# Untying the Gordian Knot: Analyzing the Challenges of United Nations Security Council Reform in the 21st Century

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## Abstract

In this master's thesis, the reform of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is analyzed through the research question: *Why do efforts towards reforming the United Nations Security Council face persistent challenges despite widespread recognition of the necessity for change?* The Thesis serves as an explanatory case study of reform proceedings at the UN level, specifically examining the annual Intergovernmental Negotiations Framework during the 78th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. The thesis uses document analysis of official UN documents, national statements from member states, and field notes created while participating in the IGN proceedings to strengthen its narrative. This thesis first lays out the historical context of the work of the Council and the reform debate before explaining the situation as of May 2024. The thesis then moves to its analysis, where it first analyzes reform through the theoretical framework of liberal institutionalism, examining factors such as institutional design, divergence of interests and preferences between member states, incrementalism within reform proceedings, and the conduct of the P5 and its impact on reform. The thesis then turns to a policy-level analysis through the implementation of the multiple streams framework. Here, the thesis examines the problem, policy, and politics streams before determining the policy entrepreneurs in the policy process and whether a policy window has been presented. Subsequently, the thesis interprets its findings in the discussion and lays out the limitations of both the thesis and its findings. The thesis concludes that the efforts towards reforming the council face persistent challenges due to a number of factors. Most importantly, there are significant divergences in the preferences of the member states in reform proceedings, mainly driven by national interest, as well as conduct by the permanent members of the Council that seeks to prevent reform. This is further strengthened by the high threshold needed for structural reform of the Council, which has constrained opportunities to reach consensus and created institutional inertia that makes the Council resistant to change. It further concludes that while the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the Israel-Hamas War have led to widespread calls for the necessity of reform, it has complicated reform proceedings by shifting the focus to structural reform instead of the more obtainable workings methods reform.

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## Abbreviations:

UN – United Nations

UNSC – United Nations Security Council

UNGA – United Nations General Assembly

P5 – Permanent 5 of the United Nations Security Council (China, France, Russia, United Kingdom, United States)

EU – European Union

G4 – Group of Four (Brazil, Germany, India, Japan)

IGN – Intergovernmental Negotiations Framework

AU – African Union

CAP – Common African Position

UfC – Uniting for Consensus Group

OEWG – Open-Ended Working Group

IWG – Informal Working Group

HLP – High-Level Panel

SotF – Summit of the Future

MSF – Multiple Streams Framework

IOs – International Organizations

SIDS – Small Island Developing States

UNSG – United Nations Secretary-General

# 1. Introduction

When the 50 participating countries in San Francisco signed the United Nations Charter on June 26th, 1945, the world was in turmoil. In a generation, the international community had lived through two world wars, the latter still ongoing as Japan would not surrender until September of that year. The influence of colonial powers such as Great Britain and France was waning, and the world witnessed increased tensions between the USSR and the US, which would accelerate in the aftermath of the war and lock the world in a Cold War for half a century. To remedy this, the United Nations, a name coined by the then-late President Roosevelt, was set up to succeed the League of Nations, which had failed to prevent World War 2. The new organization would be tasked with governing the post-WW2 world to avoid replicating the catastrophes of recent decades.

The preamble of this new organization reads:

"We the peoples of the United Nations, determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom."[1]

The organization, at its core, was founded on the ideals of multilateralism, the sovereign equality of states, and a system of international law and justice[2]. Ralph Bunch, one of the diplomats who helped shape the UN in its early years, argued that the UN was the world's one great hope for a peaceful and free world. In other words, effective multilateralism and international cooperation were the antidote to future wars.

While Cold War tensions and decolonization permeated the first half-century of the UN's history, western liberalism seemed to triumph with the fall of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s. The world moved from a bipolar world to a unipolar world, and the United States was the sole remaining hegemon. Frances Fukuyama famously labeled this triumph the 'end of history,' as the ideological fight between liberalism and communism, between East and West, was over. Liberal democracy was the only remaining viable and desirable political system. Fukuyama argued that "What we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular

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[1] "United Nations Charter," United Nations. San Francisco, 1945,Preamble.
[2] Ibid, Article 2.

period of postwar history, but the end of history as such: that is, the endpoint of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government.[3]" Given this, it would be a natural assumption that the UNSC and the global security architecture could now more easily manage international peace and security more effectively due to the new unipolarity.

Nevertheless, in 2024, one cannot argue convincingly that the end of history is indeed upon us. In the last few years, the UN Security Council, the principal organ whose primary responsibility is to maintain international peace and security per the UN Charter, has experienced several vetoes on Council Resolutions that have left it incapable of carrying out its mandate. Since 2020, 15 vetoes have been cast by a P5 member.[4] The majority of these vetoes have been by Russia on matters relating to the war in Ukraine or, more recently, by the US on issues relating to the Israel-Palestine question. This is a clear indicator that geopolitics and national interest are at the heart of the conduct of some members of the Council rather than the maintenance of international peace and security and that this is a significant problem for the Council.

Perhaps inspired by this, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres criticized the current state of global governance at the 2023 UNGA High-Level Debate. In his words:

"A multipolar world needs strong and effective multilateral institutions. Yet global governance is stuck in time. Look no further than the United Nations Security Council and the Bretton Woods system. They reflect the political and economic realities of 1945 when many countries in this Assembly Hall were still under colonial domination. The world has changed. Our institutions have not. We cannot effectively address problems as they are if institutions do not reflect the world as it is. Instead of solving problems, they risk becoming part of the problem. And, indeed, divides are deepening. Divides among economic and military powers. Divides between North and South, East and West."[5]

It is perhaps not surprising that the failures of the UN to prevent conflicts across the world are placed primarily at the feet of the UNSC. Following the remarks by Guterres, President Biden also criticized the Council and called for it to expand: "We need to be able to break the gridlock that

[3] Francis Fukuyama. "The End of History?" The National Interest, no. 16 (1989): 3–18. 4.

[4] "UN Security Council Meetings & Outcomes," United Nations, Accessed May 28, 2024,

[5] António Guterres. "Secretary-Generals Address to the General Assembly" (Speech, New York City, NY, September 19, 2023), United Nations.

too often stymies progress and blocks consensus on the Council.  We need more voices and more perspectives at the table".[6] Generally, there seemed to be a consensus on the need for reform at this year's UN High-Level Week General Debate, with many nations, including all P5 members, calling for reform[7]. However, the nature and the extent of these reforms varies greatly.

Shifting the focus away from the UN to other international organizations there have been widespread reforms in the last decades. The EU has, albeit slowly, deepened and is moving towards a supranational structure. NATO has expanded significantly, most recently including Sweden and Finland. The establishment of the ICC has increased accountability for genocide and war crimes, and both the World Bank and the World Trade Organization have been reformed.

Taking this into consideration and given that there seems to be widespread agreement that the composition of the UNSC does not reflect the geopolitical realities of the 21st century. Due to the increasing gridlock in the Council as a direct result of vetoes by the P5, and given the increased focus and work on UNSC reform through the IGN Intergovernmental Negotiations, why have we seen little to no progress in negotiations? Winther argues that the predominant narrative among scholars is that the P5 is to blame for the lack of progress but also cites regional rivalries and the structure of the UN System as a whole as possible causes[8].

This paper attempts to uncover whether one of these assumptions are indeed correct by analyzing the present state of UNSC reform proceedings. Perhaps it is a combination of the three or another issue entirely? As a result, the research question this thesis follows is:

*Why do efforts towards reforming the United Nations Security Council face persistent challenges despite widespread recognition of the necessity for change?*

It is important to note that this thesis builds on existing literature on the subject that inspired both the problem formulation and the angle pursued in the thesis. Most notable is the work of Bjarke Winther at Aalborg University, who has written several articles on the subject and whose work *A Review of the Academic Debate about United Nations Security Council Reform*

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[6] Joseph R. Biden Jr. "Remarks by President Biden Before the 78th Session of the United Nations General Assembly " (Speech, New York City, NY, September 19, 2023), White House.
[7] See Appendix A, 4.
[8] Bjarke Zinck Winther "A Review of the Academic Debate about United Nations Security Council Reform" *The Chinese Journal of Global Governance*, 95.

has been a significant point of departure for this thesis and guided the development of the approach taken. Similarly, Hösli and Dorflers *Why is change so slow? Assessing Prospects for United Nations Security Council Reform* helped me focus on the importance of institutional design and guided the thesis to adopt a liberal institutionalist perspective. Finally, *Mahmood's Power versus the Sovereign Equality of States: the Veto, the P-5 and United Nations Security Council Reforms* inspired the focus on the relationship between power and the values of the UN in Council reform. Existing academic literature is, therefore, a significant point of departure for the thesis as it builds on the work of existing scholars and expands on it by applying their findings to the IGN framework to see if the findings are similar.

The thesis begins in section 2 with a brief overview of the Security Council's organizational background and the UN's efforts to reform the Council frameworks to give the reader an overview of the historical context of the issue. The thesis then presents its theoretical framework in section 3, liberal institutionalism and the multiple streams framework, and explains their underlying assumptions and how they benefit the analysis. In section 4, the thesis then lays out its methodological considerations, as well as its considerations regarding data selection and operationalization of the theoretical frameworks. The analysis in section 5 is spread into six different subcategories. The first three deal with the implementation of liberal institutionalism, whereas the last three deal with the MSF. Finally, the thesis turns to the discussion of findings in section 6, along with the limitations of the thesis, before finally concluding the answer to the research question in section 7.

## 2. Historical Context

The UN was created towards the end of WW2 to replace the flawed League of Nations, which had failed to prevent the war. During this creation period, the SC was granted the primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security. As stated in the UN Charter Chapter V: "in order to ensure prompt and effective action by the United Nations, its members confer on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and agree that in carrying out its duties under this responsibility the Security Council acts on their behalf."[9]

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[9] "United Nations Charter", Chapter V.

The SC, unlike the GA, which was set up as the most democratic organ with the participation of all member states, was limited in its representation, and its resolutions were more binding than the GA's. Fasulo states, "The council is the only UN principal organ whose resolutions are binding on member states, which means that governments do not have the option of choosing which decisions they will or will not accept or help implement."[10]

The SC was founded on the idea of collective security. Collective security is a system where states agree to abide by certain norms and rules and collectively stop aggression. It is, therefore, primarily directed against the use of force within the system rather than an external threat.[11] On this, Danchin writes: "the concept of collective security sits uneasily between and incorporates elements of both these ideas functioning as a dialectical notion of order without government in an effort to manage the problem of power relations between states by superimposing a scheme of partially centralized management upon a situation in which power remains diffused among national units."[12]

To enforce this system, there was a notion that the Council needed the states with the strongest military prowess permanently on the Council. Thus, the original Council in 1945 consisted of 11 members, five permanent (P5) and six non-permanent. The P5 consisted of the United States, the United Kingdom, France, the USSR, and the Republic of China (Taiwan). The P5 were also given the right to veto any legislation before the Council along with their permanency. The remaining six countries were elected by the GA and served 2-year terms, and were Australia, Brazil, Egypt, Mexico, and the Netherlands in the first session.[13]

One of the overarching themes of the early history of the Council was the Cold War, which ultimately meant that the Council "could do very little in crises involving either the United States or the Soviet Union."[14] On crises outside the scope of the Cold War, the Council was more successful, an example being its deployment of the first UN Peacekeeping Force (UNEF) to deal with the Suez Crisis in 1956.[15] Perhaps surprisingly, there were already significant calls for the SC to reform during this period despite the Council being relatively new. This period of postwar history saw a lot of criticism of the veto system due to its lack of fairness and its incompatibility with UN ideals,

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[10] Linda Fasulo, *An insider's guide to the UN* (Connecticut: Yale University Press), 57.
[11] Peter G. Danchin and Horst Fischer, United Nations Reform and the New Collective Security (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 41.
[12] Ibid, 42.
[13] *"Countries Elected Members,"* United Nations, Accessed May 28, 2024,
[14] Stanley Meisler, *United Nations: The First Fifty Years* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1995), 35.
[15] "Milestones in UN History 1951-1960," United Nations, Accessed May 28, 2024,

which resulted in "arguments for both structural reform via suggested abolition of the veto, and of arguments for enlargement of the council to enhance geographical equity."[16] However, due to the Council's ineffectiveness in addressing conflicts related to the Cold War, scholars were generally pessimistic about the possibility of reform in this environment.[17]

Nonetheless, structural reform would prove possible as the GA adopted a resolution in 1963 that would increase the Council's non-permanent membership from 6 to 10 by 1965.[18] Additionally, during this time, there was an increase in the focus on equitable geographic representation of the Council as outlined in Article 23 of the UN Charter.[19] Half a decade later, in 1971, the Council experienced its first shakeup in the composition of the P5 as the Republic of China was replaced with the People's Republic of China via a GA resolution supported by much of the Third World.[20] Concurrently in the academic sphere, the recent reforms had largely quelled calls for structural reforms and resulted in less pessimism about Cold War tensions' impact on the Council. This period was therefore influenced more by problematizations of the juxtaposition between equitable representation and the effectiveness of the Council, as some scholars believed that "increased membership might be detrimental to the council's ability to operate effectively."[21]

During the 70s and 80s, with an increased presence of the Global South, the UN shifted its attention to subjects such as economic development rather than peace and security. On this, Meisler argues that: "…with the Security Council moribund as a result of the Cold War and the incompetence that allowed the Arab-Israeli issue to slip into the hands of other peacemakers, the United Nations took on the guise in the 190s and 1980s of an organization more concerned with economic and social issues than peace and war."[22]

The tumultuous end of the Cold War and the fall of the USSR in the late 1980s dramatically changed the priorities of the UN once again. The composition of the P5 was once again altered when the Russian Federation took up the spot of the Soviet Union in 1991,[23] a decision heavily

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[16] Winther, 77.

[17] Ivi.

[18] Ibid, 78.

[19] Ivi.

[20] Meisler, 195.

[21] Winther, 79.

[22] Meisler, 225.

[23] "Russian Federation," United Nations, Accessed May 28, 2024,

criticized by Ukraine for circumnavigating standard procedures[24]. On top of this, peacekeeping, and by extension, the SC, became more and more prominent as the UNSC launched 20 new peacekeeping operations in a decade.[25] To put this into perspective, only 13 peacekeeping operations had been launched in the previous 40 years. Further, from 1988 to 2000, the annual meetings of the Council more than tripled from 55 to 167.[26] As a result, the number of UN troops in the field rose from 9.600 to 73.400 from 1988 to 1995, accompanied by an over tenfold increase in costs[27].

Another interesting observation during this period is that the number of vetoes in the Council dramatically decreased. In fact, only nine vetoes were cast in the 1990s, a stunning decrease from the 46 vetoes cast in the 1980s[28]. On the surface, it would, therefore seem that the Council is more effective when geopolitical tensions are low. Nonetheless, while UN Peacekeeping was reformed significantly in the aftermath of the Cold War, the Council itself was not.

However, the 1990s would be the decade when the reform debate was manifested more concretely with the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council[29], a working group that still exists today and has received the nickname "the never-ending working group."[30] This was followed up by UN General Secretary Kofi Annan, who set up a High-Level Panel to report on Threats, Challenges, and Change (to international security and peace) that included a recommendation for reform of the SC.[31] Finally, in 2008, the formal negotiations on SC reform moved to the 'Intergovernmental Negotiations' (IGN), which is an annual negotiation round that is the system used for the UNSC reform debate today[32].

Today, the UNSC remains incredibly important in global governance. The Council currently has 11 active peacekeeping missions, primarily in the Middle East and Africa[33]. Moreover, the Council is actively engaged in the Ukraine war and the Israel-Palestine conflict, two of the most

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[24] "Statement of the MFA of Ukraine on the illegitimacy of the Russian Federation's presence in the UN Security Council and in the United Nations as a whole," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Accessed May 28, 2024,
[25] Meisler, 286.
[26] Fasulo, 59.
[27] Meisler, 334.
[28] "UN Security Council Meetings & Outcomes Tables"
[29] Winther, 79.
[30] Ivi.
[31] Ivi.
[32] Ivi.
[33] "Where We Operate," United Nations Peacekeeping, Accessed May 28, 2024,

prevalent international conflicts today. In recent decades, the UNSC has focused more on intra-state conflicts, and sanctions have been incorporated via Article 41 of the UN Charter as an important tool to pressure misbehaving governments.[34]

The calls for reform that have existed ever since the creation of the Council persist today, and some incremental progress has been seen. In the aftermath of the widespread criticism the Council faced for its inaction on the Russian Invasion of Ukraine, the GA adopted a landmark resolution tabled by Liechtenstein that stated that in the instance of a veto in the SC, the President of the GA shall convene a meeting on the veto in question and invite the SC to produce a special report on the veto 76 hours in advance[35]. Many states, such as Mexico, Sweden, Norway, Finland, and Denmark, saw this as an important step in enhancing the accountability of the Council[36]. It is worth noting, however, that the progress came via a GA resolution and not the IGN, where reform debates should normally take place.

At the opening of the IGN in December 2023, the representative of Brazil stated that almost 140 of the UN member states are in favor of expanding the Council both in terms of its permanent and non-permanent membership[37]. Generally, there seem to be two major issues that are repeatedly brought up, namely equitable representation on the Council and the issue of the veto. However, despite approaching the 20th anniversary of the creation of the IGN and despite there never having been more pressure and calls for reform, there has been limited progress.

## 3. Theoretical Framework

### 3.1 Liberal Institutionalism

The first theoretical framework drawn upon in this thesis is liberal institutionalism. Liberal institutionalism has its roots in Kantian classical liberalism and emerged as an explanation of the rise of liberal institutions such as the UN, the EU, and the Bretton Woods system during a time of bipolarity with constant tension between the US and the USSR[38]. Liberal Institutionalism "presumes that domestic and international institutions play central roles in facilitating cooperation

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[34] Fasulo, 59.

[35] "General Assembly Adopts Landmark Resolution Aimed at Holding Five Permanent Security Council Members Accountable for Use of Veto," United Nations, 26 April, 2022.

[36] Ivi

[37] Appendix A, 3.

[38] Thomas G. Weiss *"International Organization and Global Governance,"* ed. Rorden Wilkinson (London: Routledge, 2023

and peace"[39] and could help explain widespread engagement with these organizations despite changes in the international order.

As a theory, liberal institutionalism embraces the core tenets and assumptions of other IR theories in a selective manner. Logically, as liberal institutionalism is a revision of liberalism, it heavily draws on the importance of free democratic domestic governments and international institutions. These institutions "facilitate trade and other linkages that would make war even more damaging for its perpetrators.[40]" Such a system is self-sustaining and widens over time until everyone is part of the in-group[41].

Where liberal institutionalism diverges from traditional liberalist thought is that it also draws heavily upon some of the main tenets of realism, the antecedent to liberalism. Where liberalism argues that cooperation can be fostered by binding together in domestic and international institutions, realism highlights nation-states and their importance in global governance. Like realism, liberal institutionalism is utilitarian and rationalistic at its core and, therefore, adopts several assumptions to explain the behavior of states within the international system[42].

One of the early scholars of liberal institutionalism was G. John Ikenberry, who attempted to bridge realist and liberalist interpretations of the post-WW2 institution building. Ikenberry believed that "state power was important, but international institutions and values were too."[43] Further, he believed that the rise of liberal institutions in the aftermath of the war was due to the self-restraint of the US which helped set up international institutions and a rules-based world order that restrained itself, ultimately encouraging other nations to join. [44] Not only can this help explain the rise of institutions in the 20th century, but also the continued importance of these institutions today despite moving towards a multipolar world order.

The concept of path dependency will also be useful to the thesis. Path dependency "seeks to illuminate how and why institutions change and goes beyond the mere idea that 'history matters.' It centrally focuses on the effect of self-reinforcing mechanisms of increasing returns and feedback

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[39] Weiss, 120.
[40] Ibid, 121.
[41] Ibid, 122.
[42] Ivi.
[43] Ibid, 123
[44] Ivi.

loops."[45] Examining UNSC reform through path dependency can help shed light on the impact of historical decisions in the Council and how this has impacted the reform process.

Correlating with this is the concept of institutional inertia, which can explain resistance to reform. Institutional inertia is defined as: "the inability of institutions to provide a timely response to the created problems; tendency of institutions to resist changes; stickiness of institutions or how they resist changes; or inability of institutions to changes in national and international environments."[46] There can be many reasons for this inertia, such as sunk costs, uncertainty, political conflicts, and, finally, path dependence[47]. These two concepts will help gain a historical perspective on the reform process and examine decisions in the past that might influence the present.

Another scholar important scholar who helped develop liberal institutionalism was Robert Keohane. Keohane integrated core realist assumptions of state-centrism, anarchy, and rationality, but also rejected that international politics is an inherent zero-sum power game. Keohane also rejected the notion of the pursuit of relative gains, as it is not applicable in an international arena where there are more than 2 actors.[48] Keohane argues that: "liberal institutionalists treat states as rational egoists operating in a world in which agreements cannot be hierarchically enforced,"[49] and that "institutionalists only expect interstate cooperation to occur if states have significant common interest."[50] Keohane further argues that institutions are often rooted in power and interest and that it is in conjunction with these power realities that institutions make a difference.[51] Often, there is also an interactive effect as the impact of institutions on outcomes varies depending on the nature of power and interests[52]. When explaining why cooperation may sometimes face difficulties, Keohane outlines 2 factors. *Firstly*, states often worry about the

[45] Madeleine O. Hosli and Thomas Dörfler, "Why Is Change so Slow? Assessing Prospects for United Nations Security Council Reform," Journal of Economic Policy Reform 22, no. 1 (April 18, 2017): 35–50, 37.

[46] Nezameddin Faghih, *Institutional Inertia: Theory and Evidence*, ed. Ali Hussein Samadi (Switzerland: Springer, 2024), 6.

[47] Ivi

[48] Robert O. Keohane and Lisa L. Martin, "The Promise of Institutionalist Theory," *International Security* 20, no. 1 (1995): 39–51, 43.

[49] Keohane and Martin, 39.

[50] Ivi

[51] Ibid, 42.

[52] Ivi

potential of other actors in the system cheating.[53] *Secondly*, there is also often a coordination problem. On this, Keohane writes:

"Usually more than one cooperative outcome exists. The states involved may not agree on which of these outcomes is preferred, as each has different distributional implications. Disagreement about the specific form of cooperation is the principal barrier to cooperation in such coordination games. Unless some coordinating mechanism exists, states may fail to capture the potential gains from cooperation."[54]

Through liberal institutionalism, Keohane offered a correction to realism by combining it with a functionalist and neo-functionalist approach. He argues that "institutions can persist when they provide information, coordination, enforcement, or other benefits that states cannot provide on their own[55]" and that "the successful functioning of institutions depends heavily on the operation of reciprocity, both specific and diffuse.[56]" Further, despite the international system being inherently state-centric, international affairs are not dictated by the states completely, as there are other important stakeholders such as bureaucrats, legislators, judges, civil society groups and international institutions[57]. While Keohane acknowledges that political-economic relationships are typically more institutionalized than military-security relationships, he argues that liberal institutionalism still applies to security questions as institutions can provide information, coordination, and enforcement[58]. By combining these tenets, Keohane shows much greater prospects for international cooperation, even in a multipolar world order.

Another important aspect of liberal institutionalism that is crucial to this thesis is its view on how institutions evolve. Liberal institutionalism is heavily influenced by functionalist and neo-functionalist tenets. Functionalism, as argued by David Mitrany, states that authority is "not necessarily monopolized by nation-states within sovereign territories[59]" but could take place on a transnational level by a mix of state and non-state actors. Furthermore, global governance becomes self-perpetuating as nation-states continually cede more and more power to international organizations, conditioned they govern effectively.[60]

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[53] Keohane and Martin, 45.
[54] Ivi
[55] Weiss, 126.
[56] Keohane and Martin, 46.
[57] Weiss, 125.
[58] Keohane and Martin, 43.
[59] Weiss, 124.
[60] Ivi.

These functionalist notions then evolved into neo-functionalism, inspired by the EU integration project, which shifted the focus to regional integration. Scholars such as Haas and Lindberg argued that "the architects of European integration were strategically sequencing the delegated functions. By initially cooperating in economic matters states were building institutions and trust that eventually could spill over into politically sensitive areas.[61]" Neo-functionalism places great importance on experts who are thought to be anxious to expand their role in the policy-making system and, therefore, will use opportunities, often crises, to introduce new initiatives[62].

As neo-functionalism is heavily inspired by the EU integration project, some scholars argue that the reason for the successful integration and the spillover effects were "due to the fact that the conditions present in Western Europe were unusually favorable to the generation/cultivation of spill-overs from one functional arena to another and from lower to higher levels of common authority.[63]" When it comes to global attempts at functional cooperation, the expectation is instead that:

"at best, they should perform the initial tasks bestowed upon them by member states by international agreement and then persist as stable institutionalized components of the interstate order. Only in exceptional circumstances or conditions should actors within such arrangements be expected to agree to a redefinition of their functional tasks or an upgrading of their authoritative status."[64]

Neofunctionalism posits that "the process of regional integration will be incremental, involving a sequence of interrelated decisions"[65] but that "the process does not include major 'threshold effects' or decisions that are so much more consequential or controversial that they require a radically different mode of decision-making or conflict resolution.[66]" This notion is specifically useful as it will allow us to examine UNSC reform from an incremental perspective while at the same time examining whether there are threshold effects that make reform more difficult.

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[61] Weiss, 124.
[62] Philippe C. Schmitter and Zoe Lefkofridi, "Neo-Functionalism as a Theory of Disintegration," *Chinese Political Science Review*, no. 1 (March 2016): 1–29, 4.
[63] Schmitter, Lefkofdridi, 2.
[64] Ivi.
[65] Ibid, 5.
[66] Ivi

The functionalist and neo-functionalist notions adopted by liberal institutionalism provide an excellent foundation for examining why the UN continues to successfully reform, broaden, and deepen in a wide variety of areas while struggling to reform the SC.

Overall, liberal institutionalism is an excellent choice of theory for this paper as it highlights the central role of international institutions and, by extension, the crucial role the SC plays in facilitating cooperation and peace. Furthermore, its incorporations of realist tenets and assumptions, such as state power and anarchy, allow for a more nuanced understanding of the problem and the power dynamics at play. Lastly, its functionalist notions of the benefits of international institutions and how this affects broadening, deepening, and reform can help explain the reform process so far and how to address issues by analyzing the institutional structures at play.

## 3.2 Multiple Streams Theory

The second theoretical framework utilized in this master's thesis is the multiple streams theory (MSF). The MSF is a prominent tool for analyzing the public policymaking process and can help shine a light on the specific policymaking process of UNSC reform, whether in the UNGA or the IGN. The MSF, originally developed by Kingdon, consists of three separate and independent streams; the problem stream, the policy/solutions stream, and the politics stream. These streams dictate political action and are governed by different actors and considerations.

Kingdom developed this framework, which is heavily inspired by the so-called garbage can model, in an attempt to "explain the process of policy development and change and to describe how a problem or a public issue can reach the political agenda.[67]" While liberal institutionalism and its focus on incrementalism can help explain parts of the public policy process, MSF contributes by providing a tool for understanding how discontinuous or sudden changes in policy agendas can happen.

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[67] Ali Guidara, "Multiple Streams Theory" in Guidara, Ali. "Multiple Streams Theory." In *Policy Decision Modeling with Fuzzy Logic*, 405:35–45. (Switzerland: Springer, 2021), 35.
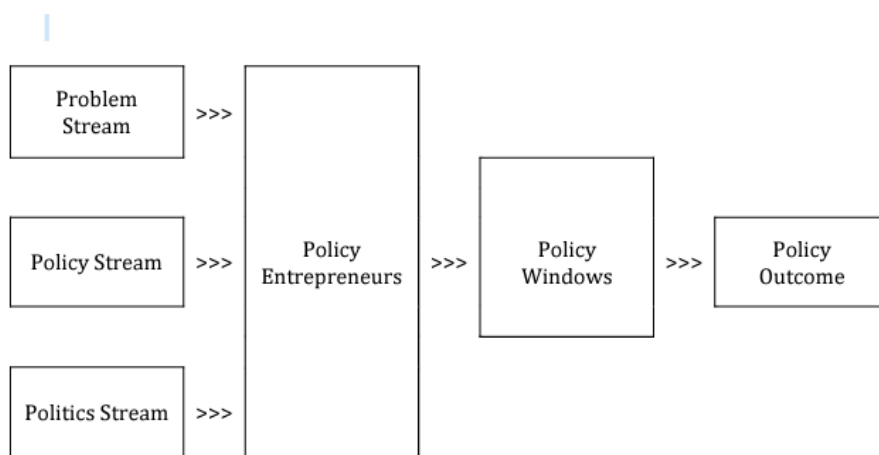
Figure 1. The Multiple Streams Framework (Adapted from Zahariadis[68])

Central to both the Garbage Can Model and the MSF is the examination of agenda-setting within organized anarchies. Organized anarchies are defined by three characteristics: Problematic preferences, unclear organizational technology, and fluid participation of actors[69]. These organized anarchies contain certain levels of ambiguity surrounding organizational choice, meaning that there are many ways to think about the same circumstances and phenomena. This ambiguity is then in turn heavily influenced by the three characteristics.

The first stream that Kingdon outlines is the problem stream. The problem stream constitutes things such as how a problem is defined and the ensuing struggle over problem definition by the relevant stakeholders. All public issues are conceptualized differently by the various participants, which influences how the problem is perceived by decision-makers[70]. Kingdom claims that these problems can arise and be defined by several factors.

Firstly, they can come from a systematic analysis, a survey, or a report on a given subject that recognizes an indicator of a problem. These indicators are not enough to constitute a problem on their own, however. Kingdom writes that "Such indicators or studies are not used primarily to determine whether or not a given problem exists; such determination is a matter of interpretation"[71] and that "Precisely because indicators have such powerful implications, the methodology by which the facts are gathered and the interpretations that are placed on these facts become prominent items

for heated debate."[72] Thus, problem indicators often need a push to get the attention of decision-makers, which can happen in the form of a significant event or a crisis that generates a sudden problem or calls further attention to an existing problem. Additionally, sometimes, these crises are so critical that they simply "bowl over everything standing in the way of prominence on the agenda."[73] These events or crises must reach a certain level and be considered significant, as well as have a real impact that is either real or symbolic, which in turn triggers the mobilization of stakeholders.[74] Lastly, these focusing events are often combined with other similar events that create a pattern. Kingdon writes that often "Awareness of a problem sometimes comes only with the second crisis, not the first, because the second cannot be dismissed as an isolated fluke, as the first could."[75] Finally, feedback on existing policies and programs can also serve as a problem indicator as "feedback can attract decision-makers attention to the results and consequences of policy because they may indicate the degree of success or failure."[76] This feedback can be both formal and informal.

Regardless of how the problem arose, there are significant struggles over problem definition by the stakeholders as "There are great political stakes in problem definition. Some are helped and others are hurt, depending on how problems get defined."[77] Kingdon argues that actors attempt to define the problem according to their own interests in an attempt to "define the problem in such a way as to place the burden of adjustment elsewhere, and to avoid changing your own patterns."[78]

Knoepfl et al. provide us with useful criteria to identify some of the factors of the problem stream. *Firstly*, the intensity of the problem is important. This intensity refers to the consequences of the problem and the perception of these problems, as well as context and time.[79] The consequences are typically financial and human costs which the stakeholders use to raise awareness to the public. *Secondly*, Knoepfl et al. refer to the extent of the problem. This entails how visible the problem is to the general public, the consequences of the problem on certain groups, the geographical area of the problem, and the duration of it[80]. *Thirdly*, Knoepfl highlights the urgency

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[72] Kingdon, 94
[73] ibid, 96.
[74] Guidara, 36
[75] Kingdon, 98.
[76] Guidara, 36.
[77] Kingdon, 110
[78] Ivi
[79] Guidara, 37.
[80] Guidara, 37.

of the problem as an important factor, an urgency that might shift depending on the context of the situation. Moreover, a problem may be limited to a specific area or be perceived as borderless, with a significant chance of a slow or rapid spread.[81]

The second stream outlined by Kingdon is the policy stream, also known as the solutions stream. As the name indicates, this is the stream where different solutions or alternatives are put into what Kingdon calls the "Policy Primeval Soup."[82] Central to this stream is the existence of policy communities where specialists in a given area " try out their ideas on others by going to lunch, circulating papers, publishing articles, holding hearings, presenting testimony, and drafting and pushing legislative proposals."[83] Often, there is a long softening-up process where ideas and drafts are continually floated and revised, eventually confronting each other or combining. These policy communities act independently and can be closed or fragmented. If a policy community is fragmented, it results in policy fragmentation, whereas close-knit policy communities develop common outlooks and ideas.[84]

Another central group of actors in the policy stream is policy entrepreneurs. Policy entrepreneurs are actors who advocate for ideas or proposals and who are willing to invest time, resources, energy, and reputation in the given solution.[85] These entrepreneurs advocate for policies for a variety of reasons. Some advocate simply to solve problems, others due to personal interest, and others to promote their values.[86]

The policy primeval soup and the ensuing selection process is an evolutionary process where some ideas survive and flourish while others fade. Typically, the ideas that survive meet certain criteria. *Firstly*, the solution must be technically feasible, meaning that policymakers must believe that the solution will work if enacted. [87] *Secondly*, it must align to some extent with the values of the policy communities.[88] *Thirdly*, there is an anticipation of future constraints that might be imposed on the given solution.[89] As the selection process evolves, the policy community produces a short list of ideas that are sharpened, and consensus starts to spread among the

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[81] Guidara, 37.
[82] Kingdon, 116.
[83] Ivi
[84] Ibid, 119.
[85] Ibid, 122.
[86] Ibid, 123.
[87] Ibid, 131.
[88] Ibid, 132.
[89] Ibid, 137.

community.[90] While it is hard to observe exactly when this consensus appears, there is often talk of a growing realization or an increasing feeling of a consensus taking shape.[91]

The final stream Kingdon developed is the politics stream. However, as Kingdon's vision of the political stream is mainly centered around domestic US politics and incorporates things such as national mood, organized political forces, and government. The thesis will instead utilize Lipson's adaptation of the political stream which better fits the multilateral policy arena. Lipton sought to understand the emergence of second-generation peacekeeping in the UN and thus identified 3 levels of actors, ideas, and interests, which are the multilateral setting, the politics within the UN member states, and the politics and organizational culture within the UN.[92] Central to this stream is the concept of bargaining, as consensus is more often reached by bargaining and not simply by persuasion.[93] Lastly, Zahariadis argues that often, this stream reflects the ideology of the dominant groups in power and that there is a tendency for these groups to attempt to dominate the stream with their narrative to shape policy.[94]

Having laid out the three streams and their actors and considerations, we can now look at how agenda-setting happens. While the problem and the political stream can push an item on the agenda by themselves, the likelihood of success is dramatically increased when all three streams join. On this idea, Kingdon writes:

"if one of the three elements is missing, if a solution is not available, a problem cannot be found or is not sufficiently compelling, and support is not forthcoming from the political stream, then the subjects place on the decision agenda is fleeting. The window may be open for a short time, but if the coupling is not made quickly, the window closes."[95]

Policy entrepreneurs play a critical role in the coupling of streams, as their qualities are extremely useful in the process of softening up.[96]

If the three streams are coupled, it presents a clear policy window where advocates of solutions can then attempt to push attention to their proposals or the problem in general.[97] Kingdon

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[90] Kingdon, 139.
[91] Ibid, 140.
[92] Lipson, 84.
[93] Guidara, 39.
[94] Ivi.
[95] Kingdon, 178
[96] Ibid, 181.
[97] Ibid, 165.

argues that "The separate streams come together at critical times. A problem is recognized, a solution is developed and available in the policy community, a political change makes it the right time for policy change, and potential constraints are not severe."[98] Generally, there are two types of policy windows: Problem and politics. Problem windows happen when a problem becomes so pressing that an opportunity arises for advocates to push their proposals, while political windows open due to a change in the political stream.

When a policy window opens, it is incredibly important for advocates to strike while the iron is hot, as policy windows do not stay open long and can close for a variety of reasons, such as there being no available alternative[99] or the passing of the event that prompted the window.[100] The policy window sometimes becomes overloaded, meaning that there are more solutions than windows to handle them. This can be coincidental or a deliberate action by an actor who prefers to prevent action on an item. If this happens, "most participants conclude that the subject is too complex, the problems too numerous, and the array of alternatives too overwhelming. Their attention drifts away to other, more manageable subjects."[101]

To further understand why a problem sometimes fails to reach the agenda, this thesis incorporates the concept of policy denial. Policy denial refers to how some actors seek to prevent a problem from reaching the agenda.[102] These might be actors who are negatively affected where an agenda change would benefit a certain group.[103] Cobb and Ross outline 3 types of ways actors achieve this. These are avoiding the problem altogether, attacking and dissipating conflict, or threatening.[104] They further highlight a placation strategy if the group proposing change is recognized as legitimate. If this is the case, opponents of an agenda change will "…seek to demonstrate concern over the issue on a symbolic level and, instead of attacking the group or issue, they provide a visible but not necessarily significant solution, blocking the proponents' action and dissipating the conflict."[105]

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[98] Kingdon, 165.
[99] Ibid, 170.
[100] Ibid, 169.
[101] Ibid, 176
[102] Ana Cláudia Capella, "Agenda-Setting Policy: Strategies and Agenda Denial Mechanisms," *Organizações & Sociedade* 23, no. 79 (December 2016): 675–91, 685.
[103] Ivi.
[104] Ibid, 686.
[105] Ivi.

The MSF is a useful theoretical framework for this thesis because it helps examine institutional decision-making in an organized anarchy with a degree of ambiguity. Further, the politics of international organizations are more symbolic, rhetorical, abstract, and value-laden than their domestic counterparts, making them optimal for an interpretive analysis such as the MSF.[106] Thus, the MSF presents an excellent base for understanding the dynamics of the UNSC reform process by examining the 3 different streams and examining where there might be difficulties or opportunities for stakeholders.

# 4. Methodology

## 4.1 Research Design

The research design of this thesis is adapted to construct a more convincing answer to the research question. At its core, the research design of this thesis is qualitative. Qualitative researchers "aim to develop an understanding, an interpretation, of the way in which those they study understand their actions and the context in which they act.[107]

The research conducted is of a positivist nature. Positivist research, as opposed to normative research, attempts to explain reality as it is and focuses on "empirical phenomena, on the links between them, and on the links between empirical phenomena and theoretical concepts."[108] Therefore, the thesis attempts to explain the realities of UNSC reform as they are and examines the links between the empirical phenomena of reform on one side and liberal institutionalism and the multiple streams framework on the other.

Empirically, the thesis takes an explanatory approach. The objective of explanatory research is to "explain a particular case, to build a comprehensive causal account of a general phenomenon, or to establish a general causal relationship that holds for a number of cases."[109] When conducting explanatory research, it is important to specify whether one seeks a prospective or retrospective explanation and whether one wants a full or partial explanation.[110] In this case, this thesis seeks a full retrospective account of why and how the UNSC has been prevented from reforming. Thus, adopting an explanatory approach, the research objective of this thesis is to explain the main causes

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[106] McCann, 16.

[107] Selen A. Ercan and David Marsh, "Qualitative Methods in Political Science," *Handbook of Research Methods and Applications in Political Science*, December 30, 2016, 309–22, 309.

[108] Dimiter Toshkov, *Research Design in Political Science* (London: Macmillan Education: Palgrave, 2016), 24.

[109] Ibid, 35.

[110] Ibid, 36.

behind the lack of progress on reform of the UNSC, both on an overall institutional level and on a policy level.

## 4.2 Case Study

This thesis acts as an explanatory single case study of the overall phenomenon of UNSC reform. Specifically, it reviews the proceedings undertaken during the 78th Session of the UNGA and the initiatives that have taken place to advance UNSC reform. This is supported by historical documents and events from previous sessions, such as High-Level Reports and elements papers from co-chairs of the IGN, which summarize previous IGN sessions. Single case studies "examine multiple pieces of evidence about a single unit" and are thus useful as they can help explain the relationship between multiple outcomes and explanatory variables.[111] Toshkov writes that "single case studies invite the explanation of individual cases,"[112] and we can, therefore, use a single-case study on UNSC reform to help explain the congruence between the lack of reform and the possible explanatory factors such as institutional design or geopolitical competition.

There are several reasons for choosing the 78th Session of the UNGA as the focal point of this case study. Firstly, the author of this thesis participated in this session personally during his work at the UN in the fall of 2023 and, therefore, has observed the issues and proceedings firsthand while writing extensive fieldnotes, minutes, and reports for the Mission of Estonia. Secondly, this is the first session where all meetings on reform, both in the UNGA and the IGN, are televised and broadcast to the public. Therefore, the data available for this specific session is considerably larger than its predecessors.

Lastly, as the last session before the upcoming Summit of the Future in September 2024 in New York, the 78th Session is tasked with contributing its input to the Pact for the Future on the status of UNSC reform.[113] The Summit of the Future marks the midway point of implementing the 2030 Agenda. It is labeled by the UN as "a once-in-a-generation opportunity to enhance cooperation on critical challenges and address gaps in global governance."[114] In the New Agenda for Peace, Secretary-General Guterres recommended that the international community: "Make urgent progress in the intergovernmental negotiations on the reform of the Security Council to make this body more

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[111] Toshkov, 36.
[112] Ivi.
[113] Appendix B, 2.
[114] "Summit of the Future: Multilateral Solutions for a Better Tomorrow," United Nations, accessed May 29, 2024.

just and representative."[115] Given this, this year's session of the IGN has an even higher incentive to produce a meaningful outcome from its meetings, as it will be imperative for the Pact for the Future.

By honing in on statements from the most recent session, Elements Papers from previous sessions, and academic literature, this thesis can offer a more timely and in-depth analysis of the recent developments and issues of UNSC reform and allow for examination of contemporary issues.

Reform of the UNSC is a case of great importance. There is a growing sentiment that a complete overhaul of the international system is needed to make it more reflective of the 21st century and ensure it benefits all nations, rich or poor. This is evident by the focus on reform in the 2030 Agenda and the upcoming Summit of the Future, and as such, there is a need to further understand the intricacies related to UNSC reform. In the preamble of the 2030 Agenda, it is stated that there can be sustainable development without peace, and no peace without sustainable development.[116] A case study of UNSC reform can, therefore, positively contribute to the existing literature on reform of the international system.

## 4.3 Data Selection

The empirical data collected and analyzed for this thesis comes from multiple sources that are both primary and secondary. Firstly, the thesis utilizes official UN Documents and documents produced by nation-states for meetings at the UN on UNSC reform. Examples of these are the report from the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change or the Elements Papers prepared by the IGN Co-Chairs.

National statements delivered by diplomats, permanent representatives, and other key stakeholders either at the IGN or at the UNGA during this session will play a crucial role in this thesis. The statements gathered provide an excellent insight into the positions of key actors and the rationales behind their positions. These will be especially useful for examining the dynamics of reform negotiations and understanding why actors behave as they do.

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[115] "Letter from Co-Chairs of the Intergovernmental Negotiations on the upcoming meetings" Permanent Mission of the State of Kuwait to the United Nations and Permanent Mission of Austria to the United Nations in New York, 31 January, 2024.

[116] "Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development," United Nations, accessed May 29, 2024,

To provide an overview of the IGN meetings from which the data has been gathered, the following table has been constructed:

| Date: | Meeting: | Agenda: |
|---|---|---|
| 13-14th of December 2023 | 1st, 2nd and 3rd informal meetings of the Plenary | 1. Opening meeting of IGN<br>2. Statements on the 5 clusters of reform. |
| 22nd of January 2024 | 4th, 5th and 6th informal meetings of the Plenary | 1. Structuring of dialogue on individual model proposals.<br>2. Presentation of reform model proposals by Mexico and Liechtenstein |
| 15-16th of February 2024 | 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th informal meetings of the Plenary | 1. Presentation of reform model proposals by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines on behalf of the L.69 Group.<br>2. Continued discussion of the 5 Clusters. |
| 7-8 March | 11th, 12th and 13th informal meetings of the Plenary | 1. Presentation of reform model proposals by India on behalf of the Group of 4.<br>2. Continued discussion of the 5 Clusters. |
| 18-19 March | 14th, 15th, 16th and 17th informal meetings of the Plenary | 1. Presentation of reform model proposals by Italy on behalf of the Uniting for Consensus Group.<br>2. Continued discussion of the 5 Clusters. |
| 15 April 2024 | 18th informal meeting of the Plenary | 1. Presentation of the revised co-chair elements paper. |

*Table (1): List of IGN Informal Meetings of the Plenary on the Question of Equitable Representation on and the Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Relating to the Council. All material available at: https://www.un.org/en/ga/screform/*

Literature from academic scholars is another source of data for this thesis. Given the importance of UNSC reform, there has been vast research over the years on the topic and the difficulties that reform faces. Such literature provides an excellent foundation, rich with insights and empirical evidence on reform that will be useful to the thesis.

### 4.3.1 Using Field Notes as Empirical Data

Field notes will be utilized to carry out the analysis. Field notes are an excellent tool for qualitative research as they "enhance data and provide rich context for analysis."[117] Further, these field notes will help navigate the complex data gathered and review it, and are therefore crucial for the analysis.[118] The field notes used were prepared during the author's work as a Political Intern for the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Estonia to the United Nations, where he was tasked with covering several meetings on the reform of the UNSC. Namely, the two meetings covered were the 34th plenary meeting of the 78th UNGA entitled *Debate on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Relating to the Security Council* on the 16th of November 2023, and the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd informal meetings of the IGN on the 13th of December 2023. The field notes were originally used by the Estonian Mission, and as such, they specifically pay attention to mentions of structural reform (veto and change in membership), specific proposals for working methods reform, and mentions of the Russian Invasion of Ukraine and the Israel-Palestine conflict. Both sets of field notes were taken in person at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City and will be put in Appendix A and Appendix B. The field notes from December 13 are especially useful, as the physical participation allowed the author to partake in the informal discussion after the meeting, which was not televised. Here, diplomats were encouraged to debate more informally and conversationally, and the format was significantly different and more interactive than the normal meetings.

As there are hours upon hours of meetings and statements during this cycle of the IGN, this thesis chooses to narrow its scope by focusing on essential actors such as the P5, the UfC group, the G4, the L.69 Group, the African Group, and the Arab Group. Narrowing in on these key actors will help streamline the analysis, limit the scope, and allow a more in-depth examination of these specific actors' positioning. As several of these also have presented their own specific models for reform, focusing on them will help, especially in the policy analysis section.

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[117] Julia Phillippi and Jana Lauderdale, "A Guide to Field Notes for Qualitative Research: Context and Conversation," *Qualitative Health Research* 28, no. 3 (April 5, 2017): 381–88, 381.
[118] Ivi

## 4.4 Document Analysis

To efficiently analyze the data gathered, this thesis uses document analysis as the process for reviewing and evaluating the different documents collected. Document analysis is a systematic way of reviewing and evaluating data, in order to "elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge."[119]

Documents are useful because they can help provide background information and historical insights into issues that can help understand their roots.[120] In addition to this, Bowen argues that documents "provide supplementary research data"[121] and that the "information and insights derived from documents can be valuable additions to a knowledge base."[122] Lastly, documents can help track developments and changes in a field when there are more versions of a specific document available.

Document analysis includes skimming, reading, and interpreting documents and combines elements of both content analysis and thematic analysis.[123] Bowen writes, "The researcher should demonstrate the capacity to identify pertinent information and to separate it from that which is not pertinent."[124] Researchers must, therefore, be careful and view documents critically, and not just take statements at face value, but rather "establish the meaning of the document and its contribution to the issues being explored."[125]

When performing a document analysis, the researcher must consider a document's purpose, the context in which it was produced, and the audience it was intended for while also making the process as rigorous and transparent as possible.[126]

To summarize, "document analysis is a low-cost way to obtain empirical data as part of a process that is unobtrusive and nonreactive,"[127] and as such, provides us with an excellent method to examine documents relating to UNSC reform and elicit meaning from them to strengthen the analytical narrative of the paper.

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[119] Glenn A. Bowen, "Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method," Qualitative Research Journal 9, no. 2 (August 3, 2009): 27–40, 27.
[120] Ibid, 29.
[121] Ibid, 30.
[122] Ivi
[123] Ibid, 32.
[124] Ivi
[125] Ibid, 33.
[126] Ivi
[127] Ibid, 38.

## 4.5 Choice of Theory

For the thesis, two theoretical frameworks have been chosen and applied in the form of liberal institutionalism and the multiple streams framework. Since my thesis deals with the reform of the UNSC, a prominent body in global governance, liberal institutionalism was a natural choice. Liberal institutionalism was chosen as it explains why states engage in international organizations (IOs) and why these IOs persist while at the same time taking the national interests of member states and the anarchy of the international system into account. This can help us explain the power dynamics internally in the UN and how these affect reform. As liberal institutionalism explains why IOs persist and evolve, it can also help explain why there is a lack of change in certain aspects of the organization and what might be the root cause of these.

Secondly, MSF was chosen as it can give specific insights by zeroing in on the policy process of UNSC reform and help outline how it might prevent reform. By looking at the three different streams separately, respectively: 1); Problem stream, 2); Policy stream, and 3); politics stream we can examine the specific problems that arise and what can be done to overcome them. Lipson[128] and Keohane[129] argue that the MSF is well suited to an analysis of the policy process within the UN, as the UN can be classified as an organized anarchy with high levels of ambiguity, and as its symbolic, abstract, and rhetorical nature makes it perfect for application of the MSF.

While the chosen theories examine different aspects of the issue on different levels, they also complement and strengthen each other. Specifically, the insights gained from examining the aspects of state-centrism and anarchy in liberal institutionalism can help understand the bargaining and rationales of actors in the politics stream of the MSF. Further, understanding the nature of power and interest can significantly enhance our understanding of the policy stream and why different policy entrepreneurs push the solutions that they do.

## 4.5.1 Operationalization of Theory

Operationalization refers to "the translations of abstract concepts and their attributes (dimensions), into less abstract ones that can be detected, classified, and measured in the empirical world."[130] To operationalize our theories, we therefore lean on document analysis as it allows us to elicit meaning from documents and translate the theoretical concepts into empirical evidence. This

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[128] McCann, 17.

[129] Ivi.

[130] Toshkov, 100.

will allow us to identify themes and patterns in the reform debate, which can be translated into explanations by implementing the theoretical frameworks.

It is fruitful to pay specific attention to the MSF and its operationalization, as its metaphors have not yet been developed into a shared "understanding, definition, and operationalization in empirical MSF studies."[131] To enhance the reliability of the results, it is necessary to supplement the theory with additional identifiers. Therefore, the categories developed by Knoepfl et al. will help clarify the problem stream. These are the intensity, the extent, and the urgency of the problem.

As the thesis applies the MSF on a supranational level and not a domestic US level, as intended by Kingdon, it is necessary to alter the politics stream to make it more suitable for analysis on a UN level.[132] To do this, Lipson's adjustment of the politics streams has been used. It outlines the multilateral setting of the UN, the politics within the UN member states, and the politics and organizational culture within the UN organizationally as the important elements of the politics stream.

Additionally, to operationalize the MSF and apply it to UNSC reform, it is fruitful to develop a hypothesis, assumptions, and sub-questions to help navigate the streams and understand when they are ready for coupling.

The main hypothesis used, as developed by Zohlnhöfer, Herweg, and Zahariadis, is:

*Agenda change becomes more likely if (a) a policy window opens, (b) the streams are ready for coupling, and (c) a policy entrepreneur promotes the agenda change.*[133]

Further, the thesis also borrows underlying assumptions to ascertain the readiness of streams for coupling, these are as follows.

1. *The problem stream is ready for coupling if the analysis reveals that there is a problem that has been framed as problematic by a problem broker[134].*
2. *The policy stream is ready for coupling if at least one alternative meets the criteria of survival[135].*

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[131] Reimut Zohlnhöfer, Nicole Herweg, and Nikolaos Zahariadis, in Methods of the Policy Process, ed. Christopher Weible and Samuel Workman (New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2022), 23–50, 23.
[132] Ibid, 25.
[133] Ibid, 27.
[134] Ibid, 31.
[135] Ibid, 33.

3. *The politics stream is ready for coupling if a policy entrepreneur actively supports a proposal and is willing to bring together a majority for it[136].*

Having established the main hypothesis and underlying assumptions, we can then develop sub-questions that will help develop the framework[137].

1. *Problem stream:*

   What are regarded as the main issues that require attention in the UNSC reform debate? Has the stream been impacted by recent focusing events?

2. *Policy stream:*

   What are the main policies or solutions given to deal with the problem? Are there any emerging solutions that stand out or meet the criteria of survival?

3. *Politics stream:*

   What are the political events that surround UNSC reform, and who are the main policy actors? How have these actors been influenced by recent political events?

4. *Policy windows:*

   Has any development in the problem of the streams presented a decision-making opportunity?

5. *Policy entrepreneurs:*

   Are there any actors who are particularly active in moving forward with UNSC reform? How did these actors promote the adoption of their policy?

Lastly, as we are examining a negative case where reform hasn't happened and where there seems to be significant difficulties at face value, it is important to ask:

> *Are there streams that are not yet ready for coupling and which might explain the lack of progress in UNSC reform?*

# 5. Analysis
## 5.1 The Status of United Nations Security Council Reform Anno 2024

This section briefly lays out the realities of the reform process as it stands in 2024. Overall, the objective of UNSC reform, as formulated in the 2005 World Summit Document, is to "strengthen

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[136] Zohlnhöfer, Herweg, and Nikolaos Zahariadis, 36.
[137] McCann, 33.

the United Nations, with a view to enhancing its authority and efficiency, as well as its capacity to address effectively, and in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter."[138] Thus, already at that time, a reform of the UNSC was deemed necessary to improve the Council's efficiency, transparency, and effectiveness in order to enhance its effectiveness and legitimacy.[139] The necessity of reform can be clearly seen in the attention the issue got at the 2023 UNGA High-Level Week.[140]

Typically, 2 types of reform are mentioned. The *first* and most contentious of these is the structural reform. Structural reform refers to. 1) a change in the composition of the Council; 2) the categories of membership; and 3) the question of the veto. Structural reform is incredibly hard to achieve as an amendment of the UN Charter is required which has a high threshold. First of all, any structural reform proposal must receive a 2/3 majority from the 193 member states in the GA, whereafter it will have to be ratified in 2/3 of the UN Member states domestically according to their respective constitutional national processes, including all P5 members.[141] Therefore, any structural reform proposal needs to receive collective support from 2/3rds of the membership and support from the P5, who are often at odds with each other and would need to be passed through the US Congress, the British House of Commons, and the Russian Duma.

The *second* type of reform is about the working methods' reform, which mainly deals with streamlining and enhancing how the Council operates and is often labeled the "unsexy cousin of the mainstream reform debate."[142] The threshold for such a reform is significantly easier as article 27(3) outlines it as a simple majority+1 needed in the GA.[143] Indeed, there have been examples of successful working methods reform in recent history. The most noticeable of these is the Liechtenstein Veto Initiative, which was adopted through UNGA Resolution 76/262[144] and attempted to make the Council more accountable to the UNGA. Additionally, initiatives aimed at a voluntary restraint of the P5 on the use of the veto in the case of mass atrocities have seen growing

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[138] "Revised Co-Chairs' Elements Paper on Convergences and Divergences on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters," Permanent Mission of the State of Kuwait to the United Nations and Permanent Mission of Austria to the United Nations in New York, 29 April, 2024, 2.

[139] Ibid, 3.

[140] Ibid, 5.

[141] "United Nations Charter," Article 108.

[142] Winther, 74.

[143] Ivi

[144] "D. 76/262 Standing mandate for a General Assembly debate when a veto is cast in the Security Council," United Nations General Assembly, 26 April, 2022.

support in recent years, most notably through the ACT Code of Conduct and the French-Mexican Veto Initiative.[145]

Both types of reform have been hotly debated at the UN in recent years at the IGN with little to show for it. The work of the IGN is split into 5 clusters (areas). These are categories of membership, the question of the veto, regional representation, the size of an enlarged Council and working methods of the Council, and the relationship between the Council and the General Assembly.[146] These 5 clusters have been at the heart of the work of the IGN since its inaugural session in 2009. However, there is a consensus that all 5 clusters are interlinked, and therefore the IGN is based on the principle that "nothing is agreed until everything is agreed."[147] The main objective of the IGN is, therefore, to overcome divergences and build convergence on the clusters, and as such, it takes an incremental approach where each session builds on convergences from the previous session to have a continual process for reform.

This year the newly appointed co-chairs of the IGN, Austria and Kuwait, have attempted to do just that and breathe new life into the reform debate by implementing new and innovative approaches. These include webcasting of IGN meetings, the launch of a website specifically for the IGN, the convening of annual meetings between the IWG and IGN Co-Chairs, an open house discussion on Security Council reform, and informal-informal meetings.[148] Additionally, rather than simply discussing the 5 clusters, the co-chairs split the agenda into three areas of work: discussion of the 5 clusters, structured dialogue on models proposed by member states, and the IGN contribution to the Summit of the Future.[149]

At the outset of this IGN session, many convergences and divergences have been identified by the policy community. On the convergence side, there seemed to be widespread convergence that the objective of UNSC reform is to make the Council more efficient and effective.[150] There was also widespread consensus on the need for increased representation for underrepresented nations such as developing countries, small and medium-sized states, and the Small Island Developing

145 "Revised Co-Chairs' Elements Paper," April 2024, 10.
146 "D. 62/557 Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters, " United Nations General Assembly, 15 September, 2008.
147 "Revised Co-Chairs' Elements Paper," April 2024, 4.
148 "Revised Co-Chairs' Elements Paper on Convergences and Divergences on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters" Permanent Mission of the State of Kuwait to the United Nations and Permanent Mission of Austria to the United Nations in New York, June 2, 2023, 3.
149 "Revised Co-Chairs' Elements Paper," April 2024, 1.
150 Ibid, 4.

States (SIDS).[151] In relation to this, there was widespread support for the increased representation of Africa, as laid out in the Ezulwini Consensus, which calls for both permanent and non-permanent seats for the continent.[152] This support includes important actors in the reform debate, such as the G4[153] and the US[154]. Furthermore, there was a consensus that an incremental process of changing the working methods and functioning of the Council is a useful and necessary tool to enhance the effectiveness of the Council while structural reform is being negotiated.[155] Lastly, there is a convergence on the need for an expansion in the membership of the Council from 15 to somewhere between 21-27 members.[156]

Enlargement is also one of the biggest divergences, however, as there is no agreement on the categories of membership of an enlarged council. Actors such as the G4[157], the L.69 Group,[158] the US,[159] the African Group,[160] the Nordic Countries,[161] the Arab Group,[162] the UK[163], Russia,[164] and France[165] all support an expansion of both categories of membership, while actors such as the UfC Group are against it.[166] Further, even among the states that agree on the need to expand the permanent membership, there is disagreement on which countries deserve this right.

The many different actors calling for the expansion of the permanent membership have also led to contention and divergence on the question of the veto.[167] Some states call for the extension of the veto to new permanent members, while some call for the outright abolition of it. Other states declare their opposition to the principle of the veto but acknowledge that it must be extended to new permanent members as long as it exists. Additionally, some states recognize the difficulty of outright abolition and instead call for limiting the scope of the veto.

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[151]"Revised Co-Chairs' Elements Paper," April 2024, 4.
[152] Ivi
[153] Appendix A, 3.
[154] Appendix A, 5.
[155] "Revised Co-Chairs' Elements Paper," April 2024, 5.
[156] Ibid, 8.
[157] Appendix A, 3.
[158] Appendix A, 1.
[159] Appendix A, 5.
[160] Appendix A, 21.
[161] Appendix A, 2.
[162] Appendix A, 1.
[163] Appendix A, 13.
[164] Appendix B, 17.
[165] Appendix A, 9.
[166] Appendix A, 2.
[167] "Revised Co-Chairs' Elements Paper," April 2024, 11.

Finally, a point of convergence that seemed extremely prevalent during this session of the IGN was whether to proceed to text-based negotiations. The usual procedure at the UN is for member states to produce resolutions, which are then debated and discussed at formal and informal meetings, where progress is made. On this, the Co-Chairs wrote that:

"There are repeated calls by a number of delegations, in particular the L.69 Group, the Benelux Group, the Group of 4, and the Nordic Group, to introduce text-based negotiations on a single consolidated document with attributions based on which the IGN negotiations should continue, while a number of delegations, in particular the Uniting for Consensus Group, the African Group, and the Arab Group, advocate for the need to first agree on the principles of the reform – particularly the model of reform - before proceeding to negotiations based on a text."[168]

Thus, while there has been incremental process and change in UNSC reform, especially when it comes to the working methods of the Council and the IGN process, the structural reform that is necessary continues to elude the international community, mainly due to a number of key divergences on the clusters combined with the principle of agreeing on all 5 before reform can proceed.

## 5.2 Understanding United Nations Security Council Reform through Liberal Institutionalism
### 5.2.1 Institutional Design and its Impact on UNSC Reform

Having concisely laid out the status of UNSC and subsequent convergences and divergences within the IGN, we can now turn to applying the theoretical frameworks of this thesis.

While liberal institutionalism is often used to explain why international institutions matter and why states engage in them, creating an ever-widening self-sustaining system, it can also be used to understand why cooperation might be lacking in certain areas. To understand the lack of progress of UNSC reform, it is necessary to go all the way back to 1945 and the creation of the UN. As mentioned, the UN Security Council was constructed on the concept of collective security. However, there is a glaring contradiction between the composition of the Council and the core principles of the UN Charter. Rather than adhering to the principle of the sovereign equality of states, the SC was set up with the principle of privilege trumping egalitarianism.[169] This was done partly due to the belief that an overemphasis on "exaggerated equality between great and small

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[168] "Revised Co-Chairs' Elements Paper," April 2024, 6.

[169] Lauri Mälksoo, "Great Powers Then and Now: Security Council Reform and Responses to Threats to Peace and Stability," in *United Nations Reform and the New Collective Security*, ed. Peter G. Danchin and Horst Fischer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 94–115, 97.

powers"[170] was a major reason for the failure of the League of Nations, and the decision makers, therefore, created a body where a select number of great powers could dominate smaller powers. On this decision, Mälkso writes:

"While probably truly interested in creating an international body that could act to preserve peace and stability, the victorious Great Powers also took great care to grant themselves special superior status and special privileges within the new body they helped create."[171]

And further that:

"While reaffirming the principle of the sovereign equality of states, the Charter simultaneously created a special and unequal enforcement authority in the Security Councill and gave the Council's permanent members a veto power so powerful, that its use by any one member could totally derail any resolution."[172]

Furthermore, this privilege is not only present in the Council but was extended to the domain of Charter amendments that are needed for structural reforms. Drawing from the concept of path dependency, it is clear to see how the historical decision by a number of great power states in 1945 has continually served as a constraining factor in the reform process. On this notion, Hosli and Dörfler argue that:

"States are uncertain as to what future political developments may be. Hence, states must fear that any political opponents will gain control over the necessary majorities to direct the organization's political agenda so as to change the action capability of the initial creators. To prevent the institutional setup to be altered against the preferences and power constellation among its creators, states deliberately ensure that the organizational structure is rigid. Therefore, institutions are equipped with high decision-making thresholds for institutional change, to prevent that the institution will be used against the preferences of its creators."[173]

Given the context behind the situation, the great powers found themselves in at the founding of the UN in 1945, the composition of the UNSC and the high threshold for reform seem logical. In the aftermath of the Second World War, and with the Cold War beginning, great powers such as the

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[170] Mälksoo, 98.
[171] Ibid, 97.
[172] Ibid, 98.
[173] Hösli, and Dorfler, 38.

United States, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union wanted to ensure that UN machinery and its political agenda could not hijacked by their rivals and thus set the threshold high.[174]

To put this threshold into perspective, one could look at the EU and its attempt to pass the Constitution for Europe. This was an attempt by the EU to create a consolidated constitution for its member states, which needed to be ratified by all 25 EU member states,[175] and subsequently failed as it was rejected by Dutch and French referendums. While the Constitution for Europe was ultimately replaced by the Treaty of Lisbon, it shows the difficulty of such a high threshold when dealing with institutional reform. Added to this, the EU membership at the time was just 25 while the UN membership is 193 as of writing. Therefore, 129 states would have to agree on a specific solution at the UNGA to simply pass the first threshold and subsequently must be ratified in 129 member states including the P5, making reform highly unlikely. The South Korean ambassador highlighted a concrete example of the difficult task during the UNGA meeting on UNSC reform when he pointed out that the UN had been unable to change the names of the Soviet Union and China in many of the legal documents.[176] The fact that it seems impossible to enact change on such minutia further strengthens the idea that the high threshold for change is a significant institutional hurdle that serves as a severely constraining factor and prevents reform.

Hösli and Dorfler further argue that the significant increase in member states of the UN makes reform further unlikely, writing that "It is likely that the increasing number of UN member states has affected both the contents of UNGA resolutions and the probability that the UNGA managed to reach decisions on resolutions, notably those requiring a two-thirds majority for their successful adoption."[177]

Because of this threshold, Horsli and Dorfler identify two main actors who they label veto players that are required for reform. These are the permanent members and the regional groups.[178] When examining the positions of the veto players, it is crucial to acknowledge that they share a privilege of power within the international system simply due to their existence as members of the P5.

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[174] Richard M. Price and Mark W. Zacher, *The United Nations and Global Security* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 211.
[175] Honor Mahony, "Ratification Problems Loom over Convention," EUobserver, May 31, 2003,
[176] Appendix B, 11.
[177] Hösli, and Dorfler, 39
[178] Ivi

Using Ikenberry's notion of Hegemonic restraint and its input on the rise of liberal institutions provides us with an interesting observation. While Ikenberry credits the restraint of great powers such as the US as one of the chief reasons why the UN succeeded, it is interesting to observe that the collective security model, the one area where the great powers did not restrain themselves, has continuously experienced gridlocks and ineffective decision making. This extends to the realm of UNSC reform and the IGN, and the ability of the P5 to halt proceedings on their own accord if they so choose. The argument could thus be made that one of the major reasons for the lack of reform was the inability of the initial great powers or hegemons to restrain themselves in a manner that would allow for institutional reform in the future.

Building on this and adding the general notion of institutional inertia, we can see how the creation of the UNSC in 1945 and the rigorous and complex system for reform while making the system more robust and dependable has also made it resistant to change. Drawing on the concept of path dependency, we can observe that the initial decision-making and composition of the Council created a feedback loop that constrains the reform process today.

Additionally, a factor that strengthens the institutional inertia within UNSC reform is the notion of status quo bias in institutions, meaning that some actors in the reform process prefer to maintain the status quo. Hosli and Dörfler argue that "a reform proposal that provides negative utility relative to the status quo for at least one veto player will not find a winning coalition.[179]" The clearest example of these actors is the P5 as they acknowledge that **"**the veto right of the permanent members (P-5) provides them with a huge advantage, while the general membership has to compete for ten rotating two-year term seats without such far-reaching privileges."[180] In this sense, China and Russia are privileged within the UNSC, which contrasts with their representation in some other multilateral institutions.[181] Mahmood further elaborates on the extensive power of the P5, specifically regarding the veto, which he points out makes the P5 able to veto any resolution irrespective of popular support if the resolution goes against their interests.[182] Considering this, the reform of the UNSC might significantly decrease the power of the P5. While a curtailment of the veto would, of course, mean a significant limitation in the power of the P5, every new seat in the UNSC, whether permanent or non-permanent, will also result in a loss of power for the permanent

[179] Hösli, and Dorfler 45.
[180] Ibid, 35.
[181] Ibid, 36.
[182] Fakiha Mahmood. "Power versus the Sovereign Equality of States: The Veto, the P-5 and United Nations Security Council Reforms." *Perceptions* (Ankara, Turkey) 18, no. 4 (2013), 126.

members as they will need more votes to pass resolutions in an expanded Council. This might lead them to prefer to maintain the status quo. Nonetheless, there are groups of states that do not necessarily benefit from a reformed UNSC while simultaneously having a privileged position in the decision-making process.

The conduct of some of the P5 states seems to fit with this notion. All P5 members, including China and Russia, recognized the need for UNSC reform at the opening of this year's IGN.[183] Specifically, the Chinese ambassador highlighted the crucial place of the UNSC in the multilateral system but argued that the Council must be restructured to reflect the geopolitical realities of the 21st century,[184] while the Russian diplomat called for a reform of the UNSC while maintaining its effectiveness.[185] At the same time, the P5 are some of the actors most often blamed for holding up the reform process and preventing meaningful progress.[186] This can be explained via the consensus among scholars that official support of UNSC reform is mandatory.[187]

As such, actors such as China and Russia, who might prefer to maintain the status quo cannot impede the work of the IGN outright given the criticism they might face, but must instead undermine it more subtly. An example of this can be seen regarding the debate on progressing to text-based negotiations within the IGN. While text-based negotiations are the norm in many of the UN bodies and Committees,[188] several states are against it being employed in the IGN, such as the Chinese ambassador who UN stated that "China opposes the hasty launch of text-based negotiations in the absence of consensus on the direction and principles of the reform by members states,"[189] while his Russian counterpart argued that "we consider attempts to establish artificial deadlines for the reforms or enforce the negotiations onto a text basis before waiting for the right conditions to be unacceptable."[190] Text-based negotiations on issues are the normal procedure at the UN, and states that are in favor of them argue that they are "the only way to initiate a real negotiating process capable of bringing together divergent positions,"[191] and that in the context of the IGN, the progress

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[183] Appendix A
[184] Appendix A, 10.
[185] Appendix A, 17.
[186] Winther, 95.
[187] Ivi
[188] Appendix A, 6.
[189] Zhang Jun, (Speech, New York City, NY, December 13, 2023.) IGN Afternoon Meeting, Minutes 04.30-16.00
[190] Vasily Alekseyevich Nebenzya, (Speech, New York City, NY, December 14, 2023.) IGN Morning Meeting, Minutes 09.35 -17.20,
[191] Sérgio França Danese, "Opening intervention on behalf of the G4," (Speech, New York City, NY, December 13, 2023), United Nations,

is being "blocked by those who do not want to let the IGN process move forward."[192] Both China and Russia vehemently oppose this notion, stating that it is not the right condition, as there is no consensus on all 5 clusters. However, as the OEWG has been working since 1993, and the IGN has been debating the 5 clusters since 2009, why not attempt text-based negotiations that many states argue might move the process forward? Perhaps the reason is that maintaining the status quo would be preferable for some of these states.

Another area where there seems to be a divergence between official and unofficial diplomacy is regarding the expansion of the permanent membership. At the IGN, the Russian diplomat expressed that Russia "consider India and Brazil to be worthy candidates for a permanent seat on the Security Council."[193] China has also often supported the candidacy of their fellow BRICS alliance members India and Brazil, but at the same time, the conduct of China and Russia in the veto system promotes discontent on the expansion of the permanent membership and its possible impact on the effectiveness of the Council.[194] The reason for this, according to Winther, is that "this is being done to strengthen the camp of reform voices that seeks abolition of the veto, inciting antagonisms within the debate and thereby preventing the process from progressing,"[195] and that this explains why "why P5 states act in accordance with this culture publicly, while pursuing their real agenda behind the scenes."[196] By preventing the IGN from moving to text-based negotiations, by stressing the need for consensus on all five clusters before proceeding, and by sowing discontent in the veto system, the process becomes more protracted and fragmented, making it possible to maintain the status quo. The argument could thus be made that the balanced approach to UNSC reform by an actor such as China is an attempt to ease the pressure it faces due to its position as a P5 member.[197]

A more tangible example of the possible reluctance of the P5 for reform is the fact that none of the members have proposed a specific model for reform such as the UfC or the G4 has. Instead, the P5 content themselves to be very general in their comments, calling for a more effective,

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[192] "Following Debate over Text-Based Process, General Assembly Adopts Oral Decision to Continue Intergovernmental Negotiations on Security Council Reforms," United Nations, July 12, 2022, https://press.un.org/en/2022/ga12435.doc.htm
[193] Nebenzya.
[194] Winther, 95
[195] Ivi.
[196] Ivi.
[197] Wencheng Wu, "China's Position towards UN Security Council Reform: Balancing Legitimacy and Efficiency," Strategic Analysis 44, no. 5 (September 2, 2020), 506.

representative, and legitimate Council without going into specific details about how this can be achieved. Given that the P5 are incredibly powerful actors in the reform debate, any proposals they put forward would be a significant point of consideration for other states in the reform debate. For example, while Biden and, by extension, the US have been very vocal in their calls for reform in recent years if the US was to put forward a specific proposal aligning with their statements, it would most probably get a sizeable coalition behind it. Dayal explains this as he writes that "Every few years, a permanent member advocates adding new permanent seats, secure in the knowledge that regional groups are deadlocked overrepresentation and that the Security Council's other permanent members would veto any proposed structural changes,"[198] and that this is "diplomatic populism" as the nation proposing it gains goodwill without risking change.[199]

Given this, it is fair to reason that part of the reason for the lack of reform is the presence of institutional inertia strengthened by a path dependency resulting from the original design of the UNSC that constrained the future possibilities for reform, as well as the preference veto players, especially the P5, in the reform process who wish to maintain the status quo despite their official support for reform, visible through a discrepancy in official and unofficial diplomacy.

### 5.2.2 Divergent Interests and Preferences of Actors and its Impact on UNSC Reform

Building on Keohane's argument that differing preferences and interests are a major obstacle to cooperation within international institutions, this thesis argues that a significant reason for the lack of progress in UNSC reform is the policy community's inability to reach a consensus on one solution due to diverging interests between actors such as the P5, the G4, the African Group, and the UfC.

Looking specifically at the proposals and preferences of some of these, it is possible to identify several severe divergences on key issues within the IGN, which seem to hamper the reform process. One of the most noticeable divergences is the question of categories of membership. One of the most vocal groups in the reform process is the G4, who believe that there should be an expansion in both the permanent and non-permanent membership. They argue that over 120 Member States support an expansion in both categories, including the African Group, the Arab Group, CARICOM, the L69, the G4, the Nordic countries, the Benelux countries, and 4 out of the 5 of the P5.[200] The G4

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[198] Anjali Dajal, "United States," in *UN Security Council Reform: What the World Thinks* (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2023), 62.
[199] Ivi.
[200] Appendix A, 3.

is eager to gain permanent seats on the Council[201] and believes that they should be central to a possible enlargement as they argue they are some of the "staunchest advocates of multilateralism under the banner of the United Nations."[202] This notion is further bolstered by the expressed support from both France and the United Kingdom of the P5.[203]

While receiving support from many member states, opposition to the candidacy of the G4 by the UfC is one of the most glaring examples of the importance of national interest and geopolitics in the reform negotiations. The key agenda of the UfC "appears to be the prevention of G4 ascension to permanency",[204] and by extension to prevent an enlargement of the permanent membership. Looking at the composition of the UfC, there seems to be an interesting trend in its geographic composition and how it relates to the composition of the G4. Argentina and Colombia are neighbors of Brazil, Pakistan neighbors India, Italy and Spain are in close proximity to Germany and the Republic of Korea is near Japan. Thus, for every member of the G4, there is at least one influential member of the UfC who is either a neighbor or in close proximity to their counterpart, showcasing that there are perhaps some regional dynamics at play in the struggle between the two factions. One possible explanation for this is that there are historical tensions between a number of these actors. Argentina and Brazil have had a complicated relationship spanning centuries. Further, while The Republic of Korea and Japan continue to move closer, their "unresolved historical disputes continue to undermine genuine bilateral reconciliation and optimal diplomatic, security and economic cooperation."[205] Lastly, as the tension between Pakistan and India continues to this day over the Kashmir region, it gives Pakistan a very powerful motivation to prevent India from assuming the powerful position of permanent membership in the Council. If India were to be given permanent membership with all the rights accompanied with it including the veto, it would severely restrict Pakistan's power in the region as India could of course veto any resolution before the Council it deemed unacceptable.

Another possible explanation for this divergence of preferences between the G4 and the UfC is a more practical one. If the G4 members were given permanent candidacy, they would take up a

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[201] Hösli, and Dorfler, 36.

[202] "Reform of the United Nations Security Council – Questions and Answers," German Federal Foreign Office, accessed May 29, 2024.

[203] Appendix A, 10 and 13.

[204] Winther, 95.

[205] "Resolving Tensions between South Korea and Japan: An Essay Series," United States Institute of Peace, February 1, 2023.

spot on the Council that could otherwise go to a non-permanent one on a rotational basis, thus reducing the potential number of elected members in a reformed Council. Given that Council elections happen on a regional basis, a permanent membership for Germany would reduce the chance of election for Italy or Spain, two major actors in the UfC, and similarly for Argentina and Colombia if Brazil is granted permanent status. The Pakistani diplomat explained this during an IGN meeting as he argued that "any permanent seat in a region statistically reduces the opportunity for other Member States from that same region to get elected to the Council".[206] Therefore, drawing on Keohane's notions of power and interest and how this affects cooperation, it can be argued that a significant factor in the resistance to expansion of permanent membership, whether for the G4 or another candidate, is that it is in the direct interest of other countries in their region to prevent it.

Another interesting observation in the candidacy of the G4 is the opposition by the Russian Federation and China to permanent membership for Germany and Japan while at least officially supporting the candidacies of India and Brazil.

On the question of an expansion of the permanent membership, spokeswoman for the Russian Foreign Ministry Maria Zharakova stated that:

"We give prominence to India and Brazil, which are natural candidates for a permanent seat on the Security Council,"[207]

and that:

"increasing the number of already over-represented Western states will not make the Council more democratic or bring closer the emergence of a more just architecture of international relations. For this reason, the ambitions of Germany and Japan to take permanent seats seem absolutely ungrounded."[208]

China, while not explicitly stating their reluctance to a Japanese or German permanent membership, also seems opposed to the notion. Richard Gowan, UN Director at the International Crisis Group think tank, argues that allowing Japan into the P5 would be an "absolute red line" for Beijing,[209] while Heusgen argues that "Beijing obstructs Security Council reform out of fear that

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[206] Pakistan National Statement, (New York, IGN Afternoon Meeting, 13 December, 2023), 3.
[207] "On Russia's Approaches to Reforming the UN Security," The Embassy of the Russian Federation in the Republic of India, July 6, 2023,
[208]Ivi
[209] "Why China, the Only Permanent Asian Member of the UN Security Council, Wants It to Stay That Way," Yahoo! Finance, February 21, 2024.

Japan and India, its main rivals in Asia, would become permanent members and thereby end China's privileged position."[210] Therefore, the conduct of China here can perhaps be attributed to an intensifying geopolitical and geoeconomic competition between the two East Asian states.[211] Moreover, both Germany and Japan are close allies of the US, and thus applying Keohane's notion of states being rational actors in an anarchic system, we can surmise that geopolitics and self-interest are key to the actions and preferences of both China and Russia, actors who are necessary for reform.

There is generally a clear notion of self-interest and national interest in the preferences of states and the bargaining process within the IGN. States tend to push and prefer reform proposals that benefit themselves the most, which can be seen throughout the UNGA and IGN debates this session. The Arab Group naturally calls for a permanent seat for an Arab state and fair representation in the nonpermanent section.[212] The L.69 Group, which is comprised of developing countries from Africa, Latin America, Asia, and the Pacific (SIDs), highlights the overrepresentation of the Global North and the need for inclusion of the Global South, as well as a rotating seat for the SIDs.[213] CARICOM, a group of SIDS in the Caribbean, also calls for a seat at the table for SIDS. At the same time, countries such as Slovenia, Ukraine, and Belarus demand an additional seat for the Eastern Europe Group.[214] Finally, the Ezulwini Consensus, commonly known as the Common African Position (CAP), was continually mentioned. It states that the African Continent must have 2 permanent seats and 5 non-permanent seats in an expanded Council and is the clearest example of the growing ambition of Africa on the Council. There is convergence within the IGN on the notion that Africa deserves greater representation on the Council. Still explicit support for the CAP was only given by 14 countries at the opening of this year's IGN, 8 of whom were African.[215]

Finally, it cannot be denied the divergence of interest and preferences in the IGN has a more utilitarian aspect to it, meaning that there are different interpretations of the ailments of the Council,

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[210] Christoph Heusgen, "Germany," in *UN Security Council Reform: What the World Thinks* (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2023), 25.

[211] Phillip Y. Lipscy, "Japan," in *UN Security Council Reform: What the World Thinks* (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2023), 33.

[212] Appendix B, 1.

[213] Appendix A, 1.

[214] Appendix A, 19. Appendix B, 17 and 8.

[215] Appendix A, Countries include Sierra Leone, St Vincent, Brazil, Egypt, SA, India, Germany, Guyana, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, Ethiopia, Portugal, and Uganda.

the reason for its ineffectiveness, and how to enhance it. To examine this, it is useful to examine how Winther categorizes the reform debate. Winther, like many other scholars, focuses on structural reform and working methods reform. He argues that actors who advocate for structural reform stress the need for a more legitimate council through reform of the Councils membership and the veto system, as they believe that "structural reform will lead to improved effectiveness and efficiency, because the larger group of countries in the council will be able to calibration regional and global perspectives with states' agendas in an enhanced and more representative way, and therefore come up with better-fitted resolutions."[216]

Proponents of working methods reform argue that structural reform will gridlock the Council due to an increase of actors and therefore argue that "once the methods of the council have been improved, the council's effectiveness and efficiency will increase as a result."[217] In addition to divergence on the preferred method for reform, there is also divergence on the relationship between legitimacy and efficiency in the Council. Advocates of structural reform argue that increased legitimacy of the Council leads to a more efficient Council, whereas advocates of working methods reform argue that increased efficiency will increase the Council's legitimacy.[218]

While Winther's work is mainly centered on the academic debate surrounding UNSC reform, it also seems to apply to the preferences of the member states in the reform debate. It therefore seems there is a significant utilitarian aspect to the divergence of preferences in the IGN. While there is an agreement on the inefficiency of the Council, there is disagreement on how to solve the Council's problems. This, again, is most noticeable in the debate surrounding the expansion of permanent and non-permanent membership, as well as the debate on the veto system. During the debate in the GA in November 2023, many states explicitly mentioned the need to strengthen the legitimacy of the UNSC to make it more effective.[219] Perhaps the most noticeable of these is the strong support for the CAP.[220] The CAP seeks to address the historical injustice many believe that Africa has faced in the Council, and its proponents believe it will significantly enhance the legitimacy of the Council by including more voices from an underrepresented region.[221] However, while the CAP states the

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[216] Winther, 74-75.
[217] Ibid, 75.
[218] Ibid, 91-92.
[219] Appendix B, Countries include Nigeria, Saint Vincent, Brazil, India, France, Guyana, El Salvador, Colombia, Qatar, Spain, and Nigeria.
[220] "Revised Co-Chairs' Elements Paper," April 2024, 4.
[221] Appendix A, 1.

African state's opposition to the veto, it also highlights that veto power must be extended to new permanent members if the right is maintained.[222] As opponents of the veto power argue that the veto hurts the credibility and efficiency of the Council's work,[223] this is a clear example of a clash between legitimacy and effectiveness. Maeserea and Badza share this notion as they argue that "It is crucial to point out that the Consensus' unwavering clamor for the veto privilege is arguably its greatest obstacle to overcome regarding the reform of the UNSC."[224] The struggle to balance the Council between legitimacy can further be seen in the common combination of both structural and working methods reform when arguing for the path forward. Through a reform in both these categories, states argue, the Council can be expanded through a structural reform while a working methods reform can help maintain the efficiency of an expanded Council[225].

Lastly, incorporating Keohane's 2 factors about why cooperation sometimes faces difficulties, we can identify both the worry about the potential of other actors in the system cheating and coordination issues. Firstly, the coordination issues highlighted by Keohane are extremely prevalent when it comes to UNSC reform and one of the main reasons why there is a lack of progress on reform. The wide divergence of preferences and interests laid out in this chapter naturally leads states to prefer different solutions, leading to a principal barrier to cooperation in the reform negotiations. Even with a coordination mechanism in the IGN, these preferences, strengthened by the high threshold for reform, have gridlocked the process of structural reform of the Council.

The worry about other actors in the reform process cheating is also prevalent, especially when it comes to possible permanent members and the misuse of the veto. Most notably, this worry was often brought up in the context of the Russian vetoes on the War in Ukraine and the American vetoes on the Israel-Palestine situation. The Italian Permanent Representative brought this up during a debate in the GA as he noted that "there are no guardrails of accountability between permanent members and the wider membership"[226] and that "life tenure is incompatible with the principles of democracy, accountability and equality among Member States,"[227] a notion they doubled down on a

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[222] Isabel Badza and Sadiki Maeresera, "The Ezulwini Consensus and Africa's Quagmire on United Nations Security Council Reform: Unpacking The Dynamics," *AFFRIKA Journal of Politics, Economics and Society* S1, no. 1 (July 13, 2019), 207

[223] Appendix A: Countries includes Italy, Netherlands (On behalf of Benelux), and Saint Lucia (On behalf of CARICOM).

[224] Badza and Maeresera, 207

[225] Appendix A, 13.

[226] "With Violent Conflicts Increasing, Speakers Say Security Council Reforms Crucial to Ensure International Peace, Stability, as General Assembly Begins Debate," United Nations, November 16, 2023,

[227] Ivi

month later at the informal-informal where they argued that the lack of action in the Council on Ukraine and Israel-Palestine were a direct result of the misuse of the veto and that as such expanding the right would only exacerbate the problem.[228]

### 5.2.3 Functionalism and neofunctionalism in UNSC reform

As the IGN, in principle, is built on an incremental approach, it is useful to view the progress made and difficulties faced through the prisms of functionalism and neo-functionalism, which are core tenets of liberal institutionalism. When applying these to UNSC reform, there are clear signs of incrementalism, which is fundamental to functionalism and neo-functionalism. This is most noticeable when looking at the evolution of the UNSC reform structure, starting as an OEWG in 1993, which ultimately evolved into the IGN process we know today in 2008. Further, the notion that each IGN session builds on the inputs and convergences reached in previous sessions is a clear sign that the IGN framework is of an incrementalist nature.[229] This is showcased in the Co-Chairs Letter as it states: "The IGN process should build on the work done in previous years, so that convergence will increase gradually, seeking solutions that garner the widest possible political acceptance by Member States, as mentioned in Decision 62/557."[230] A tangible example of incrementalism within the IGN processes are the 5 new innovative methods applied to the IGN debate. These innovative approaches were suggested by the co-chairs, adopted, and applied in this year's IGN session in an attempt to breathe new life into discussions, hoping the new dynamic it brings can lead to progress.[231]

Incrementalism is also visible in the emphasis within the IGN on the importance of working methods reform as a continual process undertaken simultaneously with the debate. On this, the Co-Chairs write: "At the same time, Member States also acknowledged that certain incremental changes to the working methods and functioning of the Security Council in its current form can be made without amendments of the Charter and can help to render the Security Council more efficient, effective, inclusive and transparent in the meantime." [232]

Given that there has been some progress on working methods reform, it can be concluded that this incremental approach is working to an extent, at least when it comes to working methods

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[228] Appendix A, 20.
[229] "Revised Co-Chairs' Elements Paper," April 2024, 5.
[230] Ivi
[231] "Revised Co-Chairs' Elements Paper," June 2023, 2.
[232] "Revised Co-Chairs' Elements Paper," April 2024, 5.

reform. Initiatives such as the French-Mexican Initiative and the ACT Code of Conduct are years in the making, getting mentioned and debated year after year in the IGN and gaining more and more prominence and support.

The notion of policy elites using crises to push their agenda is also prevalent in the IGN. While it can be argued that most of the work of the UNSC, and thus, by extension, the efforts to reform it, are on incredibly sensitive areas and topics that might be labeled crises, 2 events stood out. Firstly, many states at the opening debate of the IGN pointed to the situation in Gaza as a clear-cut case of the UNSC having failed its responsibilities and, therefore, showcased the necessity of reform.[233] Secondly, several states called attention to the ongoing war in Ukraine and its impact on the work of the Council.[234] These references to crises were often combined with reform preferences such as a curtailment of the veto[235] or simply a more efficient and legitimate Council.[236]

Neofunctionalism can also be used to examine the lack of progress on structural reform. Recounting neo-functionalist explanations for the lack of integration and cooperation and its mention of major threshold effects, it can be argued that the high threshold for structural reform and its contentious nature among member states once again serves as a constraining factor preventing progress. Furthermore, it can be argued that the conditions present for reform in the UN are significantly less favorable than those in Western Europe at the time of successful integration projects. The EU only has 27 member states, most of which are around Western Europe. In contrast, the UN is significantly more diverse in its composition with member states from all over the globe containing various political systems, strategic interests, and regional perspectives. Singapore argued that there is a need to consider the interests of all states in the reform process,[237] however, due to the incredible diversity in needs and interests of the many member states this will prove difficult. The G4 wants permanent membership, China and Russia want to prevent the membership of Japan and Germany in particular, the SIDS wants a dedicated seat for them, Africa wants 2 permanent seats and 3 non-permanent seats, and the UfC wants to prevent new permanent members altogether, leading us to conclude that this once again curtails reform prospects.

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[233] Appendix A, Countries Include Bahrain (Arab Group), Egypt, Malaysia, South Africa, Poland, Philippines, Iraq, Costa Rica, the United Kingdom, Colombia, Cuba, Maldives, Italy, and India.
[234] Appendix A, Countries include Italy, Poland, India, and Philippines
[235] Appendix A, 4 and 17.
[236] Appendix A, 1.
[237] Appendix B, 4-5.

## 5.3 Applying the Multiple Streams Framework to United Nations Security Council Reform
### 5.3.1 Problem Stream

The thesis now turns to a multiple-stream analysis (MSF) of the UNSC reform policy-making process in an attempt to examine if there are specific divergences on a policy level that can help explain the difficulties of reform. As the problem stream deals with problem definition **(See p. xx)**, it is necessary to examine how the various stakeholders have defined the problem of UNSC reform and if any factors influence this conceptualization.

One prevalent indicator outlined by Kingdon is systematic analyses in the form of official UN reports on the problem. Firstly, in 1997 the Chairs of the OEWG on UNSC reform conducted a survey that showed a substantial majority in favor of a reform of the UNSC.[238] Secondly, a prevalent example of systematic analysis is the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change report in 2004.[239] This report, commissioned by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, outlines the UN's analysis of the challenges facing the international community and how these can be solved[240]. It put forward a new vision of the collective security system that included a reform of the UNSC, along with specific suggestions for such a reform. Specifically, it outlined that both the threats and challenges the international system faces in the 21st century and the power distribution has changed while the composition of the Council has not[241]. They, therefore, concluded that it was necessary to "increase both the effectiveness and the credibility of the Security Council and, most importantly, to enhance its capacity and willingness to act in the face of threats."[242]

This HLP Report was further built upon the following year, in 2005, on the UN's sixty-year birthday during the World Summit, which was meant to transform the organization to meet the challenges of the 21st century in 2005 on the UN's sixty-year birthday.[243] At this Summit, the World Summit Outcome was agreed upon in which "UN Member states actually complemented the HLP's proposals with some additional initiatives of their own."[244] These two documents have

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[238] Price and Zacher, 217.

[239] "Report of the Secretary General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change", (NY: UN Headquarters, 2004.)

[240] Ibid, Vii.

[241] Ibid, 79.

[242] Ibid, 80.

[243] Thomas George Weiss et al., *The United Nations and Changing World Politics* (Boulder, Colo: Westview Press, 2014), 144.

[244] Jeremy Farral, "The World Summit Process and UN Sanctions Reform: Between Rhetoric and Force," in *United Nations Reform and the New Collective Security*, ed. Peter G. Danchin and Horst Fischer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 235.

been influential in the problem definition regarding UNSC reform. They are still important today as they provide measurable evidence and comprehensive analyses that bring attention to the necessity for reform and the problems the UNSC faces. The World Summit Outcome Document, in particular, seems key as it is listed as one of the important convergences in the 2024 co-chairs paper and is cited as one of the strongest indicators of the commitment of UN member states to achieve reform.[245]

Crises are also an important factor central to the HLP report. In the section dealing with UNSC reform, the report states that:

"the Panel believe it would be remiss of them if they failed to point out that no amount of systemic changes to the way the United Nations handles both old and new threats to peace and security will enable it to discharge effectively its role under the Charter if efforts are not redoubled to resolve a number of long-standing disputes which continue to fester and to feed the new threats we now face. Foremost among these are the issues of Palestine, Kashmir and the Korean Peninsula."[246]

While the HLP report is 20 years old, there seems to be a clear notion of the importance of crises in UNSC reform, even more so since the specific crises mentioned haven't been resolved as of 2024. Circling back to the problem stream, Kingdon highlights the importance of critical junctures that can help call attention to a problem indicator. Specifically, two conflicts seem to continually be brought up in the IGN when debating the general notions of UNSC reform and the subsequent preferences.

Firstly, as this year's session of the IGN took place against the backdrop of the situation in Gaza, there was a tendency for states to connect the ineffectiveness of the Council with the failure to deal with this crisis. As previously highlighted, 15 states called specific attention to Gaza at the opening debate of this year's IGN, the trend continuing in subsequent meetings. At the meeting concerning the veto power system, Italy, on behalf of the UfC Group, stated that: "With the idea of making the Security Council more efficient, democratic and fit for purpose, the UfC firmly advocates for the suppression of the veto altogether, as we understand it is outdated and the root cause of many of today's challenges. We have seen it most recently with the paralysis of the Security Council with regards to DPRK, Ukraine and Gaza.[247]"

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[245] "Revised Co-Chairs' Elements Paper," April 2024, 3.

[246] "Report of the Secretary General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change", xi.

[247] Italy Statement on Behalf of the UfC Group, (New York, IGN Morning Meeting, 8 March, 2024), 1.

This is a clear-cut example of an attempt to define the problems facing the Council by showcasing and highlighting the problem in connection with a focusing event. Furthermore, Egypt also highlighted the misuse of the Veto in the Israel-Palestine situation as a clear-cut example of the Council's failings and the imminent need for reform. [248] South Africa similarly noted that "the failure or inability of the Security Council to act and respond effectively to conflict situations such as in Gaza has highlighted over and over again its much-needed reforms,[249]" labeling it a possible genocide and accusing the US of prolonging the suffering of the Palestinian people.

Likewise, the war in Ukraine is highlighted as a major crisis for the UNSC and is often brought up in the IGN as an indicator that reform is needed. This was evident at the IGN opening debate, where Poland cited the Russian aggression in Ukraine as a reason why reform is imperative.[250] Poland argues that the Russian Federation "abuses all the basic purposes and principles of the United Nations"[251] and that there is a need for further representation from the Eastern European Group to balance them.[252] The Philippine delegate shared this notion, arguing that the inability of the Council "highlights the urgent need for reforms, especially in the veto process, to better address global conflicts."[253] Lastly, the Ukrainian delegate present at the opening was naturally vehement about the negative influence of Russia in the Council, stating that Ukraine "consider it absolutely inappropriate that a country in the permanent seat has a privilege to exercise the right of veto when considering situations in which that country is directly involved as a party to the conflict and moreover, the instigator of the conflict. The delegation of Ukraine therefore strongly supports all initiatives aimed at restricting the use of veto."[254]

Given this, it can be concluded that preferences and rationales for the need for UNSC reform are often coupled with a crisis or focusing event that showcases the inaction of the Council. Often, this is done so systematically by combining Ukraine, Gaza, and other conflicts together in an attempt to mobilize the stakeholders. It is further interesting to note that both the Ukraine and Gaza crises are not new and have troubled the Council before. The UNSC has been dealing with the Russia-Ukraine Crisis for over a decade now, tracing back to the invasion of Crimea,[255] and the

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[248] Arab Republic of Egypt National Statement, (New York, IGN Morning Meeting, 8 March, 2024), 4.
[249] South Africa National Statement (New York, IGN Morning Meeting, 8 March, 2024),1.
[250] Appendix A, 4.
[251] Republic Of Poland National Statement, (New York, IGN Morning Meeting, 7 March, 2024), 2.
[252] Ivi
[253] Philippines National Statement, (New York, IGN Morning Meeting, December 13, 2023), 2.
[254] Ukraine National Statement, (New York, IGN Morning Meeting, December 13, 2023), 1.
[255] "UN Security Council Action on Crimea Referendum Blocked," United Nations, March 15, 2014,

issue of Palestine can be traced back to the founding of the UN and is one of the crises outlined in the HLP Report.

Applying the criteria provided by Knoepfl et al. **(See pp. xx)**, Can help us develop the problem stream further to identify some of the factors within. Firstly, Knoepfl refers to the intensity of the problem. The consequences of the problem are high, and there is a perception of these problems both at the UN and in the general public. On this, Stewart Patrick, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, writes that: "To a growing proportion of the world's governments and citizens, the council today is both feckless and unjust, dominated by irresponsible and unrepresentative powers inclined to abuse their position rather than safeguard the peace.[256]" Further, Mexican diplomat Miguel Izquierdo writes: "The continued absence of such reform pushes the Security Council toward greater impotence and irrelevance, which will inevitably have dire consequences for international peace and security."[257] These consequences are also visible in the IGN. For example, Colombia argued that the lack of reform and the subsequent failure to deal with crises such as Gaza has led to a decline in the legitimacy of the Council due to the undemocratic nature of the veto,[258] while Italy also highlighted the Gaza and Ukraine as a consequence of the ineffectiveness of the Council.[259] Further, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines highlighted that the inefficiency of the Council was a consequence of its structural composition,[260] while Sierra Leone argued that the problem resulted from the lack of equity in the international system and that only a permanent membership for Africa could rectify it.[261] We can, therefore, deduce that the problem is often defined as the inefficiency of the Council, which has wide-ranging consequences, most notably the Council's ability to deal with crises, and that this has wide-ranging human costs for the affected states.

The second criterion outlined is the extent of the problem, which includes a problem's public visibility and consequences on certain groups. Given the prominent position of the UNSC as the body chiefly responsible for maintaining international peace and security, it is natural that the Council's problems are extremely visible to the general public, especially in prominent crises such

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[256] Stewart Patrick, ed., *UN Security Council Reform: What the World Thinks* (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2023), 2.
[257] Miguel Ruiz Cabañas Izquierdo, "Mexico," in *UN Security Council Reform: What the World Thinks* (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2023), 38.
[258] Appendix A, 15.
[259] Appendix A, 20.
[260] Appendix A, 1.
[261] Appendix A, 21.

as Ukraine and Gaza. On this, Patrick writes that the "Security Council's failure to act on Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine has reignited long-smoldering global demands to overhaul the world's premier body for international peace and security,"[262] highlighting Bidens and the US change in stance as a direct result of this. There is a general notion in academia that reinforces the notion that the war in Ukraine is an indicator of the problems of the Council that is very visible to the public. On this, Gordanić writes: "The conflict between Russia and Ukraine has attracted a lot of media attention and has cast a lot of shadows on the image of Russia, especially in the Western states. It has also heaped scorn on the on the United Nations and the Security Council's roles and reputation.[263]" Similarly, Mbara and Graham write that "The invasion of Ukraine by Russia has revealed several deep flaws in the world system. The structure of the UNSC and its oversight function of the multilateral system is a significant problem that needs to be addressed."[264]

In connection with its high visibility, the problem is also quite extensive in that it does not limit itself to a geographical area or a group but is rather a problem for the international community at large. An example of this can be seen by turning to the war in Ukraine and the Black Sea Grain Initiative (BSGI). While some might have seen this conflict as a regional dispute between two neighboring states, this case highlights the interconnectedness of the globalized world. Gordanić argues this, highlighting that "Russia and Ukraine provide 30% of the world's wheat and barley, one-fifth of its maize, and over half of its sunflower oil. The consequences of the problem might affect 1.7 billion people, which is over one-fifth of humanity".[265] The war is not a regional phenomenon but threatens global food security, especially now that Russia has canceled the BSGI, which UNSG Guterres called "a lifeline for global food security and a beacon of hope in a troubled world".[266]

This argument ties in nicely with the third criterion, the problem's urgency. The effectiveness of the UNSC and reform of the body is a global issue that involves all member states of the UN and can therefore be considered a borderless issue. Additionally, given the interconnectedness of the 4 pillars of the UN,[267] there is a chance that the problems of the Council

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[262] Patrick, 1.

[263] Jelica Gordanić, "The Ukraine Crisis 2022 — an Alarm for the Reform of the UN Security Council?," The Review of International Affairs 73, no. 1186 (2022), 128.

[264] George Chimdi Mbara and Suzanne Graham, "Russia's Invasion of Ukraine: What Relevance for the United Nations Security Council Reforms?," *Journal of African Foreign Affairs* 10, no. 2 (August 1, 2023): 88

[265] Gordanić, 126.

[266] "UN Chief Regrets Russia's Decision to Withdraw from Grain Deal," United Nations, July 17, 2023.

[267] "The 4 Pillars of the United Nations," United Nations, accessed May 29, 2024.

can spread to other areas. For example, as there can be no peace without development and no development without peace,[268] the failure to reform the UNSC could severely hamper efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

Lastly, Kingdon's notion of struggles over problem definition is extremely prevalent in the IGN. While there is seemingly established consensus on the challenges the Council faces and the need for reform, there are divergences and struggles in the debate over the cause of this. For example, during a speech at the UNGA, the Russian representative placed the blame for the Council's ineffectiveness at the feet of the US and the West, arguing that it is not the veto that is the issue, in fact, the veto is crucial to maintain international peace and security, but rather it is the conduct of the US and its allies that is the problem as they take advantage of a comfortable majority in the Council due to their overrepresentation.[269] This highlights the struggle over problem definition well; Russia attempts to shift the blame to the US while at the same time defending its conduct in the Council, trying to justify its vetoes, and defining the problem in a way that limits blame on themselves. Other great examples are the attempts by states to frame the problem in a way where solutions would often include said state. Examples of this are the Arab[270] and African[271] states citing their lack of representation in the Council as the main problem and arguing that including their voices would make the Council more effective. Similarly, Italy tries to define the cause of the problem as the conduct of the permanent membership to curtail support for models that expand permanent membership and instead support the UfC model centered on non-permanent expansion.[272]

Thus, to answer the question posed in the operationalization section, the main issues that are regarded as requiring attention in the UNSC reform debate are enhancing the effectiveness of the Council and equipping it better to handle crises. Some argue that an expansion of permanent membership is needed for this, while others argue that the role of the non-permanent section must be increased and the veto limited. Further, the events in Gaza and Ukraine have served as focusing events that have pushed further attention to the problem, which has often been brought up in the struggle over problem definition.

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[268] Khalida Bouzar, "No Peace, No Sustainable Development: A Vicious Cycle That We Can Break," United Nations, April 2015.
[269] Appendix B, 20.
[270] Appendix A, 1.
[271] Appendix A, 23.
[272] Appendix A, 1-2.

Looking at the policy stream, this thesis argues that the IGN and the actors who take part in it are a textbook example of a policy community as outlined by Kingdon. This is especially true for this session of the IGN, where specific models have been put into the policy primeval soup, presented and pushed by groups such as the G4, The L.69 Group, and the UfC group. There is a softening-up process where ideas are floated by member states and debated in an attempt to build convergences and support for each specific model. The emphasis structurally of the IGN, where each session builds on the ideas and convergences of the previous session, further strengthens this idea. However, as overwhelming support for one solution has not happened yet, it is important to examine the specific models proposed in this session more closely to understand the reasons behind this.

Firstly, The G4 model was presented at the IGN on the 7th of March by India. The G4 model centers around enhancing the capabilities of the Council to deal with the geopolitical realities of the 21st century by expanding the Council to 25/26 members and adding six permanent and four or five non-permanent members.[273] In the permanent section, this includes two from the African states, two from the Asia-Pacific, one from Latin America and the Caribbean, and one from Western Europe or other states.[274] In the non-permanent section, this would add one or two members from the African States, one from the Asian-Pacific States, one from the Eastern European States, and finally one from Latin American and Caribbean States.[275] It is also important to note that the G4 model would not assume that the G4 members are granted permanent membership automatically as they call for fair elections in the UNGA to elect the new permanent members[276]. Finally, On the veto, the G4 notes that new permanent members should not veto a resolution until a final decision on the matter has been made at the IGN.[277]

Responding to the model, several other groups were critical of the G4 proposal. Italy, on behalf of the UfC, criticized the proposed expansion of permanent seats, arguing that it would "undermine the accountability, effectiveness and efficiency of the Security Council"[278] and accusing the G4 of acting in self-interest as the proposal would inherently favor larger states over

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[273] India Statement on behalf of the G4, (New York, IGN Morning Meeting, 7 March, 2024), 1.
[274] Ivi.
[275] Ivi.
[276] Ibid, 2.
[277] Ivi.
[278] Italy Statement on behalf of the UfC Group (New York, IGN Morning Meeting, 7 March, 2024), 2

smaller states.[279] Sierra Leone, on behalf of the African Group, supported the G4 in their proposal for expansion of the permanent membership and thanked them for their support for the CAP[280] but stated that the African Group still diverged severely on the use of the veto for new member states.[281] Further, Russia disagreed with the model, arguing that 25/26 members of the Council was too many and that Western states should not be granted additional seats.[282]

Later that month on March 18th, Italy presented the UfC Model. The UfC model proposes an expansion only in the non-permanent membership, stating that an expansion of the permanent category would make the Council less accountable and undermine the sovereign equality of states enshrined in the UN Charter.[283] Further, the model proposes longer-term non-permanent seats from 3 to 5 years to accommodate states contributing more to international peace and security.[284] In an expanded Council, the UfC views the distribution of seats as follows:

| Group: | Before: | After: |
|---|---|---|
| African Group (54 members) | 3 | 6 |
| Asia-Pacific Group (53 members) | 2 | 6 |
| The Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (33 members) | 2 | 4 |
| Western European and Others Group (28 members) | 2 | 3 |
| Eastern European Group (23 members) | 1 | 2 |

*Table 2: adapted from Italy's presentation of the UfC Model at the IGN on 18.03.24.[285]*

In response to the UfC model, the delegate from Sierra Leone, on behalf of the African Group, argued that the expansion only in the non-permanent section deviated severely from the CAP and that only an expansion in both categories could make the Council fully democratized.[286] Germany, on behalf of the G4, likewise criticized the model, arguing that failing to expand the permanent

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[279] Ibid, 4

[280] Statement by Sierra Leone on behalf of the African Group, (New York, IGN Morning Meeting, 7 March, 2024), 1.

[281] Ibid, 5.

[282] Russian Federation National Statement, (New York, IGN Morning Meeting, 7 March, 2024) Minutes 1.16.10 – 1.21.45.

[283] Italy Presentation of UfC Model, (New York, IGN Morning Meeting, 17 March, 2024), 3

[284] Ibid, 4.

[285] Ibid, 5.

[286] Statement By Sierra Leone on behalf of the African Group, (New York, IGN Morning Meeting, 17 March, 2024)

membership will only perpetuate the imbalance currently in the Council,[287] and noted that all 54 African states, the L.69, and at least 4 out of the 5 P5 members support an increase in permanent membership.[288]

The last model examined was presented by the L.69 Group on February 15th. The L.69 proposes an expansion of both permanent and non-permanent membership, as they recognize that the permanent membership category cannot be dissolved and, therefore, has to be expanded to achieve equity.[289] Further, on regional representation, their model builds on enhancing the position of the Global South, supporting the CAP, and establishing a rotating seat for the SIDS.[290] On the question of the veto, the L.69 Group proposes an extension of the veto to new permanent members with no reservations but also acknowledges that items such as the French-Mexican Initiative can help the problems in the veto system.[291]

In response to the L.69 proposal, Sierra Leone, once again speaking for the African Group, praised the L.69 proposal, which they noted built on the CAP.[292] Italy once again found the expansion of the permanent membership unacceptable,[293] while Germany noted the close proximity of the L.69 and G4 models and hoped to bridge the gap going forward.[294]

Having examined the different proposals and how they were received in the IGN, it is now possible to attempt to understand the reason behind the lack of consensus. As laid out in the previous section, 5.2.2, there are large divergences in the preferences of the individual member states in the IGN. Noting Kingdon's explanation of the fragmentation of policy communities, we can thus conclude that the fragmentation of the policy community in the IGN has resulted in a fragmentation of policy. This is evident in the wide divergences in the reform models pushed by the policy entrepreneurs within the framework, most notably between the G4 and the UfC.

Additionally, building on Kingdon's assumption of why some ideas survive while others do not, we can conclude that none of the proposed models have cleared these thresholds yet. Firstly, a

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[287] https://estatements.unmeetings.org/estatements/10.0010/20240318100000000/rBnB3cq0ya9w/gHEFSbeGKTS3_en.pdf, 1.

[288] Statement By Sierra Leone on behalf of the African Group, March 17, 2.

[289] St. Vincent and the Grenadines Presentation of L.69 Reform Model, (New York, IGN Morning Meeting, 15 February, 2024), 4.

[290] Ibid, 5.

[291] Ibid, 6.

[292] Statement By Sierra Leone on behalf of the African Group, (New York, IGN Morning Meeting, 15 February 2024), 2.

[293] Statement by Italy on behalf of the UfC Group, (New York, IGN Morning Meeting, 15 February 2024), 1

[294] Germany National Statement, (New York, IGN Morning Meeting, 15 February 2024), 1.

solution must be feasible meaning that policymakers must believe that the solution will work if it is enacted. This once again brings us back to the debate over how to remedy the Council's problems. Actors such as the African Group, The G4, and the L.69 believe that the Council can only be made more effective by increasing the legitimacy of the Council through an expansion of permanent membership. In contrast, actors such as the UfC, believe that the Council's problems can only be achieved by limiting the influence of permanent members.

Secondly, on the notion of value acceptability, if we assume that the values that solutions need to align with are those of the UN Charter, there also seem to be issues here. Recalling the contradiction in the creation of the UNSC as an entity, there is evidence that this extends to the reform debate. While presenting the models, Italy continuously highlighted that permanent membership goes against the inherent notion of the sovereign equality of states. On the other hand, actors from underrepresented regions such as the L.69 or the African Group argue that as long as the permanent category exists and they do not have membership, there is no sovereign equality of states. This serves as a conundrum as there are multiple interpretations of the same ideals enshrined in the UN Charter.

In conclusion, to answer the sub-question from section 4.5.1, there are several solutions pushed by actors. These mostly center around either an expansion in permanent membership, non-permanent membership, or both, as well as an overhaul of the working methods of the Council and the veto system. There does, however, not seem to be an emerging solution that meets the criteria of survival yet, perhaps indicating that the softening-up process needs time. Regarding policy entrepreneurs, several actors are particularly active in pushing proposals; these are the G4, the UfC, the L.69, and the African Group. These actors mainly promote adopting their policies within the IGN debates, where their ideas are continually floated and considered.

### 5.3.3 Politics Stream

Turning to the politics stream, we can implement the adaptation created by Lipson for MSF analysis of policies in a multilateral policy arena. Firstly, examining the multilateral politics of the UN and, by extension, the UNSC, we can see that there have been significant developments in the past decades. Specifically, regarding the UNSC and its place in the international system, there has been a large emphasis placed on the importance of reform in the 2004 HLP Report and the 2005 World Outcome Document. Moreover, the linkage of peace and security with sustainable development in the 2030 Agenda has further highlighted the importance of UNSC reform in the

multilateral policy arena. This is evident in the IGN input to the Pact for the Future where the IGN members committed to accelerate the efforts undertaken in the IGN in line with SDG 16.8 and make the Council more "representative, inclusive, transparent, efficient, effective, democratic and accountable."[295]

Another important event that has changed the multilateral politics surrounding UNSC reform in recent years is the declaration by President Biden and the US that they support an extensive overhaul of the Council that included widespread extension of permanent membership. While historically supportive of Germany, Japan, and India, with whom the US has had close relations, the US now also supports permanent seats for states in Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean.[296] On this, Patrick writes that: "Biden's surprise announcement kicked off the latest flurry of multilateral diplomacy on the perennial and seemingly intractable challenge of Security Council reform."[297] This shift is crucial as "the United States has a unique ability to buttress multilateralism even without formal charter amendments,"[298] and their support could, therefore, mean life or death for a reform proposal. While one has to be careful about prescribing any specific event as the cause of this shift in rhetoric from Biden and the US, one cannot ignore the fact that this has happened simultaneously with the Council's paralysis over the war in Ukraine. Although we cannot equate correlation to causality in this instance, it is worth noting that Biden often combines the Ukrainian struggle with the principles of the UN Charter. At the 2022 UNGA High-Level Week, in the same speech where Biden announced the shift in stance on UNSC reform, Biden defended US support of Ukraine, stating: "We chose liberty. We chose sovereignty. We chose principles to which every party to the United Nations Charter is beholding. We stood with Ukraine".[299] And that "the UN Charter's very basis of a stable and just rule-based order is under attack by those who wish to tear it down or distort it for their own political advantage."[300]

The wars in Ukraine and Gaza and the difficulties the Council has faced in dealing with them are other aspects of the multilateral politics surrounding UNSC reform that might have an

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[295] "Letter from Co-Chairs transmitting a revised draft of the IGN input to the Pact for the Future and announcing the next IGN meeting scheduled for 20 and 21 May 2024,"Permanent Mission of the State of Kuwait to the United Nations and Permanent Mission of Austria to the United Nations in New York, 14 May, 2024, 3.

[296] Patrick, 1.

[297] Ivi.

[298] Dayal, 65.

[299] Joseph R. Biden Jr. "Remarks by President Biden Before the 77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly," (Speech, New York City, NY, September 21, 2022), White House.

[300] Ivi.

impact. As highlighted in the problem stream, there has been a tendency to frame the problem of the UNSC reform in combination with these crises. Similarly, these crises might have an impact on multilateral politics and could potentially provide a thawing in the stances of some member states and create an impetus for progress.

Looking at the politics within the UN member states, some issues impact the political stream. Turning once more to the US, there has been a significant shift in policy from President Trump and his "America First" ideology to President Biden, who has adopted a more traditional American foreign policy course. President Biden, who famously stated "America is back"[301] shortly after taking office, rejoined both the WHO and the Paris Climate Accords, signifying America's commitment to multilateral diplomacy, which has now culminated with its support for UNSC reform.

There is also an interesting observation when looking at public opinion in the population of the member states. In a public opinion survey on institutional design for the United Nations, respondents in Argentina, China, India, Russia, Spain, and the United States were asked for their opinions.[302] The survey found that there was widespread public support for an increase in the authority of the UN over its member states. On these results, the authors wrote:

"On the whole, we find public opinion to lean toward the position of those reformers who have sought to see the UN and related global institutions moving closer to supranationalist and cosmopolitan ideals. In contrast, the positions of policymakers and commentators who advocate weaker international authority and fewer constraints on state sovereignty resonate less with aggregate public preferences[303]"

and that:

"Far from supporting attempts to weaken and undermine the UN, they want this global organisation to have more power to address today's security, environmental, and economic challenges".[304]

There are, however, also observations that may present obstacles to reform, as the study additionally found that "when reforms involve a redistribution of power among countries,

[301] Joseph R. Biden Jr. "Remarks by President Biden on America's Place in the World," (Speech, Washington, D.C., February 4, 2021), White House.

[302] Farsan Ghassim, Mathias Koenig-Archibugi, and Luis Cabrera, "Public Opinion on Institutional Designs for the United Nations: An International Survey Experiment," *International Studies Quarterly* 66, no. 3 (July 23, 2022), 2.

[303] Ibid, 16.

[304] "New Survey Finds Public Support for Increasing UN Authority over Member States," London School of Economics and Political Science, September 8, 2022.

individuals in our sample tend to favor the options that increase or at least preserve the influence of their own state."[305] This leads the author to conclude that domestic politics in key countries can limit the prospects for UN reform.[306]

This idea could potentially spell a problem for UNSC reform. A Pew Research poll conducted shows that the UN's favorability rating fell among Americans in 2023, likely being influenced by the situation in Gaza.[307] This split is even wider when considering ideology, as only 34% of Republicans viewed the UN favorably compared to 71% of Democrats[308]. Therefore, if Trump is reelected later this year this puts US support for reform in serious doubt.

Lastly, it is crucial to consider the organizational culture and politics in the UN and its impact on reform. Firstly, it is crucial to note the importance of UNSG in the agenda-setting of the UN. This is evident during the incumbency of Kofi Annan, where the HLP Report and the World Outcome Document in 2004 and 2005 served as catalysts for establishing the IGN and put UNSC reform squarely on the agenda. This has continued with Guterres and his many calls for reform and a fairer international system, most visible through his New Agenda for Peace, which calls for a complete overhaul of the collective security machinery.[309] Secondly, the prominence of the UNGA has been enhanced in recent years. Most notably, the Liechtenstein Veto Initiative has made the Council more accountable to the GA, and the relationship between the two bodies continues to be prominent in reform proceedings at the IGN.[310]

However, issues in the organizational culture and politics of the UN make reform more difficult. Firstly, the notion of having to agree to all 5 clusters before progressing and the reluctance of some actors to proceed to text-based negotiations, combined with the high threshold for reform, serve as organizational hurdles that must be overcome to achieve progress.

To answer the sub-question posed in the operationalization section, there are several political events surrounding UNSC reform that have influenced the main policy actors. These events include the shift of stance by the US on reform, the emphasis put on reform by UNSG Guterres in tandem with his New Agenda for Peace and the Summit for the Future, and recent

[305] Ghassim, Koenig-Archibugi and Cabrera, 16

[306] Ivi.

[307] Janell Fetterolf, "Fewer Americans View the United Nations Favorably than in 2023," Pew Research Center, April 23, 2024.

[308] Ivi

[309] "A New Agenda for Peace," United Nations, accessed May 29, 2024,

[310] "Revised Co-Chairs' Elements Paper," April 2024, 4.

events in the Council, such as the war in Ukraine and the Israel-Palestine conflict. The main actors, which are the P5, the regional groups, and the reform groups such as the UfC and the G4, have been influenced by these events and spurred them to support reform proposals.

### 5.3.4 Coupling of Streams

Having examined the three streams in relation to UNSC reform and the recent developments in these, it is now necessary to scrutinize whether the streams are ready for coupling. This is necessary as Kingdon argues that agenda-setting is most likely when the three streams join. To clearly evaluate the viability of the streams for coupling, the thesis utilizes the assumptions by Zohlnhöfer, Herweg, and Zahariadis

The problem stream is deemed ready for coupling when a problem has been framed as problematic by a problem broker. In the analysis of the problem stream, it is evident that this is the case. The ineffectiveness of the UNSC and its inability to deal with certain crises has long been seen as problematic enhancing calls for reform. Notable problem brokers include UNSG Kofi Annan and UNSG Guterres, as well as groups within the IGN such as the G4, the UfC, the African Group, and the L.69. Despite struggles over problem definition between these actors, there has emerged a clear notion that the UNSC is unfit for the 21$^{st}$ century and its effectiveness must be enhanced.

The policy stream is deemed ready for coupling if there is at least one alternative that meets the criteria of survival. Through the analysis of the policy stream, it is clear that there is not yet such an alternative present when it comes to UNSC reform. This can be seen most clearly in the presentations of reform models at the IGN this session. Whether it is the G4, the L.69, or the UfC proposal, there is no model that receives the overwhelming support needed to clear the high threshold for UNSC reform.

Lastly, the politics stream is ready for coupling if a policy entrepreneur actively supports a proposal to bring a majority for it. Policy entrepreneurs play a crucial role in the coupling of streams, and in the case of UNSC reform, there are a plethora of them pushing their own proposals. The thesis outlines 3 policy entrepreneurs in the G4, the L.69, and the UfC, who are all pushing proposals that fit with their preferences and which they believe will help the Council.

This thesis, therefore, concludes that there is not a viable coupling of the streams for UNSC reform, which in turn hampers the likelihood of meaningful reform making it to the agenda-setting stage according to the underlying assumption outlined in the operationalization section. The thesis

does, however, conclude that the crises in Ukraine and Gaza showcase the inadequacies of the Council to such an extent that it might present a problem window for reform. Similarly, the shift in stance by the US outlined in the politics stream might present a political window for reform. However, these were consequentially influenced by the lack of solutions that met the criteria of survival. Kingdon highlights the importance of striking while the iron is hot in the face of a policy window, and the thesis, therefore, concludes that the inability of the policy community to present a viable solution hindered progress. If, for example, the G4 proposal had received widespread support before the opening of the politics window, it would have been easy for the US simply to throw their support behind the proposal given that they support much of its contents. Further, the plethora of solutions presented within the IGN may have led to an overloading of these policy windows, meaning that there are more solutions than there are problem windows to deal with them.

Lastly, applying the concepts of policy denial in tandem with the coupling of streams can help us understand the lack of agenda change. In the case of the UNSC, the actions of China and Russia, as outlined in section 5.2.1, can be seen as attempts to prevent reform from being put on the agenda. This is being done through a placation strategy where the Chinese and Russian delegates will state their support for reform in the IGN while at the same time stating concern over the different models proposed, that more consensus needs to be built before moving to text-negotiations and insisting all 5 clusters must be agreed before progress can be made. Thus, instead of outright coming out against UNSC reform, which might have negative connotations due to the widespread support for it in the UN, Russia and China block the reform proceedings subtly and dissipate the conflict.

To conclude, while there have perhaps been developments in both the problem and politics streams that might have presented a decision-making opportunity via a policy window, the underdevelopment of the policy stream has negated the impact of these developments and constrained reform from making it onto the agenda.

## 6.0 Discussion

### 6.1 Interpretation of Findings

Having examined the case of UNSC reform both from a liberal institutionalist perspective and through the multiple stream framework, we can now compare our insights and findings to identify commonalities and differences between the two theories.

The two theoretical frameworks have distinct strengths that make them excellent choices for analyzing why UNSC reform faces difficulties. Liberal institutionalism helps bring the institutional dynamics to the forefront. It shows us that the institutional design of the UNSC and the high threshold for reform have created a system that is inherently rigid and not susceptible to reform. This is further problematized due to divergent preferences by the divergent positions of member states, driven by several factors such as self-interest and geopolitical struggles. The MSF, on the other hand, provides us with a more targeted analysis of the policy process and the difficulties linked with policymaking in a multilateral section, and how sudden agenda change can happen due to unforeseen circumstances such as a focusing event in the problem stream or a shift in the politics stream that. In the implementation of the MSF, we discovered that despite the politics and problem streams being ready for coupling, the process was held back by a lack of consensus in the policy stream and policy denial by certain actors such as Russia and China.

Generally, the two frameworks chosen complemented each other throughout the thesis writing process and, in turn, strengthened the credibility of the results. For example, many of the insights gained through implementing liberal institutionalism were useful when conducting the MSF analysis. Firstly, detecting divergent preferences and the rationales behind these was extremely useful for both the problem and policy stream as it helped understand the motivations behind the actors. Secondly, the high thresholds for reform in the institutional design of the UNSC outlined in the liberal institutional section served as valuable insight into both the understanding of the criteria of survival in the problem stream and the reason for the lack of coupling of streams.

Another strength in the choice of these two theories is how they each shine a light on different perspectives and time spans. Specifically, liberal institutionalism emphasizes an incremental approach where the widening of institutions and cooperation within is a continual long-term process. Through this perspective we understand how the issue of UNSC reform has been continually raised at the UN leading first to the establishment of the OEWG in the 1990s, the HLP in the early 2000s, and finally the IGN in 2008. Further, it helps understand the incremental approach of the IGN, which builds on the works of previous sessions in a continual process to build convergence, resulting in new and innovative approaches such as the webcasting of meetings, the launch of a website for the IGN, the informal-informal negotiations, and finally the presentations of specific reform models by actors. Liberal institutionalism just gives us a classic IR perspective of how institutions widen and change through ceding gradual authority. Through it, we can see the cumulative attempts of actors, both nation-states and UN Personnel such as Antonió Guterres and

Kofi Annan, to expand and reform the collective security system and make it more effective and legitimate. We can also see how this incremental progress has been stifled by factors such as actors attempting to maintain the status quo, institutional design, and shifting geopolitical interests.

Divergently, the MSF is more short-term focused and thus can help us understand the role of policy windows and sudden events can alter prospects for agenda change. Through it, we understand how the problem of UNSC reform has been shaped as an inadequacy of the Council to carry out its mandate in maintaining international peace and security and its failure to represent the geopolitical realities of the 21$^{st}$ century. We also observe the shifts in the politics stream, notably the shift in stance by the US on reform and the upcoming Summit of the Future as an opportunity for reform.

Our implementation of these two frameworks has provided us with several interesting observations. Firstly, there is a clear notion that the founders' decision, however well-founded, has backfired severely and left the UN in a quandary. By setting up a robust council that might be able to deal with the geopolitical realities of the post-WW2 world, they created a body that was inherently against the ideals on which the organization was founded and which threshold for reform was so high that future generations could not amend it regardless of political will.

Secondly, one of the most interesting observations is on the impact of the war in Ukraine and the Israel-Palestine situation. While at first glance looking like the greatest indicators of what is wrong with the Council and thus driving calls for reform, they seem to have an adverse effect on the chances of successful reform. As the conduct of permanent members of the Council is highly criticized regarding these crises, it further strengthens the calls for a structural reform of the Council. It shifts focus away from the more obtainable working methods reform, which is already the "less-sexy" of the two. In turn, this allows veto players such as Russia and China who prefer to maintain the status quo in the Council, at least in the permanent section, as they can prevent any legislation on structural reform if they so desire. Furthermore, it was interesting to note that there was a definite schism between who brought up which conflict. Many of the Arab States, the African Group, and the rest of the Global South highlighted Gaza, while many of the Western States highlighted Ukraine.

Thirdly, despite Keohane's assumption that relative gains are not important in a multilateral system with more than 2 actors, this does not seem to fit the UNSC as there are clear notions of actors in the P5 attempting to preserve their relative power to other countries.

## 6.2 Limitations of Thesis

Having examined and interpreted the analysis's findings, it is necessary to acknowledge that the paper and its findings have certain limitations.

Firstly, there are significant data limitations in the available data. This refers to the fact that this is the first session of the IGN where statements and speeches are widely available and webcast, and therefore the paper's emphasis has been on this year's cycle. Having input from previous years' cycles could have allowed the paper to further explore the incremental nature of the IGN by assessing progress made session by session. The thesis has attempted to alleviate this by drawing on historical documents from other UN stakeholders, such as the HLP Report and the World Summit Outcome Document, as well as the Co-Chairs Elements Papers.

Furthermore, the vast number of actors in a forum such as the IGN, where 193 member states can participate at any given time, is a limitation. For the sake of brevity, it was necessary to focus on specific actors deemed most important to the reform debate, and as such, important input from other actors, such as the Nordic Countries or the Non-Aligned Movement, was missed.

The thesis's contemporary nature also serves as a limitation. As the thesis was written from February to May 2024, simultaneously with the IGN session, this meant that the input from debates was ever-shifting, especially given the nature of the reform debate and events such as the war in Gaza and the war in Ukraine that impacted it.

Lastly, the complex and subjective nature of the MSF as a theory can serve as a limitation, this is especially prevalent given the complex nature of UNSC reform to which it was applied. The thesis has tried to overcome this by adapting the streams to fit its purpose, most notably through the Knoepfl et al. criteria in the problem stream and the adaptation of Lipson's politics stream. Further, applying the MSF to a negative case where agenda change didn't happen can be conceived as a limitation as it is normally applied in positive cases, however, the concept of policy denial has been implemented to overcome this.

## 6.3 Recommendations for Future Research

Given the immense importance of the research area and the findings of this thesis which highlight the ever-shifting preferences of UN member states on reform, this thesis invites further research. Specifically, examining the insight from future sessions of the IGN and the outcome document of the Summit of the Future later this year will present an interesting opportunity to analyze if they present an opportunity for agenda change. Further, it will be interesting to see what

happens if the two major crises, Ukraine and Gaza, end and if this will enhance opportunities to build convergence in the IGN or if another crisis will come along to take their place.

## 7.0 Conclusion

This thesis attempted to analyze the underlying conditions and factors that prevented reform of the United Nations Security Council by examining the IGN process through liberal institutionalism and the multiple streams framework.

Through liberal institutionalism, the thesis ascertained that one of the major issues in the current reform process is the decisions made by the founders of the UN in setting up the Council's composition and the threshold for Charter amendment. By elevating the P5, the founders went against the notion of the sovereign equality of states. They created a position in which these actors were motivated to maintain the status quo while giving them the tools to do so. This has created a path-dependent effect that has constrained the reform process and led to significant institutional inertia.

Furthermore, there is a significant divergence in member states' preferences regarding reform, as states tend to approve reform proposals that benefit them and disapprove of reform proposals that hurt them.

In conjunction with this, liberal institutionalism accentuated the actions of the P5 as a major inhibition in the reform process. As the P5 enjoys significant power in the current system, they are naturally inclined to maintain the status quo and prevent change. This is most evident in the actions of China and Russia through their use of official and unofficial diplomacy. They openly support reform and permanent membership for India and Brazil while subtly undermining the reform progress by creating discontent in the veto system and reluctance to move to text-based negotiations.

Via liberal institutionalism emphasis on a neo-functionalist approach to change, we uncovered how the incremental aspect of the UNSC and the IGN was limited by unfavorable conditions, which prevented cooperation on structural reform. On the other hand, the incrementalist nature did help achieve some working methods reform, most notably through the Liechtenstein Veto initiative and the increased support for the French-Mexican Veto Initiative and the ACT Code of Conduct. Additionally, there is some positive incremental progress on the working methods of the IGN that has increased its transparency and visibility to the public.

The examination of the problem through the MSF further highlighted the important role of crises such as the war in Ukraine and the Israel-Palestine conflict in bringing attention to the issue and defining the problem as a lack of inefficiency, legitimacy, and accountability that hampers the work of the Council and drives reform, but also that this impetus for change is significantly constrained by divergent preferences strengthened by the high threshold for reform. This has meant that the 3 streams have not been joined and, in turn, worsened the likelihood of agenda change.

Thus, efforts towards reforming the United Nations Security Council face persistent challenges, as there are significant divergences of interest and preferences for reform spurred by national interest and geopolitics, which is further strengthened by the presence of institutional inertia through path-dependency from the original composition of the Council and reform mechanisms that have created a high-threshold for reform and allow powerful actors to maintain the status quo.

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