plausible*. Dialogue on Globalization, N° 14 / January 2005, Occasional Papers, New York, ISBN 3-89892-343-6, pp. 4–5

¹¹ Charter of the United Nations, Article 23, Source: <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/intro.shtml>, Access: 29.01.2013, 21:10

¹² Maxwell (2005) p. 415

In the case of the Security Council I define change as change in the composition of the Council (expansion of the membership) and change in its working methods. In the working methods the most important change would concern the veto power of the P5, but this has never occurred. Change concerning representativeness (composition) is expected to be seen by neorealists as well, because they predict reforms in international institutions to reflect the changes in the distribution of power,¹³ as I show it in the theoretical framework section. Ironically, after the systemic change, at the beginning of the 1990s institutional change did not happen in the Council.

The outcome of a reform attempt can be change or continuity. In that sense, change (when a reform happens) is regarded as success, while continuity (when change does not happen) does not necessarily refer to failure (because the nature of change – being it negative or positive – depends on the individual opinion of states), but for the sake of simplicity I refer to continuity as failure. Apart from this, the “non-acceptance” of a well-prepared reform proposal is definitely a failure for its drafters. In the cases I state that a reform happens, if change in the working methods and/or composition of the Council occurs. Change and reform are almost synonyms in the thesis, although I refer to reform as the concrete case of change, as the tangible embodiment of an idea of change in the form of a proposal. As Edward Luck describes it, reforms are “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.”¹⁴ So reform is about how to make the Council more representative and effective to better reflect the current distribution of power in the international system.

¹³ Waltz (1979), Mearsheimer (1994/94)

¹⁴ Dimitris Bourantonis: *The History and Politics of UN Security Council Reform*. Routledge, 2005, p. 1

1.2 Research Question and Importance

Building on historical-empirical facts, I apply the neorealist theoretical framework to map out the possible answers to the question: What are the factors, causes and circumstances that led to both the failures and success of reform processes in the United Nations Security Council? It is worth answering this question, because it can lead to possible generalizations about institutional changes in the Council, and it can enhance the understanding of the functioning of this body.

In spite of the expertise of policymakers as initiators of change, success has never been guaranteed. I aim at discovering the role of states, their interest and power in the field of reforms and changes in the Security Council. I choose the Council to examine because it is the most contentious organization due to its obsolete composition and working methods. There have been many reasons and impetuses to change this very important body, however, little or actually nothing has been achieved since 1963. It is worth mapping out historically why that reform happened, and perhaps events in the past can show what should be done in order to reach a consensus, or an agreement which is close to that. With the help of the neorealist framework, I show why there have been only one successful and several unsuccessful reform efforts in the case of the Council. The other theories that try to explain institutional change and enhancement of cooperation in international organizations ignore important features of world politics, like the distribution of power, relative gains and state interest. It is obvious that power realities and interests have been the main facilitators or obstacles to any kind of change. I demonstrate that over time the outcomes of all the reform attempts can be explained by neorealist arguments. In the existing neorealist theoretical literature it is stated that change in the distribution of power is the main source of institutional change.¹⁵ But in the case of the Council it does not fully stand, because after the systemic change of 1990 there was not any

¹⁵ Waltz (1979), Mearsheimer (1994/94)

change in the institutional arrangement of the Council. The more important in the history of the Council was the change in the interest of great powers and large groups of states.

It is important to deal with the Security Council, because it is one of the most fundamental international bodies in the field of the maintenance of international peace and security. There is, however, a *cliché* in the realist literature that international institutions do not matter that much, or at all. For example in 1983 President Ronald Reagan reacted to a General Assembly resolution which condemned the intervention in Grenada that it “didn’t upset his breakfast at all.”¹⁶ Since the end of the Cold War, there have been many changes in the world, but the Council and some UN member states too, have neglected the necessity of change in the Council itself. The main issue is that the extension of Council membership would change the decision-making capacity of the organ, which would be important, but could be dangerous at the same time, if it hindered effectiveness.

I argue that if the membership of the UN is ready to accept power realities, then there could be a modest and incremental change. As Thomas G. Weiss puts it, there is a need for “evolutionary, not revolutionary, change” and praises the little steps that were achieved in transparency, but notes that there is no sign for Charter amendments.¹⁷ He says that the improvement in transparency in the decision-making (inclusion of non-members into meetings) was more important and successful than attempts aiming at formal changes. So this slow, evolutionary change is in progress, but it is far from Charter amendment.

¹⁶ Erik Voeten: *Why no UN Security Council reform? Lessons for and from institutionalist theory*. in: Dimitris Bourantonis, Kostas Ifantis and Panayotis Tsakonas (eds.): *Multilateralism and Security Institutions in an Era of Globalization*, Routledge, 2008 p. 296

¹⁷ Thomas G. Weiss: *The Illusion of UN Security Council Reform*. *The Washington Quarterly*, 26:4, Autumn 2003, p. 154

1.3 Literature Review

There is a considerable amount of literature discussing the topic of the reform of the United Nations and the Security Council. The majority of those works are mainly descriptive, historical accounts without major theoretical contribution. There are not many authors who deal with the Council theoretically and even fewer scholars who take neorealist framework into account. In addition, those who use realist arguments concentrate particularly on the latest effort of reforming the UN in 2003–2005. There are also works focusing on the reform attempts from a neoliberal institutionalist angle, which is not surprising, because international institutions have always been more connected to this theoretical realm. But neorealism is also a general rational choice theory and it is hard to find a work that deals with all the reform attempts in the history and applies neorealist framework at the same time. Therefore this thesis seeks to fill in this gap.

In the literature review I show the achievements and shortcomings that already can be found in the existing literature about alternative theoretical explanations. In addition to neoliberalism, I explore the explanatory power of two other approaches, principal-agent theory and norm entrepreneurship. Neorealist works are discussed in the theoretical framework section.

Dimitris Bourantonis has written extensively on the topic of Security Council reform. He has written several books and articles about this issue, notably *The History and Politics of UN Security Council Reform*, a succinct historical description of the reform attempts of the Council since 1945.¹⁸ Bourantonis claims in the introduction of that book, that his intention is to give an evaluation of historical development of the debates in the history of

¹⁸ Bourantonis (2005) pp. 1–2

Council reform and he does not deal with theory in the book.¹⁹ But still, the volume is very much appreciated because of its clear explanations.

There is a contentious and contradictory relationship between legitimacy and effectiveness in the case of the Council reform. If legitimacy is increased, effectiveness will deteriorate. This thesis was clearly articulated by Ian Hurd. He argues that the relationship between legitimacy and Council reform is a chain of four linked steps.²⁰ First, inequality is inherent in the Council because of its composition and working methods which leads to a lack of legitimacy.²¹ Second, this lack of legitimacy reduces the effectiveness of the Council as a whole, because for international organizations legitimacy is “a crucial element of their corporate existence.”²² The third step offers that a change in the membership would ameliorate the legitimacy and would lead to the fourth step, which is an increase in effectiveness.²³ Legitimacy has special importance, because it is said to increase the power of the Council, so it cannot be neglected.²⁴ Thus Hurd provides a good explanation via causal paths how to make the Council work better, but he neglects the interest inherent in state interactions.

Liberal theories embody the tradition of optimism and the possibility of progress.²⁵ Liberalism is meliorist; therefore it believes that human beings, political arrangements and social institutions can be corrected and improved.²⁶ This meliorist legacy of the liberal tradition leads to the concept of change. Change is an important concept in liberal

¹⁹ Bourantonis (2005) pp. 1–2

²⁰ Ian Hurd: *Myths of Membership: The Politics of Legitimation in UN Security Council Reform*. Global Governance 14, 2008, p. 202

²¹ Hurd (2008) pp. 202–203

²² Hurd (2008) pp. 202–203

²³ Hurd (2008) pp. 202–203

²⁴ Hurd (2008) pp. 202–203

²⁵ Tim Dunne: *Liberalism*. in: John Baylis and Steve Smith (eds.): *The Globalization of World Politics*. An Introduction to International Relations, Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 163

²⁶ Edwin van de Haar: *Classical Liberalism and International Relations Theory*. Hume, Smith, Mises, and Hayek. Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, p. 2

institutionalism, because it is possible to change the world via establishing international organizations and enforcing international rules and norms.²⁷

Neoliberal institutionalists, like Robert O. Keohane have a less idealistic approach to change when note that change can be explained in rationalistic theories “by changes in opportunity costs at the margin.”²⁸ Similarly Andrew Moravcsik argues that liberalism can depict historical change in the nature of international politics while other theories lack this capability, so this is one of the special assets of liberal approaches.²⁹ In neoliberal institutionalism international institutions can stabilize the system and manage most of the global and regional changes in the world without doubt.³⁰ It is noteworthy that both neorealism and neoliberal institutionalism accept the presence of international institutions in the international system, however they regard their role in the system differently, and this is the main source of disagreement between the two theoretical traditions. Mearsheimer argues that neorealists think of international institutions as merely intervening variables.³¹ In that sense, they do not have a significant effect on state behavior. On the other hand, neoliberal institutionalists conceive of these institutions as independent variables.³² Neoliberals believe that international organizations have an existence independent of state interests and that they can even change the intention of states via mutually beneficial cooperation.

According to neoliberals, the biggest obstacle to inter-state cooperation is cheating, because states are self-interested entities and concerned with short-term goals.³³ But

²⁷ van de Haar (2009) p. 143

²⁸ Robert O. Keohane: *International Institutions: Two Approaches*. International Studies Quarterly, Vol. 32, No. 4 (Dec., 1988), p. 390

²⁹ Andrew Moravcsik: *Taking Preferences Seriously: A Liberal Theory of International Politics*. International Organization, Vol. 51, No. 4, 1997, p. 535

³⁰ John Gerard Ruggie: *Multilateralism: the anatomy of an institution*. International Organization, 46, 3, Summer 1992, p. 561

³¹ John J. Mearsheimer: *The False Promise of International Institutions*. International Security, Winter 1994/95 (Vol. 19, No. 3), p. 13

³² Mearsheimer (1994/95) p. 7

³³ Steven L. Lamy: *Contemporary mainstream approaches: neo-realism and neo-liberalism*. in: John Baylis and Steve Smith (eds.): *The Globalization of World Politics. An Introduction to International Relations*, Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 190

institutions can lower the likelihood of cheating, because there are rules to obey, and institutions have the tool for punishment of defecting; therefore the system needs institutions to function more effectively.³⁴ States are more interested in the gains they get from cooperation (absolute) than in the amount of others' gains from cooperation relative to their own.³⁵ Relative gains are less important than absolute gains in the neoliberal framework.³⁶ This is the main problem with neoliberal institutionalism. In the case of the Security Council, relative gains (as the goal of state interest) have always been the most important hindrance to change. In addition, this theoretical framework has not much to say about the distribution of power which is also crucial in the history of the Council, since the organ reflects the distribution of power in 1945 and it determines the attitude of great powers.

Jan Klabbers writes about the reform efforts in the Council, and institutional change. Klabbers argues directly in his first sentence that “human beings devise institutions” to allocate goods “whenever there are goods to be allocated.”³⁷ He elaborates the basic liberal argument that creating an institution means the most apparent way to prevent abuse.³⁸ Klabbers's chapter is a very good liberal analysis of institutional change in general and he also addresses the dilemma of legitimacy and effectiveness. However, he explicitly claims that power distribution is not as important as the criterion that “people in responsible positions behave responsibly.”³⁹ Thus Klabbers overestimates the importance of individuals on institutions.

Aris Alexopoulos and Dimitris Bourantonis also address the legitimacy-effectiveness debate and argue that there are types of reform that can enhance decision

³⁴ van de Haar (2009) p. 144

³⁵ Lamy (2001) p. 190

³⁶ Dunne (2001) p. 176

³⁷ Jan Klabbers: *Reflections on the politics of institutional reform*. in: Horst Fischer and Peter G. Danchin (eds.): *United Nations Reform and the New Collective Security*. Cambridge University Press, New York, 2010, p. 76

³⁸ Klabbers (2010) p. 76

³⁹ Klabbers (2010) p. 78

capacity while increasing the number of the members.⁴⁰ They demonstrate their quantitative analysis about the ideal location of preferences in decision-making games, and in that sense the key element in Council reform is the location of preferences regarding the status quo, not the number of players.⁴¹ They give a highly interesting analysis about the divergence of preferences and prove that the lower the GDP per capita in a country, the less likely that it will support the use of force.⁴² So in authorizing peacekeeping operations and military interventions, developed countries would not use their veto power, therefore it is not dangerous to extend the Council with them. Thus the enlargement with Germany and Japan would not change the decision-making capacity, because they are developed countries, but it would be likely to change with the addition of Brazil, Egypt or India which have a lower GDP per capita average.⁴³ Apart from this, Alexopoulos and Bourantonis deal too much with prospective members and overlook the interest of the present members, who can never be sure about the preferences of the others.

Neoliberal institutionalism is closely related to principal-agent theory, which is a possible way to explain change in international organizations too. This approach is embedded in agency theory, which “is directed at the ubiquitous agency relationship, in which one party (the principal) delegates work to another (the agent), who performs that work.”⁴⁴ The theory belongs to the rational choice realm, where decisions and behavior are subjected to self-interest and claims that information between the principal and the agent is distributed asymmetrically.⁴⁵ Principals (mainly states) delegate not just work, but also some authority to

⁴⁰ Aris Alexopoulos and Dimitris Bourantonis: *The reform and efficiency of the UN Security Council, A veto players analysis*. in: Dimitris Bourantonis, Kostas Ifantis and Panayotis Tsakonas (eds.): *Multilateralism and Security Institutions in an Era of Globalization*, Routledge, 2008, p. 306

⁴¹ Alexopoulos and Bourantonis (2008), p. 309

⁴² Alexopoulos and Bourantonis (2008), p. 314

⁴³ Alexopoulos and Bourantonis (2008), p. 316

⁴⁴ Kathleen M. Eisenhardt: *Agency Theory: An Assessment and Review*. *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 1989, p. 58

⁴⁵ Eisenhardt (1989) pp. 63–64

an agent (mainly international organizations) “without renouncing this authority.”⁴⁶ From the 1970s onwards studies within the principal-agent framework were addressing initially problems in the private sector but later on also in the public sector, like bureaucracy behavior.⁴⁷ Barry M. Mitnick argues that agency theory “seeks to model social relationships of ‘acting for.’”⁴⁸ In that sense agents are acting for principals, so change is more likely when international organizations thoroughly prepare it for the benefit of the principals (states). In the case of the Council, the principals are the fifteen member states and the agent is the UN or the Security Council. However, this approach fails to take into consideration that the principals are not equal. The P5 is the main (if not the only) driving force in the decision-making, therefore the principal-agent theory cannot fully explain the functioning of and change in the Council, because it neglects the nature of gains distributed among principals and variations in their power.

Principal-agent theory can be connected to norm entrepreneurship to some extent, because it is about the role of an agent (here the Secretary-General). Norm entrepreneurship comes from the broader theoretical framework of constructivism. The role of the Secretary-General can be essential in the process of change in the United Nations. However, it is not based on “calculations of interest based on fix preferences” or material capabilities, but on social relationships.⁴⁹ Social constructivism has provided a major criticism to neorealism and neoliberalism for decades.⁵⁰ In constructivism, norms are particularly important, because they constrain behavior, and the identity of actors can form their interests, thus “agent and structure are mutually constitutive.”⁵¹ Norm entrepreneurs are actors who can mobilize

⁴⁶ Bob Reinalda: *Routledge history of international organizations: from 1815 to the present day*. Routledge, London, 2009, p. 8

⁴⁷ Jan-Erik Lane: *New public management*. London, New York, Routledge, 2000, p. 132

⁴⁸ Barry M. Mitnick: *Regulation and the Theory of Agency*. Review of Policy Research; Vol. 1 Issue 3, 1982, p. 442

⁴⁹ Ian Johnstone: *The Secretary-General as norm entrepreneur*. in: Simon Chesterman (ed.): *Secretary or General? The UN Secretary-General in World Politics*. Cambridge University Press, 2007, p. 125

⁵⁰ Johnstone (2007) p. 124

⁵¹ Johnstone (2007) p. 125

support for a norm, which is to be internalized.⁵² According to Article 98 and 99 of the UN Charter the Secretary-General “shall act (...) in all meetings of the General Assembly, of the Security Council, of the Economic and Social Council,” “shall make an annual report” and “may bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security.”⁵³ Therefore the Secretary-General can be regarded as a norm entrepreneur through his activity as one of the main agenda setters of the UN. Ian Johnstone argues that the clearest example for this was Kofi Annan, who aimed at not just transforming his office, giving it more power,⁵⁴ but launched the largest ever reform initiative in the history of the UN – including the Security Council – in his 2005 report, *In larger freedom*.⁵⁵ However, this initiative ultimately failed. Norms may be important in international relations, but constructivism underestimates the importance of material capabilities and neglects the calculations of gains, which is crucial in the case of the Council. The role of the Secretary-General is very important of course, but his or her ability to have an impact on decisions of principals (particularly the P5) is questionable.

Combining various theoretical angles is difficult, but Erik Voeten successfully fulfills this task. He gives one of the most detailed and comprehensive theoretical work about the reform of the Security Council. He incorporates into his work realist and liberal arguments in order to depict the real circumstances of the Council. He rightly puts the question why the activity of the Council has increased since the end of the Cold War without major institutional change.⁵⁶ Then he argues that institutional change occurs “in response to an exogenous shock that undermines the mechanisms that generate continuity.”⁵⁷ However, he does not explain what this exogenous shock was in 1963 when the only substantial change in the Security

⁵² Johnstone (2007) p. 126

⁵³ Charter of the United Nations, Article 98 and 99, Source: <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/intro.shtml>, Access: 11.05.2013, 11:31

⁵⁴ Johnstone (2007) p. 123

⁵⁵ Johnstone (2007) p. 132

⁵⁶ Voeten (2008) p. 289

⁵⁷ Voeten (2008) p. 289

Council occurred. Voeten also writes about the distribution of gains when he notes that the P5 “distribute the gains equally among themselves” while non-permanent members are basically powerless in the Council.⁵⁸ He does not address explicitly the concept of relative and absolute gains, but this statement is about the relative gains of the P5, which has been sacrosanct for them. The potential leverage of non-P5 countries is high, because for example Germany and Japan could stop paying their big contribution to the UN budget while India and Brazil could convince developing nations to ignore the decisions of the Security Council.⁵⁹ Voeten also mentions alternative explanations about the Council reform, like path dependency and contract theory in which hidden information as transaction cost could prevent cooperation.⁶⁰ He then concludes that it is unlikely that the P5 will ever give up their veto power and it is also not sure that a more inclusive Council can be better at producing public goods.⁶¹ Thus, he states that increasing the number of Council members could hinder efficiency. He also shows that asymmetric information and the interference of domestic politics are the two possible causes of bargaining failure.⁶² Hence it is clear that this analysis tries to show as many theoretical explanations as possible and actually it is comprehensive and clear, this chapter is really useful for studying Security Council reform from various theoretical angles. However, Voeten’s argument about the total powerlessness of the non-permanent members is not correct, because if they acted as a group, there would be a possibility to block a decision, since nine votes are required to adopt a resolution.

In the light of the literature, the topic of the reform of the Security Council is widely discussed, but it has not been a topic to which much attention was devoted in the field of international relations theory. Therefore it is necessary to map out the answers to the research question historically from a theoretical point of view, especially from neorealism,

⁵⁸ Voeten (2008) p. 290

⁵⁹ Voeten (2008) p. 293

⁶⁰ Voeten (2008) pp. 292, 294–295

⁶¹ Voeten (2008) p. 296

⁶² Voeten (2008) p. 301

because as I have just shown, other theories underestimate or neglect important concepts in their analysis. In the next section I discuss the neorealist literature about Council reform, provide an explanation why neorealism is relevant to be used as a framework, and I formulate my hypothesis as well.

1.4 Theoretical framework and hypothesis

Realism has never been a theory favoring international institutions and change, as it is more aimed at explaining continuity than changes in the status quo. The reasons for institutional continuity include interest, relative gains, and the distribution of capabilities and power.⁶³ These concepts in the theoretical background are important and necessary in order to formulate my hypothesis.

There are works that are based on neorealist argumentation about the Security Council and its reform. Seryon Lee and Marianne Hanson contribute to the topic from a realist angle to a certain extent. Thomas G. Weiss also puts a great emphasis on state interest among other features of state behavior, but the real, clearly realist account of the Council is made by Edward C. Luck. Below I show the relevance of their works in order of importance.

Seryon Lee argues that the veto power of the P5 is not just a privilege, but responsibility as well and writes about the “cascade effect of permanent membership” which means that the P5 have seats in all major UN organs.⁶⁴ This can be seen as a power projection – the powerful permanent members secure seats for themselves everywhere. Lee refers to the realist theory when she notes that the UN can work effectively only when the most powerful states in the system are involved and they are given authority and competence.⁶⁵ However, it is hard to meet the criteria of being a “great power” (political stability, globally deployable military capabilities, and financial contributions to the UN’s regular budget) nowadays, even for some permanent members, but they of course insist on keeping their seats and privileges.⁶⁶ Lee gives a brief overview about reform attempts but only from the end of the Cold War. She also distinguishes groups of states based on their individual and regional interests around the

⁶³ Grieco (1988), Mearsheimer (1994/95), Dunne and Schmidt (2001), Lamy (2001), Elman (2007)

⁶⁴ Seryon Lee: *The Feasibility of Reforming the UN Security Council: Too Much Talk, Too Little Action?* Journal of East Asia & International Law, Vol. 4, Issue 2, Autumn 2011, p. 415

⁶⁵ Lee (2011) p. 415

⁶⁶ Lee (2011) p. 415

Council reform, but she leaves it as a description of three groups (G4, Uniting for Consensus and the African Group).⁶⁷ Her analysis is limited to the recent events of Council reform and does not say much about core neorealist concepts.

Marianne Hanson's work concentrates on state interest. Substantial reform would be needed in order to build an inclusive international order, but there is little chance for it because of the self-interest of the P5.⁶⁸ Even the P5 agree that enlargement is needed, but the expansion of the veto power is strictly out of question for them.⁶⁹ An important misperception from 1945 is the regional representation in the Council, because states elected on a rotating basis, pursue their own national interest first, and only after that comes regional interest.⁷⁰

There are authors who regard Thomas G. Weiss as a liberal scholar because he deals with the notion of credibility and the well-known balance between legitimacy and effectiveness, while realists deal more with the balance of power.⁷¹ I discuss him here, because he puts a disproportionate emphasis on state interest, especially on the US interest which is the biggest obstacle to Council reform.⁷² Weiss argues that there was only one plausible reform in 1965, but since then "uncontested US power makes such efforts largely irrelevant."⁷³ The P5 started to reach consensus informally before meetings of the Council, and in this way effectiveness became more prevalent, so Weiss refers to the axiom "if it ain't broken, don't fix it,"⁷⁴ in order to show that the Council can work more effectively even without change. But representativeness remained untouched, so expansion is about equity and

⁶⁷ Lee (2011) pp. 410–413

⁶⁸ Marianne Hanson: *Security Council reform: Prompters, proposals and problems*. in: Christian Reus-Smit, Marianne Hanson, Hilary Charlesworth, William Maley: *The challenge of United Nations reform*, ISBN 0 7315 3132 9. Canberra, 2004, p. 6

⁶⁹ Hanson (2004) p. 7

⁷⁰ Hanson (2004) p. 8

⁷¹ Hans-Martin Jaeger: *UN reform, biopolitics, and global governmentality*. *International Theory*, 2, doi:10.1017/S1752971909990182, 2010, p. 51

⁷² Weiss (2003) p. 147

⁷³ Weiss (2003) p. 147

⁷⁴ Weiss (2003) p. 149

not about practical issues.⁷⁵ The author states that the “initiative stays in Washington, not New York” and that the Council is heavily reliant on US military power so the US will continue to use the Council to authorize the use of force.⁷⁶ It is quite realistic when he mentions that “proposals for Security Council reform are highly unlikely to succeed.”⁷⁷ In his work from 2005, Weiss makes a historical overview about the changes of the Council and identifies three reasons for the changes in the circumstances in the 1990s: the unification of Europe, the Council began to intervene more and Germany and Japan started their campaign for permanent seats in the Council.⁷⁸ The US interest is regarded as an obstacle to Council reform especially by Weiss. Moreover, he makes an analogy between the Roman Emperor and the US, and the Roman Senate and the Security Council.⁷⁹ Weiss makes a very good contribution to the debate about Council reform, but devotes too much attention to US power and interest while neglecting the interest of other powers or groups of states.

Edward C. Luck provides comprehensive realist explanations about the Security Council and its reform efforts. His stance is undoubtedly realist, because many times he regards the state as the only unitary actor in the international arena that attention should be paid to. In *Rediscovering the State*, he argues that during the Cold War the world was too state centric, but since then “the pendulum has swung too far” and “it is time to return the state to a more central place.”⁸⁰ International organizations, transnational civil society and global norms can play an important role, but they cannot substitute for the state, because their power is derivative and their legitimacy is comprised by their lack of accountability and sovereignty.⁸¹ Nevertheless non-state actors do matter, but they are distinct and sometimes even competitive

⁷⁵ Weiss (2003) p. 149

⁷⁶ Weiss (2003) p. 156

⁷⁷ Weiss: (2005) p. 8

⁷⁸ Weiss (2005) p. 11

⁷⁹ Weiss (2005) p. 19

⁸⁰ Edward C. Luck: *Rediscovering the State*. Global Governance 8, 2002, p. 7

⁸¹ Luck (2002) p. 9

with their member states.⁸² Therefore it is essential in planning reforms “to take into account existing political realities and the limits they are likely to impose on what is achievable.”⁸³ The main drivers of change are member states, if they are inclined to accept change then it is likely to occur, but it is rare when the initiative comes from the bureaucracy of the organization or civil society.⁸⁴ Civil society must be persuasive in order to make decision-makers interested and in the end it is the latter’s responsibility to accept good recommendations.⁸⁵ It is relevant here to quote the old saying: “you can lead a horse to water, but you cannot make it drink.”⁸⁶ States are the main source of decision, even if other actors try to influence them.

In 2005 Luck commented on the failure of the UN reform at the World Summit. He notes that national interest was an obvious obstacle to the reform as the states were fearful of change and wanted to secure their relative position in the UN.⁸⁷ It can be seen as a reference to relative gains, however, implicitly. Luck also states that “political convergence precedes institutional change, not the other way around”⁸⁸ which is a further clue of his idea of the primacy of the state. He also shows that the composition of the Council should “reflect the contemporary distribution of power in the world,” and he argues that it actually does reflect it.⁸⁹ Prospective members would like the world to be more multipolar, but it is still unipolar in the sense of military capabilities, securing the leading role of the US.⁹⁰ Thus Luck contributes to the topic of Council reform from a neorealist stance; however, his analyses concentrate on the recent attempts in the 1990s and 2000s and do not address some important

⁸² Luck (2002) pp. 9–10

⁸³ Luck (2000) p. 89

⁸⁴ Luck (2000) p. 95

⁸⁵ Luck (2000) p. 98

⁸⁶ Luck (2000) p. 98

⁸⁷ Edward C. Luck: *How Not to Reform the United Nations*. *Global Governance* 11 (2005A) p. 408

⁸⁸ Luck (2005A) pp. 410–411

⁸⁹ Edward C. Luck: *Rediscovering the Security Council: The High-level Panel and Beyond*. in: Yale Center for the Study of Globalization: Reforming the United Nations for Peace and Security Proceedings of a Workshop to Analyze the Report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change. New Haven, Connecticut, March 2005B, p. 134

⁹⁰ Luck (2005B) p. 134

neorealist concepts which would be crucial in order to have a clearer understanding of the Council and its reform proposals over time. It is obvious now that realist works about the reform of the Security Council have some shortcomings and now I show how realism in general contributes the topic of the thesis.

Realism sees international affairs as a struggle for power among states and has a pessimistic view about the possibility of avoiding conflict and war.⁹¹ It is almost a *cliché* in the international relations scholarship that realism has a “timeless wisdom” to show the imperfect nature of states.⁹² The character of the relationship between and among states has not fundamentally altered, because state behavior has been driven by the “leaders’ flawed human nature.”⁹³ In the 20th century, Robert Gilpin questioned whether there was anything new about the behavior of states that Thucydides did not know in the 5th century BC.⁹⁴ If realism is so deterministic and pessimistic about the world and assumes perennial principles and patterns of behavior then how can it explain change? If self-interest is inherent in the actions of states, how can they cooperate and set up international institutions and organizations? The answers lead to the neorealist hypothesis about the possibility of change in international institutions, specifically in the Security Council.

In one of his books, Kenneth N. Waltz refers to the defining role of the structure of the international arena, which may change outcomes.⁹⁵ It is also remarkable that he shows a strong connection between the change in the international structure and the change in the distribution of capabilities.⁹⁶ Scholars in the second half of the 20th century recognized that change in the international relations depends not just on the power of states, but on how this

⁹¹ Stephen M. Walt: *International relations: One world, many theories*. Foreign Policy, No. 110, Special Edition: Frontiers of Knowledge, Washington; Spring 1998, p. 31

⁹² Dunne and Schmidt (2001), Monoson and Loriaux (2006), Williams (2006), Elman (2007)

⁹³ Colin Elman: *Realism*. in: Martin Griffiths (ed.): *International Relations Theory for the Twenty-First Century*. An Introduction. Routledge, 2007, p. 11

⁹⁴ Tim Dunne and Brian C. Schmidt: *Realism*. in: John Baylis and Steve Smith (eds.): *The Globalization of World Politics. An Introduction to International Relations*, Oxford University Press, 2001 p. 145

⁹⁵ Kenneth N. Waltz: *Theory of International Politics*. Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1979, p. 78

⁹⁶ Waltz (1979) p. 102

power is distributed among them. Historical examples show that during the course of history, humanity witnessed uni- bi- and multipolarity as different kinds of the distribution of power.⁹⁷ These distributions changed over time and high status was scarce, so the competition for it tended to be zero-sum.⁹⁸ Multipolarity was dominant in 19th-century Europe, bipolarity during the Cold War and unipolarity in the 1990s.⁹⁹ Change in the distribution of capabilities (economic and/or military) often resulted in change in the distribution of power, thus regional or global hegemons could emerge. And these new hegemons always wanted to form the international institutional arrangement. Neorealists claim that any differences in the policy can be explained by differences in power and capabilities of states, in other words they are utility (power or security) maximizers.¹⁰⁰ Thus any kind of change can only happen when the proportion of capabilities in states change, as Waltz writes: “The structure of a system changes with changes in the distribution of capabilities across the system’s units.”¹⁰¹ Moreover, the change in the system defines the behavior of the states and the expectations about their actions.¹⁰² In short, the most important source of change in international relations comes from changes in the distribution of power. Nevertheless in the case of the Security Council I show that change in the interest matters more crucially.

There are differences in the importance of interests and only the most serious ones cause systemic change. State interest more often concentrates on changing the patterns and rules of interstate interactions.¹⁰³ For neorealism this interaction is war or a hostile conflict. But for the sake of this thesis, I examine the realist opinion on cooperation and international institutions as a more peaceful way of interaction among states. In this sense, international institutions are embodiments of cooperation and the main arena for pursuing state interest too.

⁹⁷ William C. Wohlforth: *Unipolarity, Status Competition, and Great Power War*. World Politics, Volume 61, Number 1, January 2009, pp. 40–41

⁹⁸ Wohlforth (2009) p. 30

⁹⁹ Wohlforth (2009) pp. 44–56

¹⁰⁰ Lamy (2001) p. 186

¹⁰¹ Waltz (1979) p. 97

¹⁰² Waltz (1979) p. 97

¹⁰³ Mearsheimer (1994/95), Dunne and Schmidt (2001), Lamy (2001), Elman (2007)

Cooperation has always been problematic for realism, because it means interaction with other states, from which not just advantages, but serious failures can emerge as well and this is really risky. Cooperation is difficult to achieve in a self-help system,¹⁰⁴ because state interest and the lack of trust among actors are inevitable. The “lack-of-trust” problem, which severely hinders cooperation, is depicted in the stag hunt game theoretic model by Kenneth Waltz.¹⁰⁵ States can never be sure about the others’ intentions, because today’s friend can be tomorrow’s enemy.¹⁰⁶ States are fearful of achieving joint gains that benefit a friend more, because that friend can be a potential foe in the future.¹⁰⁷ This way of thinking leads to the problem of states declining to cooperate when it would benefit all parties because they are fearful that others may benefit more than themselves.

Although states are concerned with their absolute gains, i.e. the raw amount of benefits they get, regardless of others’ advantages; they are even more eager to achieve a greater advantage than that of the others.¹⁰⁸ John Mearsheimer writes about this problem as a pie metaphor: “... states concerned about absolute gains need only make sure that the pie is expanding and that they are getting at least some portion of the increase, while states that worry about relative gains must care also about how the pie is divided, which complicates cooperative efforts.”¹⁰⁹ Mearsheimer argues that relative gains have always been more important for states than absolute. However, states at the same time worry about the absolute and the relative gains from cooperation and, what is even more important, how these gains are distributed among participants.¹¹⁰ Neorealists state that there are two main obstacles to

¹⁰⁴ Dunne and Schmidt (2001) p. 154

¹⁰⁵ Kenneth N. Waltz: *Man, the State and War. A Theoretical Analysis*. Columbia University Press, New York, 1959, pp. 167–168

¹⁰⁶ Joseph M. Grieco: *Anarchy and the limits of cooperation: a realist critique of the newest liberal institutionalism*. *International Organization* 42, 3, Summer 1988, p. 487

¹⁰⁷ Grieco (1988) p. 487

¹⁰⁸ Dunne and Schmidt (2001) p. 154

¹⁰⁹ Mearsheimer (1994/95) p. 13

¹¹⁰ Walt (1998) p. 35

cooperation: cheating and relative gains.¹¹¹ Joseph Grieco argues that cooperation is hard to achieve and difficult to maintain, because states fear that others will enjoy relatively greater benefits.¹¹² He notes that in addition to cheating, relative gains and anarchy, states have to overcome enforcement as well, in order to cooperate successfully.¹¹³ It is highly relevant that Grieco addresses the problem of the number of participating states in cooperation from the angle of relative gains. The change “in the number of states to which a state compares itself can affect the severity of the relative-gains problem for cooperation.”¹¹⁴ Neorealists assume that states prefer more partners if the circumstances are uncertain which state would be better off, because if “the number of states in an agreement increases, relative-gains concerns between any two partners should go down.”¹¹⁵ Grieco’s assumptions are especially important in the case of the reform of the membership of the Security Council. Cooperation fails when states do not follow the rules in order to secure their benefits and interests, so it has a discouraging effect for states and they start to act unilaterally rather than multilaterally.¹¹⁶ In this sense, all kinds of institutionalized international cooperation are just hypocrisy, because states can absolutely neglect their rules, if they collide with their interests.

Such cooperation can be international organizations and institutions that have been the main focus of realist criticism since the 1980s. The main realist argument is that it is not prudent to entrust state security to international institutions, like the United Nations in a self-help system.¹¹⁷ Besides, states are the only actors that really count in realism, so transnational corporation, international organizations and the like rise and fall, but states are the only permanent features of world politics.¹¹⁸ In all cases, the effectiveness of an

¹¹¹ Lamy (2001) p. 186

¹¹² Joseph Grieco, Robert Powell and Duncan Snidal: *The Relative-Gains Problem for International Cooperation*. The American Political Science Review, Vol. 87, No. 3 (Sep., 1993), p. 729

¹¹³ Grieco, Powell, Snidal (1993) p. 729

¹¹⁴ Grieco, Powell, Snidal (1993) p. 731

¹¹⁵ Grieco, Powell, Snidal (1993) p. 731

¹¹⁶ Lamy (2001) p. 186

¹¹⁷ Dunne and Schmidt (2001) p. 144

¹¹⁸ Dunne and Schmidt (2001) p. 151

organization depends on the support of major powers.¹¹⁹ But effectiveness is concerned not just with major powers, but all participating countries, as they provide side payments in an institution for disadvantaged states, and this compensatory mechanism can be facilitated by international institutions.¹²⁰

A further, very important analysis about international institutions was provided by Mearsheimer who has a very pessimistic view of the ability of international institutions to function separately from the major powers that back them. There was a remarkable debate in the 1990s between him and neoliberal institutionalist scholars about the independent role played by international institutions, whether their “promise is true or false.” In his prominent article, *The False Promise of International Institutions*, Mearsheimer builds a sharp critique of the neoliberal view of institutions. He states that institutions do not have stabilizing effect at all, and he confirms the realist claim that the institutions are only “a reflection of the distribution of power in the world. They are based on the self-interested calculations of the great powers, and they have no independent effect on state behavior.”¹²¹ He also gives a definition of institutions, which reflects his realist view: “a set of rules that stipulate the ways in which states should cooperate and compete with each other.”¹²² Thus institutions are only spheres where states act on the basis of power and these institutions are just intervening, not independent variables in the process of international relations.¹²³ Mearsheimer also maintains that the UN was established to provide collective security, but was never tested during the Cold War, because of superpower rivalry, and now there is no reform effort to fulfill real

¹¹⁹ Lamy (2001) p. 186

¹²⁰ Grieco, Powell, Snidal (1993) p. 731

¹²¹ Mearsheimer (1994/95) p. 7

¹²² Mearsheimer (1994/95) p. 8

¹²³ Mearsheimer (1994/95) p. 13

collective security missions.¹²⁴ Institutions can, however, be useful for great powers to maintain or increase their share of world power.¹²⁵

In the theoretical works there is the assumption that change in international organizations is likely when there is a change in the distribution of power. I claim on the basis of my research into the case of the Security Council, that the change in the interest of great powers and large groups of states is even more important, than the distribution of power and capabilities. States use their representation as power and they together as a group can block or facilitate a reform process. The distribution of power does matter of course, but institutional arrangement is more affected by the change in the interest. Therefore my neorealist hypothesis about the outcome of a reform effort in the Security Council is the following:

H: Institutional change may happen when there is a change in the distribution of power in the international arena, but it is more likely to happen when the interest of great powers and/or the interest of large groups of states change.

In the case of the Council the great powers of the world are given as well as large interest groups of states, and in the historical examples I show that the criteria of this hypothesis are feasible. Groups of states have used their representation in the UN as aggregate power in order to put pressure on the P5. As can be seen from the above analysis, neorealism can depict the circumstances and causes that lead to change in the Security Council. Realist scholars actually seem to be very straightforward and confident in their claims about world politics. Walt says that many academics and policymakers “are loathe to admit” that “realism remains the most compelling general framework for understanding international relations.”¹²⁶ For example in the 1990s the US dealt with the UN with disdain when its actions were somehow against American interests, but otherwise supported multilateralism and

¹²⁴ Mearsheimer (1994/95) pp. 33–34

¹²⁵ John J. Mearsheimer: *A Realist Reply*. International Security, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Summer 1995), p. 82

¹²⁶ Walt (1998) p. 43

international institutions.¹²⁷ All of these show that realism is still a multifaceted, durable and adaptive theory.¹²⁸ As I have demonstrated my assumptions in the hypothesis, in the next section I elaborate on the methodology.

¹²⁷ Walt (1998) p. 43

¹²⁸ Elman (2007) p. 20

1.5 Methodology

My aim is to confirm the relevance of neorealism in the case of the reform attempts in the United Nations Security Council. Since the reform proposals were different in many aspects, I apply most-likely case study methods to assess the scope conditions and validity of neorealism on the topic of the thesis.¹²⁹ Although this theory does not regard international institutions as important or effective actors of the international system, I still argue that neorealism provides the most plausible explanation of the success or failure of a reform proposal in the Council. It is true that neorealism puts a disproportionate emphasis on the importance of the distribution of power in institutional change, but this theory is also very clear and right in claiming the impact of interest on organizations, which is fundamentally relevant in the case of the history of Security Council. Neorealism supposes that international organizations are only proxies of great power politics with fixed interest, and as John Mearsheimer writes “institutions are basically a reflection of the distribution of the power in the world.”¹³⁰ So according to this, if there is a change in the distribution of power then change is possible in international institutions too, because they are used as proxies by those great powers. But I claim that the interest of great powers and large groups of states is more important in the case of the Security Council when it is about the outcome of a reform process. This is stated in my hypothesis as well, and I will test it on historical-empirical findings in order to evaluate. In this way I can confirm a central neorealist hypothesis.¹³¹ In the case of the Council, gains are permanent or non-permanent membership and veto power.

In the three historical cases, I use process tracing to show the causal link between events and various variables that led to failure or success of reform proposals. Process tracing

¹²⁹ Andrew Bennett and Alexander George: *Case studies and theory development in the social sciences*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press., 2005, Chapter 4: Phase one: Designing case study research, p. 75

¹³⁰ Mearsheimer (1994/95) p. 7

¹³¹ Bent Flyvbjerg: *Five Misunderstandings About Case-Study Research*. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 12: 2006, p. 231

“refers to the examination of intermediate steps in a process to make inferences about hypotheses on how that process took place and whether and how it generated the outcome of interest.”¹³² The exact method applied in the thesis is process verification, which “involves testing whether the observed processes among variables in a case match those predicted by previously designated theories.”¹³³ Process tracing is an appropriate method for qualitative analysis, especially in this thesis, as it aims to discover historical causal explanations.¹³⁴ In addition to evaluating causal claims, process tracing can contribute to “describing political and social phenomena” and to analyzing “trajectories of change and causation.”¹³⁵

Thus I can test the scope conditions of neorealism on the cases of reform proposals in the Security Council. After I have shown the causal link between events and circumstances in the three cases, I evaluate the hypothesis. On the basis of these causal explanations I show that my neorealist hypothesis is plausible.

¹³² Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey T. Checkel: *Process Tracing: From Philosophical Roots to Best Practices*, Simons Papers in Security and Development, No. 21/2012, School for International Studies, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, June 2012, p. 8

¹³³ Andrew Bennett and Alexander L. George: *Process Tracing in Case Study Research*. MacArthur Foundation Workshop on Case Study Methods, October 17-19, 1997, Source: <http://users.polisci.wisc.edu/kritzer/teaching/ps816/ProcessTracing.htm>, Access: 12.04.2013, 12:49

¹³⁴ David Collier: *Understanding Process Tracing*. *Political Science and Politics* 44, No. 4 (2011), p. 823

¹³⁵ Collier (2011) p. 823

1.6 Conclusion

The main incentives for Council reform came from states and groups of states that wanted to pursue their interest. The other source of proposals was individuals (experts, policy-makers, leaders of UN organs). It is discernible that proposals made by states have had a greater effect on reform processes than that of individuals. There may be a fork in the road in the history of the Council, but it is unlikely that this will happen in the near future, because of the strongly divergent interests of great powers and large groups of states.

It is also an option not to change anything, as some authors argue saying “if it ain’t broken, don’t fix it.”¹³⁶ In that case it is the P5’s highest responsibility to show that the organ can function effectively in the current circumstances. The Council is definitely not “broken,” thus the bigger problem lies in the question of legitimacy than effectiveness. The main concern of the thesis is that the literature lacks a theoretical analysis that is both historical and neorealist.

I have shown that neorealism is the most relevant theoretical framework to be used in order to clearly explain success or failure of changes and reforms in the Council. Alternative theoretical frameworks (neoliberal institutionalism, principal-agent theory and norm entrepreneurship) can contribute to a better understanding of causes and circumstances, but they neglect important concepts that need to be taken into account. Neorealism has never been famous for its optimism, but its explanatory power is inevitable. Just as in the case of the Security Council.

¹³⁶ Weiss (2003) p. 149

2. The only major reform success: 1963–1965

The only expansion of the membership of the Security Council occurred almost exactly fifty years ago. The circumstances that led to the acceptance of this change were not at all simple, though. The impetus came from the large group of newly admitted states who wanted a more representative Council, and the P5 eventually accepted this proposal. So African, Asian and Latin American states used their representation in the UN as aggregate power to put pressure on the P5, and finally an overwhelming majority adopted resolution 1991A; the ratification process lasted until 1965. But historical causes had their origins in the foundation of the UN in 1945.

The main incentive for the drafters of the UN Charter was to avoid the mistakes of the League of Nations. The UN was founded after the most catastrophic war in the history of mankind and this disaster was regarded occurring because of the paralysis and ineffectiveness of the League of Nations that could not hinder the outbreak of World War II.¹³⁷ Edward Carr noted that the League became more representative during the years, but at the same time lost its effectiveness.¹³⁸ The victorious states became the permanent members of the UN Security Council and their intention was to “exercise global leadership with a view to managing or governing the international system.”¹³⁹ The key idea behind the composition of the Council was to enhance legitimacy by means of selecting six non-permanent members for two-year non-renewable terms elected by a two-thirds majority of the General Assembly.¹⁴⁰ In order to make a decision in the Council not just the P5 should agree, but there must be other states as well to vote for it. It is clear that due to their relative power, the P5 always could get the others to do what they preferred by means of either punishment or reward.¹⁴¹ So the interests

¹³⁷ Lowe, Roberts, Welsh, Zaum (2008) p. 33

¹³⁸ Bourantonis (2005) p. 8

¹³⁹ Bourantonis (2005) p. 3

¹⁴⁰ Bourantonis (2005) p. 4

¹⁴¹ Bourantonis (2005) p. 5

of the P5 were always secured. The countries elected as non-permanent members were small or medium powers who could hardly afford to refuse to promote at least one of the great powers, because they have been dependent on the economic and military support of the P5.¹⁴² This condition was of utmost importance for the P5 in 1945, thus they could be sure that their power position would be unchangeable, regardless of their actual military or economic might.

Article 109 of the UN Charter stipulates that ten years after the entry into force of the Charter there should have been a Review Conference about possible Charter amendments.¹⁴³ As this conference was due in 1955 when the Cold War had its “coldest battles,” such an event was inconceivable.¹⁴⁴ But a major historical cause of change appeared in the middle of the 1950s, which was decolonization. Originally only six states were members of the UN from Africa and Asia, but in the 1960s half of the UN membership belonged to these two continents.¹⁴⁵ A large number of new, independent states became full members of the UN and most were from the developing world, particularly from Africa and Asia.¹⁴⁶ The geographical distribution of non-permanent seats was based only on a gentlemen’s agreement from 1945, when the six seats were allotted as follows: two to Latin America, one to the British Commonwealth, one to the Middle East, one to Western Europe and one to Eastern Europe.¹⁴⁷ With the admission of a large number of new, sovereign states, this geographical grouping was not relevant any more. There were states that did not fall into any of the above groups (Ethiopia, Liberia) and dissatisfaction was particularly characteristic for African and Asian states.¹⁴⁸ In addition, these newcomers started to demand representation in every UN organ. New members used their representation in the General Assembly as power by submitting proposals and demonstrating voting cohesion. Between 1945 and 1963

¹⁴² Bourantonis (2005) p. 5

¹⁴³ Ronzitti (2010) p. 4

¹⁴⁴ Ronzitti (2010) p. 4

¹⁴⁵ Weiss (2003) p. 149

¹⁴⁶ Bourantonis (2005) p. 7

¹⁴⁷ Bourantonis (2005) p. 11

¹⁴⁸ Bourantonis (2005) p. 11

the membership grew from 51 to 112, and the majority of new members were admitted only after 1955.¹⁴⁹ However, it is questionable whether this extensive growth in membership can be regarded as an “exogenous shock that undermines the mechanisms that generate continuity.”¹⁵⁰ More importantly these states recognized their membership as power and tried to put pressure on the structure of the UN, including the P5 to accept new reality. The distribution of power (bipolarity) was inevitable at that time, because the Cold War reached its peak in the Cuban missile crisis in 1962,¹⁵¹ so this institutional change was not a case of change in the distribution of power, as both superpowers accepted it eventually. Rather, it was a case of change in the interest of the great powers, which was obvious. Common interest was the biggest incentive for states to form groups and submit joint proposals for Council reform. Interest groups have always been important in the history of the reform of the Council, because they have been able to ensure that a common proposal will be voted in the General Assembly and in the other way round, if a group has not been large enough, the reform will not pass.¹⁵²

At the end of the 1950s, the Latin American group was fearful of redistributing the non-permanent seats as they had two and the others only one, so they favored the expansion of the number of seats and not their redistribution.¹⁵³ Therefore Latin American states took the initiative of expanding the Council up to thirteen from eleven, securing their own two seats as well as not disturbing the interest of the P5 too much.¹⁵⁴ The Latin American initiative gained solid support from the African and Asian states too.¹⁵⁵

¹⁴⁹ Olivia Lau: *United Nations Security Council Expansion: The Efficacy of Small States Under Bipolarity and Uni-Multipolarity*, 2003, Source: <http://www.olivialau.org/papers/unreform.pdf>, Access: 14.05.2013, 19:09, pp. 13–14

¹⁵⁰ Voeten (2008) p. 289

¹⁵¹ Robert S. Norris and Hans M. Kristensen: *The Cuban Missile Crisis: A nuclear order of battle, October and November 1962*. Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, 68(6), Sage Publications, 2012, p. 85

¹⁵² Lau (2003) p. 7

¹⁵³ Bourantonis (2005) p. 13

¹⁵⁴ Bourantonis (2005) p. 13

¹⁵⁵ Bourantonis (2005) p. 13

The relative gains of the P5 (permanency and veto power) would have been secure with the expansion, maybe with a little diminution, which came from the decision-making procedure stipulated by Article 27 of the UN Charter.¹⁵⁶ Before 1963, seven votes were necessary to adopt a resolution,¹⁵⁷ after that it became nine, which means that there was a more likely scenario in which persuasion of four non-permanent members would have been more difficult than only two. Apart from this minor loss, the P5 concentrated on their strategic interest and the main source of problem became the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Union declared that it would not support any kind of change in the Council as long as the People's Republic of China was not represented there, because at that time the Taiwan-based Chinese Republic represented China in the Security Council.¹⁵⁸ It was a strategic decision to connect the desire of African and Asian states for Council expansion to the representation of Communist China, because the Soviet Union wanted to use its bargaining power and put pressure on the West by using the Chinese representation as a tool. At the same time, Nationalist China encouraged the proposal, because it needed the support of African and Asian states to be stable in the Council.¹⁵⁹ Substantial change happened when the People's Republic of China also claimed that it supported the proposal of Council expansion, and the Soviet Union was the first from the P5 to favor the amendment of the Charter to expand the Council.¹⁶⁰

By 1963 there had been two different proposals, one from twenty-one Latin American states and one from thirty-seven African and Asian states. The former was the same version of the earlier plan of a thirteen-member Council; the latter proposed the expansion of

¹⁵⁶ Charter of the United Nations, Article 27, Source: <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/intro.shtml>, Access: 29.01.2013, 21:10

¹⁵⁷ Bourantonis (2005) p. 10

¹⁵⁸ Lau (2003) p. 9

¹⁵⁹ Lau (2003) p. 8

¹⁶⁰ Lau (2003) p. 10

non-permanent seats from six to ten.¹⁶¹ After some consultations, the two groups agreed upon the incorporation of the Latin American proposal into the African-Asian one in order to put more pressure on the P5.¹⁶² The formation of this new, bigger coalition meant the aggregation of power and interest to achieve absolute gains mutually, because in that way the situation of these new member states would be beneficial. The question was whether the P5 would consent. Basically their relative gains were secure, because the working methods, particularly the veto power, remained unchanged. The acrimonious debates in 1963 were limited only to symbolic questions, for example the British worried about losing the Commonwealth seat,¹⁶³ and it was not surprising that De Gaulle's France did not even explain why it had a negative attitude toward the proposal.¹⁶⁴ Finally the General Assembly voted on the draft resolution (1991A) on 16 December 1963, and ninety-six states voted for it, eleven against and four abstained.¹⁶⁵ France and the Soviet Union voted against, the US and the UK abstained while the Republic of China supported the resolution.¹⁶⁶ However, the ratification period could be started with a deadline in September 1965 and by that time the necessary number of states ratified the resolution including the P5.¹⁶⁷

The result of the reform process starting from the end of the 1950s to 1965 was a new geographical distribution of the non-permanent seats: five seats for Africa and Asia, two for Latin America, two for Western Europe and one for Eastern Europe.¹⁶⁸

All in all, the decolonization led to the addition of a number of new states from Africa and Asia and they together started to use their representation in the UN as power in order to put pressure on the P5. This process could be successful, because the relative status

¹⁶¹ Bourantonis (2005) p. 19

¹⁶² Bourantonis (2005) p. 19

¹⁶³ Bourantonis (2005) pp. 19–20

¹⁶⁴ Lau (2003) p. 10

¹⁶⁵ Bourantonis (2005) p. 21

¹⁶⁶ Daniel Deudney and Hanns W. Maull: *How Britain and France Could Reform the UN Security Council*, *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy*, 53:5, 2011, p. 113

¹⁶⁷ Bourantonis (2005) p. 23

¹⁶⁸ Bourantonis (2005) p. 22

and position of the great powers were also secure. In addition, the two superpowers accepted this change too. The Soviet Union regarded Communist China as its greatest ally which could be seated in the Security Council. However, it recognized that in the future major support would be more likely from the large number of African and Asian states and Moscow supported the proposal and ratified it as the first permanent member.¹⁶⁹ In that sense the formation of an interest group in order to gain mutually beneficial gains for Latin American, African and Asian states led to the success of their proposal and institutional change in the Security Council. Although the ratio for voting in the Council changed, as the Article 27 was amended, but in the era of bipolarity, it was not a difficult task for the P5 to convince four non-permanent members to support a decision which had already been supported by them.

So it is clear now that due to the constraining structure of bipolarity, the two superpowers and the whole P5 could manage to secure their interest and relative gains because the new members were somehow connected to one of them, thus successful change could happen because the US and the Soviet Union accepted it, while the initiative came from the large group of newly admitted states. My hypothesis is correct as well, because the interest of states and groups of states were more important than the distribution of power, as there was no change in the latter. After the era of bipolarity the picture became more confused as will be seen in the next chapter.

¹⁶⁹ Bourantonis (2005) p. 24

3. After the Cold War: the false promise of the 1990s

Since the end of the Cold War there has been a debate whether the world has become uni- or multipolar, but it is definitely not bipolar. The distribution of power changed, but it was not followed by institutional change in the Security Council. It is very important that maybe one of the two superpowers collapsed the distribution of capabilities, at least in the military sense, remained intact. Luck argues that the US is still the far most powerful state in the international system, thus reflection of the contemporary distribution of power in the Council has been guaranteed even since the end of bipolarity.¹⁷⁰ But during the 1990s there was an overestimated hope for changing the composition and working methods of the Council on the basis of the systemic change. Power realities, and more importantly individual and mutual interests of states and groups of states, hindered all the reform attempts in the 1990s, as was the situation with the most comprehensive proposal, the Razali Plan. At the beginning of the decade, impetus for change came from various member states in the form of recommendations, but the greatest initiative was made by President Razali Ismail in 1997. The goal was again a more representative Council with enhanced working methods. From this period on there have been a clear formulation and functioning of groups of states based on their common interests and gains.

By the beginning of the 1990s the UN membership had grown to 185 states,¹⁷¹ mainly due to the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union.¹⁷² In spite of the activism of the Council in the early 1990s a debate about the necessity for reforming it emerged.¹⁷³ In the new world order states as well as policy-makers were enthusiastic about the possibility of

¹⁷⁰ Luck (2005B) p. 134

¹⁷¹ Joachim Müller (ed.): *Reforming the United Nations The Struggle for Legitimacy and Effectiveness*. Martinus Nijhoff Publishers Leiden/Boston, 2006, p. 15

¹⁷² Yehuda Z. Blum: *Proposals for UN Security Council Reform*. The American Journal of International Law, Vol. 99, No. 3 (Jul., 2005), p. 638

¹⁷³ Weiss (2005) p. 11

change in the United Nations, especially in the Security Council. France and the UK were nearly middle-ranking powers, while Germany and Japan had been on the rise for decades, which meant a further indication for change in the structure of world politics.¹⁷⁴ The General Assembly adopted resolution 47/62 in 1992 about the equitable representation of states in the Council and the increase of the number of its seats.¹⁷⁵ As a response to this resolution, the Assembly established the Open-Ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council, which was defined by Weiss as “the entity with the lengthiest name in the annals of multilateral deliberations.”¹⁷⁶ By the middle of the 1990s most of the P5 were in favor of the so-called “quick-fix” solution (a general idea about a prompt expansion of the Council membership) in which Germany and Japan would be added to the Council as permanent members and there should have been three more non-permanent seats, increasing the number of Council members to twenty.¹⁷⁷ Members of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) strongly rejected the quick-fix solution, arguing that it did not represent the membership of the UN and gave more power to industrialized countries, so they demanded an increase to twenty-six seats including permanent membership for developing countries.¹⁷⁸ This was the point when regional rivalries gained importance because of the idea of regional representation.¹⁷⁹ Mexico and Argentina were against Brazil, Pakistan against India, Italy and Spain against Germany and those other states too that were not likely to be elected as permanent members on a regional basis started to oppose reform proposals that included the addition of new permanent members.¹⁸⁰ Although these opposing countries supported the UN

¹⁷⁴ Bourantonis (2005) p. 29

¹⁷⁵ Müller (2006) p. 15

¹⁷⁶ Weiss (2003) p. 152

¹⁷⁷ Müller (2006) p. 16

¹⁷⁸ Müller (2006) p. 16

¹⁷⁹ Hanson (2004) p. 8

¹⁸⁰ Müller (2006) p. 16

traditionally, the Council expansion would have meant a downgrading in their relative power status.¹⁸¹

The fiftieth anniversary of the UN in 1995 passed without major changes in the composition of the Council; there were only minor reforms in order to make the Council more transparent.¹⁸² In the middle of the decade, France and the UK were strongly against any kind of reform and their views changed only when the US assured them that there would be no change in their status and position in the Council, thus they started to support the candidacy of Germany and Japan.¹⁸³

From the debates and proposals one emerged which was drafted in 1997 by Razali Ismail.¹⁸⁴ Razali wanted to close the series of various proposals and negotiations by initiating a new one. This proposal was a watershed in the history of the reform of the Security Council, because it marked the roots of the formation of interest groups of states that influenced the outcome of all the reform efforts from 1997 on. Razali introduced his Council reform proposal with the aim to tackle the questions of permanent and non-permanent membership, the working methods and the veto power quickly.¹⁸⁵ Razali's proposal was organized into several stages: first, the General Assembly would adopt a framework to enlarge the Security Council; second, the Assembly would vote for five candidates for the new permanent seats; third, two-thirds of the whole General Assembly would have to accept the Charter amendment; fourth, two-thirds of the UN membership would have to ratify the amendment (including the current P5); and fifth, ten years after the ratification a review conference shall be held.¹⁸⁶ The Razali Plan aimed at increasing the number of seats to twenty-four with five permanent (Germany, Japan and one each from Africa, Asia and Latin America) and four

¹⁸¹ Müller (2006) p. 16

¹⁸² Müller (2006) p. 17

¹⁸³ Bourantonis (2005) p. 41

¹⁸⁴ Lee (2011) p. 409

¹⁸⁵ Müller (2006) p. 18

¹⁸⁶ Lau (2003) p. 4

non-permanent (one each from Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe).¹⁸⁷ Most importantly, the new permanent members would not have the veto power, and the original P5 would have to restrict their use of veto to actions under Chapter VII of the UN Charter.¹⁸⁸ The hopeful candidates for new permanent membership were Germany, Japan, Brazil and India¹⁸⁹ and later on they remained together to constitute their strong interest group, the so-called Group of Four (G4). The US and Russia were reluctant to accept the Razali Plan, because they thought that the number of seats should not be more than twenty; the UK and China avoided taking positions, and only France supported it, because of its gradual framework.¹⁹⁰

On the other hand the Razali Plan was vigorously opposed by a group of other states, which was called the Coffee Club. The leading role was played by Italy, Pakistan and Mexico, who were against any expansion of the permanent seats.¹⁹¹ This was a clear evidence of regional rivalry as these states had been competing with Germany, India and Brazil. However, the greatest enemy of the Razali Plan was the NAM, as they insisted on giving the same veto power of the current P5 to the new permanent members as well; in addition, the Organization for African Unity demanded two rotating permanent seats for Africa.¹⁹² Eventually the NAM wanted to save its cohesion and unity as a movement, so it “killed” the Razali Plan in order not to be in a situation to choose permanent members among themselves.¹⁹³ Therefore it is inevitable that mere representation became power as the developing countries harmonized their interests.

In addition to procedural issues, economic questions also emerged in the debate as Japan and Germany claimed permanent seats for themselves on the basis of their financial

¹⁸⁷ Müller (2006) p. 18

¹⁸⁸ Müller (2006) p. 18

¹⁸⁹ Müller (2006) p. 19

¹⁹⁰ Bourantonis (2005) p. 66

¹⁹¹ Müller (2006) p. 19

¹⁹² Bourantonis (2005) pp. 50–51

¹⁹³ Konstantinos Magliveras and Dimitris Bourantonis: *The Enlargement of the UN Security Council: Reflections from the Current Debate*. Politics, 2002, Vol 22(1), p. 28

contributions to the UN budget, which were the second and third largest after the US.¹⁹⁴ However, Italian Foreign Minister Lamberto Dini claimed that “there could be absolutely no link between members’ contributions and Security Council reform.”¹⁹⁵ Paolo Fulci called the Razali Plan “a constitutional absurdity,”¹⁹⁶ because at the first two stages of the reform process, the resolutions should have been adopted in accordance with Article 18 and not 108, so not by the two-thirds of the entire General Assembly, but only the two-thirds majority “of the members present and voting.”¹⁹⁷ The power of the NAM as well as the Coffee Club was in their capacity to convince other members not to vote for the Razali Plan in the General Assembly and, as Article 108 of the UN Charter requires, a resolution needs two-thirds majority in the Assembly in order to be adopted.¹⁹⁸

It is more relevant to compare the reform attempts in the 1990s to the reform in 1963 than to 1945, because after World War II, small and medium-size states were either colonies or followed the leadership of the United States.¹⁹⁹ In 1963 and 1997 the interests of small and medium members could not be ignored and they could manipulate the outcome of the reform attempts via forming coalitions for voting in the General Assembly.²⁰⁰ Change did not happen in the 1990s for two reasons. First, even if great powers more or less supported some minor changes at least theoretically; their interest was continuity in order to preserve their relative gains, namely permanency and most importantly the veto power. Second, the NAM and the Coffee Club were strong enough to obstruct everything that concerned new permanent statuses using their numerical majority.

¹⁹⁴ Bourantonis (2005) p. 43

¹⁹⁵ Müller (2006) p. 20

¹⁹⁶ Magliveras and Bourantonis (2002) pp. 26–27

¹⁹⁷ Charter of the United Nations, Article 18, Source: <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/intro.shtml>, Access: 29.01.2013, 21:10

¹⁹⁸ Charter of the United Nations, Article 108, Source: <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/intro.shtml>, Access: 29.01.2013, 21:10

¹⁹⁹ Lau (2003) p. 5

²⁰⁰ Lau (2003) p. 5

As can be seen from the above historical analysis, after the end of the Cold War the constraint of bipolarity ceased to be there in the international arena and that boosted enthusiasm in the membership to change the composition and working methods of the Council. However, every state wanted to profit from the new circumstances, achieve relative gains or not to lose them, and in order to be more efficient, they formed groups as embodiments of their common interest. These factors led to a situation in which two-thirds majority in the General Assembly became impossible, and the Razali Plan failed. Even if the distribution of power changed in the 1990s, the distribution of capabilities did not, and the interest of the major players also remained unchanged. Thus interest was more important in the 1990s, than the distribution of power, because after the Cold War there should have been a change in the UN as well, but it did not occur, because of the constraining effect of the divergent interest of great powers and large groups of member states. These facts underpin my hypothesis. Many new circumstances that evolved in response to the Razali Plan remained and had a significant influence on the third and greatest reform effort in the 2000s.

4. An overhaul of the UN? The greatest reform attempt in 2003–2005

Secretary-General Kofi Annan played the important role of initiator in the period of 2003–2005.²⁰¹ He wanted to revitalize the whole United Nations via structural changes as he stated in his address to the General Assembly in 2003.²⁰² Annan famously claimed that the UN had come “to a fork in the road” and the reform of the Security Council was so essential that an agreement on this issue was highly needed. He also noted that one of his “main priorities was to reform the internal structures and culture” of the UN to make it “more useful to its Member States.”²⁰³ In addition, Annan stated that no reform of the UN would be complete without the reform of the Security Council.²⁰⁴ The impetus for the reform proposal was that the Secretary-General wanted to finish the process from the 1990s and make the Council more representative and effective. Nevertheless there was no change in the distribution of power and capabilities, in the interest of the member states and not even in the composition of the interest groups, so the circumstances remained more or less the same as in 1997. However, the proposals were new, therefore there was at least hope for the possibility of change, but it failed in 2005, because of the divergence of state interests.

The interest groups from 1997 continued to keep their opinion about Council reform. However, the members of the NAM became more divided; some of them supported the Uniting for Consensus (UfC, the new name of the Coffee Club), but the African countries started to represent another strong opinion, similar to that in 1997 about the insistence on two African permanent seats with veto power.²⁰⁵ The G4 were campaigning for permanent membership on the ground of their size, regional role and financial contribution. Thus all the

²⁰¹ Lowe, Roberts, Welsh, Zaum (2008) p. 32

²⁰² The Secretary-General, Address to the General Assembly, New York, 23 September 2003, Source: <http://www.un.org/webcast/ga/58/statements/sg2eng030923.htm>, Access: 31.01.2013, 15:53

²⁰³ Kofi Annan: *In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all*. 21 March 2005, Source: <http://www.un.org/largerfreedom/contents.htm>, Access: 16.05.2013, 12:39, p. 39

²⁰⁴ Annan (2005) p. 42

²⁰⁵ Lee (2011) p. 413

three major groups (G4, UfC and the African Group) regarded Annan's initiative in 2003 with either enthusiasm or disdain.

In 2003 Annan announced that he would establish a board of highly qualified and experienced experts to make recommendations for reforming the whole UN.²⁰⁶ Soon after that the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change with sixteen experts started to work and presented the recommendations in 2004 with the title, *A More Secure World: Our shared Responsibility*.²⁰⁷ The report tried to cover all the issues that were related to state security, human security and institutional change in the UN. In the final section of the report recommendations were given about how the UN should change in order to be ready to respond to the challenges of the 21st century including the most contentious debate about the Security Council.²⁰⁸ Although this was one of the most crucial issues, the Panel insisted that the stalemate of the Council reform should not block the whole reform process.²⁰⁹ It also shed light on the fact that the effectiveness of the Council had improved since the end of the Cold War, but actions had not always been equitable and the contributions of some permanent countries had not been sufficient which damaged credibility.²¹⁰ The most important criterion for the involvement in the decision-making of the Council, i.e. being a member, requires considerable contribution to the United Nations "financially, militarily and diplomatically."²¹¹ More representation should be devoted to the developing world and the new composition should not hinder the effectiveness of the Council, but increase its democratic accountability.²¹²

²⁰⁶ The Secretary-General, Address to the General Assembly, New York, 23 September 2003, Source: <http://www.un.org/webcast/ga/58/statements/sg2eng030923.htm>, Access: 31.01.2013, 15:53

²⁰⁷ Anne-Marie Slaughter: *Security, Solidarity, and Sovereignty: The Grand Themes of UN Reform*. The American Journal of International Law, Vol. 99, No. 3 (Jul., 2005), p. 619

²⁰⁸ Report of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change: *A more secure world: Our shared responsibility (with endnotes)*. United Nations, 2004, pp. 75–94

²⁰⁹ Slaughter (2005) p. 630

²¹⁰ Panel (2004) p. 79

²¹¹ Panel (2004) p. 80

²¹² Panel (2004) p. 80

The cornerstones of the Panel's recommendations concerning the Council were two models of changing the composition on the basis of new regional areas (Africa, Asia and Pacific, Europe, Americas). Model A suggested adding six new permanent seats without veto power and three new non-permanent seats. Model B provided for creating no new permanent seats, but a new category of eight, four-year, renewable seats and one non-permanent non-renewable seat.²¹³ Thus the membership in both models should be increased up to twenty-four. The Panel asserted that "no change to the composition of the Security Council should itself be regarded as permanent or unchallengeable in the future."²¹⁴ In order to avoid imbalances a review conference was stipulated in the report due in 2020. The Panel also recommended the introduction of "indicative voting" which could enhance transparency, but strongly rejected the expansion of the veto power "under any reform proposal."²¹⁵ The recommendations of the Panel were aimed at attracting every member state, but the importance of interest was underestimated, although it did not change since the end of the 1990s.

In 2005 all the recommendations were incorporated into the Secretary-General's report, *In larger freedom*, in which he offered these new guidelines to be accepted at the World Summit in September that year. Annan noted that states should have agreed on the expansion of the Council according to model A or B before September, preferably by consensus, but their inability for reaching a consensus "must not become an excuse for postponing action."²¹⁶

Reactions of individual states and interest groups varied greatly. During the months before the World Summit many new proposals were drafted in order to convince other states about the necessary changes in the original proposal of the Panel. The G4 campaigned

²¹³ Panel (2004) p. 81

²¹⁴ Vijay Mehta: *Reforming the UN for the 21st Century*. December 2008, Source: http://www.action-for-un-renewal.org.uk/speeches/reforming_the_un_for_21st_century.pdf, Access: 16.05.2013, 20:47, p. 6

²¹⁵ Panel (2004) pp. 82–83

²¹⁶ Annan (2005) p. 60

for an early vote about the expansion of the Security Council by six new permanent seats with the possibility of granting veto right to them after fifteen years, and with four non-permanent seats.²¹⁷ The UfC was strongly against the G4 proposal and regarded it as an “unjust reduction of their international relevance,” thus their proposal claimed only for the expansion of non-permanent seats from ten to twenty.²¹⁸ The African Group also became active in 2005 before the World Summit. Their achievement was the Ezulwini Consensus, which turned out to be one of the greatest obstacles to Council reform in 2005.²¹⁹ This was the common position of the African Group on the Panel report, basically replicating the demand of the continent from 1997: two permanent seats for Africa with the right of veto and the criteria for selecting the two representative states should be reserved for Africa.²²⁰ In general, the African Group wanted six new permanent seats (including the two for them) with veto power and five new non-permanent ones.²²¹ However, none of the above mentioned proposals were put to the vote in the General Assembly.²²² So right after that the Panel report was published in 2004 the divergence of the interests of these three groups was inevitable.

By 2005 the groups had been so confident both in the sense of their numerical weight in the General Assembly and their insistence on their goals that it was hard to imagine a successful (two-thirds majority) vote about the Panel’s proposals, not to mention the desired consensus demanded by Annan in his report. Luck argues that by the summer of 2005 the importance of the national interest became clear when the states began to behave fearfully of change.²²³ Smaller states started to worry about losing their relative power and status gained over time, in order to achieve some “unpredictable renovations” in the structure of the UN.²²⁴ Annan’s main mistake was that he wanted to handle the problems of the UN as they had been

²¹⁷ Ronzitti (2010) p. 9

²¹⁸ Lee (2011) p. 412

²¹⁹ Lee (2011) p. 413

²²⁰ Lee (2011) p. 413

²²¹ Ronzitti (2010) p. 9

²²² Ronzitti (2010) p. 9

²²³ Luck (2005A) p. 408

²²⁴ Luck (2005A) p. 408

institutional, but they had been political, which was much harder to solve.²²⁵ There was no political convergence among states for reforming the Council; the P5 wanted to reserve its relative power and status, while the G4 tried to extend its gains. The UfC did not want to see its status deteriorating, so safeguarded the status quo. The stubborn imprudence of the African Group was harmful not just for the other groups and the reform process, but for Africa itself too, because the continent lost the hope for a more equitable representation by insisting on the Ezulwini Consensus. All these obstacles contributed to the failure of the process.

The P5, and most importantly the US did not declare a detailed opinion about the reform proposal. They acknowledged the need for enlargement and that there should be no change in the veto power. The US favored a slight expansion of both permanent (without veto power) and non-permanent members.²²⁶ There always were cases when the US interest could be best secured by multilateralism and then the Security Council was necessary.²²⁷ Arguably, the US had the least to lose with the Council reform, because its participation (or at least consent) in every international action is a “*sine qua non*.”²²⁸ On the other hand, it is not problematic for the US to act unilaterally, just as this was the case in Iraq in 2003.²²⁹ France and the UK supported Germany and India, and were ready to restrict the use of veto to Chapter VII resolutions.²³⁰ Russia claimed that “so far none of the existing models (...) enjoys prevailing support in the UN,” so the reform is out of question without a wide agreement.²³¹ China also refused to support the expansion of permanent seats, and supported only the non-permanent category.²³² Thus it is evident that the P5 did not facilitate the reform process, although they did not exactly hinder it. The interest groups managed to block any kind of proposal, just because of their own interest, using the disguise of effectiveness. In that sense

²²⁵ Luck (2005A) p. 409

²²⁶ Ronzitti (2010) p. 12

²²⁷ Weiss (2003) p. 157

²²⁸ Weiss (2005) p. 19

²²⁹ Weiss (2005) p. 19

²³⁰ Weiss (2005) p. 24

²³¹ Ronzitti (2010) p. 12

²³² Weiss (2005) p. 24

the “battles” of Council reform can be regarded as a game of stag hunt as it is elaborated by Waltz,²³³ because in the period of 2003–2005 (and even in the 1990s) any kind of reform was a zero-sum game in the view of the various member states.

2005 was regarded as a “once in a lifetime” opportunity to break through the deadlock of reforms, and expectations were also high because of the sixtieth anniversary of the UN.²³⁴ The Panel report had not too much to do with the interest of the membership which led to a vehement rejection from the UfC and the African Group. Thus two-thirds majority in the General Assembly became unconceivable again.

The World Summit in September “did not take a stance” on the Council reform, only three paragraphs were dedicated to the issue in which support was expressed for “an early reform.”²³⁵ The main impetus for the reform of the Security Council came from the Secretary-General and not from the membership, which must have been crucial. In this case the old saying quoted by Luck is pretty much relevant: “you can lead a horse to water, but you cannot make it drink.”²³⁶ Annan and the Panel definitely led member states to a situation to decide, but could not make them decide, simply because they did not want to. It is also noteworthy that with increasing the number of seats up to twenty-four or twenty-six, the power of the P5 to convince the necessary number of non-permanent members about how to vote, would deteriorate. In relative gains it would have been definitely a loss, however, not as great as it would have been in the case of the expansion of the veto power, which was unimaginable. Even the Panel notes that “the veto had an important function in reassuring the United Nations most powerful members that their interests would be safeguarded.”²³⁷

The analysis shows that the reform effort in 2003–2005 failed in the institutional issues of the Security Council, but it succeeded in other areas, and the Secretary-Generalship

²³³ Waltz (1959) pp. 167–168

²³⁴ Weiss (2005) p. 34

²³⁵ Ronzitti (2010) p. 9

²³⁶ Luck (2000) p. 98

²³⁷ Panel (2004) p. 82

of Kofi Annan was very much appreciated by the UN and its members. But the composition and the working methods of the Council remained unchanged again, for the second time in less than ten years. And it happened clearly because of the divergent interest and relative gains of the almost entirely universal membership which strengthens my hypothesis.

Conclusion

The United Nations Security Council has been a battlefield for almost seventy years. It is special, because it is not broken, but still needs to be fixed. Nevertheless contradiction has been inherent in the case of the Council. Institutional arrangements make this important body rigid and inflexible to change even in circumstances where the features of the international system are less constraining. It is ironic that the only successful reform proposal was adopted in the coldest years of the Cold War and after the systemic change almost nothing happened despite great efforts and well-prepared recommendations.

My analysis provides with sufficient evidence that institutional change in the Security Council might happen when there is a change in the distribution of power in the international arena, but it is much more likely to happen, when the interest of great powers and/or the interest of large groups of states change. The analyses in the three cases can clearly show this. Aggregate interest of large groups of states can be almost as important as that of the great powers from the angle of the outcome of a reform proposal. The most important causes and factors that lead to success or failure of a reform process are the will of the member states, the interest of the P5 and the aggregate power of the less powerful states which can be gained through representation in the UN. It is also obvious that in the 1960s, the UN had a little more than a hundred members and during the period between 1997 and 2005 there were almost 200. Of course, no serious decisions can be made by consensus in these circumstances, but a broadly accepted agreement is not impossible.

In the three cases I have demonstrated historical causal explanations about the outcomes of reform attempts and these findings underpin the assumptions in my hypothesis. Now it is evident that interest is the main driving force of initiating and hindering a reform process in the Security Council. It is also important that in 1963 the impetus came from the

membership, while in 1997 and 2003 it came from individuals. I argue now, referring back to Kofi Annan that so far there has not yet been a real fork in the road in the history of the Security Council. I have shown the relevance of neorealism in the analysis of Council reforms in the history, and the importance of analyzing reform attempts from a theoretical angle more deeply and broadly. Maybe neorealism is not a theory of change, but its concept of interest can obviously explain outcomes of reform proposals in the Council.

Change in the Council should be very careful, slow, incremental and evolutionary. There is no hope for the membership to accept revolutionary changes in a year or two. I argue that model B of the Panel report was the closest to an agreement acceptable to a majority, but no state wanted to miss the opportunity to renegotiate it in order not to lose their relative status compared to others. The wide membership has already recognized that representation and their group formations are the “power of the less powerful,” and want to use these groups for their advantages. The importance of relative gains is also apparent, because the P5 could quickly change the situation by rethinking their veto power, but of course it is out of question as this power is sacrosanct for them. Therefore any kind of change is conceivable only if power realities and state interests are taken into account. This is the point where the African Group makes a mistake. They overestimate their power with insisting on two permanent seats with the veto power. It is true that there are more than fifty African states and the voting cohesion is strong among them, but representation as power becomes powerless when they fail to take power realities into account. There is a possibility that on the long-run the G4 and the UfC can agree on a joint proposal and that could facilitate the whole reform process greatly. Initiative, however, should come preferably from the P5 and the broad UN membership. The dilemma of legitimacy and effectiveness should also be addressed in the future, but based on historical experiences I would recommend to strengthen effectiveness. The League of Nations ended up in a catastrophic failure because of its ineffective nature and

the main purpose of the founders of the UN was to avoid this failure. The world should always remember this when it is about reforming the Security Council.

Change in the near future is not likely, because reform nowadays is not on the top of the agenda of the UN. However, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon states that the reform of the Council is an “important and sensitive issue,” and claims that he will use his position in order to facilitate the process of cooperation among member states to agree on the Council reform.²³⁸ He, at the same time emphasizes that the reform of the Security Council is “the responsibility of the UN member states.”²³⁹ The current Secretary-General rightly recognizes that he can enhance the process, but cannot make states decide; moreover, make them accept a decision that is harmful for them in their understanding.

The debate is ongoing and there will always be hope for change, but circumstances of power realities must be considered first and action comes only after that. It is possible that in the 21st century there might be “a moment no less decisive than 1945 itself, when the United Nations was founded,”²⁴⁰ but then the world should be more careful and cautious than ever before.

²³⁸ Luisa Blanchfield: *United Nations Reform: U.S. Policy and International Perspectives*. Congressional Research Service, December 21, 2011, Source: <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL33848.pdf>, Access: 18.05.2013, 18:26, p. 2

²³⁹ Blanchfield (2011) p. 2

²⁴⁰ The Secretary-General, Address to the General Assembly, New York, 23 September 2003, Source: <http://www.un.org/webcast/ga/58/statements/sg2eng030923.htm>, Access: 31.01.2013, 15:53

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