

**THE UNITED NATION SECURITY COUNCIL AND THE
MANAGEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL CONFLICT A CASE STUDY
OF THE RUSSIAN UKRAIN WAR**

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**PROJECT WORK SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
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BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (B.SC)**

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DECLARATION

I, **Divine Sobechi Ujunwa**, an undergraduate student in the Department of Political Science and International Relations, Faculty of Management and Social Sciences, Godfrey Okoye University Ugwuomu-Nike Enugu, with Registration Number **GOU/U22/IRE/666**, hereby declare that I have duly completed this project work in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Bachelor of Science (B.Sc)**. This research work represents my own original contribution to knowledge in the field of Political Science and International Relations. I affirm that the project work has not been copied, plagiarized, or reproduced from any other existing academic work. Furthermore, it has never been presented or submitted in any form to another university or institution for the purpose of obtaining any degree, diploma, or certificate. The content and findings of the study are based on independent research carried out under proper academic guidance. By this declaration, I take full responsibility for the authenticity and originality of the project work submitted.

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APPROVAL

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my beloved parents and my siblings for their love and support.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title Page	i
Declaration Page	ii
Approval/Certification Page	iii
Dedication	iv
Acknowledgement	v
Table of Contents	vi
List of Tables/Figures	vii
List of Abbreviations	viii
Abstract	ix

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	3
1.3 Research Questions	4
1.4 Objectives of the Study	5
1.5 Significance of the Study	5
1.6 Scope of the Study	6
1.7 Limitation of the Study	6
1.8 Operational Definitions of Concept/Terms	7

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEWS

2.1 Conceptual Review	9
2.2 Review of Theme of Research Questions	13
2.2.1 The Role of the UNSC in International Conflict Management	13
2.2.2 The UNSC and the Russia-Ukraine War	14
2.2.3 Veto Power and UNSC decision making	15
2.2.4 Challenges facing te UNSC in conflict management	16
2.3 Theoretical Review	17
2.3.1 Collective Security Theory	18
2.3.2 Realist Theory	19
2.3.3 Significance of using both theories	21
2.4 Empirical Review	22
2.5 Gap in Literature	25

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Theoretical Framework	27
3.2 Hypotheses	28
3.3 Research Design	31
3.4 Sources of Data	33
3.5 Method of Data Collection	37
3.6 The Study Area	40
3.7 Population for the Study	43
3.8 Sample and Sampling Techniques	45
3.9 Justification for the Sampling Techniques	48
3.10 Validity and Reliability	52
3.11 Method of Data Analysis	55
3.12 Analytical framework	56

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

4.1 Data Presentation, Analysis and discussion of findings	60
4.2 Objective One/ Hypothesis One	60
4.2.1 Objective One	60
4.2.2 Hypothesis One	60
4.2.3 Presentation of Data	60
4.2.4 Analysis of Findings	61
4.2.5 Discussion	62
4.3 Objective Two/ Hypothesis Two	62
4.3.1 Objective Two	62
4.3.2 Hypothesis Two	62
4.3.3 Presentation of Data	62
4.3.4 Analysis of Findings	63
4.3.5 Discussion	63

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of findings	64
5.2 Conclusion	64

5.3 Recommendations	68
REFERENCES	71

LIST OF TABLE

Table	Title	Page
1	Research questions and hypotheses linkage	57

LIST OF FIGURE

Figure	Title	Page
1	Integrated logical framework diagram	58

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Meaning
AU	African Union
EU	European Union
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICJ	International Court of Justice
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
P5	Five Permanent Members of the United Nations Security Council
R2P	Responsibility to Protect
RF	Russian Federation
UN	United Nations
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WTO	World Trade Organization
UA	Ukraine

Abstract

This study examines the role of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in managing international conflict, using the Russia–Ukraine War as a case study. The UNSC has primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. Its mandate includes preventing the escalation of conflict, authorising peacekeeping operations and supporting diplomatic settlement between states. However, the Russia–Ukraine War has exposed serious concerns about the Council’s effectiveness, neutrality and institutional structure, especially when a permanent member is directly involved in the conflict. The study considers how geopolitical interests and the veto power of the permanent members have shaped the Council’s response to the war. Particular attention is given to the way Russia’s permanent membership has restricted the adoption of binding resolutions. The research also examines other measures used by the United Nations, including emergency sessions of the General Assembly and humanitarian assistance provided by United Nations agencies. A qualitative case study design was adopted. Secondary evidence was drawn from United Nations reports, academic studies, policy documents and reputable international news sources. The findings indicate that the UNSC remains important to global governance, but its response to the Russia–Ukraine War has been weakened by deep political divisions among its permanent members. Russia’s use of the veto has been especially significant in limiting collective action. The study concludes that the present structure of the UNSC reduces its credibility when permanent members are parties to conflicts under consideration. Reform is therefore needed to improve the Council’s accountability, legitimacy and ability to respond to contemporary security crises. The study recommends restricting veto use in situations involving mass atrocities and strengthening collective diplomatic arrangements within the wider United Nations system.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) occupies a central position in the international security system established after 1945. It was created in response to the failure of earlier collective security arrangements to prevent large-scale interstate war. Under Article 24(1) of the Charter of the United Nations, member states confer on the UNSC the “primary responsibility” for maintaining international peace and security (United Nations, 1945). This responsibility gives the Council powers that are not available to other organs of the United Nations (UN), including the authority to impose sanctions, authorise military action and establish peacekeeping operations. Yet the same institutional arrangement that gives the Council its authority also limits its independence. Although the UNSC is expected to act on behalf of the wider UN membership, its major decisions remain closely tied to the interests of its five permanent members: China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States. The Council must therefore be understood both as a legal institution and as a forum in which powerful states pursue their strategic interests.

This tension reflects the political conditions under which the UNSC was created. The Council was not designed as an equal or fully representative body. Its structure was shaped by the balance of power that emerged after the Second World War. The permanent members received special voting privileges because the founders of the UN believed that the participation of the major powers was necessary for the survival of the collective security system (Luck, 2006). There was a practical basis for this decision. An international security organisation without the cooperation of the states possessing the greatest military and political influence would have had little capacity to enforce its decisions. However, the arrangement also created a lasting

problem of legitimacy. The countries with the greatest ability to influence or disrupt international peace were granted the power to prevent binding action against themselves and, in some cases, against their strategic partners.

The veto power illustrates this contradiction most clearly. Article 27 of the UN Charter requires the agreement of the permanent members for substantive Council decisions. In practice, a negative vote from any one of them can prevent the adoption of a binding resolution (United Nations, 1945). Supporters maintain that the veto reduces the risk of direct confrontation between major powers and encourages them to remain within the UN system. This argument has some merit because collective security measures taken against a major power without its consent could intensify geopolitical confrontation rather than resolve it. Even so, critics contend that the veto allows powerful states to avoid accountability and contributes to the selective application of international law (Maluwa, 2023). The difficulty becomes more pronounced when a permanent member is itself involved in the conflict under discussion. In that situation, the Council's duty to maintain peace comes into direct conflict with the political privilege of the state accused of undermining it.

The Russia-Ukraine War has exposed this institutional weakness with particular clarity. Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 presented one of the most serious challenges to the UN Charter framework since the organisation was established. The use of military force by one sovereign state against another raised fundamental questions concerning sovereignty, territorial integrity, non-intervention and collective security. These principles are not secondary features of the UN system. They form the legal basis on which the organisation's authority and legitimacy depend. For this reason, the war developed into more than a regional security crisis in Europe. It became a direct test of whether the UNSC could respond effectively

when one of its permanent members was accused of violating the rules that the Council was created to defend.

The Council's initial response revealed the practical consequences of this structural problem. On 25 February 2022, Russia vetoed a draft UNSC resolution that condemned its actions in Ukraine. Eleven Council members supported the resolution, while China, India and the United Arab Emirates abstained (Security Council Report, 2022). The outcome suggests that the failure to adopt the resolution did not result from a general absence of international concern. Instead, it arose from the Council's decision-making structure. Most members favoured a formal response, but Russia's status as a permanent member allowed it to prevent the resolution from being adopted. Maluwa (2023) argues that this episode shows how the veto can produce institutional paralysis when a permanent member uses it to protect itself from scrutiny. This interpretation is persuasive because the veto did more than postpone collective action. It prevented the Council from exercising binding authority in response to a major breach of the international security order.

Nevertheless, the UNSC was not entirely inactive during the crisis. It continued to hold emergency meetings, provide a forum for diplomatic exchanges and place the legal and humanitarian consequences of the war under international scrutiny. These functions should not be dismissed because international institutions operate through public debate and political pressure as well as through sanctions and military enforcement. Council meetings also create an official record of state positions and allow competing claims to be examined before the international community. Yet these contributions remain limited when compared with the Council's formal responsibilities. Diplomatic debate may shape international opinion, but it cannot, by itself, halt military aggression or compel compliance with international law. The Russia–Ukraine case therefore demonstrates that the UNSC can continue to function as a

deliberative forum while failing to act effectively as an enforcement institution. Its weakness becomes most visible when meaningful action conflicts with the interests of a permanent member.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

This study addresses the gap between the legal mandate of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and its actual capacity to manage major international conflicts. Article 24 of the United Nations Charter assigns the UNSC primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security (United Nations, 1945). In principle, this mandate places the Council at the centre of efforts to prevent aggression, respond to armed conflict and protect the international order. In practice, however, its ability to act depends heavily on political agreement among the five permanent members. The Russia–Ukraine War has exposed the consequences of this dependence, particularly when the interests of a permanent member conflict with the Council’s legal responsibilities.

The difficulty is especially pronounced because Russia is both a permanent member of the UNSC and a party to the conflict. This creates a direct institutional conflict of interest. Russia has been accused of violating Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, yet it retains the power to block any binding Council decision directed against its conduct. On 25 February 2022, Russia exercised its veto to prevent the adoption of a draft resolution condemning its aggression and calling for the withdrawal of its forces from Ukraine (Security Council Report, 2022). The incident demonstrates that the Council’s limitation does not arise from an absence of legal authority. Instead, it is rooted in an institutional structure that allows a permanent member to obstruct action in a matter in which it is directly involved.

However, the problem extends beyond Russia's use of the veto. The UNSC has often required a degree of political cooperation among major powers before it can respond effectively to threats to international peace. Where such cooperation is absent, the Council's role may be reduced to public debate, diplomatic exchange and political condemnation. These functions remain relevant, but they fall short of enforcement. The United Nations General Assembly, for example, condemned Russia's aggression through Resolution ES-11/1, although the resolution did not possess the binding authority attached to a Security Council decision (United Nations General Assembly, 2022).

The central problem, therefore, concerns whether the UNSC can fulfil its collective security mandate when great-power rivalry and veto politics prevent decisive action. The Russia–Ukraine War provides a particularly important case through which to examine this question because it reveals a contradiction at the centre of the UN security system: the institution responsible for responding to aggression may be prevented from acting by the state accused of committing it.

1.3 Research Questions

1. How effective is the UNSC in managing international conflict in the Russia-Ukraine war?
2. What factors limit the effectiveness of the UNSC?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the role of the United Nations Security Council in managing the Russia-Ukraine War.
2. To assess how the veto power has affected the UNSC's response to the Russia-Ukraine War.

3. To identify the major challenges facing the UNSC in the management of the Russia-Ukraine War.
4. To evaluate the effectiveness of the UNSC in promoting peace and security in the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is important because it examines a weakness in the global collective security system through the Russia–Ukraine War. For students, it offers a basis for understanding how international institutions function when legal obligations conflict with political power. For researchers, it contributes to debates about the effectiveness, legitimacy and constraints of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), particularly when a permanent member is involved in a conflict. The study is also relevant to international relations scholars because it applies institutional theory, realism and collective security theory to a contemporary case involving war, veto politics and rivalry among major powers. For policymakers, the findings may encourage closer consideration of UNSC reform, veto restraint and alternative diplomatic arrangements when the Council cannot act. The study also matters to organisations concerned with international peace and security because it demonstrates that legal authority does not necessarily produce effective crisis management. Although the UNSC remains central to international peace under the UN Charter, the Russia–Ukraine War illustrates how political division can weaken its response to serious threats to peace (United Nations, 1945; Maluwa, 2023). Consequently, the study supports a more critical understanding of how global security governance might be effectively strengthened.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study is confined to the role of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in the management of the Russia–Ukraine War. It examines the Council’s response to the conflict through meetings, draft resolutions, debates, vetoes and diplomatic engagement. The period covered begins in 2014 and extends to the present because the conflict did not originate with the full-scale invasion of February 2022. Instead, it developed from earlier tensions, including Russia’s annexation of Crimea and the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine (Peters, 2023). Greater attention is nevertheless given to developments from 2022, as the full-scale invasion posed a direct challenge to the UNSC’s capacity to respond to a major breach of international peace and security. The study does not provide a complete military history of the war or examine battlefield strategies in detail. Its concern is the institutional and political constraints affecting the UNSC, particularly veto power, rivalry among major powers and disagreement between permanent members. The role of the General Assembly is discussed only where it helps to clarify the limits of Security Council action. Thus, the study remains focused on the UNSC’s capacity, response and institutional constraints in relation to the Russia–Ukraine War.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

This study is subject to several limitations. First, it relies mainly on secondary materials, including academic studies, United Nations documents, policy reports and credible media sources. As a result, the analysis may not fully capture confidential diplomatic discussions or classified security information. The continuing nature of the Russia–Ukraine War also means that later developments may affect interpretations of the UNSC’s role. In addition, the study concentrates on the UNSC, which limits detailed consideration of other actors, including NATO, the European Union and the General Assembly. Even so, this narrower focus keeps the research coherent and manageable.

1.8 Operational Definitions of Concepts/Terms

United Nations Security Council (UNSC): For this study, the UNSC is the principal United Nations organ charged with maintaining international peace and security. The Council comprises fifteen members in total: five permanent members and ten non-permanent members, each elected to serve a two-year term (United Nations, 1945; United Nations Security Council, 2026).

International conflict: In this study, international conflict means a serious dispute, tension or armed confrontation between two or more states. The term applies where questions of sovereignty, territory, national security, political authority and competing state interests are directly contested (Wallensteen, 2019).

Conflict management: Conflict management describes the diplomatic, legal and institutional measures used to prevent, contain, reduce or resolve conflict. In this study, it concerns the steps taken by the UNSC in addressing the Russia–Ukraine War through debate, resolutions, mediation initiatives and other peace-related mechanisms (Bercovitch & Jackson, 2009; Ramsbotham et al., 2016).

Veto power: Veto power is the voting privilege held by the five permanent members of the UNSC. It enables any permanent member to prevent the adoption of a substantive Council decision, even where other members support the resolution (United Nations, 1945; Security Council Report, 2024).

Permanent members: Permanent members are China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States. Their significance in this study lies in the extent to which their interests and veto privileges influence the UNSC's response to major international crises (United Nations Security Council, 2026).

Russia–Ukraine War: The Russia–Ukraine War denotes the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, beginning with Russia's annexation of Crimea and fighting in eastern Ukraine in 2014 before escalating into full-scale invasion on 24 February 2022 (Council on Foreign Relations, 2026; Britannica, 2026).

International peace and security: International peace and security concerns the prevention of war, armed aggression and instability between states. In this study, the term provides the basis for assessing whether the UNSC has fulfilled its Charter responsibility towards the Russia–Ukraine War (United Nations, 1945).

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Review

A conceptual review establishes the meaning of the ideas that guide this study. The central concepts considered here are the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), international conflict, conflict management, collective security, peacekeeping, sanctions, diplomacy and veto power. They are closely related because the UNSC does not address war through a single instrument. Its responses may combine legal authority, diplomatic pressure, sanctions, peace operations and political negotiation. Yet the Russia–Ukraine War demonstrates that these instruments do not operate with equal force in every crisis. Their practical value depends largely on political agreement among influential states, particularly the Council’s five permanent members.

The UNSC is the principal UN organ responsible for maintaining international peace and security. Article 24 of the UN Charter assigns this primary responsibility to the Council, while Article 27 grants its permanent members distinct voting privileges (United Nations, 1945). Even so, the UNSC cannot be understood solely as a legal body. It is equally a political institution shaped by power, national interests and questions of legitimacy. Hurd (2002) argues that its authority rests not only on formal rules, but also on the willingness of states to regard its decisions as legitimate. This distinction matters because the Council is most effective when legal authority is supported by political acceptance. When powerful states resist or obstruct action, its formal mandate remains intact, but its practical influence is substantially reduced.

International conflict describes serious disagreement, hostility or armed confrontation between states or organised political actors. Wallensteen (2019) explains that such conflict commonly

emerges from incompatible claims concerning territory, power, security or political control. The Russia–Ukraine War is treated here as an international conflict because it involves two sovereign states and concerns territorial integrity, state survival and the use of force. Yet the conflict cannot be reduced to military violence alone. It also reflects competing political claims, historical narratives, security anxieties and failures of diplomacy. This broader interpretation is necessary because battlefield developments explain only part of the war. Questions surrounding sovereignty, NATO enlargement, regional security and Russia’s challenge to Ukraine’s territorial independence are central to understanding its origins and continuation.

Conflict management refers to measures intended to prevent, contain, reduce or settle conflict. Bercovitch and Jackson (2009) argue that it includes negotiation, mediation, peacekeeping, sanctions and intervention by third parties. It is therefore broader than conflict resolution. Whereas conflict resolution seeks to address and remove the underlying causes of hostility, conflict management may simply limit violence or prevent further escalation. This distinction is especially relevant here because the UNSC has not brought the Russia–Ukraine War to an end. Its contribution has largely involved debate, condemnation, humanitarian deliberation and diplomatic pressure. The central question is not whether the UNSC possesses conflict-management functions. Rather, it is whether the Council can exercise them effectively when political unity is absent and one of its permanent members is directly involved in the conflict under consideration.

Collective security is also central to this study. The concept rests on the principle that aggression against one state should be regarded as a threat to the wider international community. In theory, it replaces reliance on self-help with a system of shared responsibility. López-Jacoiste (2010) notes that the UN collective security framework is organised around the Security Council’s primary responsibility for international peace and security. The Council

should therefore identify threats, condemn aggression and authorise collective measures where necessary. Yet this framework depends on cooperation among major powers, which creates an obvious weakness. When a permanent member commits aggression or protects an ally, collective action may be blocked. The Russia–Ukraine War illustrates this limitation because Russia’s veto prevented the UNSC from adopting a strong and binding response to the full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Peacekeeping is among the UNSC’s most visible instruments. It generally involves deploying international personnel to monitor ceasefires, protect civilians or assist the implementation of peace agreements. Hultman, Kathman and Shannon (2013) found that UN peacekeeping can reduce violence against civilians when missions possess sufficient personnel and a clear mandate. Their later study also argues that UN peacekeepers can lessen battlefield violence during civil wars (Hultman, Kathman and Shannon, 2014). These findings support the value of peacekeeping, but only under particular conditions. Missions usually require consent from the parties, operational access and sustained political support. Those conditions are largely absent in the Russia–Ukraine War. Any UN peacekeeping deployment would require UNSC authorisation, which Russia could veto. Peacekeeping therefore remains relevant as a conflict-management concept, but its practical application to this war is severely restricted by the Council’s present political structure.

Sanctions provide another means of pressuring states, political leaders or armed groups without resorting to direct military force. Drezner (2011) explains that targeted sanctions emerged partly to reduce the humanitarian harm associated with comprehensive economic measures. In principle, they concentrate pressure on governing elites, military officials, financial networks and selected economic sectors. Biersteker, Eckert and Tourinho (2016) likewise note that targeted UN sanctions have become an established response to threats against international

peace and security. Their use, however, does not guarantee political compliance. Drezner (2011) cautions that targeted measures do not automatically produce stronger outcomes. Sanctions may express condemnation while failing to alter the conduct of the targeted state. In the Russia–Ukraine War, the UNSC could not impose sanctions on Russia because Russia retained the power to block them. Consequently, most sanctions have been introduced by individual states and regional organisations rather than collectively through the Council acting under its mandate.

Diplomacy involves communication, negotiation and bargaining among states and other international actors. Berridge (2015) argues that it remains indispensable to international relations because governments must often negotiate even when their relationships are openly hostile. In conflict management, diplomacy can support ceasefires, humanitarian corridors, prisoner exchanges and negotiations towards peace. Its effectiveness, however, depends on trust, credible incentives and a willingness to compromise. Murithi (2022) argues that the UNSC did not create suitable conditions for effective mediation in the Russia–Ukraine crisis because veto politics weakened its authority. This assessment shows that diplomacy cannot operate independently of the institutions supporting it. Mediation requires a framework that the parties consider credible and reasonably impartial. When one belligerent can shape or obstruct that framework through a permanent Council seat, as Russia can, confidence in UNSC-led diplomacy becomes difficult to sustain among the parties involved.

Veto power is particularly important to this study because it directly shapes the UNSC's response to the Russia–Ukraine War. The veto permits any permanent member to prevent substantive Council action. Its defenders argue that this privilege limits the risk of confrontation among major powers and helps retain their participation in the UN system. That position has some merit, since the organisation was created partly to prevent another world war

by keeping powerful states engaged. Yet the veto also institutionalises inequality and weakens accountability. Peters (2023) argues that using it to shield a permanent member's own aggression is morally indefensible and legally questionable. Maluwa (2023) similarly maintains that Russia's veto on Ukraine exposed the Council's paralysis and intensified demands for reform. Viewed critically, the veto is more than a procedural voting rule. It operates as a structural obstacle that can prevent collective action precisely when an effective response is most urgently required to protect international peace and security.

Taken together, these concepts reveal a tension between the UNSC's legal authority and its practical capacity when permanent members are divided. Collective security supplies the governing ideal, while conflict management provides the tools. Diplomacy, peacekeeping and sanctions offer methods of response, but veto power often determines whether they can be used. The Russia–Ukraine War is therefore more than a test of the Council's handling of one conflict. It also raises a broader question about whether the post-1945 collective security system can function when a permanent member is directly engaged in a major international war.

2.2 Review of Themes from the Research Questions

2.2.1 The Role of the UNSC in International Conflict Management

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) holds the leading responsibility for managing international conflict because the UN Charter assigns it primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security (United Nations, 1945). Its role extends beyond military enforcement. The Council addresses conflict through resolutions, sanctions, peacekeeping mandates, support for mediation and diplomatic pressure. Resolutions matter because they establish formal international positions on threats to peace, breaches of peace and acts of

aggression. Benson (2022) argues that UNSC resolutions can affect the success of peacekeeping by defining mandates, signalling international concern and increasing pressure on parties to conflict. Sanctions also offer a non-military means of influencing behaviour, limiting access to resources and expressing collective disapproval. Biersteker et al. (2016) note that targeted UN sanctions have become central to the Council's response to threats to peace, although their value depends on careful design, effective implementation and sustained political support.

However, the Council's role should not be exaggerated, since managing conflict requires more than formal legal authority. Mediation and peacekeeping can reinforce each other, but their success commonly rests on consent, appropriate timing, clear mandates and the readiness of the parties to compromise (Clayton et al., 2022). The UNSC may therefore establish conditions for managing conflict without being able to impose a political settlement. Badache (2022) likewise suggests that major powers may support UN involvement when it respects state sovereignty, but their support often declines once national interests appear threatened. This tension is evident in the Russia–Ukraine War. Murithi (2022) argues that the Council failed to establish credible conditions for mediation because veto power and the competing interests of permanent members undermined collective action. The UNSC consequently remains the principal legal institution for international conflict management, although its practical influence still depends largely, in practice, on agreement among powerful states.

2.2.2 The UNSC and the Russia–Ukraine War

The Russia–Ukraine War has placed the United Nations Security Council's (UNSC) capacity under intense scrutiny because the alleged aggressor is one of its permanent members. The UN Charter requires the Council to maintain international peace and security through measures that include resolutions, diplomatic pressure and collective action (United Nations, 1945). Existing

scholarship nevertheless argues that Russia's permanent membership has sharply restricted the Council's response. Maluwa (2023) contends that Russia's veto of the February 2022 draft resolution revealed the UNSC's paralysis, since a state accused of aggression could prevent binding measures directed at its own conduct. This episode undermines the principle of collective security because the Council was unable to respond decisively when its central legal mandate was directly engaged. The institutional design therefore obstructed collective action.

Even so, the literature does not portray the UNSC as entirely absent from the crisis. The Council provided an official forum for debate, public condemnation and diplomatic pressure, despite being unable to adopt forceful binding measures. Peters (2023) argues that Russia's use of the veto to protect its own conduct raises serious moral and legal concerns, particularly because it concerned allegations of aggression. Scharf (2023) further notes that the Council's failure shifted political attention towards the General Assembly through the "Uniting for Peace" procedure. This response indicates that the wider UN system could adapt when the Council was blocked. Its value remains limited, however, because General Assembly resolutions lack the binding force attached to Security Council decisions. Murithi (2022) therefore argues that the Russia-Ukraine case reveals how the UNSC struggles to create credible conditions for mediation when great-power interests and veto politics shape the wider conflict environment in practice.

2.2.3 Veto Power and UNSC Decision-Making

Veto power lies at the centre of United Nations Security Council (UNSC) decision-making because each of the five permanent members can block a substantive resolution, even where most Council members favour action. Article 27 of the United Nations Charter requires the concurring votes of the permanent members on substantive matters (United Nations, 1945). The arrangement was intended to keep the major powers committed to the UN system. In

practice, however, it creates an unequal structure in which the exercise of legal authority remains dependent on great-power consent. Nick Pay (2022) notes that elected members can shape negotiations, but their influence is restricted when permanent members determine the limits of acceptable decisions. The veto therefore shapes negotiations before a formal vote in the Council, since sponsors may weaken, delay or withdraw draft resolutions when opposition from a permanent member appears likely, rather than risk an unsuccessful vote.

The deeper difficulty is that the veto constrains the Council most sharply when decisive action is required. Kato (2025) argues that Article 27(3) establishes an obligatory abstention rule for parties to a dispute, yet weak application has allowed permanent members to influence conflicts in which they hold direct interests. This is important because the veto can transform the Council from a body for managing conflict into an arena of institutional obstruction. Mbara (2023) similarly argues that Russia's invasion of Ukraine revived demands for Security Council reform by demonstrating how one permanent member can block collective action during a major conflict. Defenders respond that weakening or removing the veto could reduce the commitment of major powers to the UN system. That concern cannot be dismissed. Nevertheless, the Russia–Ukraine case indicates that the veto may preserve institutional participation while sacrificing equality, accountability and an effective response to international conflict.

2.2.4 Challenges Facing the UNSC in Conflict Management

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) faces substantial difficulties in conflict management because its legal mandate relies on political agreement among powerful states. Although the UN Charter gives the Council primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, fulfilling that duty becomes difficult when permanent members disagree about a conflict's causes, participants and possible solutions (United

Nations, 1945). Hu and Shen (2025) argue that competition among major powers influences the UN's strategic choices, particularly when influential states assess cooperation according to their own interests. The Council is therefore constrained not only by legal rules but also by geopolitical rivalry. When permanent members interpret a conflict through competing strategic priorities, they may delay action, weaken proposed resolutions or prevent the enforcement of agreed measures.

National interests and limited enforcement capacity further restrict the Council's practical effectiveness. Chesterman (2025) notes that the UNSC is frequently criticised as unrepresentative, paralysed by veto politics and ineffective when confronting major conflicts. The criticism is significant because conflict management requires more than deliberation. It also demands credible pressure, implementation and sustained follow-up. Yet the Council relies on member states to supply troops, enforce sanctions and provide political support. Implementation may therefore weaken when major powers or their regional partners refuse to cooperate. Non-permanent members can still shape debate, form coalitions and draw attention to neglected security concerns. Gailišs (2024) argues that smaller states can influence Council practice through diplomatic skill and issue-based coalitions. Their influence nevertheless has clear limits because they lack veto power and cannot compel permanent members to support enforcement. The UNSC remains important, but rivalry, national interest, enforcement gaps and unequal decision-making continue to restrict its capacity to manage conflict effectively in complex and politically divided crises.

2.3 Theoretical Review

This study draws on Collective Security Theory and Realist Theory because each offers a different explanation of the United Nations Security Council's (UNSC) role in the Russia–Ukraine War. Collective Security Theory sets out what the Council is expected to do within

the international security system, whereas Realist Theory helps explain why action often becomes difficult when powerful states are directly involved. Using both perspectives is necessary because the Russia–Ukraine War is not simply a legal question concerning aggression and international peace. It is equally a political struggle shaped by power, national interest, veto politics and rivalry among major states.

2.3.1 Collective Security Theory

Collective Security Theory rests on the belief that peace is better protected when states agree to respond together against aggression. From this perspective, an attack on one state is treated as a threat to the wider international community. The United Nations Charter reflects this principle by assigning the UNSC primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security (United Nations, 1945). The theory therefore provides a useful basis for assessing how the Council should respond to the Russia–Ukraine War. If collective security operates as intended, the UNSC should condemn aggression, demand respect for international law, authorise sanctions where appropriate, support diplomacy and work to prevent further escalation.

The Collective Security Theory is primarily normative, it explains what ought to happen when aggression occurs, but it is less effective in explaining why states sometimes refuse to act collectively. Helal (2018) argues that UN collective security is often presented as a legal and moral ideal, although its application remains selective because powerful states do not consistently accept collective restraint. This argument matters because it shows that collective security relies on political unity as much as legal authority. The Russia–Ukraine War exposes this weakness directly. Russia’s position as a permanent member of the UNSC allows the state accused of aggression to block binding Council action. The theory therefore helps reveal the distance between the Council’s legal responsibility and its actual performance.

Collective Security Theory is also valuable because it provides a standard against which the UNSC can be assessed. Without such a framework, the study might merely describe what the Council did without explaining why its response was adequate or inadequate. Chesterman (2025) notes that the UNSC is frequently criticised for being unrepresentative, constrained by veto politics and ineffective during major conflicts. This criticism is important because collective security depends on shared responsibility, equal protection and credible enforcement. When the Council cannot respond to aggression by a powerful state, the legitimacy of the wider system is weakened. Collective Security Theory therefore supports the argument that the UNSC's limited response to Ukraine represents more than an operational shortcoming. It also challenges the principle that international peace should be protected collectively.

The theory nevertheless has clear limitations. First, it may overestimate the willingness of states to defend legal principles when those principles conflict with national interests. Second, it assumes that states can agree on what constitutes aggression and which response is justified. In practice, permanent members often interpret conflicts through their alliances, security concerns and ideological positions. Third, collective security does not adequately explain why some crises receive sustained international attention while others attract far less concern. Collective Security Theory is therefore necessary for this study, but it cannot provide a complete explanation on its own.

2.3.2 Realist Theory

Realist Theory provides the second analytical lens for this study. Realism maintains that states act mainly to protect their power, security and national interests. It views international politics

as competitive because no central authority is strong enough to control powerful states consistently. This perspective helps explain why the UNSC may struggle to act when its permanent members are divided. The Council may possess legal authority, but its decisions still depend on the strategic calculations of states with substantial political and military power.

Realism is particularly relevant to the Russia–Ukraine War because the conflict concerns sovereignty, territorial control, military capability and competing security claims. Edinger (2022) notes that realist interpretations remain contested, especially when they emphasise security competition, Russian threat perceptions and the wider balance of power in Europe. Such explanations do not justify Russia’s invasion. Instead, they show how powerful states frame their conduct through claims about security, influence and strategic vulnerability. Dodds (2023) likewise observes that some accounts connect Russia’s actions to physical and ontological security, although critics argue that realism can neglect law, identity and political agency. This disagreement is useful because it prevents realism from being treated as a complete or uncontested explanation of the war.

Realist Theory also clarifies the politics of the veto. Hu and Shen (2025) argue that great-power competition influences the UN’s strategic choices in conflict management. The UNSC’s response is therefore shaped by whether major powers consider cooperation consistent with their interests. In the Russia–Ukraine War, Russia’s veto has prevented the Council from adopting binding measures against it. From a realist standpoint, this outcome is unsurprising because powerful states rarely support decisions that would weaken their own strategic position. Mbara (2023) argues that the war has intensified demands for UNSC reform because the current structure enables permanent members to protect themselves from accountability. This supports the view that the Council’s weakness is not accidental but embedded within its distribution of power.

Realist Theory has limitations as well. It can explain why powerful states pursue self-interest, but it may understate the role of law, legitimacy, diplomacy and moral condemnation. Although the UNSC was blocked, the wider UN system still responded through General Assembly resolutions and diplomatic pressure. A strict realist reading may dismiss these measures because they cannot directly compel compliance. Yet they still influence international legitimacy, isolate acts of aggression and provide political support to affected states. Realism is therefore valuable, but it should not be applied in a way that ignores international law or the agency of smaller states.

2.3.3 Significance of Using Both Theories

Using both theories gives the study a stronger analytical foundation. Collective Security Theory explains the UNSC's expected role in managing threats through collective action, legal authority and shared responsibility. Realist Theory explains the political constraints on that role by showing how permanent members act according to national interest, strategic rivalry and calculations of power. Read together, the theories support a balanced argument. The UNSC did not struggle merely because it lacked rules. It struggled because those rules operate within an international system dominated by powerful states.

This combined approach is especially relevant because the Russia–Ukraine War reveals both the value and the weakness of the UNSC. From a collective security perspective, Russia's invasion challenged sovereignty, territorial integrity and international peace. From a realist perspective, the Council's limited response reflects the likelihood that a permanent member will resist binding action against itself. Kato (2025) argues that the obligatory abstention rule in Article 27(3) could be reconsidered when a permanent member is party to a dispute, but its weak application shows how difficult it is to restrain powerful states through legal

interpretation alone. The study therefore uses both theories to show that the UNSC remains caught between legal expectation and political constraint.

Collective Security Theory and Realist Theory are suitable for this study because together they address its central problem: the UNSC is legally responsible for maintaining international peace and security, yet its capacity to act depends on the interests of powerful states. Their combined use does not capture every relevant factor, including identity, historical memory, domestic politics, sanctions imposed outside the UN and the role of regional organisations. It also permits a critical assessment of the difference between the Council's formal mandate, the political conditions governing its decisions, and the practical consequences of institutional paralysis during a major international armed conflict. Even so, for a study centred on the UNSC and the Russia–Ukraine War, both theories provide a coherent framework for examining the gap between institutional responsibility and practical effectiveness.

2.4 Empirical Review

This empirical review examines research on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), conflict management, veto power and the Russia–Ukraine War. The literature shows that the UNSC remains central to the management of international conflict, although its record is uneven. Several studies show that Council resolutions, peacekeeping operations and mediation efforts can reduce violence when suitable political and operational conditions exist. Other studies, however, maintain that veto politics, rivalry among major powers and limited enforcement capacity weaken the Council when a powerful state is directly involved.

Research on UNSC conflict management shows that Council action can have practical value where political agreement is matched by operational support. Benson and Tucker (2022) examine the role of UNSC resolutions in peacekeeping and reject the view that such resolutions

are merely symbolic documents. Their findings indicate that clear and targeted resolutions may strengthen peacekeeping effectiveness when they identify responsible actors and have sufficient troop support. This contribution is valuable because it demonstrates how legal language and political signalling can shape the behaviour of parties to conflict. Even so, the study concentrates on peacekeeping settings, especially civil conflicts in which missions already operate. Its findings therefore offer only a partial explanation of the Russia–Ukraine War, where no peacekeeping mission has been authorised because a permanent member is involved.

Clayton and Dorussen (2022) similarly investigate the relationship between mediation and peacekeeping. They find that mediation helps to stop hostilities, while peacekeeping is more effective when it supports an existing political process. Their analysis challenges the assumption that the presence of peacekeepers alone can manage armed conflict. It also indicates that UNSC conflict management depends on an interaction between negotiation, mandate design and credible implementation. However, the study is most applicable where the parties accept third-party participation. That condition is largely absent in the Russia–Ukraine War because Russia’s permanent membership creates a direct institutional obstacle to UNSC-led mediation or peacekeeping. The study therefore improves understanding of how conflict-management instruments work together, but it does not fully explain what happens when a major power can obstruct their use.

Research on sanctions provides further insight into the Council’s role. Biersteker, Eckert and Tourinho (2016) offer a systematic analysis of UN targeted sanctions and argue that such measures are often more successful in constraining conduct and signalling disapproval than in securing complete behavioural change. This finding is important because it challenges the assumption that sanctions automatically compel compliance. Jones and Portela (2020) likewise

argue that sanctions should not be assessed only by whether they produce immediate concessions. They may also restrict access to resources, reinforce international norms and communicate collective condemnation. This broader interpretation is useful to the present study because it recognises that UNSC measures can produce different forms of influence. Yet the Russia–Ukraine War exposes a more fundamental limitation. The Council has not imposed sanctions on Russia because Russia can veto any such proposal. Consequently, most sanctions have been adopted by individual states and regional organisations outside the UNSC framework. The sanctions literature therefore clarifies what these measures can achieve, while also revealing the Council’s weakness when the intended target holds veto power.

A related body of research examines decision-making within the UNSC and the influence of elected members. Nick Pay (2022) argues that elected members are not entirely marginal to Council politics. They can introduce issues, shape debate, build diplomatic coalitions and influence the wording of resolutions. This finding is useful because it challenges the assumption that only permanent members determine Council outcomes. Nevertheless, influence should not be confused with formal authority. Elected members may affect negotiations, but they cannot override the veto of a permanent member. This distinction is particularly important in the Russia–Ukraine case. Several Council members opposed Russia’s conduct, yet that opposition could not be converted into binding action because Russia retained the power to block any substantive resolution directed against itself.

Recent scholarship on veto power addresses this institutional problem more directly. Peters (2023) argues that a permanent member’s use of the veto to protect its own act of aggression lacks moral legitimacy and may also be legally questionable. This position is significant because it treats the veto not simply as a political obstacle, but as a challenge to the integrity of the UN Charter system. Maluwa (2023) similarly contends that Russia’s veto of the 2022

draft resolution on Ukraine exposed the paralysis of the UNSC and intensified demands for institutional reform. These studies provide a clear account of the legal and structural problems created by the veto. However, their emphasis remains mainly legal and institutional. They do not fully examine how Council paralysis affects the wider practice of conflict management, including mediation, sanctions, humanitarian access and sustained diplomatic pressure.

The Russia–Ukraine War has also generated research on the transfer of political initiative from the UNSC to the General Assembly. Scharf (2023) argues that the use of the “Uniting for Peace” procedure following Russia’s veto redirected attention from the Security Council towards the General Assembly. This interpretation is persuasive because the General Assembly was able to condemn Russia’s aggression when the Council could not reach a binding decision. Even so, General Assembly resolutions do not carry the same legal force as Security Council decisions. The development therefore represents institutional adaptation rather than a complete replacement of the UNSC. It also confirms the Council’s continuing importance, since no other UN organ possesses comparable enforcement authority under the Charter.

Taken together, the reviewed studies reveal three recurring patterns. First, UNSC instruments such as resolutions, sanctions, mediation and peacekeeping can support conflict management when they are carefully designed, adequately resourced and politically backed. Second, their effectiveness declines when permanent members disagree or when one of them is directly involved in the conflict. Third, much of the existing literature either evaluates general UNSC instruments or concentrates narrowly on the legal implications of Russia’s veto. A clear gap therefore remains. Further analysis is needed to connect the Council’s conflict-management responsibilities with the specific political restrictions created by the Russia–Ukraine War. This study addresses that gap by examining how veto power, great-power rivalry and the national

interests of permanent members constrain the UNSC's legal responsibility for maintaining international peace and security.

2.5 Gap in Literature

The literature reviewed indicates that attention has been given to the Russia–Ukraine War, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), veto power and international conflict management. Even so, studies do not fully explain how the UNSC has managed this war or the extent to which veto power has constrained its response. Some scholars concentrate on conflict-management instruments, including resolutions, mediation and peacekeeping, without treating the Russia–Ukraine War as a direct test of those mechanisms. Their work remains valuable because it shows that Council action can contribute to conflict management where political and operational conditions exist. Yet it offers less insight into conflicts in which a permanent member is involved and can prevent collective action.

Other studies examine Russia's veto as a legal and political problem. Although this scholarship is important, it is concerned with the legality of veto use, institutional reform and competing interpretations of the UN Charter rather than the broader pattern of UNSC conflict management during the war. Research on the General Assembly's "Uniting for Peace" procedure also explains how the wider UN system responded when the Security Council was unable to act. However, this literature gives limited attention to how the blockage affected the Council's capacity to manage the conflict.

The main gap, therefore, is that previous studies tend to discuss the Russia–Ukraine War in general terms, assess UNSC instruments broadly, or treat the veto chiefly as a legal issue. Fewer studies connect these areas by examining the Council's response through resolutions, diplomatic engagement, sanctions debates, referral to the General Assembly and public

deliberation. This study addresses that gap by assessing the UNSC's management of the Russia–Ukraine War and the degree to which veto power, great-power rivalry and national interests have restricted its ability to respond effectively.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

3.1 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework provides the analytical basis for examining how the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) manages international conflict, with particular attention to the Russia–Ukraine War. It places the Council within wider international relations debates, drawing on collective security theory, realism, liberal institutionalism and power transition theory (Morgenthau, 1948; Keohane, 1984; Organski, 1958; Claude, 1962). Together, these perspectives clarify both the role assigned to the UNSC and the political constraints that shape its performance in contemporary international affairs. This combined approach prevents the analysis from treating the Council as either wholly effective or institutionally entirely irrelevant.

Liberal institutionalism presents a relatively optimistic account of the UNSC. Keohane argues that international institutions remain important because they support cooperation, reduce the costs of negotiation and establish shared standards of state conduct (Keohane, 1984). From this perspective, the UNSC:

- Provides a continuing forum for diplomatic engagement.
- Promotes greater transparency in the conduct of states.
- Reinforces norms opposing aggression and territorial conquest.
- Gives legitimacy to collective action when agreement is reached.

During the Russia–Ukraine War, the UNSC has continued to serve as a diplomatic forum in which states defend their positions and seek wider international support (Hurd, 2017; Weiss & Daws, 2018). Although permanent-member vetoes have prevented decisive enforcement, the

Council still influences legal norms, diplomatic debate and international judgements of legitimacy. Even so, liberal institutionalism recognises that institutions become less effective when cooperation among major powers collapses, as the geopolitical divisions surrounding the Russia–Ukraine conflict clearly demonstrate.

3.2 The Hypotheses

This study develops a set of hypotheses from its theoretical framework and its examination of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in managing international conflict, with particular attention to the Russia–Ukraine War. Drawing on liberal institutionalist scholarship and research on international organisations, these hypotheses guide the empirical analysis and interpretation of the Council’s effectiveness, institutional conduct and practical limitations. They also provide a clear basis for comparing the Council’s formal mandate with its actual response to a conflict in which one of its permanent members is a belligerent.

Main Hypothesis

H1: The United Nations Security Council is significantly constrained in managing international conflict when a permanent member is directly involved in that conflict.

This hypothesis reflects the central claim that the veto granted to permanent members under the UN Charter restricts the Council’s ability to take decisive action when a major power is party to a dispute (Luck, 2006). The Russia–Ukraine War provides a current illustration of this institutional constraint, since Russia’s position as a permanent member has substantially limited the Council’s capacity to adopt binding resolutions. The hypothesis therefore links the legal design of the Council to the practical consequences of permanent-member involvement in a major armed conflict.

Sub-Hypotheses

H2: The veto power of permanent members is the principal structural factor limiting the effectiveness of the UNSC in conflict resolution.

This hypothesis considers whether the Security Council's institutional design, particularly its veto arrangement, has a greater effect on Council performance than diplomatic disagreement or procedural weakness. Malone (2004) and Bosco (2009) identify the veto as one of the Council's most disputed features and a frequent source of deadlock in decision-making.

H3: The UNSC is more effective in addressing conflicts involving non-permanent members or weaker states than conflicts involving great powers.

This hypothesis is informed by realist theory, which holds that international institutions function within a system shaped by state power and national interest (Morgenthau, 1948). Waltz (1979) argues that the distribution of power influences institutional outcomes, while Mearsheimer (2001) maintains that great powers rarely permit international organisations to restrict their strategic interests.

H4: The UNSC's paralysis during the Russia–Ukraine War has increased reliance on alternative UN organs, particularly the General Assembly and humanitarian agencies.

This hypothesis assesses the capacity of the United Nations system to adapt when the Security Council cannot act. Hurd (2007) argues that institutional legitimacy may be sustained through several UN organs when the Council is unable to respond effectively. The Russia–Ukraine conflict illustrates this adjustment through the growing role of the UN General Assembly in addressing matters left unresolved because of veto constraints.

H5: The Russia–Ukraine War shows that geopolitical rivalry among major powers reduces the capacity of international institutions to enforce collective security.

This hypothesis draws on realist and power-politics approaches, which stress the effect of strategic competition among major states. Waltz (1979) argues that international institutions reflect, rather than overcome, the balance of power, while Mearsheimer (2014) maintains that great-power rivalry frequently weakens collective security arrangements. Ikenberry (2020) similarly notes that increasing geopolitical polarisation presents serious difficulties for contemporary international institutions.

H6: Despite its limitations, the UNSC continues to serve an important diplomatic and legitimising role in international conflict.

This hypothesis recognises that the Council’s importance extends beyond coercion and enforcement. Keohane (1984) argues that international institutions promote dialogue, establish norms and provide channels for cooperation. Hurd (2007) further maintains that the legitimacy created through Security Council deliberation remains valuable even where consensus is absent. Voeten (2022) also emphasises the Council’s continuing function as a forum for diplomatic engagement and international legitimation.

The hypotheses examine two related dimensions of the study. The first concerns constraints on effectiveness, particularly how power politics, veto authority and institutional design shape UNSC performance (Mearsheimer, 2001; Waltz, 1979; Luck, 2006). The second concerns institutional resilience and alternative functions, focusing on how the wider UN system responds to Security Council deadlock while sustaining international legitimacy and cooperation.

Therefore, these hypotheses provide a coherent basis for examining both the continuing relevance and practical limitations of the UNSC within the Russia–Ukraine War and the broader management of international conflict.

3.3 Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative research design, using a descriptive case study approach. Creswell and Poth (2018) explain that qualitative research is appropriate for studies concerned with understanding social, political and institutional phenomena within their natural contexts. This design suits this study because it examines how the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has managed international conflict, with particular attention to the Russian–Ukrainian War. Addressing this issue requires analysis of political developments, diplomatic initiatives, institutional decisions and international relations rather than numerical measurement. Denzin and Lincoln (2018) also argue that qualitative research allows social realities to be explored through the interpretation of documents, experiences and institutional processes. It therefore offers a suitable basis for examining both the Council’s responsibilities and the political conditions that shape its response to conflict.

The qualitative design allows the researcher to examine international conflict management through official records, documented evidence, policy decisions and scholarly interpretations. Creswell and Poth (2018) note that qualitative inquiry focuses on meanings, experiences and interpretations rather than statistical measurement. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) similarly maintain that this approach is well suited to the study of institutions, policies and social relationships within their specific contexts. Applying this design makes it possible to assess the Security Council’s response critically and carefully to identify the political, legal and institutional factors that have shaped its performance during the conflict.

The study also uses a descriptive design because it sets out the activities, functions and responses of the United Nations Security Council during the Russian–Ukrainian conflict. Kothari (2004) explains that descriptive research examines the characteristics of a phenomenon, event or situation as it exists. Kumar (2019) likewise argues that descriptive studies offer detailed and systematic accounts of political and social realities. This approach therefore supports a careful account of the meetings, resolutions, debates and diplomatic efforts through which the Security Council sought to maintain international peace and security. It also helps clarify, in practice, what the Council did, how it responded at different stages, and the practical limits that affected its involvement in the conflict.

The research further adopts a case study design, treating the Russian–Ukrainian War as a focused example of contemporary international conflict. Yin (2018) explains that case study research permits intensive examination of a current phenomenon within its real-life setting, particularly where the boundaries between the event and its context are difficult to separate. Stake (1995) similarly argues that case studies support a deeper understanding of complex issues through detailed contextual analysis. The Russian–Ukrainian War was selected because it is among the most consequential international conflicts of recent years and has placed considerable pressure on the United Nations Security Council. It therefore provides an appropriate setting for assessing how the Council performs its responsibilities for conflict prevention, conflict management and the maintenance of international peace and security when a permanent member is directly involved in the conflict before the Council.

The case study approach is also justified because it enables the researcher to examine interactions among the principal actors, including Russia, Ukraine, the permanent members of the Security Council and the wider international community. Yin (2018) emphasises that case studies are especially useful for investigating relationships, institutional processes and political

dynamics in complex settings. Baxter and Jack (2008) likewise note that case study research allows contemporary issues to be explored in depth through several forms of evidence. This approach therefore supports a close examination of how veto power has influenced decision-making within the Council and what that influence means for the credibility, effectiveness and wider security role of the institution.

The chosen design is suitable for achieving the study's objectives because it offers a coherent framework for examining the United Nations Security Council's management of the Russian–Ukrainian conflict. It also keeps the analysis tied to the study's questions. By combining qualitative, descriptive and case study approaches, the researcher can interpret evidence, assess institutional responses and reach grounded conclusions about the Council's effectiveness and limitations in managing international conflict.

3.4 Sources of Data

Secondary data were appropriate for this study because the activities of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and the Russian–Ukrainian War have been widely recorded in official documents, academic studies, policy papers and international reports. Creswell and Creswell (2018) explain that secondary data are valuable when researchers examine information already produced by credible institutions and scholars. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019) likewise argue that documentary and archival materials are useful for research on political institutions and international events.

The secondary evidence used in the study came from several reliable and authoritative categories. Together, these materials allowed the researcher to trace institutional decisions, compare competing interpretations and assess whether reported developments were consistent

across official, scholarly and journalistic accounts, rather than relying on one type of evidence alone in the final analysis.

i. United Nations Official Documents

Official United Nations publications and records formed the principal documentary source for the study. They included Security Council resolutions, meeting records, voting records, reports of the Secretary-General, press releases and General Assembly resolutions concerning the Russian–Ukrainian conflict. The United Nations Charter assigns the Security Council primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security (United Nations Charter, 1945). Official UN documents therefore provided direct evidence of the Council’s decisions, debates, voting patterns and responses to the war. Reports and resolutions published by the United Nations (2022) also offered contemporary information on the Council’s deliberations and the wider UN response to the conflict.

ii. Academic Journals and Scholarly Articles

Peer-reviewed journals and scholarly works in International Relations, Political Science, Peace and Conflict Studies and International Law provided another major source of evidence. Hurd (2007) argues that academic research offers critical insight into the legitimacy and performance of international organisations. Malone (2004) examines Security Council decision-making, while Weiss and Daws (2018) assess the strengths and weaknesses of the United Nations in responding to contemporary conflicts. These studies supplied theoretical arguments, empirical findings and critical interpretations of the UNSC’s role in maintaining international peace and security. They also helped the researcher examine the interests and institutional constraints underlying Council action.

iii. Textbooks and Reference Materials

Relevant textbooks, encyclopaedias and reference works on international organisations, diplomacy, global governance, conflict resolution and the United Nations system were consulted. Mingst and Karns (2017) provide a broad account of the structures and functions of international organisations, including the United Nations. Taylor and Curtis (2011) likewise discuss the development of international institutions and their place in global governance. These materials provided historical background and conceptual understanding of the Security Council's composition, functions and powers under the United Nations Charter.

iv. Reports from International Organisations

The study also considered reports from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the European Union (EU), the International Crisis Group (ICG) and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). NATO (2022) examined the conflict's security implications for Europe and the international system. European Union (2022) publications documented diplomatic responses and sanctions, while reports from the International Crisis Group (2022) and OSCE (2022) analysed the conflict's causes, development and humanitarian consequences. These reports were valuable because they presented perspectives from organisations directly concerned with European security, diplomacy, crisis monitoring and humanitarian conditions.

v. Newspapers and International Media Reports

The study further used reports from established international news organisations, including BBC News, Reuters, Al Jazeera, CNN, The Guardian and The New York Times. Bryman (2016) notes that reputable media reporting can provide timely information and useful context for contemporary events. These outlets supplied updates on developments in the conflict,

diplomatic negotiations, Security Council meetings and international responses to the war. Since reporting may reflect editorial choices and unequal access to information, several media sources were compared to identify agreement, recognise disputed claims and reduce possible bias.

vi. Online Databases and Electronic Sources

Electronic databases and research repositories, including Google Scholar, JSTOR, ResearchGate, Academia.edu and university library databases, were used to locate journal articles, conference papers and research reports. Saunders et al. (2019) argue that electronic databases broaden access to academic materials and support literature reviews. Creswell and Creswell (2018) similarly observe that online databases give researchers access to current and credible scholarship. These platforms therefore supported access to recent literature and empirical research on international conflict management and Security Council operations. Materials located through them were assessed for authorship, relevance, publication quality and academic credibility.

vii. Government Publications and Policy Documents

Official statements, policy papers and reports issued by governments involved in or affected by the conflict were also examined. These included documents from Russia, Ukraine, the United States and member states of the European Union. Publications from the United States Department of State (2022) provided evidence of American foreign policy responses, while documents from the Government of Ukraine (2022) presented Ukraine's official position and diplomatic activities. These sources clarified the interests, policy objectives and public arguments of major actors within the Security Council framework. Because government

documents present official positions, they were compared with independent and multilateral evidence rather than accepted without scrutiny.

Using these varied sources strengthened the credibility, reliability and breadth of the study. Yin (2018) argues that multiple forms of evidence improve the validity of case study research. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) similarly maintain that triangulation increases the trustworthiness and rigour of qualitative inquiry. By comparing official documents, scholarly studies, institutional reports, government publications and credible media accounts, the researcher developed a balanced understanding of the UNSC's management of the Russian–Ukrainian War and the challenges affecting its responsibility to maintain international peace and security.

3.5 Method of Data Collection

This study used the documentary method of data collection, a qualitative technique that involves the careful gathering, assessment and interpretation of existing written materials, official records and published documents connected to a research problem. Scott (1990) explains that documentary research allows researchers to draw evidence from records that are authentic, credible, representative and meaningful. Mogalakwe (2006) similarly argues that documentary methods are especially valuable in social science research concerned with historical, political and institutional questions. This method was suitable for the present study because the investigation focuses on international relations and the activities of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), where much of the relevant evidence exists in documented form rather than through direct observation in the field.

All data used in the study came from secondary sources. Johnston (2014) defines secondary data as information previously collected and processed by individuals or institutions, often for purposes different from those of the present research. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019)

further note that secondary data give researchers access to extensive bodies of information that may otherwise be difficult, expensive or time-consuming to obtain. Their use therefore enabled the researcher to examine a wide range of evidence on the Russian–Ukrainian War and the role of the UNSC in managing the conflict.

The principal documentary sources included official United Nations materials, such as Security Council resolutions, meeting records, reports of the Secretary-General, General Assembly resolutions and publications issued by UN agencies. The United Nations Charter (1945) identifies the Security Council as the organ with primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. Official UN documents therefore provided authoritative evidence of Council decisions, debates and institutional responses. Reports and records released by the United Nations (2022) also supplied direct information on voting patterns, resolutions and diplomatic actions taken by the UNSC in relation to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

Scholarly materials were also consulted, including textbooks, journal articles, conference papers, dissertations and theses on international conflict management, collective security, peacekeeping and the United Nations system. Hurd (2007) stresses the value of academic literature in assessing the legitimacy and effectiveness of international institutions. Malone (2004) provides detailed analysis of decision-making within the Security Council, while Weiss and Daws (2018) examine the strengths and limitations of the United Nations in contemporary world politics. These studies offered both theoretical explanations and empirical evidence for evaluating the Council’s contribution to international peace and security.

Reports from international organisations and policy institutions formed another part of the evidence base. These included publications from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the European Union (EU), the International Crisis Group (ICG) and other policy research bodies. NATO (2022) provided information on the wider security consequences of the war, while the European Union (2022) documented diplomatic responses and policy measures adopted in reaction to the conflict. The International Crisis Group (2022) also offered detailed analysis of the political, humanitarian and security dimensions of the Russian–Ukrainian War.

The study further used credible media reports from BBC News, Reuters, Al Jazeera and other established international news organisations to obtain timely information on developments in the conflict. Bryman (2016) notes that media reporting can provide valuable evidence on contemporary events when sources are carefully assessed for credibility and objectivity. These reports supplied accounts of major events, diplomatic negotiations, international reactions and Security Council deliberations. To reduce the risk of relying on one editorial perspective, information from different outlets was compared carefully wherever possible. This comparison also helped distinguish verified institutional actions from disputed claims reported during rapidly changing phases of the war.

The collected materials were reviewed, screened and organised in line with the objectives of the study. Bowen (2009) argues that documentary analysis requires the systematic examination and interpretation of documents in order to generate meaning and develop empirical understanding. Relevant evidence was therefore extracted and grouped under themes such as the UNSC's role in conflict management, the Council's response to the Russian–Ukrainian War, the challenges affecting its performance and the influence of veto power on decision-making. Creswell and Poth (2018) also emphasise the importance of arranging qualitative evidence around themes that reflect the purpose of the research.

The documentary method was selected because it is economical, gives access to a broad range of reliable materials and allows historical developments to be examined alongside contemporary events. Scott (1990) argues that documentary evidence has important advantages in terms of accessibility and permanence. Bowen (2009) likewise notes that documentary research can strengthen the credibility of findings when the materials used are authoritative and verifiable. For these reasons, the method provided an appropriate way of investigating the role of the United Nations Security Council in managing international conflict.

Through documentary research and the use of secondary evidence, the study gathered sufficient material for a detailed analysis of the United Nations Security Council's management of the Russian–Ukrainian conflict. Mogalakwe (2006) observes that documentary methods produce rich and dependable evidence for political and institutional research, while Creswell and Poth (2018) maintain that qualitative documentary materials are useful for interpreting complex social and political phenomena.

3.6 The Study Area

This study focuses on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and its role in managing the Russian–Ukrainian War, an international conflict with far-reaching consequences for global peace, security and international relations. Malone (2004) identifies the Security Council as the central institution within the United Nations system for addressing threats to international peace and security. Weiss and Daws (2018) similarly argue that assessments of the United Nations in contemporary global politics often depend on how effectively the Security Council performs its responsibilities and responds to its institutional limitations.

The United Nations Security Council is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations and carries primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. Created

under the Charter of the United Nations in 1945, it has fifteen members: five permanent members—the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia and China—and ten non-permanent members elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms. The United Nations Charter (1945) authorises the Council to investigate disputes, recommend peaceful means of settlement, impose sanctions, establish peacekeeping operations and approve collective military action where necessary to restore international peace and security, and give it substantial legal and political authority. Hurd (2007) argues that these powers place the Security Council at the centre of the international collective security system.

The Security Council forms the institutional focus of this study because it is the principal international body charged with responding to threats to global peace and stability. Keohane (1984) argues that international institutions create channels for cooperation, coordination and conflict management among states. Since hostilities between Russia and Ukraine escalated in 2022, the Council has held debates and emergency meetings, considered resolutions and pursued diplomatic initiatives concerning the conflict (United Nations, 2022). Examining these responses offers insight into how international organisations address contemporary conflicts and where their authority becomes politically constrained.

This study centres on the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, two sovereign states in Eastern Europe. Ukraine borders Russia to the east and north-east, Belarus to the north, Poland, Slovakia and Hungary to the west, and Romania and Moldova to the south-west. Russia is the world's largest state by land area and occupies an influential position in international politics. It is also one of the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (Mingst & Karns, 2017). This status gives Russia considerable influence over Council decisions, particularly through its power to exercise the veto on substantive Council matters.

The Russian–Ukrainian conflict emerged from political, historical, economic and security tensions that developed over several years. Mearsheimer (2014) argues that relations between Russia and the West have been shaped by competing geopolitical interests and conflicting security concerns. The conflict, however, drew exceptional global attention after Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. The international community widely regarded the invasion as a serious challenge to the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity established in international law and the wider international security order (United Nations, 2022). The war has caused extensive destruction, deaths, mass displacement, disruption to global economic activity, food insecurity and heightened geopolitical tension across the world (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2023; World Bank, 2023).

The conflict was selected as the case study because it is one of the most consequential international crises of the twenty-first century. Malone (2004) argues that conflicts involving major powers offer important tests of Security Council effectiveness because they expose weaknesses within collective security arrangements. The Russian–Ukrainian War has placed particular pressure on the Council’s ability to fulfil its mandate because Russia, one of the principal parties to the conflict, is also a permanent member of the Security Council (Hurd, 2007). This institutional contradiction has intensified concern about how veto power and geopolitical interests influence the Council’s decisions and restrict collective responses to major threats to international peace (Bosco, 2009; Luck, 2006).

The study area is not confined to the geographical boundaries of Russia and Ukraine. It also covers the wider diplomatic setting in which the Security Council operates under the United Nations framework. The research considers the Council’s response through official meetings, resolutions, diplomatic initiatives, humanitarian action and peacebuilding efforts. It further examines the political and institutional conditions that have shaped the Council’s effectiveness,

including relations among the permanent members, competing national interests and disagreements over how the conflict should be managed.

By focusing on the United Nations Security Council and the Russian–Ukrainian War, this study clarifies the relationship between international institutions and conflict management in the contemporary international system. Keohane (1984) argues that institutions remain important because they provide frameworks for cooperation even during political disagreement, while Hurd (2007) emphasises the continuing value of institutional legitimacy in global governance. This study area is especially relevant today because the conflict continues to shape debates about international security, diplomatic relations and possible reforms to the structure and decision-making procedures of the United Nations Security Council.

3.7 Population of the Study

As this study uses a qualitative design and depends on documentary evidence, its population does not consist of human participants. Instead, it comprises written materials and official records relating to the activities of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and the Russian–Ukrainian conflict. Creswell and Poth (2018) explain that qualitative research may draw on documents, records and other textual materials when these sources provide meaningful evidence about social and political phenomena. Bowen (2009) similarly notes that documentary research defines its population through the body of available documents relevant to the issue being examined. Accordingly, the population of this study includes official records, reports, resolutions, scholarly publications and policy materials concerning the UNSC’s role in managing international conflict, with particular emphasis on the Russian–Ukrainian War.

More specifically, the population covers Security Council resolutions, meeting records, voting records, reports of the Secretary-General, General Assembly resolutions and official communications connected with the Russian–Ukrainian conflict from the escalation of the crisis to the present period. The United Nations Charter (1945) identifies the Security Council as the principal organ responsible for maintaining international peace and security, making its records essential for assessing Council decisions and actions. Publications issued by the United Nations (2022) also provide detailed evidence of debates, voting patterns, diplomatic initiatives and institutional responses to the war. The population further includes textbooks, journal articles, conference papers, dissertations and theses addressing international conflict management, collective security, peacekeeping, diplomacy and Security Council effectiveness (Hurd, 2007; Malone, 2004).

The population also includes reports produced by international organisations concerned with peace and security, including the United Nations, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the European Union (EU), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the International Crisis Group. NATO (2022) and the European Union (2022) show that institutional reports can provide useful evidence on security developments, diplomatic responses and policy measures associated with the Russian–Ukrainian conflict. OSCE (2022) reports likewise offer information on security conditions, humanitarian concerns and conflict-related developments. Government publications, policy papers and official statements issued by Russia, Ukraine, the United States and other important actors are also included because they reveal the positions, interests and foreign policy objectives of the principal stakeholders.

Reputable media reports and analytical publications from established international news organisations also form part of the population. These sources provide timely accounts of

developments in the conflict, diplomatic negotiations, humanitarian concerns and international responses to the war. Bryman (2016) argues that media materials can serve as useful documentary evidence in qualitative research when their credibility and reliability are carefully evaluated. Johnston (2014) similarly observes that secondary documentary sources can illuminate political events and institutional responses, particularly where direct access to decision-makers or other research subjects is limited. Such materials were therefore treated as supporting evidence and compared with official and scholarly sources.

The choice of this population reflects the nature of the study, which assesses the effectiveness of the United Nations Security Council in managing an ongoing international conflict. Because the relevant evidence exists mainly in documentary form, the population is defined by accessible written materials rather than individual respondents. Scott (1990) argues that documentary sources are valuable in social research because they record institutional activities, historical developments and policy decisions. Mogalakwe (2006) likewise maintains that documentary populations are appropriate for studies of political institutions and governance processes. This approach ensures that the evidence examined remains closely connected to the Council's formal actions and the wider political context.

The study gives particular attention to documents published from 2022 to the present because this period captures the major developments following the escalation of the Russian–Ukrainian War and the Security Council's responses. Yin (2018) argues that a clearly defined timeframe strengthens case study research by ensuring that the selected evidence remains directly relevant to the phenomenon under investigation. This timeframe also allows the analysis to distinguish immediate institutional reactions from later diplomatic developments and evolving interpretations of the Council's overall performance. These materials therefore constitute the

population from which documents were selected, reviewed and analysed to meet the research objectives and answer the study's research questions.

3.8 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The sample size and sampling technique adopted for this study reflect its focus on the role of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in managing international conflict, with particular reference to the Russia–Ukraine War. Because the research uses a qualitative design and depends on documentary evidence rather than human participants, sampling applies to documents, reports and institutional records instead of individuals. Bowen (2009) explains that documentary research requires the deliberate selection of texts and records containing useful evidence about the issue under investigation. Creswell and Poth (2018) similarly note that qualitative sampling gives priority to information-rich sources that can deepen understanding of the research problem. This approach also ensures that the evidence examined remains closely connected to the institutional questions raised by the study and its analytical focus.

The sample size refers to the number of documents, reports and other materials drawn from the wider population for detailed examination. Unlike quantitative studies, which often calculate sample size statistically, qualitative documentary research determines adequacy through relevance, depth, accessibility and the capacity of selected materials to address the research objectives (Patton, 2015). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) likewise argue that qualitative researchers seek sources capable of producing sufficient evidence and meaningful insight rather than statistical generalisation.

For this study, the sample comprises approximately 25–40 key documents and sources selected from the wider body of relevant material. These sources are grouped as follows:

i. United Nations Security Council Documents

The sample contains approximately 8–10 Security Council resolutions, draft resolutions, meeting records and official statements concerning the Russia–Ukraine War. These materials provide direct evidence of Council debates, voting patterns, institutional responses and decision-making processes (United Nations, 2022). Official UN records are appropriate because they constitute authoritative accounts of the Council’s activities under the United Nations Charter.

ii. United Nations General Assembly Resolutions

Approximately 4–6 General Assembly resolutions concerning the Russia–Ukraine conflict are included. These documents show wider international responses, diplomatic positions and efforts by the UN system to address matters on which the Security Council could not act effectively.

iii. United Nations Agency Reports

The sample includes approximately 5–7 reports from UN agencies, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. These reports provide evidence of the war’s humanitarian effects, including displacement, food insecurity and emergency relief measures.

iv. Academic Journal Articles

Approximately 6–10 peer-reviewed articles addressing UNSC effectiveness, collective security, international institutions and the Russia–Ukraine conflict form part of the sample.

These studies are important because they provide theoretical explanations and critical assessments of the role and limitations of international organisations.

v. Policy Papers and Institutional Reports

The sample further includes approximately 4–6 policy reports from recognised institutions, including the Council on Foreign Relations and the International Institute for Strategic Studies. These materials offer contemporary policy analysis and expert assessments of the geopolitical developments surrounding the conflict.

vi. Credible Media Analyses

Approximately 3–5 reports from reputable international media organisations are included to support contextual interpretation and verify the sequence of major events. Bryman (2016) notes that media reports can provide valuable contemporary evidence when they are selected carefully and assessed for credibility.

The proposed sample size is adequate because qualitative research values depth, relevance and richness of evidence rather than numerical representativeness. Patton (2015) argues that an effective qualitative sample should provide enough information to explain the research problem. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) similarly maintain that adequacy depends on whether the selected materials can address the objectives of the study.

Sampling Technique

The study uses purposive and judgemental sampling. These techniques suit qualitative documentary research because they enable the researcher to select sources deliberately on the basis of their relevance, credibility and capacity to provide evidence directly connected to the research objectives.

3.9 Justification for the Sampling Technique

Purposive or judgemental sampling was adopted because the study is qualitative and relies mainly on documentary evidence. In qualitative research, sampling is not chiefly concerned with statistical representativeness. Its purpose is to identify sources that contain rich, relevant and meaningful information about the issue being investigated. Patton (2015) explains that purposive sampling involves deliberately choosing information-rich cases that can support a detailed understanding of the subject. Creswell and Poth (2018) similarly argue that this technique is appropriate where researchers require specific evidence from carefully selected sources rather than from randomly chosen participants or materials. This choice keeps the sampling process aligned with the questions and boundaries of the study.

Purposive sampling, also known as judgemental sampling, is a non-probability technique through which the researcher intentionally selects sources considered most useful for meeting the study's objectives. Unlike probability sampling, where every element in a population has an equal chance of selection, purposive sampling concentrates on materials that possess the qualities needed to answer the research questions (Patton, 2015). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) further note that qualitative researchers commonly use this approach because it enables them to identify sources capable of offering deeper insight into complex institutional, political and social issues. It also reduces the risk that large volumes of marginal material will obscure the evidence that matters most.

Several reasons support the use of purposive sampling in this study. First, the research is concerned specifically with the role of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in managing the Russian–Ukrainian War. Not every document on international relations, conflict management or the United Nations is directly relevant to that purpose. The researcher therefore selected records containing evidence about the Security Council's resolutions, debates,

decisions, actions and responses to the conflict. Bowen (2009) argues that documentary research requires the careful choice of materials that address the research problem, while Hurd (2007) stresses the value of institutional records for understanding how international organisations function. Selection was therefore guided by relevance to the case, source authority, date, and direct engagement with UNSC decision-making.

Second, the study population contains a very large number of documents, reports, publications and institutional records produced by different organisations and political actors across the world. Examining every available item would be unrealistic given the limits of time, resources and research scope. Purposive sampling therefore allowed the researcher to narrow the study to sources that were especially relevant, credible and informative. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) maintain that selecting information-rich materials enables qualitative researchers to achieve analytical depth. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019) likewise note that judgemental selection is valuable when researchers must identify the most suitable materials from a broad population.

Third, the technique helped ensure that the study relied on authoritative and dependable evidence. Through deliberate selection, attention was given to official United Nations records, Security Council resolutions, reports from international organisations, peer-reviewed academic studies, government publications and credible media analysis. Scott (1990) argues that documentary sources should be assessed according to authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning. Bowen (2009) similarly maintains that careful document selection and evaluation strengthen the reliability and validity of findings produced through qualitative research.

Purposive sampling is also well suited to qualitative inquiry because its main aim is to develop a detailed understanding of a phenomenon rather than to achieve statistical generalisation.

Creswell and Poth (2018) explain that qualitative studies require evidence capable of supporting careful interpretation of complex issues. Since this study assesses the Security Council's effectiveness in managing international conflict, a smaller body of carefully selected documentary evidence offers greater analytical value than a large collection of randomly chosen materials (Patton, 2015).

Another reason for using purposive or judgemental sampling is that it allowed the researcher to prioritise contemporary and directly relevant documents. Preference was given to official records, publications and reports produced from 2022 to the present because this period captures the escalation of the Russian–Ukrainian War and the Security Council's subsequent responses. Focusing on recent materials helps ensure that the analysis reflects current developments in international conflict management and changing institutional responses to the crisis.

The technique also supported the selection of documents addressing the study's central variables. These included the role of the Security Council, approaches to conflict management, the exercise of veto power, diplomatic initiatives, peacekeeping efforts and institutional barriers affecting the Council's ability to fulfil its mandate. Luck (2006) identifies veto power as a major influence on Security Council effectiveness, while Malone (2004) emphasises the need to examine Council decision-making when assessing the management of international conflict.

In practical terms, purposive sampling improved the efficiency of the research by allowing the researcher to concentrate on documents that contributed directly to the objectives instead of devoting substantial time to irrelevant material. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) argue that effective qualitative sampling strengthens data collection and analysis by ensuring that chosen sources

provide meaningful evidence. Saunders et al. (2019) likewise maintain that appropriate source selection improves the credibility, relevance and practical value of research findings.

Purposive or judgemental sampling was therefore the most suitable technique for this study because it enabled the deliberate selection of relevant, credible and information-rich documentary materials. These sources provided detailed evidence about the role of the United Nations Security Council in managing the Russian–Ukrainian conflict. Patton (2015) and Creswell and Poth (2018) agree that purposive sampling is especially valuable in qualitative research where the aim is to gain a detailed understanding from carefully chosen sources rather than to achieve statistical representation.

3.10 Validity and Reliability

The validity and reliability of this study were supported through the careful selection, verification and systematic analysis of evidence drawn from credible documentary sources. In qualitative research, validity and reliability concern whether findings represent the issue being examined accurately and whether the research process is consistent, clear and open to scrutiny. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) argue that qualitative studies can establish trustworthiness through suitable data selection, careful interpretation and systematic procedures. For this reason, deliberate steps were taken throughout the study to ensure that the evidence used was accurate, relevant, dependable and capable of supporting credible conclusions. This was important because documentary evidence can reproduce institutional bias if sources are accepted without scrutiny.

Validity of Data

To strengthen validity, the study drew on authoritative sources directly connected to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and the Russian–Ukrainian conflict. Particular attention was

given to official United Nations documents, including Security Council resolutions, meeting records, reports of the Secretary-General, General Assembly resolutions and formal statements. The United Nations Charter (1945) identifies the Security Council as the principal organ responsible for maintaining international peace and security, which makes its official records important evidence for assessing its conduct. Scott (1990) argues that documentary materials should be judged according to their authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning before they are accepted as valid evidence. These records were examined as evidence of official action rather than treated as neutral accounts of events.

Peer-reviewed journal articles, textbooks, conference papers, dissertations and research reports were also examined. These materials strengthened validity because they had undergone scholarly review and offered theoretically informed and empirically grounded analysis of the issues under investigation. Bryman (2016) notes that academic sources improve the credibility of qualitative research, while Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019) stress the importance of relying on professionally reviewed and dependable materials. Where scholars disagreed, their arguments were compared to identify the evidence supporting each interpretation.

Data triangulation provided another means of strengthening validity. Denzin (1978) defines triangulation as the use of several sources or methods to examine the same phenomenon and improve the accuracy of findings. In this study, information from United Nations reports was compared with evidence from academic publications, policy papers, government documents and reports issued by organisations such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the European Union and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. Bowen (2009) argues that comparing evidence across documentary sources increases confidence in research conclusions by reducing dependence on any single account.

Content validity was further supported by selecting documents that addressed the objectives of the study directly. Materials that did not concern the Security Council, international conflict management or the Russian–Ukrainian War were excluded. Yin (2018) argues that case study validity improves when the evidence selected corresponds closely with the research objectives. Patton (2015) similarly maintains that qualitative researchers should prioritise information-rich sources that contribute directly to understanding the research problem.

Reliability of Data

Reliability was addressed through a systematic and organised approach to collecting and analysing documents. Clear selection criteria were applied, including relevance to the topic, source credibility, authenticity, publication date and consistency with the study's objectives. Scott (1990) argues that the systematic assessment of documents is necessary for establishing reliability, while Bowen (2009) emphasises consistency throughout the process of documentary analysis. This procedure also made the inclusion and exclusion of documents more transparent and reproducible in practice. The study also relied on publications from recognised institutions whose work is widely accepted in academic and professional settings. These included the United Nations, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, European Union, International Crisis Group, government agencies and reputable academic publishers. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) note that established sources improve the dependability of qualitative findings. Saunders et al. (2019) similarly argue that reliability is strengthened when evidence comes from trustworthy and verifiable sources.

Reliability was also supported by keeping detailed records of every source consulted. Accurate documentation of books, journal articles, reports, resolutions and electronic materials created an audit trail through which the research process could be reviewed and verified. Yin (2018)

argues that a clear chain of evidence strengthens case study reliability, while Scott (1990) identifies careful documentation as an essential feature of documentary research.

Cross-verification provided a further safeguard. Information obtained from one source was checked against evidence from independent sources before it was included in the analysis. This process helped identify inconsistencies, factual errors and possible misinformation. Bowen (2009) explains that cross-checking documentary evidence improves reliability, while Patton (2015) argues that confirming information across multiple sources strengthens the credibility of qualitative findings.

3.11 Method of Data Analysis

Given the nature of the study and the form of evidence collected, qualitative content analysis was adopted as the method of data analysis. This approach provides a systematic way of examining textual materials by identifying recurring themes, concepts, categories, patterns and relationships within the evidence. Krippendorff (2018) explains that content analysis offers a structured basis for drawing meaningful interpretations from information. Schreier (2012) similarly notes that the method is particularly suitable for documentary research where the purpose is to understand meaning and patterns rather than measure numerical relationships.

Qualitative content analysis was selected because the study relied entirely on secondary materials, including United Nations Security Council resolutions, meeting records, reports of the Secretary-General, academic journal articles, textbooks, government publications, policy documents and reports issued by international organisations. These sources contain descriptive and interpretive evidence that requires close reading rather than statistical measurement. Bowen (2009) argues that documentary materials are valuable for qualitative

analysis because they record institutional actions, decisions and social processes. Creswell and Poth (2018) likewise maintain that qualitative analysis is appropriate where research seeks to explore meanings, interpretations and experiences contained in textual evidence. The method therefore enabled the researcher to compare sources carefully and organise findings around issues connected to the research questions.

3. 12 Analytical Framework

- i. The analysis was guided by four international relations perspectives:
- ii. Liberal institutionalism, which explains how institutions support cooperation among states.
- iii. Realism, which emphasises power politics, national interest and state self-preservation.
- iv. Collective security theory, which provides the normative basis for collective international action.
- v. Institutional design theory, which explains structural constraints, including the veto system.

These perspectives ensured that the analysis remained theoretically informed and academically coherent. Findings were presented through narrative explanation and thematic discussion rather than statistical tables. The presentation covered:

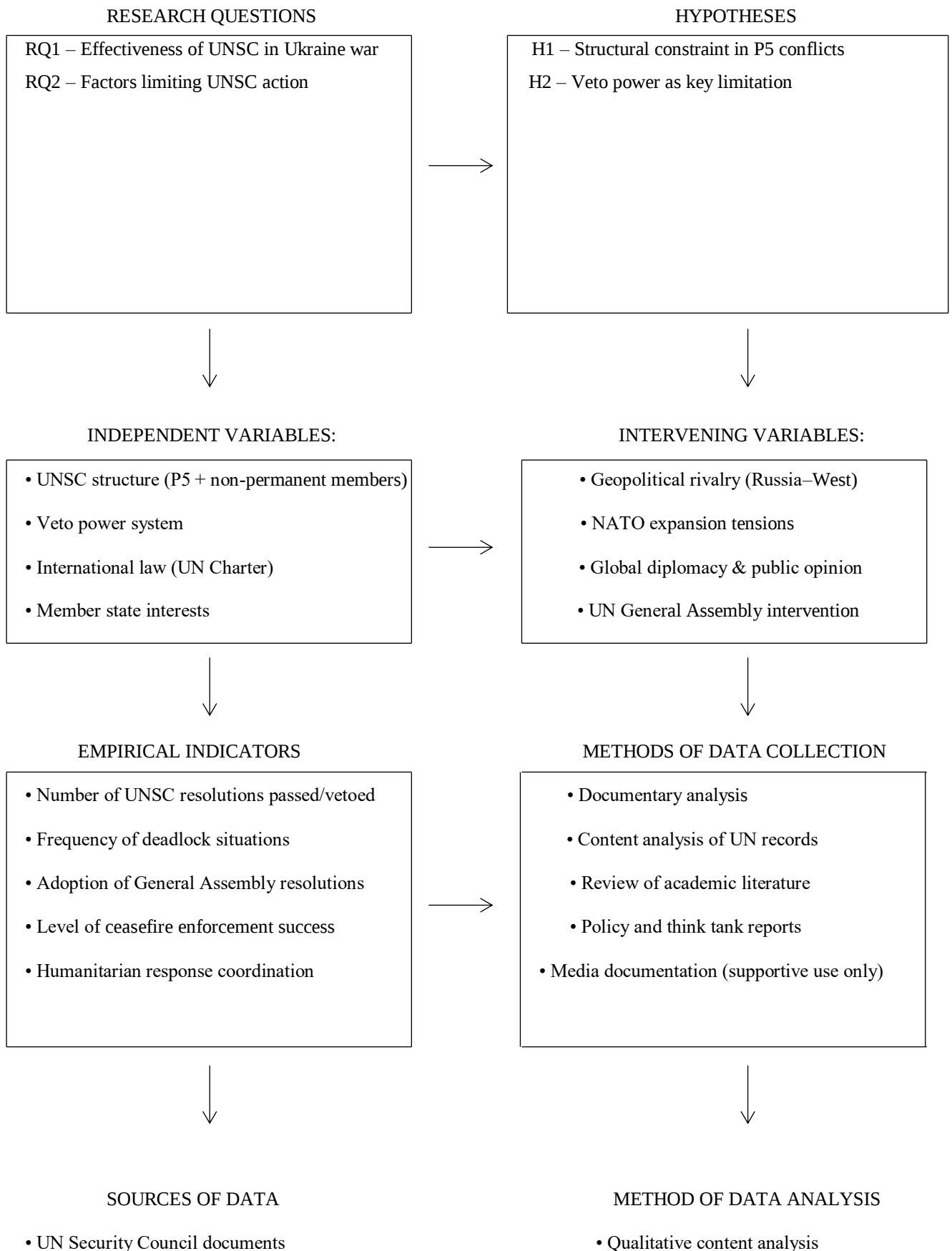
- i. Descriptive accounts of UNSC actions.
- ii. Thematic examination of the central issues.
- iii. Integration of documentary evidence with relevant theoretical arguments.

This analytical framework links the research questions, hypotheses, principal variables, empirical indicators, data collection methods, data sources and methods of analysis within one structured model. It therefore provides a clear methodological guide for examining how the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) manages international conflict, with particular reference to the Russia–Ukraine War. It also supports consistent interpretation of the Council’s institutional performance.

Table 1: Research Questions and Hypotheses Linkage

	Research Question (RQ)	Hypothesis (H)
1	How effective is the UNSC in managing international conflict in the Russia–Ukraine war?	The UNSC is significantly constrained when a permanent member is involved in conflict.
2	What factors limit the effectiveness of the UNSC?	Veto power is the primary structural limitation of the UNSC.

Fig 1: INTEGRATED LOGICAL FRAMEWORK DIAGRAM



- UN General Assembly resolutions
- UNHCR / WFP / OCHA reports
- Peer-reviewed journals
- CFR, IISS, Chatham House reports
- Credible international media
- Thematic coding
- Comparative institutional analysis
- Interpretation using IR theories:
- Liberal institutionalism
- Collective security theory
- Institutional design theory

This framework establishes a sequence for the analysis. The integrated logical data framework serves as a detailed methodological guide for the study. It connects the research questions, hypotheses, variables, indicators, data collection methods, sources and analytical procedures. Organising the research in this manner strengthens clarity, consistency and academic rigour, while providing a coherent basis for evaluating how the United Nations Security Council has managed the Russia–Ukraine conflict

CHAPTER FOUR

Data Analyses and Results

4.1 Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of Findings

This chapter presents and discusses findings on the United Nations Security Council's (UNSC) management of international conflict, using the Russia–Ukraine War as its case study. The analysis draws on United Nations resolutions, Security Council meeting records, General Assembly resolutions, UN agency reports, academic studies and policy analyses.

Each section addresses a research objective and its related hypothesis. Qualitative content analysis guides the interpretation, while realism, collective security theory and institutional design theory explain the findings and diplomatic responses.

4.2 Objective One / Hypothesis One

4.2.1 Objective One

To assess the effectiveness of the United Nations Security Council in managing the Russia–Ukraine War.

4.2.2 Hypothesis One

The UNSC is significantly constrained when managing international conflict involving one of its permanent members.

4.2.3 Presentation of Data

After Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022, the UNSC convened emergency meetings, including meetings 8979–8980 and later sessions.

The documented actions of the UNSC include:

- A February 2022 draft resolution condemning Russia's invasion and demanding withdrawal was vetoed by the Russian Federation.
- The voting outcome was:

- 11 votes in favour
- 3 abstentions, including China, India and the UAE
- 1 veto by Russia
- Because of the veto, the Council has not adopted a binding resolution against Russia concerning the invasion.
- The UNSC instead focused on procedural matters and humanitarian statements rather than enforcement measures.

4.2.4 Analysis of Findings

The evidence indicates that the UNSC remained institutionally active but operationally ineffective during the Russia–Ukraine War. Although most members supported condemnation, Russia’s veto prevented substantive enforcement measures.

The findings indicate that:

- Collective security becomes ineffective when a permanent member is involved in the conflict.
- The Council’s design prioritises great-power consent over collective enforcement.
- The UNSC operated mainly as a deliberative forum rather than an effective enforcement mechanism.

4.2.5 Discussion

The findings support realist theory, which holds that power politics can override international law. The UNSC could not take binding action because Russia holds a permanent seat and veto authority.

Hypothesis One is therefore accepted.

4.3 Objective Two / Hypothesis Two

4.3.1 Objective Two

To examine the factors restricting the effectiveness of the UNSC.

4.3.2 Hypothesis Two

Veto power is the principal constraint on the effectiveness of the UNSC.

4.3.3 Presentation of Data

Evidence from Security Council proceedings indicates that:

- Russia vetoed resolutions concerning:
 - Condemnation of the invasion
 - Withdrawal of Russian forces
 - Accountability mechanisms
- Since annexing Crimea in 2014, Russia has consistently opposed Ukraine-related enforcement measures before the UNSC.
- The Council cannot impose sanctions or authorise military action without agreement among permanent members.

4.3.4 Analysis of Findings

The veto is the clearest barrier to Council action. Even when fourteen members support a resolution, one permanent member can prevent its adoption.

This arrangement produces:

- Paralysis in decision-making
- Selective enforcement of international law
- An imbalance of authority within global governance

4.3.5 Discussion

Veto power is embedded in the United Nations Charter (1945). Intended to preserve stability among major powers, it now restricts the Council's response to serious crises in practice.

Hypothesis Two is therefore accepted.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Summary of findings

This study examined how the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has managed international conflict, using the Russian–Ukrainian War as a case study. The research arose from continuing concern about whether the Security Council can fulfil its responsibility for maintaining international peace and security when a major power, particularly a permanent member, is directly involved in hostilities. Hurd (2007) argues that the Council remains the central institution within the global collective security system, although disagreements among powerful states frequently weaken its performance. Malone (2004) similarly notes that conflicts involving major powers reveal the Council’s institutional constraints, particularly its limited capacity to reach decisions and enforce collective measures.

The principal objective was to assess the effectiveness of the United Nations Security Council in managing the Russian–Ukrainian conflict. The study therefore examined the Council’s role in international conflict management, evaluated its response to the war, identified the factors restricting its effectiveness, considered the effects of its interventions and proposed measures for strengthening its contribution to international peace and security. These objectives engage wider debates about the relevance, performance and possible reform of international institutions within contemporary global governance, especially where legal authority is confronted by political division among powerful member states.

The study employed a qualitative research design through a descriptive case study approach. Creswell and Poth (2018) explain that qualitative research is appropriate when researchers seek to understand complex political and social processes by interpreting textual and documentary

evidence. Yin (2018) likewise argues that case study research permits detailed examination of a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life setting. The Russian–Ukrainian War was selected because it provides a significant example through which the performance and limitations of the Security Council can be examined critically, particularly when institutional responsibility conflicts with the political interests of a permanent member.

Evidence was drawn from secondary documentary sources, including Security Council resolutions, reports of the Secretary-General, official United Nations publications, journal articles, textbooks, policy documents, government records, reports from international organisations and credible international media. Bowen (2009) argues that documents provide valuable qualitative evidence because they allow researchers to examine institutional decisions, historical developments and policy responses. Johnston (2014) similarly highlights the usefulness of secondary materials for analysing political and international events where researchers cannot easily gain direct access to decision-makers, diplomats or other actors involved in the events under investigation.

The documentary method guided data collection, while purposive sampling was used to select materials for detailed analysis. Patton (2015) explains that purposive sampling is suitable for qualitative inquiry because it enables researchers to choose information-rich sources that address the study's objectives directly. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) likewise argue that qualitative sampling gives priority to relevance and depth rather than statistical representation. Qualitative content analysis was then used to identify recurring themes, patterns and relationships across the documents. This systematic process allowed evidence from different sources to be compared, interpreted and organised around the research questions and hypotheses of the study.

The findings showed that the United Nations Security Council remains the principal international institution responsible for maintaining global peace and security. The United Nations Charter (1945) assigns the Council primary responsibility for responding to threats to international peace, while Hurd (2007) emphasises its central place within the collective security framework. The Council contributed to conflict management by providing a forum for diplomatic engagement, facilitating discussion among member states, supporting humanitarian responses and drawing sustained international attention to the effects of the war. Through meetings, debates and resolutions, it helped shape international discussion of the conflict's humanitarian, legal and security consequences, even where agreement on enforcement was absent.

At the same time, the findings revealed that structural and political factors substantially constrained the Security Council's management of the Russian–Ukrainian conflict. The most serious limitation was the veto power held by the Council's permanent members. Luck (2006) argues that the veto can obstruct collective action when permanent members pursue conflicting interests. In this case, Russia's position as both a party to the war and a permanent member created an institutional conflict of interest, since it could block proposed resolutions or measures directed at its own conduct (Voeten, 2022). This exposed weaknesses in the Council's present structure and raised serious questions about its ability to respond credibly and effectively when major powers are involved.

The study also found that rivalry among major powers, competing national interests and strategic calculations strongly influence decision-making within the Security Council. Realist scholars maintain that states often place national interest and considerations of power above collective institutional goals (Morgenthau, 1948; Waltz, 1979). Mearsheimer (2014) further argues that security competition and geopolitical interests shape conflicts among great powers

and can weaken international cooperation. In the Russian–Ukrainian case, these pressures restricted consensus, hardened opposing positions and reduced the Council’s capacity to adopt decisive measures, demonstrating that institutional authority cannot be separated from the wider distribution of power.

Despite these constraints, the study found that the Security Council continues to perform important conflict-management functions through diplomacy, negotiation, humanitarian coordination and support for peaceful settlement. Keohane (1984) argues that international institutions remain valuable because they provide channels for communication, cooperation and coordination even when states disagree. Claude (1962) similarly stresses that collective security institutions create shared norms and procedures for addressing conflict. The Council’s enforcement capacity may therefore be restricted in highly politicised crises, but its meetings and deliberations still provide a recognised forum for international dialogue, public accountability and competing claims to legitimacy before the wider international community.

The study concludes that the United Nations Security Council has contributed to the management of the Russian–Ukrainian conflict, but institutional weaknesses have sharply limited its effectiveness. The veto system and the geopolitical interests of permanent members were the most significant constraints. Hurd (2007) and Voeten (2022) maintain that such structural problems weaken the Council’s capacity to produce effective collective security outcomes. The findings therefore clearly support reforms intended to improve decision-making, strengthen accountability and increase the Council’s ability to address contemporary conflicts. Without meaningful institutional change, the gap between the UNSC’s legal responsibilities and its practical capacity is likely to remain.

5.2 Conclusion

This study concludes that the UNSC remains important to international conflict management, but its capacity to respond effectively is sharply reduced when powerful member states are involved. Addressing this weakness requires institutional reform, deeper international cooperation and stronger arrangements for preventing and resolving conflict. These measures are necessary if the Council is to fulfil its responsibility for maintaining international peace and security.

5.3 Recommendations

The following recommendations arise directly from the findings and conclusions of the study below:

i. Reform of the Veto Power System

The United Nations should pursue reforms that restrict the unrestricted use of veto power in situations involving grave threats to international peace and security. Under the current arrangement, permanent members can block collective decisions even when they have direct interests in the conflict being considered. A clear mechanism should therefore prevent any permanent member involved in a dispute from using the veto to obstruct measures intended to protect international peace and security. Luck (2006) argues that the veto remains one of the Security Council's central institutional weaknesses, while Bosco (2009) maintains that reforming it is necessary to improve the Council's credibility and legitimacy. Weiss and Daws (2018) similarly note that meaningful Security Council reform must confront structural barriers that continue to prevent effective collective action. Within two years, the General Assembly should develop and review a formal veto-restraint protocol covering conflicts involving permanent members.

ii. Expansion of Security Council Membership

The membership of the Security Council should be expanded to reflect contemporary global political realities. Developing regions, particularly Africa, Latin America and other underrepresented areas, require stronger representation if the Council is to become more legitimate, inclusive and representative. Its present composition reflects the geopolitical settlement of 1945 rather than the current international system, raising persistent concerns about fairness and equal representation (United Nations, 2005). Weiss and Daws (2018) argue that broader membership would strengthen the Council's legitimacy and improve its ability to address contemporary security challenges. A formal review should begin within two years.

iii. Strengthening Preventive Diplomacy

The Security Council should give greater attention to preventive diplomacy, early-warning systems and practical conflict-prevention measures. Identifying emerging tensions early and intervening diplomatically can reduce the risk that disputes develop into violent confrontation. Boutros-Ghali (1992) argues that preventive diplomacy is essential for addressing tensions before they escalate into full-scale conflict. Lund (2002) similarly maintains that effective prevention can limit humanitarian suffering and strengthen the capacity of international institutions to manage developing crises before violence becomes entrenched.

iv. Enhancement of International Cooperation

Member states should show greater commitment to collective security by placing international peace and stability above narrow national interests. Effective conflict management depends on cooperation among major powers and their willingness to compromise within international institutions. Keohane (1984) argues that cooperation becomes possible when states recognise

the benefits of institutional coordination, while Claude (1962) maintains that collective security depends on states acting together when international peace is threatened during serious crises.

v. Improved Humanitarian Response Mechanisms

The United Nations should improve its humanitarian response arrangements so that people affected by armed conflict receive timely and effective assistance. Humanitarian needs must remain a priority even when political disagreement prevents consensus among member states. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA, 2022) stresses that coordinated humanitarian action is essential for reducing the effects of armed conflict on civilians. Weiss and Daws (2018) further argue that stronger humanitarian capacity improves the effectiveness and legitimacy of international organisations in practice.

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