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**Final Project – Research Method (PSC 7000)**

**Veto Power and International Conflict: The Role of UNSC in Global Crises**

*Abstract*

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) holds the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, yet its effectiveness is frequently undermined by the veto power wielded by its five permanent members (P5): the United States, Russia, China, France, and the United Kingdom. This paper argues that veto power systematically obstructs the UNSC's ability to respond to conflicts, as P5 members prioritize their geopolitical interests and strategic alliances over humanitarian concerns and collective security. Using structural realism as a theoretical framework, this research examines the conditions under which veto power is exercised, focusing on its implications for international conflict resolution.

Through a mixed-methods approach, the study integrates qualitative case studies of Syria, Israel-Palestine, Libya, and Ukraine with quantitative analysis of UNSC veto trends from 1946 to 2022. The findings reveal that veto power is most frequently exercised in conflicts involving strategic allies or great power competition, even in the face of severe humanitarian crises. While the absence of vetoes in the 2011 Libya intervention demonstrates the potential for effective UNSC action, the outcomes highlight the complexities of achieving stability through multilateral efforts. The study concludes that the entrenched use of veto power exacerbates UNSC paralysis, underscoring the urgent need for institutional reform to enhance its legitimacy and capacity for global governance.

**Introduction**

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) represents one of the most powerful decision-making bodies in international relations, tasked with maintaining global peace and security. Established in 1945 under the United Nations Charter, the council wields a combination of political legitimacy and binding authority that makes its resolutions critical for addressing international crises. However, this authority is tempered by a contentious mechanism—the veto power—held by its five permanent members (P5): the United States, Russia, China, France, and the United Kingdom. While intended to promote consensus and prevent hasty or unilateral actions, the veto power has increasingly been criticized for enabling inaction and perpetuating conflicts, especially in scenarios where P5 members have vested geopolitical or economic interests.

Originally conceived to maintain a balance of power among major global actors in the aftermath of World War II, the veto power has evolved into a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it prevents decisions that could escalate tensions among major powers, safeguarding the stability of the international system. On the other hand, it frequently paralyzes the council in situations requiring decisive action, particularly in conflicts involving the strategic allies or interests of P5 members. As a result, the veto has become emblematic of the challenges facing the UNSC in fulfilling its primary mandate: *ensuring global security in an increasingly complex and fragmented world order.*

This research examines the conditions under which veto power most significantly obstructs the UNSC's ability to intervene in international conflicts. Despite urgent humanitarian needs, the veto is often wielded to shield allies, preserve spheres of influence, or advance national interests, even in the face of atrocities such as genocide, war crimes, and crimes against

humanity. Recent conflicts—such as the Syrian Civil War, the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and Russia's invasion of Ukraine—illustrate the veto's central role in stalling international action. At the same time, instances where vetoes were absent or overridden, such as the 2011 Libya intervention under the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine, highlight the nuanced conditions that enable UNSC action. This research aims to bridge the gap in understanding by identifying the geopolitical, strategic, and humanitarian factors that influence the exercise of veto power and its consequences for international peace and security.

The guiding research question for this study is: **Under what conditions does veto power at the UNSC most significantly hinder international responses to conflict?** To address this question, this paper explores three interrelated sub-questions: (1) How do strategic alliances between P5 members and conflict parties condition the use of veto power? (2) What role do humanitarian crises and international media coverage play in mitigating or exacerbating the exercise of the veto? (3) To what extent do P5 rivalries shape the council's paralysis in addressing global security threats?

I argue that veto power systematically hinders UNSC interventions by enabling P5 members to prioritize their geopolitical interests and strategic alliances over humanitarian considerations and global security objectives. Using structural realism as a theoretical lens, this research demonstrates how great power rivalries, strategic partnerships, and institutional asymmetries condition veto behavior. Through qualitative case studies and quantitative analysis, this study reveals that veto power disproportionately obstructs resolutions in conflicts involving high-stakes geopolitical interests, even in the face of widespread humanitarian crises.

The significance of this research lies in its potential to contribute to the growing discourse on UNSC reform. Numerous scholars and policymakers argue that the council's

credibility and legitimacy are undermined by its repeated failures to act in the face of

humanitarian crises, driven largely by veto-induced gridlock. By systematically analyzing the

geopolitical dynamics underpinning veto power, this study seeks to offer insights into how the

UNSC might better align its decision-making processes with its foundational principles.

Moreover, understanding the conditions under which the veto obstructs action could inform

proposals for reforming the council, such as limiting the use of the veto in cases involving mass

atrocities or expanding membership to reflect contemporary global power distributions.

**Literature Review**

*The Role of Veto Power in Shaping UNSC Interventions*

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is one of the most powerful institutions in

international governance, entrusted with the responsibility of maintaining global peace and

security. Central to its authority is the veto power and this mechanism was designed to prevent

unilateral decisions and ensure the participation of major powers in the UNSC. However, its

application has evolved into a contentious tool that frequently impedes timely and effective

responses to international conflicts. This literature review integrates insights from both

foundational academic studies and recent analyses to explore the veto's historical evolution, its

impact on geopolitical interests and humanitarian crises, and the growing discourse on UNSC

reform.

*The Historical Development and Transformation of Veto Power*

The veto power is rooted in the geopolitical realities of the post-World War II era.

Codified in Article 27(3) of the UN Charter, it was introduced as a stabilizing mechanism to

prevent unilateral actions by smaller coalitions and to ensure that major powers could safeguard

their national interests. As Butler (2012) observes, the veto was a pragmatic compromise to secure the participation of the victorious Allied powers in a collective security system. It aimed to avoid the mistakes of the League of Nations, where the absence of key powers undermined the institution's legitimacy and effectiveness.

Despite its intended function, the veto's use has shifted significantly over time. According to data from the Peace & Security Data Hub, Russia has cast the highest number of vetoes (159) since 1946, predominantly to shield its allies in Eastern Europe and the Middle East. The United States follows with 93 vetoes, many of which were employed to protect Israel from resolutions critical of its actions in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. These patterns reflect a broader trend of veto usage to advance national interests rather than to promote collective security, a dynamic that has raised questions about the UNSC's capacity to fulfill its mandate.

The paralysis of the UNSC during key conflicts such as the Syrian Civil War and the Russian invasion of Ukraine further illustrates the consequences of this shift. Russia's repeated vetoes in Syria have stalled resolutions aimed at imposing sanctions or authorizing humanitarian interventions. Similarly, the United States' use of its veto in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict demonstrates how the mechanism can perpetuate inaction, even in the face of widespread international consensus.

### *Veto Power and Geopolitical Interests*

The exercise of veto power is inseparably linked to the geopolitical interests of the P5. Vetoes are most frequently employed in conflicts where the strategic alliances or economic interests of P5 members are at stake. This is supported by Gifkins (2012), who argues that the veto is often wielded as a diplomatic shield to protect allies and maintain spheres of influence.

For example, Russia's use of the veto during the Syrian Civil War reflects its alliance with the Assad regime and its broader objective of preserving influence in the Middle East. Similarly, the United States' consistent vetoes on Israel-related resolutions underscore the enduring significance of its alliance with Israel and its geopolitical priorities in the region.

Contrastingly, the Libya intervention in 2011 demonstrates the conditions under which veto absence can enable decisive UNSC action. In this case, Russia and China refrained from exercising their vetoes, allowing the council to authorize NATO's military intervention under the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine. While this intervention marked a rare moment of consensus, scholars such as Hehir and Murray (2013) argue that it was driven more by Western strategic interests, including access to Libyan oil, than by genuine humanitarian concerns. This dual dynamic underscores the complexity of veto power: its absence can facilitate action, but the motivations behind such decisions often remain contested.

### The Intersection of Veto Power and Humanitarian Crises

Veto-induced paralysis has had dire consequences in conflicts where urgent humanitarian intervention was needed. Russia and China's repeated vetoes during the Syrian Civil War have obstructed resolutions aimed at mitigating the conflict's humanitarian toll. These actions have allowed the Assad regime to operate with relative impunity, prolonging the conflict and exacerbating human suffering (Gifkins, 2012).

The inability of the UNSC to act decisively in humanitarian crises is not a new phenomenon. The Rwandan Genocide of 1994 and the Darfur crisis of the early 2000s serve as stark reminders of the UNSC's limitations when confronted with mass atrocities. In these cases, veto power—or the threat of its use—was instrumental in stalling international action. Data from

the Peace & Security Data Hub indicates that vetoes are often exercised in conflicts where P5 members have vested interests, even when such decisions undermine the UNSC's moral and humanitarian responsibilities.

Conversely, the Libya intervention illustrates how the absence of veto power can facilitate rapid responses to humanitarian crises. However, the aftermath of the intervention raises concerns about the motivations behind such actions. Hehir and Murray (2013) caution that while R2P represents a valuable normative framework, its implementation is often compromised by the same geopolitical considerations that drive veto usage. These examples demonstrate the inherent contradictions in the UNSC's approach to humanitarian intervention.

### *Debates on UNSC Reform*

The growing dissatisfaction with veto-induced paralysis has fueled calls for reform, particularly regarding the scope and application of veto power. France's proposal to voluntarily limit the use of vetoes in cases involving mass atrocities, supported by the Accountability, Coherence, and Transparency (ACT) group, represents a pragmatic attempt to address these challenges.

The Ezulwini Consensus, championed by African nations, underscores the structural inequities within the UNSC. It advocates for greater representation of underrepresented regions, including the inclusion of two permanent African seats with full veto rights. Eguegu et al. (2024) argue that such reforms are essential to address the disproportionate impact of UNSC decisions on African nations and to enhance the council's legitimacy.

Despite these proposals, achieving consensus on UNSC reform remains a formidable challenge. The P5's reluctance to relinquish their privileged status continues to impede

meaningful change. Incremental reforms, such as voluntary veto restraint or limiting veto use in specific contexts, may represent the most viable path forward. This literature highlights the dual-edged nature of veto power within the UNSC. While it was designed to promote stability and prevent unilateral actions, its use has often undermined the council's capacity to address international crises effectively.

**Theory**

*Structural Realism*

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) veto is a mechanism that reflects the institutionalized power asymmetry in global governance. Rooted in the principles of structural realism, the veto is both a stabilizing and obstructive tool, shaped by an anarchic international system where states act primarily to preserve their sovereignty and power. By examining the application of veto power in key conflicts, such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Syrian Civil War, structural realism provides a theoretical lens to understand the P5's behavior and the systemic dynamics that drive it.

Structural realism, as articulated by Kenneth Waltz (1979), posits that states operate within a self-help system where survival and power are paramount. This framework explains the rational motivations behind the use of veto power in the UNSC, which allows the P5 to block any resolution perceived as threatening their strategic interests or the security of their allies. Recent developments in the Middle East, including the collapse of the Assad regime in Syria and the United States' persistent vetoes in defense of Israel, further highlight the utility of structural realism in analyzing veto usage.

*Key Theoretical Concepts*

The core tenets of structural realism elucidate the strategic calculus behind veto power in the UNSC:

1. **Self-Interest and Strategic Alliances**

   Structural realism emphasizes that states prioritize their national interests over collective goals, often through the protection of alliances. The U.S.-Israel relationship exemplifies this principle, as the United States has consistently vetoed resolutions critical of Israel, safeguarding its most important regional ally. Since 1972, the U.S. has employed over 50 vetoes to block resolutions addressing issues such as Israeli settlement expansion and military actions in Gaza. These actions align with the realist imperative to secure influence in the Middle East and counter regional adversaries like Iran. Similarly, Russia's alignment with the Assad regime in Syria underscores the importance of alliances in maintaining regional power. Over the course of the Syrian Civil War, Russia cast over 16 vetoes to shield Assad from sanctions, military interventions, and international scrutiny. This protection allowed Russia to sustain its naval base in Tartus, a critical asset for projecting power in the Mediterranean, while countering Western influence in the region.

2. **Balancing and Rivalry**

   Balancing, a central concept in structural realism, explains how states use veto power to counteract rival powers. In the Syrian conflict, Russia's vetoes served not only to protect Assad but also to undermine U.S.-led efforts to impose sanctions or authorize military interventions. This rivalry is emblematic of the broader competition between great powers, where vetoes become instruments of balancing behavior. Similarly, the United

States' vetoes on Israel-related resolutions can be understood as part of a broader strategy to maintain its regional dominance and support its allies against perceived threats from adversaries like Iran. This balancing dynamic ensures that U.S. influence in the Middle East remains uncontested, reinforcing the realist view that states use institutional mechanisms to project power and counter rivals.

3. **Institutionalized Power Asymmetry**

Structural realism highlights the hierarchical nature of the international system, where power is distributed unequally among states. The veto power institutionalizes this asymmetry within the UNSC, granting the P5 an unrivaled ability to shape global governance. This design ensures that non-permanent members remain secondary actors, unable to override the interests of the P5. The frequent paralysis of the UNSC during the Syrian Civil War exemplifies how this asymmetry constrains collective action, even in the face of widespread humanitarian crises.

*Theoretical Application to Case Studies*

- **Syria: From Vetoed Impunity to Post-Assad Realignment**

The Syrian Civil War illustrates the realist dynamics underpinning veto power. Over a decade, Russia leveraged its veto to block 17 resolutions aimed at sanctioning Assad, authorizing military intervention, or addressing humanitarian concerns. These vetoes were consistent with Moscow's objectives to preserve its influence in the Middle East and counterbalance Western-led interventions.

The recent fall of the Assad regime, however, marks a turning point. Structural realism suggests that Russia's strategic priorities will shift as it seeks to consolidate its influence in a post-Assad Syria. Moscow's engagement may now focus on fostering new

alliances or leveraging its involvement in reconstruction efforts to maintain its foothold in the region. This realignment reflects the adaptive nature of state behavior in response to systemic changes, as predicted by structural realism.

- **Israel: A Persistent Focus of U.S. Veto Power**

  The Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains a primary focus of U.S. veto strategy in the UNSC. By consistently blocking resolutions critical of Israeli policies, the United States has demonstrated its commitment to protecting its ally and maintaining regional stability. For instance, recent resolutions condemning Israeli settlement expansion in the West Bank were vetoed by the United States, reflecting its strategic imperative to support Israel despite widespread international criticism.

  Structural realism explains this behavior as part of a broader strategy to ensure U.S. dominance in a geopolitically vital region. These vetoes serve not only to shield Israel from accountability but also to reinforce U.S. influence in the Middle East, countering adversaries like Iran and projecting power within a volatile region.

- **Libya: The Absence of Vetoes and Its Consequences**

  The Libya intervention of 2011 provides a contrasting example, where the absence of vetoes by Russia and China enabled the UNSC to authorize NATO-led military action under the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine. While this action demonstrated the potential for collective UNSC responses, the aftermath highlighted the realist critique of liberal interventionism. Critics argue that the intervention was driven more by Western strategic interests, such as securing access to Libyan oil, than by humanitarian concerns. This case underscores the dual-edged nature of veto absence, where action is facilitated but often motivated by great power calculations.

**Hypotheses**

Building on the theoretical principles and case studies, the following hypotheses guide the research:

- *H1:* Veto power is more likely to be exercised when a P5 member's strategic ally is directly involved in the conflict.

- *H2:* Veto power is less likely to be exercised when a conflict involves significant humanitarian atrocities and international media coverage.

- *H3:* P5 rivalries increase the likelihood of veto power obstructing UNSC interventions. Example: Russia's vetoes on Ukraine-related resolutions exemplify how great power competition perpetuates UNSC paralysis.

These cases demonstrate how the P5 utilize veto power to safeguard their strategic interests, counter rivals, and maintain regional dominance. Whether shielding allies like Israel, preserving influence in Syria, or leveraging abstentions as seen in Libya, the P5's behavior aligns with the core tenets of structural realism.

**Methods and Design**

This research adopts a mixed-methods approach to investigate the impact of veto power on United Nations Security Council (UNSC) interventions. By combining qualitative case studies with quantitative data analysis, the study examines the conditions under which veto power is exercised and its consequences for conflict resolution. The methodological framework ensures a comprehensive evaluation of the hypotheses, addressing systemic and contextual factors that influence veto behavior.

The study employs a comparative case study approach alongside statistical analysis of veto usage. The qualitative component explores these case studies—Syria, Israel-Palestine, Libya, and Ukraine—to provide in-depth insights into the motivations and consequences of veto power. The quantitative component complements this by identifying patterns and relationships in veto behavior using a curated dataset of UNSC veto records. This mixed-methods approach balances depth and generalizability, allowing for robust testing of the hypotheses.

*Outcome Variable*

The dependent variable, UNSC Intervention, measures the ability of the UNSC to pass resolutions addressing conflicts or crises. The operationalization is as follows:

- **Intervention:** Resolutions that were successfully passed (e.g., Libya 2011).
- **Non-Intervention**: Resolutions that were blocked by vetoes (e.g., Syria, Ukraine, and Israel-Palestine).

The primary independent variable, Veto Power, captures the exercise of veto authority by P5 members. It is operationalized through:

- **Frequency:** Number of vetoes cast by each P5 member.
- **Context:** Geopolitical interests and alliances influencing veto decisions.
- **Resolution Types**: Categories such as humanitarian aid, sanctions, or condemnation.

*Control Variables*

To account for other factors influencing UNSC outcomes, the analysis includes the following control variables:

- **Geopolitical Alliances:** Assesses the strength and nature of relationships between P5 members and conflict parties (e.g., U.S.-Israel alliance, Russia-Assad partnership).

- **Humanitarian Toll:** Evaluates the scale of human suffering, measured by casualty rates, displacement figures, and media coverage.

- **Regional Dynamics:** Considers the broader implications of the conflict for regional stability and P5 interests (e.g., Russia's strategic priorities in Eastern Europe).

*Comparative Case Analysis*

The qualitative component of the research involves process tracing and comparative analysis of four case studies:

- **Syria (2011–2022):** Russia and China vetoed multiple resolutions targeting the Assad regime, obstructing sanctions, humanitarian aid, and military interventions. This case highlights the role of strategic alliances and great power rivalries in veto behavior.

- **Israel-Palestine (1972–2022):** The United States consistently vetoed resolutions critical of Israel, prioritizing its strategic partnership over broader UNSC goals. This case demonstrates how veto power is used to shield allies from international scrutiny.

- **Libya (2011):** The absence of vetoes enabled the UNSC to authorize NATO-led intervention under the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine. This case serves as a counterexample, illustrating conditions that facilitate UNSC action.

- **Ukraine (2014–2022):** Russia's vetoes blocked resolutions condemning its actions in Ukraine, underscoring how great power competition perpetuates UNSC paralysis.

*Quantitative Analysis*

The quantitative component utilizes a dataset of UNSC vetoes and over 276 resolutions have been vetoed by either of the P5. This dataset includes:

- **Year of veto.**

- **P5 member casting the veto.**

- **Conflict or issue addressed.**

- **Type of resolution (e.g., humanitarian, sanctions, condemnation).**

- **Outcome (e.g., blocked, passed).**

The analysis employs the use of R for data analysis and visualization to summarize veto patterns by country, resolution type, and regional focus. For example, Russia dominates veto usage in Syria and Ukraine, while the United States primarily vetoes Israel-related resolutions.

*Addressing Methodological Challenges*

- **Selection Bias:** The inclusion of both vetoed and non-vetoed resolutions ensures a balanced analysis, mitigating selection bias.

- **Conditional Independence:** Control variables such as regional dynamics and media attention are included to isolate the effects of veto power on UNSC outcomes.

- **Unit Homogeneity:** Case studies are selected based on their comparability in terms of conflict type, international significance, and P5 involvement.

**Result**

This section presents the findings from the mixed-methods analysis, integrating qualitative insights from case studies and quantitative trends in United Nations Security Council

(UNSC) veto usage from 1946 to 2022. These findings evaluate the systemic and contextual factors that condition the exercise of veto power by the five permanent members (P5), highlighting the interplay of strategic interests, great power rivalries, and humanitarian considerations.

## Number of UNSC Resolutions by Year (Total: 267)
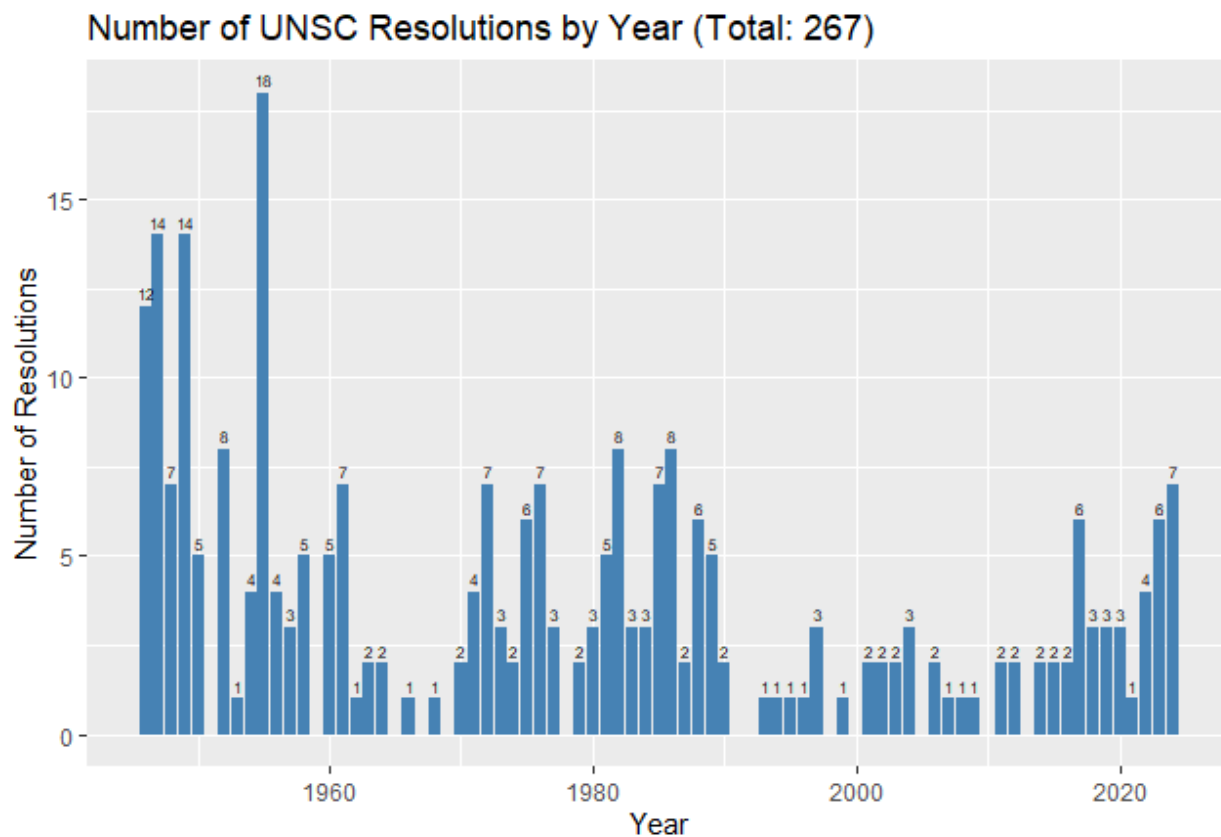


### Qualitative Findings

1. **Syria (2011–2022)**

    Russia casted over 17 vetoes on resolutions addressing the Syrian Civil War, effectively blocking efforts to impose sanctions, facilitate humanitarian access, and authorize military interventions. These vetoes, detailed in the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) Report, highlight how the obstruction of international resolutions has

exacerbated civilian suffering and impeded accountability for human rights violations (SNHR, 2020).

According to Gifkins (2012), Russia's repeated vetoes reflect its commitment to protecting the Assad regime as a strategic ally in the Middle East, ensuring access to the Tartus naval base and countering U.S.-led interventionist policies. Similarly, "China's Voting Practice at the UN Security Council" explains China's alignment with Russia as rooted in its broader principle of non-intervention and its strategic aspirations to oppose Western dominance.

- *Outcome:* The UNSC's inability to act decisively has allowed the Syrian conflict to persist, with over 500,000 fatalities and millions displaced, illustrating how strategic alliances often outweigh humanitarian imperatives in veto decision-making.

2. **Israel-Palestine (1948–2022)**

The United States has employed its veto power over 50 times to block resolutions critical of Israel, particularly those addressing settlement expansion, military actions in Gaza, and calls for international accountability. Middle East Eye (2023) provides a comprehensive account of these vetoes, which reveal a consistent prioritization of the U.S.-Israel strategic partnership over broader UNSC objectives.

The United States vetoes have shielded Israel from international censure, reflecting Washington's geopolitical interests in maintaining its influence in the Middle East while countering adversaries such as Iran. This pattern underscores the role of veto power in perpetuating the status quo and limiting international efforts toward conflict resolution.

- *Outcome:* The persistent use of U.S. vetoes has undermined the UNSC's credibility and prolonged the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, with critics arguing that this behavior has eroded trust in the council's impartiality and effectiveness.

3. **Libya (2011)**

In 2011, the UNSC passed Resolution 1973, authorizing NATO-led intervention in Libya under the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine. Russia and China abstained but did not veto the resolution, enabling one of the few successful instances of UNSC-backed military intervention in recent history. Weiss (2013) highlights this case as a rare example of P5 cooperation, albeit facilitated by the abstention of key actors rather than active consensus.

However, post-intervention analyses, including Gifkins (2012), critique the motivations behind the intervention, suggesting that Western states prioritized geopolitical interests, such as securing access to Libya's oil reserves, over long-term stability. The intervention succeeded in removing Muammar Gaddafi but failed to establish political order, leading to years of instability and regional spillover effects.

- *Outcome:* The case illustrates the conditions under which veto power is withheld, allowing for decisive UNSC action. However, it also raises questions about the efficacy and consequences of such interventions, particularly when geopolitical interests drive decision-making.

4. **Ukraine (2014–2022)**

Russia has vetoed multiple resolutions condemning its annexation of Crimea and military actions in Ukraine. These vetoes exemplify how great power competition

perpetuates UNSC paralysis, with Russia using its veto to shield itself from accountability and preserve its regional dominance (West Point Lieber Institute, 2023).

The analysis by SNHR (2020) further highlights the strategic motivations behind Russia's actions, emphasizing its desire to counter Western influence in Eastern Europe and maintain geopolitical leverage. This aligns with broader patterns of veto usage where great powers employ their authority to protect their own national interests rather than advance collective security goals.

- *Outcome:* The UNSC's inability to respond effectively to the Ukraine crisis underscores the limitations of the veto system, fostering impunity for P5 members and exacerbating geopolitical tensions.

### Quantitative Findings

The quantitative analysis of UNSC veto trends from 1946 to 2022 reveals significant patterns in the behavior of P5 members, highlighting how veto usage has evolved over time in response to shifting geopolitical dynamics.

### Frequency of Veto Usage:

- **Russia/USSR:** Cast 159 vetoes, the highest among P5 members, primarily targeting resolutions related to conflicts in Eastern Europe and the Middle East.

- **United States:** Accounted for 93 vetoes, predominantly to shield Israel from international scrutiny and protect U.S. foreign policy objectives.

- **United Kingdom, China and France:** While historically less frequent, China's veto activity has increased in recent years, often aligning with Russia on issues such as Syria and Hong Kong.

## Number of Vetoes by P5 Member
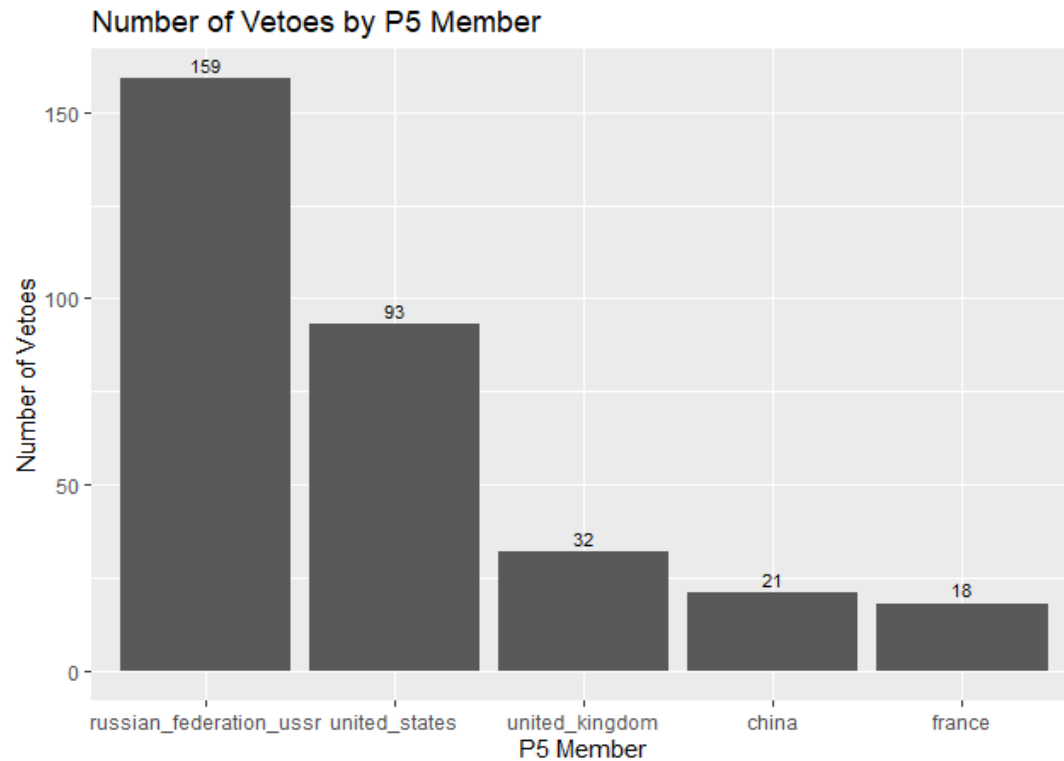


*Resolution Types*

- **Humanitarian Resolutions:** Most frequently blocked in conflicts like Syria, reflecting the tension between humanitarian priorities and P5 strategic interests.
- **Condemnation and Sanctions**: Commonly vetoed by Russia and the United States, illustrating their use to protect allies or avoid accountability.

*Regional Focus:*

- The Middle East remains the primary focus of veto activity, with Syria and Israel-Palestine accounting for the majority of blocked resolutions.

Bias Votes on Alliance or Regional Interrest
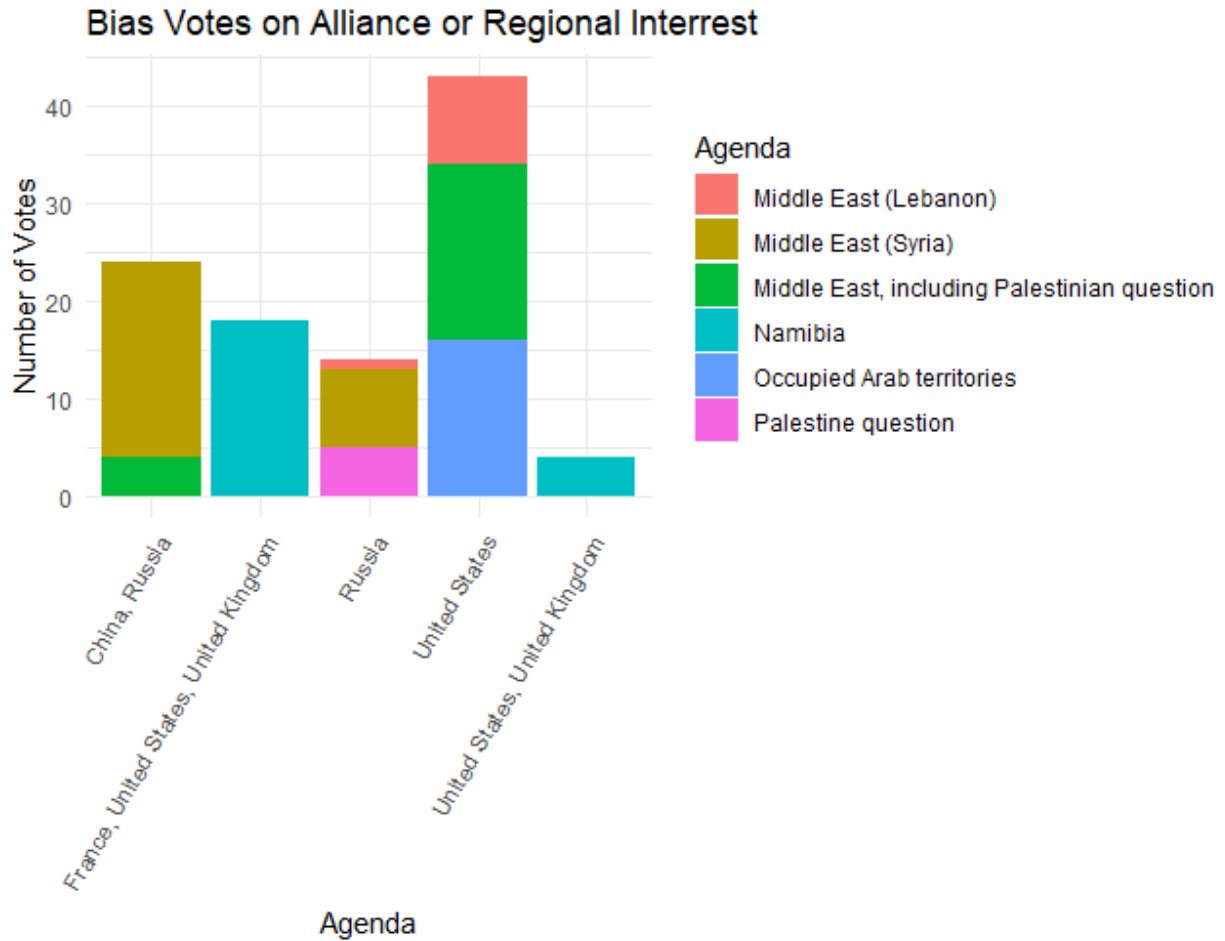
*Interpretation of Results*

The findings provide strong empirical support for the hypotheses:

- *H1* **(Strategic Alliances - Strongly supported):** The Syria and Israel-Palestine cases demonstrate how vetoes are used to protect strategic allies, even at the expense of global consensus.

- *H2* **(Humanitarian Crises - Partially supported):** While humanitarian crises can reduce veto usage (e.g., Libya), strategic interests often overshadow humanitarian imperatives (e.g., Syria).

- *H3* (**Great Power Rivalries - Strongly supported**): The Ukraine case exemplifies how great power competition drives veto-induced paralysis, with P5 members prioritizing national interests over collective security.

**Conclusion**

This research has examined how veto power within the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) shapes international responses to conflict. Through a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative case studies with quantitative analysis of veto trends from 1946 to 2022, the study demonstrated that the veto—originally intended to foster consensus—has often been employed as a tool for advancing national interests. Strategic alliances, great power rivalries, and geopolitical priorities dominate decision-making, often at the expense of humanitarian and collective security objectives.

The case studies of Syria, Israel-Palestine, Libya, and Ukraine illustrate the multifaceted nature of veto power. Russia's vetoes in Syria and Ukraine exemplify how great powers shield allies and themselves from international accountability, while the United States' vetoes on Israel-related resolutions underscore the role of strategic partnerships in perpetuating UNSC paralysis. The Libya intervention, marked by the absence of vetoes, highlights the potential for collective action but also reveals the limitations of such interventions in achieving long-term stability. The findings underscore that P5 members prioritize sovereignty and influence over collective security, validating the structural realist perspective.

These dynamics call for urgent reforms to enhance the UNSC's legitimacy and effectiveness. Limiting veto usage in cases of mass atrocities, expanding representation to reflect contemporary geopolitical realities, and improving transparency are critical steps. However,

achieving such reforms will require addressing the entrenched privileges of the P5, a challenge that demands sustained diplomatic efforts and innovative governance models. The UNSC stands at a crossroads. Without meaningful reform, its capacity to address global challenges will remain constrained, threatening the principles of multilateralism and collective security that underpin the modern international order.

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