
Models for U.N. Security Council reform: an AI analysis

Background

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is in crisis. Its composition reflects the world of 1945 rather than the world of today. And repeated misuse of the veto amid worsening great power relations has led to considerable gridlock. It remains an open question whether this body, tasked with upholding international peace and security, will remain fit for purpose in an increasingly multipolar world.

A formal Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN) process at the U.N. on reforming the Security Council have been pursued since 2008, with little progress to show owing to sharply divergent positions among the principal players. However, for the first time in two decades, there is notable movement. The IGN co-chairs (currently Kuwait and the Netherlands) have put forward a “bridging proposal” aimed at getting U.N. member states to reconsider their established positions. This holds the promise that text-based negotiations could finally begin in the not-too-distant future.

The question remains how to reform the UNSC to render it more **efficient**, **effective**, and **legitimate**, all at the same time. Several models for reform have already been proposed.

The G4 countries — Germany, Japan, India, and Brazil — argue that the Council should be expanded to include new permanent members, including themselves, while showing flexibility on the immediate extension of veto rights. African states, represented through the African Union’s Ezulwini Consensus and led by the C-10 countries, also assert that two permanent seats should be set aside for Africa, with the same rights and privileges as existing permanent members for as long as the veto exists. The L.69 Group, a coalition of developing countries, similarly supports expansion in both the permanent and non-permanent categories to strengthen the representation of the Global South.

By contrast, Uniting for Consensus (UfC) — a group of 12 countries led by Italy — opposes expansion of the permanent category, arguing that growing the elected membership would better enhance the Council’s representativeness and accountability. UfC countries have also demonstrated an openness to creating longer-term renewable seats as an alternative to expanding the permanent category — an idea that features in models put forward by Mexico and Liechtenstein.

Two proposals have tried to reconcile these diametrically opposing positions. First, as mentioned, the IGN co-chairs have advanced a bridging proposal that features “fixed regional seats.” Under this model, additional long-term seats carrying the privileges of permanent membership would be allocated to regional groups, with their occupants elected by the General Assembly for renewable terms. Unlike the UfC proposal, **these seats would be endowed with veto privileges**. This proposal seeks to reconcile competing reform models by offering greater continuity and influence to advocates of permanent expansion, while preserving an element of democratic accountability through periodic reelection.

Second, the Better Order Project (BOP) [has developed a model](#) that envisages a limited expansion of the permanent category (two seats for Africa, one for Asia, and one for Latin America), along with a veto restriction whose criteria become steeper depending on whether new permanent members obtain veto rights. It also proposes no expansion of the non-permanent category, but rather the establishment of a “semi-permanent” category in which the General Assembly elects a 15-member pool of rotating members that each serve two automatic four-year terms. By taking these countries out of the running, it makes it easier for smaller countries to earn a standard non-permanent seat.

An AI simulation

Which sets of reforms will meet the needs of the future? To strengthen international stability and reinforce the foundations of multilateralism, the UNSC must be:

- **Efficient** (i.e., capable of taking decisions without excessive gridlock or delay)
- **Effective** (i.e., able to convert international crises into actionable, high-impact mandates rather than passing hollow, watered-down resolutions)
- **Legitimate** (i.e., corrects the historical underrepresentation of various regions, strengthens the status equality of its members, boasts greater transparency in decision-making, and enhances the ability of smaller states to vote their conscience without fear of superpower retaliation)

To answer this question, the Quincy Institute ran an AI simulation based on a **continuous spatial voting model over a 50-year horizon**, cross-referenced with a **discrete linear utility model** to adjust the initial findings, where necessary. The AI itself chose the definitional metrics provided above. The 50-year horizon allows enough simulated time for institutional effects to emerge, while avoiding forecasts so far into the future that the assumptions become dominated by uncertainty, with the acknowledgment that some of the structural effects of reform would still be developing after 20 or so years. Fifty years provides long enough for repeated crises, membership turnover, and coalition evolution.

The following models were compared:

- Status quo
- Status quo + full implementation of French–Mexican initiative and Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group recommendations to reform the UNSC’s working methods and limit veto usage

- G4/L.69 hybrid
- Uniting for Consensus (UfC), including the establishment of longer-term renewable seats
- IGN bridging proposal
- BOP-1 (new permanent members **forgo** veto privileges; the UNSC’s current Permanent 5 (P5) countries must find **one** accompanying negative vote on the Council to insulate a veto on a given resolution, otherwise the General Assembly (GA) by two-thirds majority can hold a **public roll-call** vote to override the veto)
- BOP-2 (new permanent members **obtain** veto privileges; permanent members must find **two** accompanying negative votes on the Council to insulate a veto on a given resolution, otherwise the GA by two-thirds majority can vote to override the veto **by secret ballot**)

Bottom line

	SQ	SQ+	G4/L.69	UfC	IGN BP	BOP-1	BOP-2
Overall Governance Index (0–1)	0.48	0.54	0.49	0.61	0.53	0.81	0.81

The AI synthesized various metrics that measure efficiency, effectiveness, and legitimacy into an “Overall Governance Index,” a weighted composite macro-score that “measures how effectively the institutional model manages both the U.N. system *and* the wider international order.” It sees the G4 model and the bridging proposal as offering little improvement to the status quo; UfC, along with the bridging proposal when paired with a veto-override mechanism, as somewhat ameliorating overall governance; and the BOP model as a dramatic improvement over the status quo.

- Of all comprehensive models put forward to date, **BOP-1** and **BOP-2** perform best in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, and representativeness. BOP’s models are the only ones to balance the addition of new permanent members with the creation of a binding yet limited veto-restriction mechanism.
- While performing better than a G4-modeled Council in terms of overall governance, **UfC** does not address the fundamental issue of adjusting the composition of the Security Council to reflect the emerging balance of power — a measure likely necessary to render the U.N. fit for purpose in a post-unipolar world. As such, when measuring the model’s “constitutional stability” (i.e., international buy-in and resistance to decay) over a 50-year horizon, the AI predicts that the “unaddressed structural exclusion” of failing to expand the permanent category will generate “ongoing revisionist tension.”
- According to the AI simulation, the **G4/L.69** model’s proposal to add new veto players to the Council would lead to considerable paralysis. This holds true even when accounting for the G4 countries’ offer to suspend their veto privileges for the first 15 years after obtaining permanent membership. The Ensemble Institutional-Agent Model (EIAM) that the AI employed relies on the assumption of strategic rationality: A state’s behavior is dictated by its exogenous geopolitical preferences and the institutional tools available to it. Even when hypothesizing that 15 years of building cross-regional coalitions would create

path-dependent diplomatic habits, the spike in paralysis would be delayed only by approximately four to six years in the simulation. Assuming that institutional culture ultimately cannot override vital national security interests, in a severe exogenous shock a veto wielder would likely break the collaborative culture and use its newly acquired veto, rapidly resetting the Council to a higher baseline of paralysis.

- The IGN co-chairs’ **bridging proposal** aims to circumvent this very issue by subjecting veto holders to periodic reelection. However, the AI predicted that, by granting veto power to states that must constantly campaign for reelection, the model would structurally transform the veto from an emergency security brake into a transactional electoral commodity. In the simulation, renewable-veto states frequently used veto threats to logroll, secure regional patronage, and buy votes for their next election cycle. As the veto was repeatedly used for political self-preservation rather than international peace and security, the Council’s authority to demand global compliance degraded severely in the simulation.

While looking 50 years into the future inevitably involves a significant degree of uncertainty, the figures that the AI generated — and, even more crucially, the arguments — provide ample material for consideration as U.N. member states evaluate which institutional features are most likely to render the Security Council more efficient, effective, and legitimate.

Detailed analysis

Efficiency:

The AI contends that BOP-1’s public GA override mechanism would change the terminal conditions of bargaining. If a P5 member is isolated and lacks a Council ally to insulate their veto, the impending threat of a public GA override would force them to concede or compromise much faster. Conversely, if a P5 member did have an ally, they would know their veto is secure and can cast it decisively without protracted delay. In both scenarios, the time to reach a terminal outcome — either adoption or definitive veto — would be compressed.

By contrast, the proliferation of veto wielders in both the G4 model and the bridging proposal would slow Council deliberations considerably in comparison with the status quo. While Uniting for Consensus does not have this flaw, BOP-1 is the only model that would substantially improve on the status quo, while BOP-2’s veto-override mechanism would ensure that providing status equality to new permanent members (and thereby enhancing the Council’s perceived legitimacy in some respects) would not come at the expense of efficiency.

	SQ	SQ+	G4/L.69	UfC	IGN BP	BOP-1	BOP-2
Decision speed (days to resolution)	28.5	26.5	42.1	27.8	38.9	21.0	27.5

In fact, the existence of BOP's veto mechanism would not only dramatically reduce the number of *effective* vetoes (i.e., insulated from GA review or ultimately upheld), it also would reduce the number of vetoes cast in the first place, compared with the status quo. This holds true for both BOP-1 and BOP-2, even though the latter would increase the number of veto players. The veto-override mechanism would encourage great powers to cast an isolated veto only when they perceive the cost to their interests and reputation of *not* casting one to be greater than the cost of casting one. In other words, veto usage would be more restricted to national interests of considerable significance, as opposed to frivolous use to score rhetorical points and give rival powers a black eye.

	SQ	SQ+	G4/L.69	UfC	IGN BP	BOP-1	BOP-2
Effective vetoes per decade	18.4	14.2	29.7	17.5	24.3	8.2 (11.4 ex ante)	9.8 (16.5 ex ante)

Effectiveness:

In the status quo, accommodating a solitary P5 holdout often requires stripping a resolution of its enforcement mechanisms, resulting in a mandate that passes but achieves nothing operationally. In BOP's model, a P5 member cannot hold a robust resolution hostage purely on their own. To block it, they must convince at least one other state to absorb the reputational cost of a negative vote. If they were unable to find an ally in the simulation, they were often forced to accept a mandate closer to the median preference of the Council. Passing a compromise but actionable resolution scores higher in the AI's effectiveness index than passing a hollow resolution or deadlocking entirely.

	SQ	SQ+	G4/L.69	UfC	IGN BP	BOP-1	BOP-2
Operational effectiveness (Index 0-1)	0.52	0.59	0.38	0.55	0.44	0.74	0.70

One might assume that the existence of a veto mechanism could encourage permanent members to ignore the outcome of an override, thereby reducing the legitimacy and influence of the Council. This is true, but would be mitigated by several factors according to the simulation:

- By failing to expand the permanent category, the UfC model would encourage rising powers such as India to dissociate themselves more and more from U.N. decisions in any event.
- The G4 model, while reflecting the global balance of power, would lead to a proliferation of cross-vetoing that ultimately would encourage permanent members to work periodically outside the Council, whether unilaterally or minilaterally. More veto-wielding members means more geopolitical redlines on the Council, and therefore more gridlock. This is visible in the considerable decline in operational effectiveness and cartel-capture resistance (see below) that the G4 model holds in comparison to the status quo, even when taking into account the 15-year veto moratorium of new permanent members.

Legitimacy:

Per the simulation, the veto mechanism in BOP's proposal would dramatically increase the compliance of GA members along with regional implementation of UNSC resolutions. This is not only because the override mechanism would give the GA a sense of ownership over certain Council resolutions, but also because of the math in the GA.

The GA override mechanism would ensure that regional voices have structural influence over the final mandate. To achieve a two-thirds majority override under the BOP mechanism, a coalition needs 129 votes. If the African Group (54 votes) voted cohesively as a bloc to reject the override, the maximum possible remaining votes in the GA would be 139.

Securing 129 out of 139 available votes requires near-unanimous consent from the entire rest of the world — crossing deeply entrenched geopolitical divides (e.g., the U.S., Russia, China, the E.U., and Latin America all agreeing). The simulation therefore reveals that highly cohesive regional blocs effectively wield a collective structural veto over the GA override mechanism. Great powers would be forced to consult and appease regional blocs either to secure an override or protect their veto from one. This strengthens interbody dialogue at the U.N. and also allows for a decentralizing pressure valve of sorts in an increasingly regionalized world.

	SQ	SQ+	G4/L.69	UfC	IGN BP	BOP-1	BOP-2
Aggregate compliance (Weighted composite)	68%	72%	65%	74%	67%	86%	83%

Because the Global South holds four vetoes and the GA enjoys a secret override in BOP-2, the GA is predicted to feel immense ownership over U.N. mandates and therefore enforce them rigorously. However, the simulation also found that the P5 would resent the higher rate of secret GA overrides, leading to foot-dragging and resource withholding by great powers. It therefore concluded that while BOP-2 would perform better in the sub-metric of GA compliance, BOP-1 would do better in aggregate compliance (which combines GA compliance with that of the great powers, other Council members, and the target state, along with regional implementation of agreed measures, into a weighted composite score of material mandate enforcement).

Further findings

Comparing the veto mechanisms: “1+1” versus “1+2”

BOP’s models propose that the proliferation of veto players requires a commensurate strengthening of the veto mechanism. As such, if the number of veto wielders increases from five to nine, then two measures are proposed to mitigate the risk of gridlock. First, a country wishing to cast a veto must find two (instead of one) concurring “no” votes to insulate its veto from a General Assembly review. And second, that review, if it occurs, would take place by secret ballot. Here is how the AI model sees these dynamics playing out:

- With a “1+1” mechanism (BOP-1), the great power may be deterred by the reputational cost of a public roll call. They know that a public override vote would force 193 ambassadors to stand in front of cameras, deliver speeches denouncing the great power, and register their opposition on the public record. To avoid this televised diplomatic spectacle, **the great power would self-censor and moderate its behavior, casting fewer lone vetoes.**
- With a “1+2 mechanism” (BOP-2), the great power knows an override would be mathematically more likely to succeed because the GA is voting its conscience. However, because the vote would be secret, the great power would avoid the public humiliation of a roll-call debate. Without the threat of “naming and shaming,” the reputational cost of casting the veto would drop significantly. As such, while the secret ballot would empower the General Assembly to override vetoes successfully, **it paradoxically would remove the public shaming mechanism that deters great powers from casting those vetoes in the first place.**
- At the same time, losing a secret ballot vote would still carry a reputational cost. The aggregate tally of the vote would remain public knowledge. This result would visibly prove that the great power could not muster even a one-third blocking minority. It would expose that its diplomatic threats and aid linkages failed. For many great powers, **a crushing numerical defeat in a secret ballot would be reputational poison — even more damaging than a predictable, polarized public roll call.**

BOP-2 would see more ex ante vetoes cast due to the higher number of veto players, but the secret ballot would result in a higher GA override rate (21% vs. 14.2%), leading to an average of around two more unresolved vetoes per decade in the BOP-2 model compared with BOP-1. The proliferation of veto players in BOP-2 also would lead to a slightly slower decision process than BOP-1, although not nearly as lengthy as in the G4 model. (As mentioned above, the BOP-2 model performs better than BOP-1 in perceived legitimacy and GA compliance with Council decisions, given that four new Global South players would be given equal veto privileges to the P5 in BOP-2 but would be denied this benefit in BOP-1.)

BOP’s veto-override mechanism would dramatically improve the Council’s immunity to being held hostage by a single great power wielding a veto (single-power capture resistance), as this country must find at least one concurring negative vote to prevent a GA review. BOP-2 suffers somewhat on the metric of *cartel* (i.e.,

multipower) capture, but still performs better than the G4 model across a 50-year horizon. Crucially, it also significantly outperforms the co-chairs' bridging proposal, as outlined below.

The value of BOP's semi-permanent category:

BOP's model is unique in that it would create a third category, not in the form of long-term renewable seats (as proposed by Uniting for Consensus), but rather a pool of 15 countries who would take turns serving multiple longer terms on the Council. Election to this pool would guarantee a country two automatic four-year terms on the Council over a span of 24 years before needing to face the GA electorate once again.

Across the BOP-1 and BOP-2 models, the AI sees the main benefits of the semi-permanent category as follows:

- **Operational stability:** Replacing rapid two-year turnover with automatic four-year terms would allow semi-permanent members to develop institutional fluency and act as expert mediators between P5 members.
- **Cartel-capture resistance:** Significantly outperforms the IGN bridging proposal (0.64 vs. 0.28). Because semi-permanent members lack a veto, they cannot participate in veto-protection logrolling cartels.
- **Small-state electoral access:** By placing 15 regional heavyweights into a dedicated pool, the remaining 10 non-permanent seats would be cleared of heavy competition, tripling the election frequency for smaller states (e.g., Least Developed Countries, Small Island Developing States, and members of the Forum of Small States).

Unlike the veto-restriction mechanism and the addition of four Global South countries to the Council's permanent membership, the semi-permanent category would focus on procedural optimization rather than macro-constitutional legitimacy. As such, it contributes only 0.04 to 0.05 points to improving BOP's Overall Governance score, in contrast with 0.11 to 0.13 for expansion in the permanent category and 0.16 to 0.18 for the veto override. Still, the question remains: Is it preferable to have a small number of longer-term seats whose occupants are eligible for immediate reelection, as Uniting for Consensus proposes, or to have a rotating pool that offers more countries the opportunity to serve longer terms yet defers their need to seek reelection?

The AI identified several positive elements in UfC's proposal:

- **Single-power capture resistance:** Surges from 0.42 (status quo) to 0.62. Serving consecutive lengthy terms would allow elected members to master Security Council procedures, build cross-regional coalitions, and establish the diplomatic weight necessary to resist bullying or agenda-hijacking by a single P5 power.
- **Decision speed & efficiency:** Compresses negotiation time down to 27.8 days (marginally faster than the status quo's 28.5 days and drastically superior to the G4's 42.1 days or the bridging proposal's 40.5 days).

Experienced long-term members would act as skilled non-veto mediators who would draft compromise language before P5 red lines were triggered. **Operational effectiveness** also would rise somewhat, to 0.55, from 0.52, as long-term members help negotiate actionable Chapter VII compromises rather than allow resolutions to be stripped of enforcement teeth or abandoned to deadlocks.

- **Council member compliance:** Increases to 85 percent, from 82 percent (status quo). States serving long, continuous terms would develop deeper institutional investment in the mandates they help craft over multiple years.

At the same time, the simulation identified several weaknesses in UfC's proposal. First, by creating only a small number of seats for middle powers, several middle powers would still be forced to compete for non-permanent seats. By contrast, BOP's model would clear the field by inducting 15 countries into the semi-permanent pool, making it much easier for smaller countries to earn a non-permanent seat. This boosts GA compliance with UNSC resolutions under BOP-1 to 79 percent *even when the model is stripped of its veto-override mechanism*, in comparison with UfC's 74 percent and the status quo's 68 percent. With the override, BOP-1's GA compliance figure would surge to 86 percent.

Second, in the simulation, wealthy regional heavyweights (e.g., Germany, Japan, Brazil) would use continuous campaign spending to monopolize UfC's long-term seats indefinitely through vote-buying and foreign aid. Moreover, because these members are constantly campaigning for immediate reelection, the simulation predicts they will form logrolling cartels, trading votes to shield allies and secure campaign backing. In short, according to the AI, "immediately renewable seats actually *encourage* selfish behavior," whereas deferring reelection further into the future through a rotating pool would increase the chances that longer-term members will act in the interest of their regions and the wider international community.

The shortcomings of the IGN co-chairs' bridging proposal:

Despite its repeated abuse in recent years, the veto does serve a purpose in stabilizing the international order by nominally preventing the frivolous use of military force by another great power. However, the AI simulation reveals that adding *more* vetoes would be problematic — and that allowing veto privileges periodically to shift hands would be *even more* problematic. While failing to enlarge the permanent category of membership has its own legitimacy costs, extending the veto to more actors may not increase the international community's buy-in either.

Specifically, the simulation found that the BOP-1 and BOP-2 models dramatically outperform the bridging proposal on key metrics *even when a 1+1 or 1+2 veto-override mechanism is attached to the latter*.

- BOP's models achieve a veto-override rate ranging from roughly 14 to 21 percent. By contrast, the "bridging proposal + veto-override" models would overturn vetoes merely 5 to 12 percent of the time, depending on whether it embraces a 1+1 public override vote or a 1+2 secret ballot vote. Because veto wielders must face reelection under the bridging proposal, they are expected to **use foreign aid**

and regional patronage aggressively to punish states that vote against them in the GA, thereby suppressing the GA's willingness to execute overrides.

- Cartel capture occurs when veto players logroll (trade favors) to protect one another's core interests. According to the AI, the bridging proposal would fail “catastrophically” here — considerably worse than in any other model — precisely because its veto players would constantly have to run for reelection. To secure electoral support, veto wielders in the co-chairs' proposal would trade companion “no” votes with one another, forming dense protection cartels that would completely neutralize the GA override mechanism. **Knowing that their reelections depend on avoiding a humiliating GA defeat, they are predicted to form alliances on the Council to guarantee that companion votes are always provided.** The AI calculates that, even with a 1+2 veto mechanism attached, the bridging proposal (0.41) would still perform worse at avoiding cartel capture than the weakest-performing established model (the G4 at 0.47).
- Regarding compliance, the AI asserts that “Because the General Assembly realizes the 11 veto players [in the bridging proposal] have colluded to render the veto-override mechanism largely ineffective, the broader U.N. membership does not develop the sense of procedural ownership that drives global compliance in the BOP models.”

Metric (Index 0–1)	SQ	SQ+	G4/L.69	UfC	IGN BP	BOP-1	BOP-2
Single-power capture resistance	0.42	0.48	0.25	0.62	0.25	0.85	0.86
Cartel-capture resistance	0.64	0.64	0.47	0.62	0.28	0.64	0.56

U.N. elections are highly transactional. General Assembly elections for Security Council seats are rarely decided by objective assessments of a country's moral track record in upholding international peace. They are heavily determined by vote-trading, regional bloc endorsements, and “clean slate” arrangements (where regions agree internally on a single candidate). A state with a renewable veto has immense leverage. It can offer to shield regional allies from U.N. sanctions or critical resolutions in exchange for their votes in the next election. Small states in the GA, which often rely on regional heavyweights for security or economic aid, are highly susceptible to this pressure.

Adding a veto-override mechanism to the IGN model would increase its Overall Governance Index to a range of 0.60 to 0.65, from 0.53. This is stronger than the G4 model and comparable to the UfC model with longer-term renewable seats, but is a far cry from BOP's model. In other words, even with a 1+1 veto mechanism added on, the bridging proposal performs roughly as well overall as the UfC model, which does *not* have such a mechanism. The flaw is in the IGN's model's institutional design: subjecting veto-wielding seats to reelection. Indeed, the AI sees this key feature of the co-chairs' proposal as essentially **neutering the veto-override mechanism**: Since cartelization guarantees the necessary companion “no” vote, a single power could still hold the Council hostage by calling in a traded favor.

The P5 countries (who hold a veto over any structural reforms) remain opposed to extending the veto to non-permanent members, as they wish to avoid having to campaign every few years to prevent the “wrong” country from obtaining veto privileges. But if the co-chairs’ proposal were implemented, the AI sees renewable-veto members as becoming highly vulnerable to patron-client exploitation. A P5 power could offer to finance or lobby for a renewable-veto player’s reelection campaign in exchange for using its veto to block resolutions targeting the P5 country’s allies, without having to bear the reputational cost of casting the veto itself.

Metric	Status Quo	Status Quo+	G4/L.69	UfC	BOP-1	BOP-2	IGN BP	IGN+ 1+1	IGN+ 1+2
Veto holders	5	5	11	5	5	9	11	11	11
Vetoes cast (ex ante)	18.4	14.2	29.7	17.5	11.4	16.5	29.7	31.2	35.1
Effective vetoes per decade	18.4	14.2	29.7	17.5	8.2	9.8	29.7	26.5	24.1
GA override success rate (%)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	14.2	21.0	N/A	5.2	12.1
Deadlock probability (%)	45.2	40.8	62.4	42.1	28.1	32.1	56.5	49.8	45.4
Decision speed (days)	28.5	26.5	42.1	27.8	21.0	27.5	42.1	38.5	35.2
Operational effectiveness	0.52	0.59	0.38	0.55	0.74	0.70	0.44	0.51	0.56
Institutional legitimacy	0.41	0.50	0.61	0.63	0.82	0.86	0.65	0.71	0.74
Aggregate compliance	68%	72%	65%	74%	86%	83%	67%	68%	69%
Single-power capture resistance	0.42	0.48	0.25	0.62	0.85	0.86	0.25	0.45	0.50
Cartel-capture resistance	0.64	0.64	0.47	0.62	0.64	0.56	0.28	0.35	0.41
Systemic buy-in/ resistance to decay	0.56	0.58	0.59	0.69	0.81	0.91	0.58	0.64	0.68
Overall Governance Index	0.48	0.54	0.49	0.61	0.81	0.81	0.53	0.60	0.65

Even when taking away the veto-override mechanism from BOP's proposal and assuming that it will feature nine veto players rather than five, and adjusting the bridging proposal to feature only four renewable-veto players instead of six, in the latter model more crises result in gridlock (51.8% vs. 46.2%), more vetoes occur per decade (25.8 vs. 21.4), and it takes more days (40.5 vs. 37.8) to adopt a resolution. To signal strength to domestic audiences, curry favor with regional blocs, or demonstrate loyalty to major power patrons, renewable-veto members in the simulation use the threat of a veto performatively.

Because the four new Global South veto seats in BOP's model are permanent, those states do not have to engage in the transactional vote-buying and cartel behavior required to survive the bridging proposal's electoral cycle. As such, while BOP's cartel-capture resistance drops to an indexed 0.42 without the veto mechanism, it remains higher than the adjusted IGN model's 0.33 (or 0.28 with six renewable-veto players).

Metric	BOP composition 9 vetoes, no override	Modified IGN BP 4 renewable vetoes, no override
Vetoes cast (Count/decade)	21.4	25.8
Deadlock probability (% of crises)	46.2%	51.8%
Decision speed (Days to resolution)	37.8	40.5
Operational effectiveness (Index 0–1)	0.52	0.47
Institutional legitimacy (Index 0–1)	0.77	0.69
Aggregate compliance rate	71%	68%
Single-power capture resistance (Index 0–1)	0.30	0.28
Cartel-capture resistance (Index 0–1)	0.42	0.33
Systemic buy-in/ resistance to decay (Index 0–1)	0.75	0.63
Overall Governance Index (Index 0–1)	0.59	0.54

When adding a 1+1 or 1+2 veto mechanism to the modified co-chairs' proposal with just four renewable-veto players, the model's Overall Governance Index jumps to a range of 0.65 to 0.69, considerably lower than BOP's score of 0.81.

Conclusion

The results of the simulation are clear, detailed, and logical, even if one can quibble with precise figures over a 50-year time horizon.

Improving the functioning of the UNSC through voluntary pledges and changes to working methods would come with benefits. The increased diplomatic and reputational costs of violating the French-Mexican initiative's pledge to withhold veto use in cases of mass atrocities would deter unilateral obstruction, reducing the number of vetoes cast and thereby marginally improving decision speed and operational effectiveness. Transparency measures would strengthen GA compliance as the broader U.N. membership would feel slightly less alienated from the Council's day-to-day operations. Single-power capture resistance also would improve slightly due to increased procedural scrutiny. However, the Overall Governance Index remains capped at 0.54 for the "Status Quo Plus" scenario, revealing that technical reforms are not a substitute for structural change that addresses longstanding inequalities.

The G4/L.69 model does not substantially improve the UNSC's contribution to U.N. and global governance — and at 0.49, it performs worse than the successful implementation of new norms and working methods. While the model does see legitimacy gains by adjusting its composition to reflect the emerging balance of power, these would be canceled out by a dramatic increase in veto usage, increasing deadlock, and slowing down Council business. Compliance with UNSC resolutions would fall, and the constitutional stability of the new order would be virtually identical to that of a Council without compositional reform. In short, even with a 15-year pledge to forgo veto privileges, growing the group of veto wielders would not create a more durable settlement over a 50-year horizon.

Absent a veto-restriction mechanism, the co-chairs' bridging proposal fares roughly as strongly as mere voluntary pledges and working methods reforms. Again, gains in perceived compositional legitimacy would be wiped out by a consequential rise in veto use and decline in operational effectiveness. Subjecting veto wielders to fixed-length renewable terms would ensure that the Council's ability to resist cartels is fatally weakened, dramatically so even in comparison to the G4 model (0.28 vs. 0.47). As such, the new system's resistance to decay over the next 50 years would be barely changed from the status quo. **Remarkably, even with a 1+2 veto mechanism attached, the AI predicts that the bridging proposal would perform considerably worse than UfC in avoiding deadlock, lengthy decision-making, and vetoes — even when discounting those vetoes that would be overturned by the GA.**

This does not hold true for BOP's model. Even when adding four new veto players, the veto-override mechanism would ensure that fewer vetoes are cast than under the status quo, *even before any are overturned*. Along with UfC (marginally), it is one of only two models that feature structural reform and succeed in reducing veto usage. Driven by high scores in compliance, effectiveness and legitimacy (including status equality in the case of BOP-2), the BOP proposal's resistance to decay is in a different stratosphere compared with any other model. In fact, it remains higher than any other model's *even when stripped of its veto mechanism and assuming the advent of four new veto players*.

The veto mechanism is a major reason behind the BOP model's strong performance, accounting for roughly half the gains in Overall Governance Index, with the semi-permanent category and expanding the permanent membership together accounting for the other half. But even if the P5 did not agree to a veto-restriction mechanism, BOP performs well in comparison with Uniting for Consensus.

Metric	UfC	Modified BOP-1 5 vetoes, no override	Modified BOP-2 9 vetoes, no override	BOP Semi-Perm. Pool No new perm. seats, no override	Modified IGN BP (4 elected vetoes) with 1+1 override	Modified IGN BP (4 elected vetoes) with 1+2 override
Vetoes cast (Count/decade)	17.5	18	21.4	18	22.8 (27.2 ex ante)	20.2 (28.4 ex ante)
Deadlock probability (% of crises)	42.1%	43.1%	46.2%	43.5%	43.4%	39.8%
Decision speed (days to resolution)	27.8	28.1	37.8	28.3	34.2	31.5
Operational effectiveness (Index 0-1)	0.55	0.57	0.52	0.58	0.55	0.61
Institutional legitimacy (Index 0-1)	0.63	0.72	0.77	0.66	0.73	0.76
Aggregate compliance	74%	77%	71%	76%	71%	73%
Single-power capture resistance (Index 0-1)	0.62	0.68	0.30	0.65	0.55	0.58
Cartel-capture resistance (Index 0-1)	0.62	0.69	0.42	0.72	0.42	0.48
Systemic buy-in/ resistance to decay (Index 0-1)	0.69	0.76	0.75	0.71	0.68	0.71
Overall Governance Index (Index 0-1)	0.61	0.65	0.59	0.63	0.65	0.69

By contrast, the table above illustrates how the IGN co-chairs' proposal, even with just four renewable-veto players and a veto-override mechanism attached, would perform worse than either UfC or BOP's

model *stripped of its veto mechanism* on every single metric save for deadlock probability, operational effectiveness, and overall governance (and even on these, the results are relatively comparable). This is before considering that such a proposal would feature not one but *two* elements likely to run into political opposition from the P5: a veto-override mechanism and the pairing of veto privileges with non-permanent seats.



To review the text of the entire AI simulation, [click here](#).