



UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

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**An Assessment of Various International Players' Roles and Positions in the Ukraine Russia War.**

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By

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A Dissertation Submitted in Fulfilment of the Academic Requirement for  
the Degree of Master of Social Science (International Relations)

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**Supervisor**

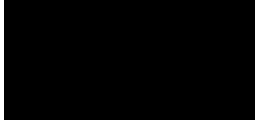
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November 2024

## **Supervisor's Authorisation**

As the candidate's supervisor, I have approved this Dissertation for submission.

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## Declaration

I, Ntokozo Mhlungu, declare that,

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## **Dedication**

I would like to dedicate this to my late mother, Zamile Patience Mazibuko, and my late grandmother, Thabile Mpiyane. You are my strength, and you are dearly loved and missed.

Rest in eternal peace and in the glory of the God Almighty; it is a matter of time, eventually we will be reunited again.

Don't die old, die empty. That's the goal of life.

Go to the cemetery and disappoint the graveyard.

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## **Abstract**

The study set out to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the different positions of international players in relation to the Russian-Ukraine war. The intention being to determine the impacts of the emerging positions on Africa's relations with the East and the West, among other issues of geo-strategic and security concerns. The researcher acknowledged that while there are informed commentaries and analyses on the war, and its dynamics, no study till date, has been able to determine or even speculate, how long the war will last; how far reaching the destructions that have attended the war will be; and what pragmatic measures to be employed towards resolving the ongoing war. The study observed that studies and analyses on the Russian/Ukrainian war tended to reflect the socio-political affiliations of both the protagonists and antagonists of the warring parties. In the opinion of the researcher, therefore, the study became important and will hopefully contribute to deepening understanding of International Relations and conflict resolution. The researcher adopted the qualitative research methodology to generate and analyse the relevant data to the study. It should be mentioned that the study is basically desktop research and conducted using the thematic (content) analysis procedure. Data for the study were obtained primarily from secondary sources, as mentioned in the applicable chapter of the study. Against the foregoing, the researcher considered it worthwhile to conclude that the Russian/Ukrainian war serves to accentuate the ideological rivalry that has characterized European politics, with the "players" poised to sustain the status quo as desired.

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## Chapter One

### **1.0 Background of the study**

The proposed study is concerned with and sought to examine the strengths and weaknesses of the different positions of international players in relation to the Russian-Ukraine war. This study further intended to examine the impacts of these positions on Africa's relations with the East and the West. Undoubtedly, the Russian/Ukraine war is one of the issues of global concern, amidst other issues requiring international attention. The researcher acknowledges that literature (both critical studies and informed commentaries) abounds on European history as it relates to the divide between the East and West, but the current study is concerned with the war between Russia and Ukraine which began on a full scale in 2022. This is because, while there are informed commentaries and analyses on the war, and its dynamics, no study can determine how long the war will last, and how far reaching the destructions that have attended the war will be.

The intention of the researcher is to chart a relevant path for study by relying on accessed documented information on the war, and the dynamics in terms of the role played and being played by "protagonists and antagonists of the warring parties, and implications therefrom. The study also intended to examine the role of other actors (both state and non-state) outside of the European continent, particularly in Africa in the war. Contextually, the dissolution of the Soviet Union in December 1991, the newly independent states of the Russian Federation and Ukraine maintained cordial relations. It will be recalled that the former Soviet Union consisted of Fifteen (15) separate republics, of which Russia and Ukraine were not just a part, but the two most notable in terms of population size, military strength and industrial and infrastructural development. Russia is believed to be the most powerful of the 15 Soviet republics, and of course the most populated; while Ukraine was the second strongest of the 15 soviet republics.

While the Ukraine-Russia crisis could be argued to have started in 2008, the current war began when Russia reportedly invaded invasion of Ukraine on 20 February 2022, an action which could be described as follow-up to an earlier invasion of Crimea in 2014, and shortly after, the invasion Dondas region, both within the territory of Ukraine. In pursuit of his "irredentist ambition", President Putin, in his published essay in July 2021, had hinted "on the historical unity of Russians and Ukrainians", in which he called Ukraine "historically Russian lands" and claimed there is "no historical basis" for the "idea of Ukrainian people as a nation separate

from the Russians". It will be recalled that the formation of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1949 in the United States of America, was to fight against the USSR, which Russia was part of at the time. Expectedly, that Russia is against the expansion of NATO, being next to its territory as that threatens its security, is not in doubt. Later reports further indicated that, days before the invasion, Putin had claimed that Ukraine never had "real statehood" and that modern Ukraine was a mistake created by the Russian Bolsheviks. Perhaps, the Russia's occupation of Crimea and its invasion of the Donbas, may have spurred Ukraine's parliament into voting in December 2014, to remove the neutrality clause from the Constitution and to seek Ukraine's membership in NATO, an act which Russia considered an anathema, for geo-strategic and security concerns.

The resulting invasion has caused huge economic devastation, humanitarian crisis, industrial impact, and global socio-economic impact. The continuous ongoing war has caused severe causes for Ukraine and Russia including economic sanctions, reduced access to global market, currency inflation, loss of foreign investments, loss of industrial capacity, destruction of infrastructure, loss of life and injuries that requires foreign aids, decline in GDP, and lastly decline in oil and gas revenue. The impact of this war in Africa includes political alignment, food insecurity, development and debt challenges.

The concern for which this study became inevitable, was to examine and place on record the role of international players in war, both state and non-state actors, which include but are not limited to, the European Union (EU), United Nations (UN), Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS), the International Criminal Court (ICC), The United States of America, China, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and Human Rights Council, etc. The study is also intended to examine the various solutions proposed by different international players in the Ukraine–Russia war, in a way to point out how genuine and practical solutions are or have been and further make recommendatory remarks to enrich literature on the issues related to the war.

## **1.1 Problem Statement**

Historically, Danieri (2019, p.145) revealed that between 980 until 1015, Grande Prince Volodimer governed the Kievan Rus. The prince is known as Vladimir in Russia and Volodymyr in Ukraine, and these are the names of the two nations' presidents. Danieri (2019, p.145) indicate that from these Slavic states, Russians, Ukrainians, and Bela-Russians descendant, Ukraine possessed defence companies, enormous agricultural fields, and the most

potent missile weaponry in the Soviet Union. Ukraine acquired independence from Russia in 1991, inheriting 44 strategic bombers, 176 intercontinental ballistic missiles, and 1,250 nuclear warheads (Danieri, 2019).

Following Ukraine's independence, Russia committed to preserving Ukraine's sovereignty and provide its security (Riasanovsky et al., 2018). The US, the UK, and Russia signed the Budapest Agreement to Respect Ukraine's Sovereignty. Fast forward to 2013, when Ukraine, led by President Viktor Yanukovich, rejected a trade pact with the EU that would have resulted in a \$15 billion-dollar contract with Russia (Riasanovsky et al., 2018). Ukrainians thought they were being sold to Russia, which provoked protests across the country. Ukraine protested because Viktor was corrupt and overtly pro-Moscow, and he was pushed out of power and flown to Russia. Because their proxy was booted out of the nation, Russia grew enraged (Riasanovsky et al., 2018). The Russian military deployed in Eastern Ukraine, Donbas, and took control of the land; Ukraine did not respond until the Russian troops bombed and shot down a Malaysian airliner from Ukraine; this is how the conflict between Ukraine and Russia began, and it continues to this day (Korostelina, 2010).

So far, it appears that neither country is prepared to surrender and pursue diplomatic alternatives to terminate the conflict (Korostelina, 2010). There are few signs that the war will be ended through negotiation in the near future. Russia stated a few weeks into the war that it was contemplating a Ukrainian proposal of neutrality, but no talks have taken place since the end of March (Plokhyy, 2008). Consequent upon the foregoing background information on the ongoing war between the warring parties, the researcher believes while there are informed commentaries and analyses on the war, and its dynamics, no study till date, has been able to determine how long the war will last, and how far reaching the destructions that have attended the war will be. The intention of the researcher is to chart a relevant path for study by relying on accessed documented information on the war, and the dynamics in terms of the role played and being played by “protagonists and antagonists of the warring parties, and implications therefrom.

Furthermore, the local players in this war are Russia led by President Vladimir Putin and Ukraine, which is led by president Volodymyr Zelenskyy (Fabricius, 2023). In this war Russia is viewed by international community as aggressor as it is the one that started the invasion. On the other hand, president Zelenskyy is seen as a symbol of resistance against Putin's aggression. The other local players include Belarus, which by the way is a close ally of Russia

and in the early stages of this war, Belarus acted as a mediator offering diplomatic negotiations, however despite its effort the war continued. The 2022 Belarus conference serve as an effort to combat and condemn the current ongoing war.

Moreover, international players such as United States of America,China,India,South Africa, Turkey and the United Nation has offered table for peace talks. Some international players decided to take sides and instead of promoting peace talks, they sent military support to Ukraine and that has fuelled the conflict and made it worse (Smith, 2023). The United States of America and its Western allies has put huge effort on Russia to withdraw from Ukraine (Smith, 2023. The harsh sanctions placed by United States of America and other Western countries is a clear indication of effort to condemn the ongoing war.

European Union has also contributed to peace talks, this is evident in the 2015 Minsk agreement and specifically France and Germany because they offered a peace agreement that was met with criticism from Ukraine (Lopez, 2022). Despite all the peaceful efforts by all local and international players, the war continued. Again in 2022, Turkey forged friendly relations between Russia and Ukraine by starting the Black Sea grain deal in July 2022 that allowed Ukraine to continue their exports of grain as it was previously blocked by Russia. China has avoided taking sides in this war together with South Africa they remain neutral while still condemning the war (Lopez, 2022).

## **1.2 Significance/Rationale of the Study**

The study is very important because it will deepen understanding of geopolitical dynamics, diplomacy, conflict resolution, global security implications, historical contexts of crises/wars, continuities, socio-political consequences, and impact on international law and norms. Besides, the outcomes of the study will not only add to existing literature on related studies but will also provide insights into and enhance understanding of the factors that tend to spur and escalate frictions and crises between and among nation-states in the international community.

### **Strategic implications and Geopolitical.**

The war further escalates and deepens the tense tension between NATO, Ukraine, and Russia. The West and European expansion, in the eyes of President Putin, is a threat to Russia's existence and sovereignty. Therefore, this study is important because the war affects not only the parties involved but also the global security of the international community, the international system status, the shift of balance of power, world economics, and politics. This war will have a strong and long effect on the global order, international relations, and the

relations, especially between NATO, the European Union, Russia, Ukraine, and the United States of America.

### **Global Economic Impact.**

There is no doubt that the economic impact of this war is catastrophic and has already led to currency inflation, economic instability, and an increase in food and energy/fuel prices. Oil, natural gas, corn, and wheat are largely produced by Ukraine and Russia, and this has caused unreliable and instability in global supply chains, especially in poor developing countries that depend on the food supply and energy from the two countries. Therefore, studying this war will provide deeper insights into the economic implications of the ongoing war, which involves not limited to sanctions and economic isolation of the two countries at war.

### **The Role of Global Powers.**

This research is important because it will explore the viability and effectiveness of global powers/institutions and their role in the international system. Global powers include but are not limited to the United States of America, China, NATO, and the UN. ICC and European involvement at large. The mentioned parties work together against Russia as they provide Ukraine with military aid and impose economic sanctions against Russia. China's position is important as a global power as its stance will shape relations with Russia, Ukraine, and European nations. The study will clearly demonstrate any unlawful unfairness and biases (in accordance with international law) of the global powers/institutions, if any.

In a nutshell, the war will have a future impact on global governance, international law and justice, global alliances, human rights, and humanitarian interventions, hence the need to study this war.

## **1.3 Aim of the study**

The study aimed to examine the strengths and weaknesses of the different positions of international players in relation to the Russian-Ukraine war.

## **1.4 Study objectives**

In order to achieve the study aim, the following objectives had to be pursued:

- To examine the roles and positions of different players in Ukraine-Russia war.
- To examine the strengths and weakness of the roles and positions of different players in Ukraine-Russia war.

- To examine the implications and the potential of those positions of different players on peace building between Russia and Ukraine.
- To examine and explore the impact of Ukraine-Russia-war on Africa's relations with the East and the West.

### 1.5 **Key research questions**

This sought to address the following research questions:

- What are the roles and positions of different players in the Ukraine-Russia war
- What strengths and weaknesses of the roles and positions of different players in the Ukraine-Russia war towards peacebuilding and stability?
- What are the implications and the potential of those positions of different players on peacebuilding and stability between Russia and Ukraine?
- What is the impact of the Ukraine-Russia war on Africa's relations with the East and the West?

## 1.6 **Research Methodology**

The research methodology that the research paper will use is qualitative research methodology. The qualitative approach, according to (Tenny and Brannan, 2017), “is a type of research that explores and provides deeper insights into real-world problems.” A qualitative approach/thematic is best suited for this study because the aim is to answer hows and whys instead of how many or how much (numerical data). The study asks open-ended questions, and answers are complex to put into numerical data, and that is, again, not the purpose of the study.

The objective of the study is to examine the strengths and weaknesses of various players' roles in the Ukraine-Russia war. Therefore, the nature of open-ended questions makes behavior, attitude, and experiences difficult to accurately demonstrate or capture using a quantitative approach. A qualitative approach will enable the study to explain how and why the Ukraine-Russia war is and the behavior of various players directly or indirectly involved.

It should be mentioned that the study is basically desktop research designed to be conducted using the thematic (content) analysis approach. By definition, research methodology is the blueprint of every social science inquiry, that must be followed by every researcher in satisfying research objectives and getting the intended information. Rebeck; McCaw; Buchwalter; Rubenstein-Montano, (2001) described research methodology as the understanding a researcher has about social reality, the interpretation given to a phenomenon, as well as the essential apparatus put in place, for designing appropriate research methods comprising of techniques employed in getting to the issues to be investigated within research. Specifically, Rebeck, et al, sum up methodology “...as a set of procedures that can be followed for achieving an objective”.

The objective in this sense is that of exploring observed phenomenon and getting to the root of possible causes and effects. For Du Plooy-Cilliers., Davis, and Bezuidenhout (2014), the research could simply mean asking questions and finding answers to the questions posed or identifying problems and finding solutions to the problems through a systematized procedure adopted by the researcher concerned. In the view of Du Plooy, et al, the essence of research is to ensure that the analysis of the generated data for a study forms the basis of the emerging findings, conclusions and recommendations.

For this study, the researcher sought to generate data essentially from secondary sources. According to Ajayi (2017), secondary data is the already existing data collected by the investigator agencies and organizations earlier, which relates to the past. Furthermore,

secondary data is collected for purposes other than the problem at hand. In general terms, secondary data collection sources are government publications, websites, books, journal articles, internal records, etc. As indicated earlier in the chapter, since the war is still ongoing, the researcher is firmly aware that there are few published books on the subject matter. Currently, the data is only available on documentaries, academic reports, essays, journals, and television broadcasts including online newspapers and case studies. It will be recalled the purpose of the study is to explore, explain, and examine the strengths and weaknesses of various players 'roles and positions in the Ukraine-Russia war.

### **Operational Definition of Concepts.**

It is very important for the researcher to explicitly provide the meaning of the terms and concepts used to leave no room for confusion or doubt. It is crucial for the study to distinguish between war and other forms of violence that exist. By war, the study means a series of small-scale attacks that involve a handful of deaths resulting in destruction, loss of life, and disruption of social, economic, and political structures. (Heywood, 2014). It is very imperative to highlight different types of wars, namely, total war, civil war, conventional war, hegemonic war, and guerrilla war.

By diplomacy, study means the effective management of state relations, government, and non-government actors with the aid to forge strong relations, build partnerships and alliances, further state interest, and, by all means, avoid conflict and war. There are many definitions of policy as they are authors; by policy, this study means (Richard and Baldwin, 1976, p122) "formulation of rules, norms, and prescriptions intended to govern the subsequent decisions and actions of government. "There are also many types of policies, namely public, foreign, economic, and social.

### **1.7 Ethical Considerations**

Being purely desktop research, requiring no field work and target participants, it is relevant to point out that the study did not pose any ethical challenge. However, the researcher complied with all necessary guidelines as required by the university to guide the study. For example, the researcher got the nod of the School Authority to proceed with the research focus and, therefore, did not encounter any form of handicap from start to finish. However, the researcher commits to and reinforces the accurate and unbiased presentation of data.



## **1.8 Limitations of the Study**

Exploratory research of this nature may not be devoid of some challenges, which were deemed could arise in the event that the target respondents appear difficult to access timeously because of their schedules and other logistics hurdles. However, this researcher endeavored as much as possible to solicit the support and understanding of those concerned on how to mitigate likely challenges that were anticipated in the course of this study. The researcher acknowledges the use of secondary data, study time frame, logistics, and the geographical location of the study as limitations that may result in biased presentation of data and interpretation of findings extracted from reliable secondary sources.

## **1.9 Structure of dissertation**

This study was designed to be in five chapters as follows:

### **Chapter One**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter introduced the study and discussed the topic explored in the study. It further provided the summary of the whole study, breaking it into different sections including the background of the study; problem statement; significance/rationale of the study; aim; research objectives, research questions; ethical consideration; and lastly the chapter sequence.

### **Chapter Two**

#### **Literature Review**

This chapter contained the researcher's critical reviews and evaluation of the available and accessed literature, with a view to identifying areas of gaps or lacuna in previous related studies, thus providing a basis for the current study.

### **Chapter Three**

#### **Theoretical Framework**

In this chapter, the researcher identified the two theoretical frameworks that were used to substantiate and underpin the research. The researcher further highlighted and expatiated on the features of the theories, and pointed out how the theories were seen to best suit the study.

### **Chapter Four**

#### **Presentation/Analysis of Data & Discussion of Findings**

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part dealt with the presentation of the data generated for the study, and the findings that emerged from the collated data in terms of themes. The findings are therefore highlighted thematically for purposes of analysis. The second part dealt with discussion of findings, in which case, the emerging themes and findings from secondary sources put together, and which are matched against the study research questions to determine how much they correlate.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

This chapter provided a summary of the research and the research findings, followed by the researcher's conclusive remarks and thereafter, the relevant recommendations. Finally, the chapter indicated the potential areas for further research, based on the findings that emerged from this study

## **Chapter Two**

### **2.0 Literature Review**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter contained the researcher's critical reviews and evaluation of the available and accessed literature, with a view to identifying areas of gaps or lacuna in previous related studies, thus providing a basis for the current study. This chapter set out to explore, discuss, and analyse the already-existing information from different secondary sources; hence, it is called a literature review. According to Rudestam and Newton, 1992 literature review, "A literature review is a piece of academic writing demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the academic literature on a specific topic placed in context. A literature review also includes a critical evaluation of the material; this is why it is called a literature review rather than a literature report. It is a process of reviewing the literature and a form of writing." A literature review helps readers understand the background significance of the undertaken study, and enables the researcher to identify areas that require further investigation and to basically provide bases for responding to the research questions and research objectives of the study (Rudestam & Newton, 2014).

#### **Techniques for data collection**

The study used several search strategies, and the main aim was to search for journal articles that relate to the objectives and questions using a combination of keywords and concepts to capture accurate results. A bibliography search strategy was used by the researcher to find relevant journal articles. By definition, the bibliography search strategy is the method of finding journal articles that have been cited by other publications, used to find journal articles (Pilot and Beck, 2018 p223).

Keywords were used to search journal articles electronically. keywords capture the key concepts in research questions. The researcher also used mapping as a feature that allows a researcher to search topics using their own keywords (Pilot and Beck, 2018 p224). The researcher also extracted data from JSTOR (for historical and multidisciplinary journal articles), ProQuest for Political Science articles, working papers, and dissertation), (CIAO (Columbia International Affairs Online for Research on International Relations and Global Policy), EBSCOhost Political Science Complete (for comprehensive resources for political Science and International relations), Google Scholar, and Web of Science.

The study also explored data from government and NGO reports such as UN, World Bank, and IMF reports for global and policy-related issues. Government publications were used for national policy or legislative studies, and NGO and tank papers were used for current and applied research. Used library catalogues such as WorldCat and UKZN library.

## **2.2 Realist and Liberal Perspective on the Russia-Ukraine War.**

In this section, the researcher opted to delineate the available and accessed literature on the basis of two perspectives, viz, the Realist and Liberal Perspectives on the war, which has, inevitably become a source of global concern.

Paul D'Anieri, in his journal article published in 2019, examined the causes of the conflict and evaluated the potential policy solutions for international actors involved in the Ukraine-Russia war. He examined the war through the lenses of the realism theory of international relations, and further argued that specifying what version of realist theory to apply is crucial in determining the potential policy and solutions for actors involved in the war. He introduced two versions of realism vs. defensive and offensive realism, and argued that how the countries at war are perceived or viewed is also important. He states that Russia started the invasion, is either he is a status quo or revisionist power (D'Anieri, 2019).

### **Defensive Realism perspective.**

On the lens of defensive realism, D'Anieri argued that in the defensive realist world, states are relaxed, but only pursue security, and respond to external threats. Under the defensive realist view, states do not seek expansion, and peace normally prevails. On the other hand, in offensive realism, states pursue security and are prone to take actions that could cause and lead to war (D'Anieri, 2019). Mearsheimer (2018) argues that Russia is a status quo power, which planned and executed the first invasion in 2014 after the invocation of Ukraine's request to join NATO filed in 2008, and that was seen as a violation by the West expanding NATO and EU, provoking Russian reaction (Mearsheimer, 2018). The proposed solution for Mearsheimer is that Ukraine must never join NATO for peace to prevail, as that changes the status quo by expanding West imperialism and influence. He argues that under offensive realism, Russia is preserving security and is prone to take action to maintain and preserve the status quo of pre-2008(Mearsheimer, 2018).

### **Russia's Behavioural analysis (Realism perspective)**

According to Golovics (2017), Russians responded aggressively not because of President Putin's personal attitude or irrationality but because the structure of the international system compels him to act so. He argues that Russia had no choice since the international system is anarchic. He suggests that the West, the US, and NATO must surrender and refrain from interfering in East Europe, and peace may be possible. Mearsheimer (2018) further argued that the best way possible is to accommodate a strong power's territorial demands, and that will satisfy that power and bring peace. In other words, give Russia what it wants, which is Ukraine and peace may prevail. He further states that either NATO should withdraw its expansion from the east of Europe or let Russia invade Ukraine.

Some scholars like Sergei Jargin, John Mearsheimer, Kenneth Waltz and Alexander Wendt argue that both countries at war have historical ties and that Russia reacted out of irredentism and Revanchism. Irredentism, by definition, is a policy of advocating the restoration of a country or any territory formerly belonging to it. Russian irredentism is a result of lost territories of the former Russian empire (USSR), and President Vladimir Putin is trying to claim back part of the former Soviet Union. Ukraine and Russia kept close connections after the Soviet Union (USSR) collapsed in 1991, and by the end of 1991, Ukraine had removed and demolished any remaining former Soviet nuclear weapons (Mearsheimer, 2021).

Through the Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States consented to protect Ukraine's territorial integrity and political independence in return. As a non-nuclear weapon state, Ukraine decided to join the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of nuclear weapons in 1994 (Karatnyck, 2022). In the years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, some have responded, in part, to regional security threats affecting Russia, such as the 1993 Russian constitutional crisis, the Abkhazian War (1992–1993), and the first Chechnya (Karatnyck, 2022). The former Eastern bloc countries joined NATO, and Russian leaders called the expansion a breach of unofficial assurances by Western powers that NATO would not expand eastward (Karatnyck, 2022).

Revanchism is the policy of seeking to retaliate, especially to recover lost territory. Countries east of Russia that joined NATO included the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, and the other three that were members of the Warsaw Pact included Bulgaria, Romania, and Slovakia. Conversely, Russia is driven by unification and nationalism as it has been trying to reunite both countries through negotiations with Ukrainian leaders. According to Stephen Walt (2018), even before 2008, there were negotiations on how to reunite or at least claim back part

of Ukraine's provinces and from 2008, negotiations were intensive because of Ukraine's application to join NATO. In 2014, both countries reached an agreement and signed the Minsk agreement, which was signed by Separatist leaders Alexander Zakharchenko and Igor Plotnitsky, Stephen Walt (2018). Swiss diplomat and OSCE representative Heidi Tagliavini, Former president of Ukraine and Ukrainian representative Leonid Kuchma were also signatories, Stephen Walt (2018).

Later, in 2014, the ceasefire agreement was broken by Ukraine's President when he requested to be accepted into the alliance according to the fast-track procedure, and that action made Russia aggressively invade Crimea and other provinces in Ukraine. The revanchism policy is applicable as NATO continues to expand eastward from Russia, and also Ukraine, next to the borders of Russia, requested to be accepted on a fast-track procedure.

Rareed Zakaria (2015) argued that Ukraine had been trying for decades to get rid of the Russian government's influence on internal issues. Because of the security dilemma, Ukraine sought to join NATO for protection and security. Similarly, Russia also feels threatened by Ukraine's application to ally itself with NATO. A security dilemma is a situation in which actions taken by a state to increase its own security cause reactions from other states, which in turn lead to a decrease rather than an increase in the original state's security (2015).

John Mearsheimer (2023) also argued that there are other international players involved in this war, and the interests of each player need to be closely studied. The major players in this war are the West and the USA, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the International Criminal Court (ICC), the UN, Russia, Ukraine, etc. Russia's interests are deeply rooted in nationalism, irredentism and unification. For the West (mostly European countries which subscribe to democracy), USA, ICC, UN, and NATO, the overriding interests are the expansion of liberal democracy, western imperialism, domination, imposed global order, and most probably, the total collapse of Russia's economy, weakening of Russia's military weaponry and reducing Russia's power as a superpower country (Mearsheimer, 2023). Ukraine, in pursuit of its interests, sought the protection of its government and the security of its territory and sovereignty from Russia.

In response to this expectation, Liboreiro (2024), in his publication titled *Making Russia pay*, remarked that at last, “from the early days of the war in Ukraine, Western allies closed ranks to provide Kyiv with the military and financial support it urgently needed to resist the advance of the invading Russian troops and, ideally, push them back to where they were before

February 2022. Loboreiro further said that, in parallel to these efforts, democratic nations began looking for ways to ensure the Kremlin was held accountable for the destruction it was wreaking. According to him, the search initially focused on justice, in which case, ideas were floated about setting an ad-hoc international tribunal to try those accused of war crimes.

Leo Chiu, a political scientist from Russia in his article mentioned a long list of Russia's allies and how they want Russia to invade Ukraine. Chiu (2023) argued that China and India are some of the countries in full support of Russia's invasion of Ukraine even though they don't support full-scale invasion despite Russia violating international law. Chiu argued that both two countries want Russia to invade rich and resourceful provinces or cities in Ukraine, such as Kyvi or Kyiv, the capital city of Ukraine, Crimea and parts of Luhansk Oblast and Donetsk Oblast and parts of Zaporizhzhia Oblast and Kherson Oblast.

Some of these provinces are already under Russia, and some of the fight is still on (Chiu, 2023). He further argued that in 2023, during the UN resolution meeting "calling for the end of war between Russia and Ukraine" on February 23, all major states voted in favour of the call, and Eritrea, Russia, Mali, Syria, Nicaragua, rogue state North Korea and Belarus voted against the UN resolution charter Chiu (2023).

The decision by these countries clearly demonstrated their support and pledge to the Russian Federation, and that was their position. The decisions of these countries to support Russia's invasion vary; for example, India shares tight and close historical ties with Russia as it has been abstaining from voting on any resolutions to this war. According to Leo Chiu, this is because of the history between these two countries. Both India's current reliance on Russian military hardware and recollections of the Soviet Union assisting India in the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War are the reasons for India's full support and pledge to Russia's invasion of Ukraine Chiu (2023).

Mali is also an ally of Russia and going by that decision, it is clear that they share expansion interests and ambitions Chiu (2023). Mali, in August 2014, was assisted by France to counter the surgency by Jihadists to overthrow the democratic government of Mali and take over. France intervened and launched a military called Operation Barkhane to track down all Jihadist terrorists to save the capital city of Mali, and that operation in 2014 succeeded Chiu (2023). As it stands today, Mali is ruled by military putschists, and this shows similarities in the style of leadership Mali and Russia share, which is to use military abilities to preserve and protect their interests Chiu (2023). Looking at the Eritrea state and relations with Russia, it is a

symbolic alliance as Eritrea has also been ruled by the iron fist of President Isaias Afwerki since the country gained independence from Ethiopia in 1993. Undoubtedly so, the strong relations are the result of the similar style of leadership shared between Russia and Eritrea.

Furthermore, Russia has its own military alliance called 'The Collective Security Treaty Organization' that encompasses the six former Soviet Union states in central Asia Chiu (2023). These states include Tajikistan, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Belarus. The position of these mentioned states is clear, as they pledged their full support to Russia, and secretly, they continue to send military weapons into Russia to fight Ukraine troops Chiu (2023).

*In reviewing the realist perspective, the researcher notes that, whether at a defensive or offensive level, the emphasis lies with the desire of states, and particularly the militarily powerful countries, to protect their territorial sovereignty, and this can only be effectively achieved through the application of military capabilities. The implications of this revolve around the reality of the anarchic nature of the international system, where the show of might remains a tool for interactions. In that circumstance, it is not out place for countries, which have shared concerns to unite against any form of aggression, or launch attacks to deter a perceived threat. Therefore, the invasion of Ukraine by Russian, from this perspective, can be validly allowed and or justified, so long as any such attack is within the allowable restriction guidelines, which in military circle is referred to as the “rule of engagement”.*

### **Arguments of Realist and Liberal Scholars**

Ravi Shankar Raj, Research Scholar, Dept. of Political Science, Central University of Haryana, and Dr Shantesh Kumar Singh, Associate Professor, Dept. of Political Science, Central University of Haryana in their article titled "Russia-Ukraine War: Realist and Liberal Perspective" argues that the foundational causes of the Russia-Ukraine war for liberals is illiberal Russia while for realists, is the threat to their national security from the expansion of NATO and EU (Raj & Sigh, 2023).

Raj and Singh argue that Liberals are in support of Ukraine, while realists are in support of Russia. Liberals view Russia's invasion brutally as undemocratic and a threat to the human rights and sovereignty of Ukraine; conversely, realists argue that the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war is a reminder that when superpowers think their vital security concerns and national interests are threatened, they may act in awful and irresponsible ways (Raj and Singh, 2023). Both Raj and Singh share the same realist perspective as that of John Mearsheimer, who says,



"States should maximize power, and their ultimate goal should be hegemony because, that is the best way to guarantee survival."

John Mearsheimer, in his 2014 article "Why the Ukraine crisis is West fault", has highlighted that the Ukraine crisis is because of the "West's triple package of policies- NATO enlargement, EU expansion, and democracy promotion" and in doing so, they have neglected the core strategic interest of Russia and generated a feeling of 'security dilemma' (Mearsheimer, 2014). Other realists, such as Matthew MacKay, have argued that Russia invaded Ukraine because of national security and defence. Mackay states that Ukraine has a huge province that is dominated by Russians (Russian-pro), and that is why Russia wants Ukraine, and also because of strong symbolic and historical history, including strong nationalism between the citizens of these two countries (MacKay, 2022).

Liberals like Michael McFaul and John G. Ikenberry, in their journal titled "Faulty powers: who started the Ukraine crisis?" argue that the cause of the Russia-Ukraine war is Russia's internal politics, rather than what realists assume is the cause, which is the rapid expansion of NATO and United Nations. McFaul and Ikenberry believe that for peace to prevail in the world politically, democracy must dominate all nations and countries of the world because, democratic states mostly do not go to war with each other; instead, they build relations through collective and cooperative security, open markets, rule of international law, shared sovereignty, and through international institutions and organization (McFaul and Ikenberry, 2009). They continue to say the war is because Russia is an autocratic state and Ukraine is a democratic state; therefore, Russia is threatened by democracy next door and wants to protect and preserve its autocratic state (McFaul and Ikenberry, 2009).

Moreover, liberal Michael Howard argues that "war is the result of an illegitimate domestic system, that aims to use war not for glory or survival but for feeding the corrupt system" (Howard, 1978). In a nutshell, the liberals' perspective is that Russia invaded Ukraine to protect and preserve its authoritarian regime, and some liberals blame the West that after the collapse of the USSR, they failed to adopt accommodate and integrate Russia into its sphere. As a result, Russia has been isolated, and there is no sense of belonging to the collaborative and cooperative international systems of the West (Raj and Singh, 2023). *In the opinion of the researcher, the position of the liberals can be likened to the commonplace saying of "passing the buck". This view is informed by the argument that, the "ascribed fault" of the West in taking steps to integrate Ukraine into the NATO, which is considered an anathema by Russia, happened to be one of the major triggers for the invasion. This researcher also considers the view that "war is the result of an illegitimate domestic system" as being espoused by the liberals, is interesting*

*and debatable. This researcher thinks that holding such view may be tantamount to “calling a dog a bad name, in other to hang it”. Perhaps, a way out of this perspective is to agree that, what is acceptable to one country, in terms of socio-political orientation, may not be for another.*

### **2.3 Roles and Positions of various player's In the Russia-Ukraine War:**

#### **Views from Africa.**

It is also important to explore, examine and understand the stance of African countries in the Russia-Ukraine war, as that will determine the relations in the international system. Dr Ralph Mathekga of South Africa in the Witwatersrand University, who is also a political, social and economic researcher, in his article published in September 2023, talked about the status and the different positions taken by different African countries in the Russia-Ukraine war. He argued that at first, most African countries took a non-alignment stance on the Russian-Ukraine war as African leaders thought it had no bearing on their material interests or peace and security in the continent (Mathekga, 2023). This claim is evident in the March 2022 United Nations resolution vote meeting out of 54 African countries, only twenty-eight countries voted in support of the UN resolution to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and Seventeen African countries voted to abstain – including South Africa, Algeria and Angola – and eight countries did not submit a vote (Mathekga, 2023).

Conversely, Mathekga argues that Western powers have pushed and demanded African countries to respond in the name of a "global response" to all atrocities and human rights violations committed by Russia in Ukraine (Mathekga, 2023). As a result, South Africa finds itself in a very tight and difficult position to decide where it goes with Russia or the so-called Western powers in general and the United States in particular. South Africa has a rich history with Russia, and with President Putin as he assisted South African leaders in the fight against apartheid that was perpetuated and supported by the US. Again, the US and South Africa are strong trading partners. The decision of South Africa to maintain the non-alignment position came because both Russia and the US are strong business, trade and economic partners (Mathekga, 2023). Mathekga said further, that the "non-alignment" position is the shield for African countries to avoid being used as a proxy in the war to fight Western powers or to fight Russia (Mathekga, 2023).

Moreover, the Russia-Ukraine war continues to affect the global supply of food networks and oil in all those countries in Africa that depend hugely on both countries, Russia and Ukraine

(Fabricius, 2023). Most African countries depend on grain from both countries, and the war has affected the food network; as a result, some African states have associated themselves with Western powers for greener pastures.

Peter Fabricius, a consultant at the Institute for Security Studies, argues that under President William Ruto, Kenya has clearly emerged as America's leading strategic partner – if not in Africa as a whole, then at least in sub-Saharan Africa (Fabricius, 2023). This is evident as President Ruto, in May 2024, made a state visit to the United States of America. Some African leaders criticized President Ruto, as they thought he was too pro-western, and that has caused some friction and unstable relations among African leaders, which is caused by the deep root of the Russia-Ukraine war (Fabricius, 2023).

There are also African countries that secretly pledge their full support and loyalty to Russia for various reasons. Russia is one of the world's largest military giants, with armed mercenary groups and a private military (Fabricius, 2023). It is important to note that some of the countries in Africa are politically unstable; there are terrorists, armed groups against or sometimes in support of the democratic government. Leaders in politically unstable countries strongly rely on military assistance to stabilize the country, bring control, and defeat armed groups or terrorists (Fabricius, 2023).

To make a compelling example, countries like Burkina Faso, Chad, Mozambique, Sudan, and Niger have asked Russia to assist in countering insurgencies in the country by deploying private, highly skilled armed groups. Russian private army group called Wagner, has been active in the above-mentioned countries in the last decades (Fabricius, 2023). *Following the sudden death of the Wagner Group, a development shrouded in mystery, it is not clear how much influence the armed group will still continue to wield.*

Despite the rule stipulated in the Organization of African Union (OAU) – now the African Union (AU), article 6 of the Convention implores states to "prevent entry into or passage through its territory of any mercenary or any equipment destined for mercenary use", some African states still support and allow foreign and private army groups to operate in their respective countries, and that renders the African Union Convention useless and undermined.

Furthermore, in an attempt to provide in-depth detail about the political, military, and economic positions of various countries around the world since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Mohammed Haddad, in his article titled "Where does your country stand on the Russia-Ukraine war?" gave detailed figures of vote of different countries in the UN resolution meetings that

were held four times for different agendas pertaining the Russia-Ukraine war (Haddad, 2023). He further argued that the only way to see where any state stands politically in the Russia-Ukraine war, is by looking at how they vote at the United Nations. United Nations General Assembly consists of about 193 member states, and all states are allowed equal voting on any matter or agenda tabled at any time (Haddad, 2023).

The first UN emergency meeting on March 2, 2022, was about demanding that Russia withdraw its military forces from Ukraine right after the first Russian invasion (Haddad, 2023). The second UN resolution meeting on March 24 was about the Humanitarian consequences of the aggression against Ukraine, the third meeting on April 7 was about Suspending Russia from the UN Human Rights Council, and the last meeting On October 12 was about the Territorial integrity of Ukraine, condemning Russia's move to annex parts of Ukraine (Haddad, 2023). Records of votes at the meeting revealed that one hundred forty-one states voted in favour in all four UN resolution meetings.

Among those countries were Germany, Poland, Canada, France, Israel, Portugal, United Kingdom, United States, Zambia, Costa Rica, Malawi, Norway, Romania, Rwanda, Slovakia, Slovenia, Dominican Republic, East Timor, Ecuador, Estonia, Federated States of Micronesia, Mauritius, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Samoa, San Marino, São Tomé and Príncipe, Serbia, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Argentina, Australia, Albania, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, DRC, Denmark, Djibouti, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Afghanistan and many more(Haddad, 2023).

Furthermore, countries that abstained in all the four UN resolution meetings include Mozambique, South Africa, Cameroon, Sudan, Tanzania, India, Eswatini, Guinea, Armenia, El Salvador, Uganda, Pakistan, Namibia, Sri Lanka, and Mongolia. Countries that voted against all resolutions include Russia, Syria, Belarus, and North Korea. Lastly, countries that were absent from all four meetings were Burkina Faso, Venezuela, Azerbaijan, and Turkmenistan (Haddad, 2023).

The above figures clearly demonstrate how countries have positioned themselves in the Russia-Ukraine war. All those in favour of all four UN resolutions are the West, the United Nations, the European Union, the United States of America and in support of Ukraine; that is their position (Haddad, 2023). Those that are against all the UN resolutions meant their support for Russia and against Ukraine.

When it comes to roles played by different countries, the West, the United States of America and the majority of European Union member states have significantly supported and given Ukraine military weapons to fight Russia (Haddad, 2023). It is estimated that over the value of \$100 billion in military assistance has been provided to Ukraine, and others decided to impose sanctions against Russia as their way of condemning the invasion (Haddad, 2023). According to Haddad, the role played by countries that support Russia; those that abstain from it; and those that were absent is not clear where their military is in any way supporting Russia (Haddad, 2023).

China and Russia have had strong relations for decades, and so many factors are strengthening both countries' relations. Kelly Ng & Yi Ma in their articles titled "How is China supporting Russia after it was sanctioned for Ukraine war?" argue that China and Russia share strong military trade relations, as Russia exports weapons to the value of \$ 300 billion. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken made serious allegations, accusing China of secretly providing weapons to Russia to fight Ukraine (Ng and Ma, 2024).

As a result, the US sanctioned China on technology exports to China. On the other hand, China recently became Moscow's key supplier of cars, clothing, raw materials and many other products, after Western countries-imposed sanctions on Russia (Ng and Ma, 2024). Even though China denies the allegation of supplying weapons to Russia, this proves the point made by Haddad (2023), that it is difficult to examine and analyse the role played by those countries that support Ukraine.

The role played by China in trade partnership with time, is important to Russia because, despite all the sanctions placed against Russia by the US, the West and some UN and UE member states, Russia still manages to grow its economy. (Ng and Ma, 2024). China and Russia share strong trade relations, even though China abstained from all four UN resolution meetings and also to note that China is the global supplier of technology, and that has made China powerfully disturbing the US hegemony (Ng and Ma, 2024). According to Ng and Ma, the consequences of this war are catastrophic to countries that depend on Russia for gas and oil, and because of sanctions against Russia, the biggest buyers of Russia's oil and gas which are the UK, US and EU countries have withdrawn from buying such products (Ng and Ma, 2024). As a result, countries that still buy oil and gas from Russia are China, and India, and that alone has boosted the economy of Russia as sanctions threaten its growth (Ng and Ma, 2024).

## 2.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher presented in a summarised format, quite a number of literature accessed on the role played by the various state actors and non-state actors in the Russian/Ukrainian war, with a view to determining and examining the strengths and weaknesses of their different positions on the war. The chapter highlighted and evaluated both the realist and liberal perspectives of the studies and informed commentaries in relation to the war. For the realists, the researcher noted that, whether at a defensive or offensive level, the emphasis lies with the desire of states, and particularly the militarily powerful countries, to protect their territorial sovereignty, and this can only be effectively achieved through the application of military capabilities.

The researcher also noted that, the realist perspective places emphasis on the preservation of ideological orientation, which for the West, is the promotion of democracy, rule of law and the enforcement of human rights, etc. In the chapter, the researcher also pointed out the position of the liberal, which tended to see the cause of the war as the illegitimate domestic issues of the aggressor(s). The researcher did not fail to present, in a summarized format, the views from Africa in relation to the war and its consequences for the continent, and how countries, as individuals or collectively, reacted to the war.

The researcher observed that the reviewed literature for the study, appeared to be mainly concerned with explaining the motives of President Putin and that of President Zelensky for the war, and discussing the positions and roles of different states in the war, but they did not examine the strengths and weaknesses of the positions and roles of different players towards peacebuilding and stability. This lacuna was of concern to the researcher, hence the present study. It requires to be emphasised that the study is really to examine the effectiveness of the positions and roles in ending the war, for peace and stability to prevail between Russia and Ukraine.

The next chapter is designed to deal with the theoretical framework considered to underpin the study.

## Chapter Three

### **3.0 Theoretical framework**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter of the study presents the theoretical framework considered applicable to underpin the study. A theoretical framework can be understood as a supporting structure of a phenomenon being studied. The theories considered for this study are realism and liberalism, and the features of the theories are highlighted and expatiated upon below.

#### **Data collection method/instrument**

Data for this were sourced primarily from secondary sources as mentioned in Chapter One of the study. The researcher had mentioned in the same chapter one that, in checking the availability of sources, there are few published books on the subject matter. Currently, relevant data required for the study are only available on documentaries, academic reports, essays, journals, and television broadcasts including online newspapers and case studies.

According to Grant and Osanloo (2014), theoretical framework is a ‘blueprint’ or a guide, and it is ‘borrowed’ by the researchers to build their own houses. The theoretical framework serves as the foundation upon which research is constructed. Sinclair (2007) compares the role of the theoretical framework to that of a map or travel plan. Brondizio, Leemans, and Solecki (2014) contend that it is the specific theory or theories about aspects of human endeavours that can be useful to the study of events. Vinz defines a theoretical framework as a foundational review of existing theories that serve as a roadmap for developing the arguments you will use in your work (2022).

Abend defines theoretical framework as the structure that can hold or support a theory of a research study (2008). The theoretical framework is a summary of your theory regarding a particular problem that is developed through a review of previously tested knowledge of the variables involved (Creswell, 2005). It identifies a plan for investigation and interpretation of the findings.

The theoretical framework involves a well-supported rationale, and is organized in a manner that helps the reader understand and assess your perspective. The theoretical framework consists of theoretical principles, constructs, concepts, and tenants of the theory (Grant and Osanloo, 2014). The relevant theory or theories that underpin the knowledge base of the

phenomenon to be researched and all aspects of the research study should connect to the theoretical framework (Grant and Osanloo, 2014).

As pointed out earlier, the theories considered for this study will be realism and liberalism. In this chapter, the researcher sought to define and explain two theories of international relations, as identified, and to point out their relevance to this study

### **3.1 Realism Theory of International Relations.**

Realism (sometimes called 'political realism') claims to offer an account of world affairs that is 'realistic.' For realists, global politics is, first and last, about power and self-interest. This is why it is often portrayed as a 'power politics' model of international politics. As Hans Morgenthau put it, 'Politics is the struggle for power over men, and whatever its ultimate aim may be, power is its immediate goal and the modes of acquiring, maintaining and demonstrating it determine the technique of political action'.

According to (Donnelly, 2002), the theory of power politics is based on two core assumptions, people are essentially selfish and competitive, meaning that egoism is the defining characteristic of human nature. The state system operates in a context of international anarchy in that there is no authority higher than the sovereign state. The key themes within realism are state egoism and conflict, statecraft and the national interest international anarchy and its implications: Polarity, stability and the balance of power. The core theme of realist theory can therefore be summed up in this equation Egoism plus anarchy equals power politics (Jindal, 2019)

Realism theory has evolved over the years from classical realism to neo-realism and to modern realism. Proponents of classical realism are Thucydides; Niccolò Machiavelli, Thomas Hobbes; Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Max Weber. The realism theory of international relations became visible during the mid-20th century, and this theory came at a time when the dominant theory was idealism. E.H. Carr wrote the first journals and book about realism, and he was a British historian and political scientist. The focus of Carr was self-interest and the perpetual role of power, and he argues that these two aspects determine the behaviour of the states globally (Carr, 1979). The catastrophic and disastrous wars that took place from 1939 to 1945, commonly called the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, made more scholars to focus more on a realistic perspective of international relations. Scholars around the world, including scholars from Europe, began to write about realism, and America adopted the theory and through it, came into existence the study of Political Science (Carr, 1979).



In Europe, the most notable and prominent scholar of realism is Hans Morgenthau, and both Hans and Carr are considered forefathers of the classical realism theory of international relations. *Politics Among Nations* (1948) was the first book written by Hans Morgenthau, and it laid a more foundational theoretical framework of realism theory. “*Politics Among Nations* (1948)” book became the most popular and used book in the United States of America. The followers of Hans Morgenthau and Carr are Reinhold Niebuhr; Raymond Aron; George Kennan; Thucydides; Niccolò Machiavelli; Thomas Hobbes; Jean-Jacques Rousseau; and Max Weber. For the classical realist, a conflict between states, and the struggle for power are rooted in human nature (Morgenthau, 1948). Human beings are self-interested and power-seeking, and states as human communities reflect that nature. Classical realism places a greater emphasis on understanding the unique historical circumstances of a given situation (Morgenthau, 1948).

Classical realists put emphasis on the nature of individual states, and they focus more on power and specifically military power. This is contrary to neo-realists, as they emphasise national security instead, and this is not limited to military power but broader incorporation of state capacity, to protect citizens from all kinds of insecurities, including food security, political security, environmental security, personal security, community security and others. (Forde, 1992).

## **3.2 Classical Realism theory**

### **3.2.1 Arguments by Scholars of Realism Theory of International Relations**

According to Thomas Hobbes, the concept of the state of nature grounds politics in the individual's desire to preserve his life and his goods, and stipulates that the role of government is to serve these ends (Hobbes, 1986). His place in the realist tradition focuses on prioritising legitimacy over justice, and legitimacy as an ability to be defended with logic or justification. Some of the greatest realist thinkers include Niccolò Machiavelli, an Italian philosopher; Thomas Hobbes, an English philosopher; and Chanakya, an Indian philosopher. Hans Morgenthau and Kenneth Waltz, American political scientist and Thucydides Athenian historian (Stephen, 2019).

Niccolò argues that new rulers have their strength tested to see whether they can defend themselves and their territory or whether they need to rely on others, such as allies, for protection. Machiavelli argues that a ruler's main concern should be perfecting their military and war strategy (Machiavelli, 1532). He believes these skills are necessary to acquire territory

and keep what the ruler has gained. Machiavelli also argues that a ruler should not be too generous or merciful toward his subjects; otherwise, the subjects will become greedy and unappreciative over time. He even adds that rulers should be able sometimes to be evil because, they will come into contact with other evil people and will have to think like them to make deals with them and to succeed politically or in war. Machiavelli believes rulers should exercise honesty and keep their promises only when it suits their purposes. Machiavelli ultimately argues that rulers should bend a variety of common virtues to keep and/or expand their territory (Stephens, 2022).

Machiavelli also warns rulers against hatred from their subjects. Although he encourages rulers to commit a number of morally questionable actions, he believes rulers have to avoid being legitimately hated by their subjects to maintain their respect (Stephens, 2022). Machiavelli advises that the staff's character will also judge rulers, and that when two other states are at war, it is usually better to choose a side than to remain neutral. An effective ruler must be skilled in war. Machiavelli argues that a ruler's most important concern should be the art of warfare (Stephens, 2022).

He believes rulers should be very active in the military and gain honour by completing military conquests or victories. Machiavelli is reputed for the common saying that “the ends justify the means”. Overall, Machiavelli believes that rulers should not always aspire to certain virtues that regular people prize, such as honesty, non-violence, mercy, and kindness. Instead, Machiavelli believes that the ends of glory or conquest justify various means, including dishonesty, violence, and cruelty (Stephens, 2022).

Machiavelli believes that an effective ruler sometimes needs to be cruel, and posits that effective ruler must sometimes be cruel, or even evil, to accomplish their means (Stephens, 2022). He argues that rulers will come into contact with other evil people, and that being conniving will serve them well in maintaining control over their territory. It is better to be feared than loved. Machiavelli argued that if a ruler is too generous, kind, or merciful to his subjects, his subjects will become too demanding (Stephens, 2022). Therefore, Machiavelli argued that it is better to be feared than loved, to keep the subjects in line. However, he warned against being hated, which would be counterproductive for a ruler.

Machiavelli's argument differed from other political treatises published at the time because it focused on what makes an effective leader, rather than what makes a virtuous leader. Machiavelli's idea of an effective leader means gaining territory and holding onto territory. He

is willing to excuse deviations from regular cultural virtues of the time in the name of these goals (Stephens, 2022). In his book “The Prince”, he advises new rulers on best maintaining or expanding their power. Machiavelli argues that a focus on warfare is important and that rulers should sometimes bend conventional morality or even be cruel to defend their state and their own power over it (1532). The main idea of The Prince is for a ruler; the ends justify the means. Machiavelli argued that rulers should strive to maintain or expand their position, even if immoral acts are necessary to accomplish that goal. Machiavelli makes a strong point about realism, arguing that man is deceitful. He gives priority to self-preservation, and so do the states. Politics has no relation to morals, and pacts and pledges are honoured only when the rival parties are of equal status.

Realism is embedded in *realpolitik* and is a system based on practical or realistic means rather than moral or ideological considerations. Thucydides argues that when there is an established hegemon, whose rising threatens its hegemony, the conflict between them is inevitable. After the Peloponnesian wars ended, Macedonian invaders overpowered both Athens and Sparta, and this caused Thucydides to believe and argue that, one has to behave as a friend or foe according to the circumstances. The strong do what they must do, and the weak accept what they must accept. Fear in international relations is the most important driving force for bringing nations to war. Thucydides states that the primary objective of states is security, and Henry Kissinger, Graham Allison, and John Mearsheimer endorse that Thucydides will revive between the US and China. According to Thucydides, states do not have permanent friends and permanent enemies.

Thomas Hobbes, under realism, argues that a state never gives up their sovereignty, and anarchy is a normal and eternal state of the international system. He further states that a strong, undivided government can avoid war, and that the best way to achieve peace is to construct the leviathan through social contract by sacrificing some individual liberty for state protection.

Kautilya Chanakya, and Indian Machiavelli, argues that the state should never trust its neighbours. A neighbouring state is a natural enemy, and the neighbour of the neighbouring country must be a friend to contain the immediate neighbour (Chanakya, 1532). Chanakya argues that a person should not be too honest, as he gave a compelling example saying straight trees are cut first, and honest people are screwed first. He further states that there is some self-interest behind every friendship and no friendship without self-interests (Chanakya, 1532). This is a bitter truth at the individual, as well as state level. Nirmal Jindal argues that Kautilya’s

Realism is perceived to be different from the Western notions of Realism, and more apt to the countries of the global South, which have traditionally focused on the hard aspects of security since their independence (2019).

In Western Realism, war is considered a necessary evil in the anarchical international system, and there is no place for moral values. Kautilya provides an alternate perspective, as his theory of power and security is not morally devoid. He does not consider war essential in achieving state objectives (Jindal, 2019). As per Kautilya, the state's chief objective should be the people's welfare. He prioritised a strong treasury for good governance and strong defence capability. Therefore, he preferred diplomacy and peace to war apropos national interest (2019).

Hans Morgenthau had argued that politics among nations is considered the bible of realism, and that states either indulge in war, recover from the effects of war, or prepare for war. According to Morgenthau, objective and universal laws are based on national interests, and political realism has three “S”: state, survival, and self-defence. Morgenthau, under classical realism, emphasises the role of power, self-interest, and the pursuit of national interest in shaping the behaviour of states (Williams, 2005). He further gives six principles of realism. According to Morgenthau, politics is governed by objective laws rooted in human nature. Morgenthau believed that politics was based on certain universal principles inherent in human nature, such as the pursuit of power, self-interest, and the desire for security. These principles, he argued, were not subject to change or manipulation (Williams, 2005).

Moreover, he argued that the international system is anarchic, characterised by an absence of central authority or hierarchy, and states are, therefore, in perpetual competition. Similarly, Hobbes said, “anarchy is a normal and eternal state of the international system.” He also believes that states are the main actors in international politics, and that the behaviour of states is largely driven by their own self-interest and the pursuit of power. Power is the central concept in international politics (Griffiths, 2013). For Morgenthau, power was the primary currency of international politics, and states constantly struggled for power and influence over one another.

Furthermore, foreign policy should be guided by national interests. Morgenthau argued that foreign policy should be guided by a clear understanding of a state’s national interest, defined as the pursuit of power, security, and other vital interests (Griffiths, 2013). Ethics and morality have a limited role in international politics, according to Morgenthau, as he believed that the

pursuit of national interest and the pursuit of moral principles were often in conflict and that states were ultimately bound by the need to protect their own interests, rather than any abstract notion of morality (Griffiths, 2013). Machiavelli also backs this claim by saying, “Man is deceitful; he gives priority to self-preservation, and so do the states.”

This view is similar to what Sun Tzu said about morals. Sun Tzu was an ancient Chinese general, military strategist, writer, and philosopher (Jütersonke, 2010). He argues that moral reasoning is not useful for the states and that, it is best to keep one’s own safe intact; to crush the enemy’s status is the only second best. Tzu argues that the supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting, and victorious warriors go to war first, and then seek to win. He further argues that moral reasoning is not useful for the states. It is an unfortunate fact that we can only secure peace only by preparing for war (Kennedy, 2000).

### **3.2.2 Neo-realism Theory of International Relations**

Later in 1979, Kenneth Neal Waltz developed Neo-realism to cover classical realism’s limitations. In his book ‘The Theory of International Politics (1979), he focused more on the structure of the international system. Classical realism and Neorealism share the foundational assumptions about the state and international system. They are both empirical theories and believe that the state is a principal actor, the state is a rational actor pursuing national, international interests, and that the distribution of power determines the outcomes (Waltz, 1979). Neo-realists, by contrast, dismiss the explanatory power of human nature and instead their explanation of state behaviour in the anarchic international system (Manning, 2022).

The lack of a world government means, for neo-realists, that states must protect themselves and consequently view other states as a threat to their survival and interests (Manning, 2022). This is because of their focus on the structure of the international system. They are also called structural realists. By contrast, Neorealism focuses more on ahistorical. Waltz and other neorealists were more interested in developing a more scientific understanding of global politics by focusing on the structural elements of global politics. Contrary to classical realists, Waltz argues that international actors are interchangeable, and he focuses on the polarity of the international system.

Neo-realism, or structural realism, is also a broader theory of international relations divided into two sub-theories, defensive and offensive realism. Anarchy, states, and distribution of capabilities within the states/government are important concepts in understanding the international system and states’ behaviour (Waltz, 1979). Neorealism introduced by Waltz is

now called defensive realism. Scholars of defensive realism are Robert Jervis; Stephen Walt; Stephen Van Evera; and Charles L. Glaser. In contrast, offensive realism was introduced by John Joseph Mearsheimer, the American political scientist and prominent international relations scholar specialising in offensive realism. Other scholars of offensive realism include Fareed Zakaria, Robert Gilpin, and Eric J. Labs (Pashakhanlou, 2016).

### **3.2.3 Defensive Realism**

The researcher observes that the core assumptions remain the same. This is because, while the international system is anarchic as a factor in conditioning state behaviour, and self-help, states are unitary and rational actors and the issue of national security, which is a major concern for states in the international system. The different understanding of defensive and offensive realists is in analysing state behaviour (Tang, 2010). According to Waltz and other neorealists, the anarchy of the international system makes states care less about risk. The nature of the international system forces states to be more vigilant, and states are only concerned about their survival (Waltz, 1979). Zakaria argues that states tend to defensively adjust their foreign policies to protect themselves from danger.

Labs argues that the goal of states under defensive realism is to maintain their power and positions in the international system, not to maximise power. Mearsheimer state that the aggression of the state in the international system is futile because all other states will forge relations and become allies, to nip in the bud any state from becoming too strong and powerful (Mearsheimer, 2011). Defensive realist, Jack Snyder argues that the aggression of states in the international system does not benefit them as anarchy punishes aggression. This is because that leads to a zero-sum game, where the gains of aggressive foreign policy hardly ever transcend negatives. This is evident when states use nuclear weapons, as that will increase the cost of war (Mearsheimer, 2011).

### **3.2.4 Offensive Realism**

The prominent scholar of this subfield theory is John Joseph Mearsheimer, and in his book titled 'The Tragedy of Great Power Politics', he states five core assumptions of this theory. Firstly, he argues that the anarchic nature of the international system stimulates states' aggression. States in the international system strive to be dominant and do everything to achieve their own interests. According to Mearsheimer, the only way states can guarantee and ensure their own security and safety is through more amassing power (Mearsheimer, 2003). States under offensive realism are driven by the ultimate goal of hegemony, meaning they are always power-hungry and seek to maximise and expand their power to the fullest at the expense

of other states. Mearsheimer military advantage of states over other states, makes them more secure and safe. He argues that the goal of all states in offensive realism is hegemony (Mearsheimer, 2003).

### **3.3 Relevance of Realism theory to the study.**

In the attempt to point out the relevance of the study theories, it is relevant to highlight the basic attributes of each of the theories to enable an objective appreciation of the theories. The two theories are realism and liberalism, as proposed by the researcher, and the researcher proceeds to point out how the theory of realism can serve to underpin the study.

As highlighted and expatiated by the researcher earlier in the chapter, the perspective of the realists, is that “global politics is, first and last, about power and self-interest”. In the opinion of this researcher, this is why it is often portrayed as a 'power politics' model of international politics. As Hans Morgenthau (1948) put it, 'Politics is the struggle for power over men, and whatever its ultimate aim may be, power is its immediate goal and the modes of acquiring, maintaining and demonstrating it determine the technique of political action'. It will be recalled that, *Politics Among Nations* (1948) was the first book written by Hans Morgenthau, and it laid a more foundational theoretical framework of realism theory. "*Politics Among Nations* (1948)" book became the most popular, and used book in the United States of America.

According to (Donnelly, 2000), “the theory of power politics is based on two core assumptions, people are essentially selfish and competitive, meaning that egoism is the defining characteristic of human nature”. For the classical realist, a conflict between states, the struggle for power is rooted in human nature (Morgenthau, 1948). Human beings are self-interested and power-seeking, and states as human communities reflect that nature. Coincidentally, the state system operates in a context of international anarchy in that there is no authority higher than the sovereign state. This researcher notes that the realism theory of international relations became visible during the mid-20th century, and this theory came at a time when the dominant theory was idealism. E.H. Carr wrote the first journals and book about realism, and he was a British historian and political scientist.

The focus of Carr was self-interest and the perpetual role of power, and he argues that these two aspects determine the behaviour of the states globally (Carr, 1979). By implication, it is arguable that the catastrophic and disastrous wars that took place from 1939 to 1945, notably known as the 2nd World War, which eventually led to the bipolarity of the international system then, made more scholars focus more on a realistic perspective of international relations. At

this point, it is relevant to mention that, the realist school of thought, whether of the classical or neorealist perspectives, share the foundational assumptions about the state and international system.

They are both empirical theories, and believe that the state is a principal actor, and also a rational actor pursuing national, international interests, and that the distribution of power determines the outcomes (Waltz, 1979). Fundamentally, for the realists, the core assumptions remain the same viz, the international system is anarchic as a factor in conditioning state behaviour and the resort to self-help. The realists, whether classical or neorealist view the states as unitary and rational actors, and would pursue the issue of national security, which is a major concern for states in the international system. Each of these theoretical positions makes an important contribution to our understanding of what realism theory is and what it advocates for, and its assumptions.

Therefore, realism theory is applicable and relevant in this study as it fits perfectly to explain the current war between Ukraine and Russia. Anarchism, lawlessness, and self-help, embedded in the realist perspective, are evident in the current war as Russia decided to invade Ukraine without fear of being held accountable and punished because there is no central authority nor central government to hold states accountable.

Neorealism and its sub-fields, defensive and offensive realism, also perfectly fits and applicable, and relevant to the study because the war between Ukraine and Russia, when viewed in the context of this element of realism, readily justifies that these countries may be defending themselves, or being offended by one another (Manning, 2015). Ultimately, these two countries may also be driven by self-interest, and because there is no international government responsible for holding states accountable, they get to do what they like (Manning, 2015).

#### **3.4 Liberalism theory of international relations.**

The second theory of this research project is the liberalism theory of international relations. Some of the most prominent scholars of liberalism theory are François-Marie Arouet (Voltaire); John Locke; Immanuel Kant; Jean-Jacques Rousseau; Denis Diderot; Jean le Rond d'Alembert; Richard Price; Adam Smith; Antoine Destutt de Tracy; James Mill; Max Weber; and many more. Liberalism is defined as a political ideology that is based on liberty, equality before the law, consent of the governed, the rights of individuals, political equality and the right to private property.



According to Heywood, the assumptions of liberalism theory are individualism, freedom, reason, equality, toleration, consent, and constitutionalism. John Locke argues that human beings have natural rights that must not be violated by anyone, and that government and states are obligated to protect the natural rights of their citizens. John Locke's idea is that of the natural rights of man, meaning individuals should make their own decisions about where and how they live (Heywood, 2013). Liberalism has been the dominant ideological force shaping Western political thought. Heywood for instance, argues that Liberalism in all its form is about harmony and balance of power amongst competing interests, and because states are ruled by individuals and groups, a state may pursue self-interest.

However, some scholars argue that natural equilibrium will tend to assert itself. Heywood further argues that Liberalism came up as the result of the breakdown of feudalism during the previous 300 years. In the view of the liberals, government, by the consent of the governed, gives up some personal freedoms in return for personal security. This is evident from his statement, 'Every man has a property in his own person. This nobody has a right to but himself.' 'Being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty, or possessions.' He advocates for a minimal state as he states that under liberal states, governments have limited powers and, at any time, can be ultimately overthrown by their citizens. Adam Smith, Immanuel Kant, and John Locke are considered the founders of the classical liberalism theory (Heywood, 2013).

Moreover, Mary Wollstonecraft adds that her ideas under classical liberalism are that personal and political freedom should be promoted, including for women. She imagines a social order founded on reason, as men and women are rational beings and capable of self-determination (Wollstonecraft, 2007). Evidence in support of this position can be found in her statement similar to what Betty Friedan said, "The divine right of husbands, like the divine right of kings, may, it is hoped, in this enlightened age, be contested without danger." "Women ought to have representatives, instead of being arbitrarily governed without any direct share allowed them in the deliberations of government." (Wollstonecraft, 2007).

On the other hand, John Stuart Mill (2006) advocates the moral and economic freedoms of individuals from both the government and society. This perspective is encapsulated in the theory of Utilitarianism, wherein, actions should be focused on what benefits the majority (2006). The only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilised community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others. In other words, freedom is

seen as pursuing our own good in our own way, so long as we do not attempt to deprive others of theirs.” (Mill, 2006).

### **3.4.1 Classical Liberalism Theory of International Relations.**

Liberalism, in the classical sense of the word, is a moral and political philosophy, and is built around a core set of ideas, and probably the most important is the recognition that all human beings inherently possess dignity and should be respected (Grant, 2010). According to John Lock, respecting human beings means giving them some space and freedom to pursue their individual plan, purposes, and project (Grant, 2010). This then leads to the next important core of classical liberalism, which is individual liberty, and when both cores are brought together, human dignity and individual liberty inform the liberal notion of justice, which is that all individuals have a duty to respect individual rights of all other people. Also, governments within the liberal tradition have to respect every individual. The above core principles of classical liberalism inform the liberal concepts of equality that in a liberal society, all human beings have equal standing within the society and also before the law (Grant, 2010).

A liberal state is where economic and intellectual progress is the norm because of the radical commitment to openness. Individuals and communities in liberal states flourish because of that openness and also because of the commitment to peace, voluntary engagement, and mutual respect (Baltes, 2016). Lock states that even though people are free under a liberal state, society and communities, the need for the law to protect against the abuse of freedom is necessary, and that is where rules of just conduct come in. Just conduct is liberals’ response to that need, and social norms and formal rules are what constitute just conduct, and these norms and rules allow individuals to cooperate with one another (Baltes, 2016).

Cultural norms that advocate for respect of all cultures of all different ethnic groups lay the foundation of rules of property, and the mutual expectation that expects citizens to keep their promise to one another lays out the foundations of contract. Respect for the integrity of other persons lays the foundations for rules that favour consent over force (Baltes, 2016). Classical liberalism is the oldest theory of international relations, deriving from the work of Adam Smith and David Ricardo, and it was once called idealism before its evolution by different prominent scholars (Seliger, 2019). They were called idealists by realists as they argued that idealism’s core principles and assumptions were just good stories and hopes, meaning impossible to apply and implement in real-life situations. This is because idealists were “too optimistic” about the world, future, and international system.

Moreover, Adam Smith and David Ricardo, under classical liberalism, advocated a free market, democratic politics, securing peace and security and international cooperation. Emmanuel Kant wrote about perpetual peace theory under classical liberalism in his book in 1795, and he argues that a state that chose democracy would always avoid war at all costs. According to him, the theory is anchored on cooperation and peace, because he believed that democratic states rarely arm against each other, and because that is against their political ideology of democracy (Smith, 2018). Classical liberals are deeply rooted in the idea of international travel and world citizenship as that creates a global community and forges partnership and cooperation among states and global citizens.

Classical liberalism became prominent after World War I, as states sought alternative ways to ensure ever-lasting peace and to ensure that war was avoided at all costs. World War I was the deadliest, most disastrous, and biggest war in human history. That took the lives of approximately 60 million civilians, and almost 90 million soldiers were recruited and died during the war (Smith, 2018).

After the World War I in 1919, when The Treaty of Versailles (1919) was signed by Germany and allied Nations to end world war, the focus was on peace, stability, and cooperation between states, and that is when the president of the United States of America (1913), Woodrow Wilson, proposed solutions that formed key core assumptions of classical liberalism (Smith, 2018). The proposed solution by President Wilson was to minimise and avoid war (Smith, 2020). The Treaty of Versailles placed attention to freedom of navigation, adjustment of colonial claims, sovereignty to colonial subjects (National self-determination), commitment to diplomacy, removal of economic barriers, and lastly, disarmament.

He also believed that a balance of power was only achievable through collective security, hence the formation of the League of Nations (Smith, 2018). The key assumptions about actors, according to classical liberals, are that human nature is good in the international system, as they are governed by human beings, that individuals and social groups are key players in the international system, and lastly, that rationality of states is limited to by the context of competing and complementary interests (Smith, 2020).

Furthermore, assumptions about the stated under classical liberalism are that, according to Wilson, states are not unitary, and that domestic competition policy (pluralism) is the effective way for states to avoid war (Fleishhacker, 2009). He added that states are not always really rational, and their interests and preferences change over time. Finally, classical liberals'

assumptions about the international system, are that anarchy in the international system is conditioned that the role of international institutions is anchored on norms and rules, and lastly, that peace, stability, and cooperation in the international system are achievable and possible (Fleishhacker, 2009).

Classic liberals such as Thomas Hobbes, Immanuel Kant, John Locke, Adam Smith, James Harrington, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Voltaire, alongside modern liberals such as John Rawls, Francis Fukuyama, Ronald Dworkin, Amartya Sen, Richard Rorty, as well as Betty Friedan, all agree on the following assumption of liberalism - that state is necessary to reduce conflict; state protect life; liberty and property; state should be tolerant; democratic and a meritocracy and hold foundational equality; and lastly limited government with separation of powers with consent of the people (Smith,1894).

Similarly, Friedan's idea that women should be treated equally to men is an example of the liberal view of foundational equality, in which all people have the same value in society. Her denouncement of marriage is an example of formal equality: women's inequality in the institution of marriage went against liberal views of equality. Friedan's views, therefore, support both classical and modern liberalism's conceptions of equality (1998).

However, they disagree about the state stands for or represents (Smith,1894). Classical liberals see the states as small, or what they call 'nightwatchmen', is there just when things go wrong, to protect, to guide and to make sure that everything is well functioning. But contrary to what modern liberals are saying, which is that, the state is a tool to help citizens to fulfil their potential (enabling state). State to allow maximum opportunity, access to education and equal distribution of wealth (Smith,1894).

Evidence in support of classical liberals can be found in John Rawl's ideas; Rawls defends a more egalitarian liberalism, and argues for access to basic liberties which should be open to all equality of opportunity. His argument is this "A just society is a society that if you knew everything about it, you would be willing to enter it in a random place (Rawls, 1999)." 'Liberal democracy is supposed to ensure that each citizen is free and equal and protected by basic rights and liberties.'" Rawls, 1787. Moreover, liberal thinker Betty Friedan even advocate for more as she seeks equal political and legal rights for women. Friedan further argued that marriage is an outdated institution which fetters women (Rawls, 1999). This is evident from her statement, as she claims to know what women can be when they are finally free to become

themselves.” “A girl should not expect special privileges because of her sex, but neither should she “adjust” to privilege and discrimination” Friedan, 1998).

Meiser argues that liberalism is the defining feature of modern liberalism embedded in the concept called ‘liberal democracy (2018). In his view, liberalism is based on moral arguments that advocate for the right of individuals, liberty, life, and property. Meiser further argued that these are the highest goals of liberal government. Liberal states focus more on establishing institutions that serve and protect the freedom of individuals, and that is done by limiting and checking political power (2018). Liberals argue that a liberal state is not concerned about military or weapons and militaristic foreign policy. This is because military power is effective in influencing and fighting the foreign state. However, the very same military power can be used to oppress civilians and citizens (Meiser, 2018).

Furthermore, Meiser argued that liberal states do not go on wars of territorial expansion and imperialism because, yes, expansionist wars do empower the states and strengthen their territory and influence. And this is often at the expense of the people, taxation and wars which require long-term commitments to military occupation and political control of foreign territory and peoples. All these occupation and control require large bureaucracies that have an interest in maintaining or expanding the occupation of foreign territory (2018). Liberal states focus on institutional checks, and that is done by making sure that they hold free and fair elections (Meiser, 2018).

Moreover, liberalism is embedded and enshrined in democratic peace theory. Democratic peace theory assumes that it is impossible for democratic states to go to war with one another. The assumption here is that democratic states do not fight each other, and according to Meiser, it is highly unlikely. This is because democratic states see one another as legal, legitimate, and unthreatening because of the same political ideology being used, and the possibility and probability of cooperation is highly likely to prosper and prevail (2018). The current international system was established after the second world war, and embodies the principles and core values of liberalism theory.

The international institutions, organisations, norms, expected behaviours, multinational corporations (MNCs), government, non-governmental organisations and big firms are the result of the liberal international system. This was done to minimise and distribute state power evenly in the international system to forge and force cooperation, peace, stability, and collective goals (Smith, 1996).

Adam Smith on his part, argued that even international law is built on the principles of liberalism theory, as a war of aggression is prohibited. The world order is built and established on liberal views as it forces international cooperation, democracy, the rule of law, and human rights. The spreading of capitalism and free trade through international organisations like the World Trade Organization, World Bank, and International Monetary Fund. All these international organisations are established to open the market and promote the international economic system (1996).

Liberalism argues that states may pursue self-interest, but a natural equilibrium will tend to assert itself. At a deeper level, competing interests complement one another; conflict is never irreconcilable. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the liberal paradigm is not clearly distinct from realism, as both of them share certain mainstream assumptions about how international politics work (Smith, 1996). The difference, nevertheless, is that liberals assume that competition within the international system is conducted within a larger framework of harmony. This inclines liberals to believe in internationalism, or multilateralism (Smith, 1996).

### **3.5 Neoliberalism**

Neo-liberalism is a sub-field of classical liberalism, even as prominent scholars of new liberalism tend to differ a bit when it comes to the core assumptions of classical liberalism. The prominent scholars include UK Prime Minister between 1975 to 1990, Margaret Thatcher; Ronald Reagan; Alan Greenspan; Milton Friedman; Friedrich Hayek; Ludwig von Mises; and James M. Buchanan. Neoliberalism is the theory that focuses on the economic affairs of states and seeks to promote capitalism, private ownership and enterprise and free market trade. Scholars argue that the economy should be in the hands of the private sector, and advocate for minimal states and little government intervention, if any (Manning, 2022).

Liberalism is the political philosophy that advocates for liberty, individualism, rights, freedom, consent, and equality. Friedman argues that neoliberalism seeks to stimulate the global economies of the states as it advocates for competition, individual responsibility, free enterprise, deregulation, free market capitalism, a decrease in union power, lower taxes, and a boost of the private sector (Manning, 2022). While neoliberalism is an economic ideology, it focuses on the market and economy. Government intervention in any sphere is discouraged, no intervention in economic activity, and the government is only present to protect everyone and make sure everything runs smoothly (Manning, 2022).

Classical liberalism, when it comes to the international system, never addresses the question of anarchy, in the view of Buchanan While neoliberalism accepts that the international system is anarchic, however, that is not the reason why states go to war (Wagner,2017). Neoliberals raise an important question, and that is, if the war in the international system is caused by the existence of anarchy, then why are wars not happening often? Neoliberals believe more in cooperation and in international institutions as peacemakers (Buchanan, 1874). Classical liberals argue that human nature and self-interest in the international system are also the cause of war and conflict. Neoliberals agree on the existence of human nature; however strongly believe that through international institutions, cooperation can outweigh human nature and force cooperation, peace, and stability (Buchanan, 1874).

Neoliberals believe that states and institutions are the most important actors in the global political system, and that the states in the international system are rational actor. By contrast, classical liberals argue that the individual is at the centre of states and global politics (Buchanan, 1874). The orientation and analysis of classical liberals tend to be philosophical and historical, and on the other hand, neoliberals' analysis is more of game theoretic and ahistorical.

### **3.6 Relevance of Liberalism to the study.**

Liberalism theory of international relations is relevant, applicable, and best fits the study based on its assumptions and arguments offered by its prominent scholars. It is without doubt that liberalism's core assumptions are deeply embedded, embodied, and enshrined in democracy. The understanding of the theory by the researcher, is that all democratic states are liberal states; they embrace the core values and assumptions of the liberalism theory of international relations. The international actors involved in the Ukraine-Russia war claim that they are democratic and liberal states (Manning, 2022). However, it seems that they only apply the core values of democracy and liberalism when it suits them. Russia is by far not a liberal state but a communist state but continues to embrace its diverse culture, traditions, morals, and principles (Manning, 2022). This means that not all democratic states are liberal, which contradicts some assumptions of liberals.

Furthermore, liberals argue that one of the core values of liberalism is equality, and it seems that in the international system, equality, human rights, and respect are non-existent concepts, yet the international system is deemed "liberal", and as a result, cooperation, peace and stability is unachievable (Fawcett, 2014). According to Fawcett (2014), Liberalism theory advocates

for international institutions as the bridge to cooperation and peace. However, it is the view of this researcher that the current institutions (non-state actors) are not credible as they have tended to take sides in every situation of international concern. Liberals believe in diplomacy, dialogue, and mediation as the way to avoid wars and conflicts, contrary to what the USA is doing; instead of encouraging diplomacy and dialogues between the two countries, the USA supports Ukraine and supplies it with weapons for Ukraine to defect Russia, and that is not being liberal at all (Fawcett, 2014). The agreement that NATO officials made that NATO would not move eastwards of Russia and Europe was broken, as most countries in the east of Russia are members of NATO, and dishonesty is against the core values of liberalism theory (Fawcett, 2014).

Moreover, the analysis of classical liberals in trying to understand the event is historical and philosophical. The history of Russia and Ukraine is well known, and these two states were once one under the political state of the USSR (Hobhouse, 1964). Tolerance is what liberals advocate for, and Russia is a communist state, totally opposite of the liberal and capitalist state of America, the West, and all actors involved in this conflict (Hobhouse, 1964). The USA and the West, through NATO, supply weapons to Ukraine, encouraging the war and escalating the atrocities and destruction. NATO destroys its credibility by taking sides instead of being neutral and encouraging diplomacy and cooperation to solve the war and bring about peace and stability for both countries and for international because many states are negatively affected by the war (Hobhouse, 1964).

Liberals argue that international institutions are the pillar of the international system for peace, cooperation, and stability and that liberal states would not seek hegemony in the international system, as all other states would gather and come together against one another to prevent it from being too powerful (Freeden, 2015). This claim by liberal may not be entirely true after all, especially when viewed against the war between Russia and Ukraine, where the United States of America is allowed to enjoy full hegemony in the international system. One of the values of liberalism is respect for sovereignty, and the USA, being a democratic and liberal state, has by its actions, tacitly supported the invasion of states by its allies, and even contributing troops to fight internal battles of independent states (Freeden, 2015).

Evidence to support the claims that the USA enjoys hegemony in the international system is the military intervention in Afghanistan (2001–2021), American intervention in the War in North-West Pakistan (2004–2018), American military intervention in Niger (2013–present);



American intervention in Libya (2015–2019), American-led intervention in Iraq (2014–2021) and lastly the intervention of USA troops in Libya (2011).

The above military interventions by the United States of America demonstrate hegemony and that no international institution or other democratic and liberal states have made attempts to call out, and hold the USA accountable for all war crimes committed in violation of other states' sovereignty (Freeden, 2015). Lastly, self-determination is also one of the values espoused by liberalism, and even enshrined in the Charter of the United Nation. In pursuit of this principle, the September 2022 Crimean status referendum demonstrated that about 96.77% of the Crimean population wanted to be part of Russia, as they voted in favour of being United with Mother Russia. In response, the Western leaders, including the USA and NATO, deemed the results illegal and immediately sanctioned Russia, contrary to what international law says about self-determination.

The right to self-determination is embedded and enshrined in international law; however, the West, NATO and the USA went against it. This act, believed to be a double-standard in the international system, has been of concern to scholars and analysts, and criticisms around it keep raging but without any hope of reversal. However, it is the considered view of this researcher that, the liberalism theory continues to be relevant, in view of its features, as pointed out in the foregoing studies. Consequently, its relevance to the present study is acknowledged.

For this researcher, regardless of whether it is classical or neo-liberal, the underlying assumption of the theory lays in its pursuit of democratic ideals, and these manifest in “*liberty, equality before the law, consent of the governed, the rights of individuals, political equality and the right to private property*”. Conceptually, Heywood posits that the “assumptions of liberalism theory are individualism, freedom, reason, equality, toleration, consent, and constitutionalism”. Just like the realists, the liberals' position on what may have prompted and or triggered the invasion of Ukraine by Russia, and its aftermath of the polarization of their respective allies, reinforces the protection of what is regarded as the national interests of the State actors and their multilateral non-state actors, working towards the same objectives.

### **3.7 Conclusion**

In this chapter, the researcher presented the two theories considered applicable to underpin the study, and provided insights into each theory stands for, as espoused by affiliated proponents.

The researcher also highlighted the relevance of both theories, and how they could serve as basis for the study. The next chapter is dedicated to the presentation and analysis of data; and the discussion of the findings that emerged in the course of presentation. The researcher compartmentalized the next chapter into two sections in line with the methodology adopted.

## **Chapter Four**

### **4.0 Presentation of data and Discussion of findings**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part deals with the presentation of the data generated for the study, and the findings that emerged from the collated data in terms of themes. The findings are therefore highlighted thematically for purposes of analysis. The second part deals with discussion of findings, in which case, the emerging themes of points of convergence in the opinions and views of the identified scholars are matched against the study research questions to determine how much they correlate. This section essentially and primarily relies on the researchers' synthesised views and opinions of scholars, writers and public affairs analysts on the seemingly interminable Russian/Ukrainian war, which has spanned over two years as at the time of this study.

It is relevant to point out that the entire data generated for analysis in this chapter are basically from secondary sources, thereby making it a desktop study. In this section, the researcher pointed out the experiences against which the researcher contended and the measures taken to overcome what could be regarded as challenges. These include, among other factors, the unavailability of published books, from which tested and verifiable facts could have been provided. Perhaps, the fact that the war is still on may serve as a valid excuse for this challenge. Other challenges relate to uncontrollable issues of time and resources against which the researcher had to contend.

In the previous chapter – chapter three specifically, the study highlighted and presented the theories considered applicable for the research, and the researcher carefully dissected the inherent features of the theories, and how they can be applied to underpin the study. The chapter concludes by providing insights into the issues for discussion and how they are organised under the respective sub-headings. Specifically, the chapter highlighted and operationalised the process for dealing with the data generated for the study. In this section, the researcher presented of the study findings, and meticulously noted the common standpoints

or themes which came out prominently in the reviewed publications and documents, and these will be critically considered under discussion of findings in the second part, with the view to demonstrating how the various findings address the study research questions.

## **4.2 Data Analysis/Presentation Procedure**

As proposed and indicated in chapter one, the study sought to use the thematic (otherwise known as the content analysis) approach to present the findings as obtainable from the literature accessed. Thematic analysis is defined as a strategy for identifying, investigating and reporting patterns within data (Braun and Clarke, 2006; 79). The reason for the adoption of thematic data analysis method is that, it is characterized by more open, tentative, intuitive and more focused on ‘meaning units’ that are meaningfully described by the participants. It also provides a flexible and clear source of data corpus and rich and detailed interpretation and reporting.

Again, thematic analysis allows for flexibility, whereby the researcher shall be able to provide interpretations of data in the simplest mode. Thematic analysis is essentially, a method of analyzing qualitative data. It is usually applied to a set of texts, such as an interview or transcripts. The researcher closely examines the data to identify common themes – topics, ideas and patterns of meaning that come up repeatedly. Through this flexibility, thematic analysis allows for rich, detailed and complex description of a particular data.

Accordingly, that is what has to be done in this chapter. Interestingly, the researcher was able to extract some useful content in the course of interactions with senior colleagues, whose have informed knowledge of global politics. Such views were meant to be reflected as a part of the processed data in this chapter.

This Chapter is organised around the research questions coded Q1-Q4 as posed in the chapter one of this study, and they are as follows for the purpose of easy recollection and to serve as a reminder -

- Q1. What are the roles and positions of different players in Ukraine-Russia war?
- Q2. What are the strengths and weakness of those position on Ukraine-Russia war?
- Q3. What are the implications and potential of those positions of different players on building peace between Ukraine and Russia?

Q4. What is the impact of the war on Africa's relations with the East and the West?

#### 4.3 Emerging themes from the accessed and cited literature

For the purposes of easy classification, the researcher has categorized the findings that emerged from the literature reviewed for the study into two groups, viz views on State Actors; and on Non-State Actors, as expressed by the identified scholars for this study. By State Actors, this study refers to countries that are either a protagonist, or antagonist in the context of the warring parties – Russia and Ukraine, and these comprise Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (called the BRICS); The United States of America, China, Belarus, and the countries in Africa, together with others in Latin America and Asian continents; while the Non-State Actors comprise the European Union (EU); North Atlantic Treaty Organization; International Criminal Court; Human Rights Council; United Nations (UN), the International Criminal Court (ICC), etc.

- On State Actors, scholars of the literature reviewed put forward suggestions on what they believe may have driven their affiliations and solidarity, and their level of support to their favoured side in the war. At this point, it must be noted that, in the contemporary international system, issues of national interests, which form the bases for countries foreign policies, often serve as determinants of how countries react to developments beyond their borders. In most cases, factors of security, territorial integrity and economics tend to be prominent, and for which countries could go to war.

This implies that, every nation-state is ever ready to become an aggressor if it feels for instance, that its sovereign integrity or security has been breached, and would take measures towards resistance regardless of what the outcomes might be. This perspective, in the opinion of the researcher, can be advanced for the decision of Russia to embark on the invasion of Ukraine in the first place. However, this position may be in collusion with the perspective of the place of international law which prohibits any form of aggression by a nation state against another. Arguments in this regard will be reserved for another research engagement.

- On the factor of territorial integrity cum security, certain of the scholars (Raj and Sigh, 2023) for instance, proceeding from the Realist School of Thought, submit thus, ***“that the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war is a reminder that when superpowers think their vital security concerns and national interests are threatened, they may act in awful and irresponsible ways”***. Other scholars who align with this position include for

instance (Mearsheimer, 2014), who puts forward the view that – the "West's triple package of policies - NATO enlargement, EU expansion, and democracy promotion" and in doing so they have neglected the core strategic interest of Russia and generated a feeling of 'security dilemma.’”

(MacKay, 2022), who argues that “*Russia invaded Ukraine because of national security and defence. Mackay states that Ukraine has a huge province that is dominated by Russians (Russian-pro), and that is why Russia wants Ukraine and also because of strong symbolic and historical history and because of strong nationalism between the citizens of these two countries*”. It is worth mentioning that, consistent with the Realist perspective of international system is the strongly held view that "*States should maximize power, and their ultimate goal should be hegemony because that is the best way to guarantee survival*".

In this context therefore, the aggressive invasion by Russian of the Ukrainian territory can be viewed and argued to have resulted from what it considers an affront on its territorial integrity by Ukraine, for concretizing its desire to align with the West by joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), an occurrence which Russia would neither accept nor tolerate. Expectedly, the Russian attack of Ukraine triggered an upset in the power configuration in Europe, thereby leading to two major different positions by some European countries, becoming either protagonists or antagonists of the belligerent parties (Russia & Ukraine). The third different position is that assumed by several countries outside of Europe, but particularly in Africa. A position that has been described as non-alignment, a concept which became famous after the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War following the bipolarity of the world system oscillating between the United States of America and the defunct Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).

**In reaction to the study’s research question 1, (Q1)** on - What are the roles and positions of different players in Ukraine-Russia war? It is relevant to point out that several of the European countries, and those multilateral organizations identified in chapter one of the current study, which are aligned with the West, will naturally pitch their tents with Ukraine against Russia. In doing this, they seek to identify with, project and promote the principles of liberal democracy and the entronement of human rights, which are non-existent and or allowed in autocratic societies associated with Russia, China, North Korea, etc.

This aligns with the view of Mearsheimer (2014), that the pro-West countries, and the USA being the leading light, together with non-states actors such as the ICC, UN, and NATO, etc,

are inclined to support and advance such interests as – “the expansion of liberal democracy, western imperialism, domination, imposed global order and the total collapse of Russia's economy, weakening of Russia's military weaponry and reducing Russia's power as a superpower country”.

- **In reaction to research question 2, (Q2)**, which is, - What are the strengths and weakness of those position on Ukraine-Russia war? Scholars’ views on the strengths and weaknesses of the allies on both sides of the divide, as evidenced from the reviewed literature, revolve around the abilities of both the protagonists (supporters of Russia), and antagonists (supporters of Ukraine) to provide `needed military and financial aids for the prosecution of the war. It is interesting to note that, while the antagonists of the Russian invasion have openly and clearly demonstrated support in terms of military and financial aids, the protagonists of the invasion have not only chosen to be obscure, they have also attempted to deny providing any form of support, but rather assuming the status of mediators and engaging in making persuasive appeals to the belligerent parties to sheath their swords, deescalate and settle for the diplomatic options towards peace.

For instance, North Korea and a few other allies, have constantly denied supplying unapproved ballistic missiles and weapons in aid to Russia, to avoid recrimination and condemnation from West. Invariably, the strengths and weaknesses of the differing positions on the war are determined by the respective military and economic capabilities of the allies on both sides of the divide. This scenario, will no doubt, no only escalate the horizon of the war, it will also lead to widespread and extensive destructions on target sites.

- **In reaction to research question 3, (Q3)**, which is - What are the implications and potential of those positions of different players on building peace between Ukraine and Russia? Findings from the reviewed literature lay entirely on what the interests of both the protagonists and antagonists are, in terms of ideological, security, territorial and economic concerns. For those who rely heavily on Russia for their military and economic needs for instance, there will always be the tendency to retain loyalty, to avoid any form of disruptions. For the African continent, while the principle of non-alignment seems to be what is openly canvassed, countries have tended to show some level of solidarity with either of the warring parties for their interests. For example, Fabricius (2023) revealed that “*there are also African countries that secretly pledge*

*their full support and loyalty to Russia for various reasons*". He is of the opinion that Russia, being one of the world's largest military giants, with armed mercenary groups and a private military is a sure bet for military assistance. According to him, it is important to note that some of the countries in Africa are politically unstable as a result of their fragile political evolution and circumstances. Besides, the resurgence of terrorists, bandits and armed groups against or sometimes in support of the governments, particularly in Sahel region of Africa, has become a huge challenge.

Fabricius contends that *"leaders in politically unstable countries strongly rely on military assistance to stabilize the country, bring control, and defeat armed groups or terrorists (Fabricius, 2023)"*. On the economic front, the implications and potentials of the positions of the players in the war are leave much to be desired. In this regard, Fabricius had opined that *"the Russia-Ukraine war continues to affect the global supply of food networks and oil in all those countries in Africa that depend hugely on both countries"*. This is because, most African countries depend on grain from both countries, and the war has affected the food network. As a result, some African states have tended to associate themselves with Western powers for greener pastures, thereby calling to question the claim of non-alignment or neutrality status being taunted.

For ideological concerns, such the defence of democracy and capitalism, the Western powers, of which the USA is playing a frontal role, will unhesitantly move in favour of one of their own, in which case is Ukraine. It will be recalled that Ukraine had formally, and subsequently absorbed into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a development which triggered the invasion of the country by Russia, thus leading to the war that has spanned over two years, and still ongoing. Expectedly, when it comes to roles played by different countries, it is on record that *"the West, the United States of America and the majority of European Union member states have significantly supported and given Ukraine military weapons to fight Russia"*. In this regard, *"it is estimated that over the value of \$100 billion in military assistance has been provided to Ukraine, and others decided to impose sanctions against Russia as their way of condemning the invasion"* (Haddad, 2023).

- **In reaction to research question 4, (Q4)**, which is, - What is the impact of the war on Africa's relations with the East and the West? Scholars noted the differing positions of the countries in Africa on the Russian/Ukrainian war, and provided insights into the countries fared in their reactions. For instance, a notable South African scholar

in his report had noted the status and the different positions taken by different African countries in the Russia-Ukraine war. He argues that at first, “most African countries took a non-alignment stance on the Russian-Ukraine war, as African leaders thought it had no bearing on their material interests or peace and security in the continent (Mathekga, 2023). In giving flesh to this view, the scholar gave a report of a proceeding at the United Nations, where on March 2022, during the United Nations resolution vote meeting, out of 54 African countries, only twenty-eight countries voted in support of the UN resolution to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and Seventeen African countries voted to abstain – including South Africa, Algeria and Angola – and eight countries did not submit a vote (Mathekga, 2023)”. While the Russian/Ukrainian war is, and conceived purely as an European affair, the interdependence and interconnectivity of the international system is such that no country can be totally immune from the ripple effects of war.

This view may have provided a basis for the opinion of Mathekga, who disclosed that “Western powers have pushed and demanded African countries to respond in the name of a "global response" to all atrocities and human rights violations committed by Russia in Ukraine, in spite of the distance between the two continents. Besides, Mathekga is also of the opinion that the "non-alignment" position of certain African countries, as expressed in the voting pattern at the UN, was the shield for African countries to avoid being used as a proxy in the war to fight Western powers or to fight Russia (Mathekga, 2023). The implication of this is that, no country in the global arena can exist in isolation of the other, as every country is dependent on the other one way or another. However, each independent country has the sovereign right to determine how it will relate with others, and such interactions are determined by the what is considered a national interest for the country.

In a nutshell, the following themes have been carefully distilled from the critically reviewed literature, and will be discussed in relation to the study research questions. These include, among others –

#### **4.4 Summary of Themes**

- The maintenance of the status quo, to sustain nationalistic and ideological orientations;
- To guarantee territorial integrity and protecting geo-strategic and security concerns;
- The need to protect economic interest.



- The desire to ensure the sustenance of international peace by concerned state outside of Europe.

In section one above, the researcher has attempted to highlight the themes as distilled from the findings that emerged from the reviewed literature sourced for the study. The themes will be used in the second section below under discussion of findings. The essence of this exercise is to match the themes against the study research questions, to determine what the ultimate direction the research will assume.

#### **4.5 Discussion of Findings**

#### **4.6 Introduction**

According to Hess (2004), the “discussion of findings” chapter in graduate research is aimed at explaining the meaning of the results of the study and includes the major findings, significance of the findings and how the findings best relate to the research questions posed for the study. In a nutshell, the purpose of the discussion of findings chapter, especially in a Master’s degree level such as this, may also be to collate the research findings and demonstrate the researchers' ability to think critically about issues for advancing creative solutions to the research problems as pointed out by Paltridge and Starfield (2011); Aitchison (2010); Cotterall, (2011).

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005), discussing and interpreting data means linking the findings to the original research problem, specific research objectives and questions, the literature and theories. Accordingly, this section is determined to subject the findings or results that emerged from the collation and presentation of data generated from all the reviewed literature for this study as is done below here. It is worth mentioning that the entire data for this study were sourced from secondary sources as have been indicated and highlighted in section one above, and also in chapter one of the study.

Ab initio, this study set out to address the following research questions:

- Q1. What are the roles and positions of different players in Ukraine-Russia war?
- Q2. What are the strengths and weakness of those position on Ukraine-Russia war?
- Q3. What are the implications and potential of those positions of different players on building peace between Ukraine and Russia?

Q4. What is the impact of the war on Africa's relations with the East and the West?

As presented in section one above, the following are the findings/themes that were generated and distilled, among others, from the reviewed literature for this study –

- The maintenance of the status quo, to sustain nationalistic and ideological orientations;
- To guarantee territorial integrity and protecting geo-strategic and security concerns;
- The need to protect both military and economic interest.
- The desire to ensure the sustenance of international peace by concerned state outside of Europe.

#### 4.7 **Marching Study Theories against Research questions.**

The procedure for discussion of findings in this section will be by drawing attention to, and adopting the findings which emerged from the reviewed literature as presented in section one above, together with the themes distilled from the findings. This section will be principally concerned with recalling the theories originally proposed for the study, which are *realism and liberalism*, as suggested by the researcher, and highlighting their inherent attributes. In this section, the researcher tries to represent and explain the two theories of international relations, and proceed to point out their relevance to this study.

For the realists, “*global politics is, first and last, about power and self-interest*”. In the opinion of this researcher, this is why it is often portrayed as a 'power politics' model of international politics. As Hans Morgenthau (1948) put it, 'Politics is the struggle for power over men, and whatever its ultimate aim may be, power is its immediate goal and the modes of acquiring, maintaining and demonstrating it determine the technique of political action'. It will be recalled that, *Politics Among Nations* (1948) was the first book written by Hans Morgenthau, and it laid a more foundational theoretical framework of realism theory. "*Politics Among Nations* (1948)" book became the most popular, and used book in the United States of America.

According to (Donnelly, 2000), “*the theory of power politics is based on two core assumptions, people are essentially selfish and competitive, meaning that egoism is the defining characteristic of human nature*”. For the classical realist, a conflict between states, the struggle for power is rooted in human nature (Morgenthau, 1948). Human beings are self-interested and power-seeking, and states as human communities reflect that nature. Coincidentally, the state system operates in a context of international anarchy in that there is

no authority higher than the sovereign state. This researcher notes that the realism theory of international relations became visible during the mid-20th century, and this theory came at a time when the dominant theory was idealism. E.H. Carr wrote the first journals and book about realism, and he was a British historian and political scientist.

The focus of Carr was self-interest and the perpetual role of power, and he argues that these two aspects determine the behaviour of the states globally (Carr, 1994). By implication, it is arguable that the catastrophic and disastrous wars that took place from 1939 to 1945, notably known as the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, which eventually led to the bipolarity of the international system then, made more scholars focus more on a realistic perspective of international relations. At this point, it is relevant to mention that, the realist school of thought, whether of the classical or neorealist perspectives, share the foundational assumptions about the state and international system. They are both empirical theories, and believe that the state is a principal actor, and also a rational actor pursuing national, international interests, and that the distribution of power determines the outcomes (Waltz, 1979).

Fundamentally, for the realists, the core assumptions remain the same viz, the international system is anarchic as a factor in conditioning state behaviour and the resort to self-help. The realists, whether classical or neorealist view the states unitary and rational actors, and would pursue the issue of national security, which is a major concern for states in the international system.

With the above attributes of the theory of realism, the researcher proceeds to march the themes extracted from the findings against the research questions to determine if the questions have been addressed or not. **In reacting to the research question one, which is, “*what are the roles and positions of different players in Ukraine-Russia war?*”** the themes/findings in section one above relating particularly to the - *maintenance of the status quo; to sustain nationalistic and ideological orientations; and the need to guarantee territorial integrity and protecting geo-strategic and security concerns of the Nation States*, provide insights into why the State actors react the way they did, and often would do.. This is because, every sovereign Nation-state will respond to any development that has an undesirable impact on its national interest, in a way that it considers appropriate, which may include among others, the decision to go to war.

There is no gainsaying the fact that the decision of Russia to invade Ukraine may be validly predicated on these factors as expressed in the themes as highlighted above. Expectedly, all

Russian allies, and or protagonists will normally move to identify and solidarize with it, an act which reflects the principle of collective security. On the other hand, those opposed to the invasion will also confederate to put up a resistance, and in this instance, Ukraine, being the victim/defender, and those States and Non-State entities standing up in defence and support of it. What stands out in this regard has to do with the protection of geo-strategic and security interest of Russia, in addition to the preservation of its ideological and nationalistic fervours of communism/Marxist sentiments. Russian finds it discomforting to have Ukraine, an old ally and a former republic-colleague under the umbrella of the defunct Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, to be aligned or joined with the “enemy camp” which the West, and its allies, represent. On the other hand, the West, led by the United States of America, in alliance with its pro-Western values European States, and allied Non-State Actors, such as NATO, EU, ICC, etc, standing in defence of democratic societies; promotion of the rule of law; respect for human rights, etc, thereby portraying Russia and its allies as autocratic, dictatorial and promoters of repression.

For the liberalists, the basic assumptions of the theory are individualism, freedom, reason, equality, toleration, consent, and constitutionalism (Heywood, 2013). By definition, liberalism is described as a political ideology that is based on liberty, equality before the law, consent of the governed, the rights of individuals, political equality and the right to private property (Heywood, 2013). Scholars, whose writings are believed to advance liberalism ideology include among others, François-Marie Arouet (Voltaire), John Locke, English, Immanuel Kant, German, Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Heywood affirms that Liberalism has been the dominant ideological force shaping Western political thought, and that the theory, in all its form, is about harmony and balance of power amongst competing interests, and because states are ruled by individuals and groups, a state may pursue self-interest. However, scholars argue that natural equilibrium will tend to assert itself. Heywood argues that liberalism came up as the result of the breakdown of feudalism during the previous 300 years (Heywood, 2013).

For this researcher, regardless of whether it is classical or neo-liberal, the underlying assumption of the theory lays in its pursuit of democratic ideals, and these manifest in “*liberty, equality before the law, consent of the governed, the rights of individuals, political equality and the right to private property*”. Conceptually, Heywood posits that the “assumptions of liberalism theory are individualism, freedom, reason, equality, toleration, consent, and constitutionalism”. Just like the realists, the liberals’ position on what may have prompted and or triggered the invasion of Ukraine by Russia, and its aftermath of the polarization of their

respective allies, reinforces the protection of what is regarded as the national interests of the State actors and their multilateral non-state actors, working towards the same objectives.

**For research question 2, (Q2), which is – “what are the strengths and weakness of those positions on Ukraine-Russia war”?** As noted by scholars in the literature review section, the strengths and weaknesses of the allies on both sides of the divide, revolve around the abilities of both the protagonists (supporters of Russia), and antagonists (supporters of Ukraine) to provide `needed military and financial aids for the prosecution of the war. In the light of this submission therefore, and in reference to the realists’ and liberalists’ propositions on the nature of the international system, conceived to be anarchical, sand the need for both self and national preservation, every nation state will prioritize increased military capabilities, and will not hesitate to solidarize with other friendly nation state in the event of any form aggression. Consequently, and as the researcher indicated in section one, the strengths and weaknesses of the differing positions on the war are determined by the respective military and economic capabilities of the allies on both sides of the divide. This scenario, will no doubt, no only escalate the horizon of the war, it will also lead to widespread and extensive destructions on target sites.

**For research question 3 (Q3), which is – “*what are the implications and potential of those positions of different players on building peace between Ukraine and Russia*”?** The desire to ensure the sustenance of international peace by both the protagonists and antagonists, and those who claim to be non-aligned, and particularly the African countries, remains sacrosanct. Unfortunately, more than two years since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the aftermath, in terms of deaths and destruction of human infrastructure, can only be better imagined. A dimension of the war which has provoked global outrage is the breach in the conduct of the war, with no regard to the rule of engagement. This breach is such that missile strikes by the warring parties have resulted into the death of innocent souls, comprising mainly children and women, who are never armed. More worrisome is the failure of the United Nations, whose major responsibility is the maintenance of international peace, to reign in on the belligerent parties.

Analysts have attributed this failure on the part of the world body to its unequalled composition structure, manifesting in its geo-political unrepresentativeness. Besides, the “powers’ that control the structure and operations of the organization have not provided the leeway to challenge the status quo, which is sustained by the application of veto powers by a few

members of the body, who clearly possess both the military and economic capabilities to repress any form of resistance. Any friction between these “powers” can only be executed to the disadvantage of the entire global system, in which case, other member states of the organization can only just ally to either of any warring super powers, or adopt the principle of non-alignment in principle.

**For research question 4, (Q4), which is, “*what is the impact of the war on Africa’s relations with the East and the West*”?** Scholars noted the differing positions of the countries in Africa on the Russian/Ukrainian war, and provided insights into how far the countries have fared in their reactions. For instance, a notable South African scholar in his report had noted the statuses and the different positions taken by different African countries in the Russia-Ukraine war, arguing that at first, “most African countries took a non-alignment stance on the Russian-Ukraine war, as African leaders thought it had no bearing on their material interests or peace and security in the continent (Mathekga, 2023). It is a widely held view, and incontrovertibly so, that the interconnectedness of the international system is such that, no country or nation state within the global community can operate in isolation, and or be immune from happenings anywhere and around the world.

Consequently, the Russian/Ukrainian war will not cease to reverberate in all the regions of the global community, although with differing magnitudes, and depending on the respective capabilities of each country, in terms of technological, military and economic resources. Unfortunately, the impact of the war on African countries’ relations with the “West and East” manifest clearly in the nature of the relationships that had existed between their former European colonial powers, which is that of dependency, and this has continued till date, except for a few changes in certain areas. A notable instance is the political sovereignty of these former colonial territories, which has made it possible for these countries to exercise some inalienable rights in the making of decisions on global shared issues. Thus, the evolution of the principle of non-alignment or mediated neutrality, whereby countries can either give or decline support on global issues.

However, the extent of the operations of this principle is limited by the fact of the interdependence of the international system on the basis of unequal possession of both human and material resources, thus making the dependency syndrome inevitable. In this regard, the relevance of the theories of realism and liberalism lay in their prescriptions of pursuit of interests by nation states or countries in an anarchical international environment where the

sense of survival is real; and the sovereign right to liberty, political equality and property ownership respectively. The implications arising from this reality include, among other factors, the fact that the respective elements of the theories, such as the pursuit for power, as associated with the realists; and the pursuit of liberty, political freedom and equality and the right to own property, etc, realistically serve to underpin the reasons nation states or countries decide which actions to take in response to developments external, and capable of injuring or helping their interests.

The war between Ukraine and Russia does not hold any barring with regard to Africa's relations with the East and the West, as the majority of African leaders abstained and took a non-alignment position in the UN meetings (Khadiagala, 2023). Despite the pressure from both sides (East and West) to force African countries to choose sides, they remain non-aligned. Even though the majority of African countries chose a non-alignment position, they continued to be in solidarity with Ukraine and Russia (Khadiagala, 2023). This is evident as at the end of 2022, in the diplomatic meeting held in Russia, Seven African countries were chosen to launch the African Peace initiative.

These seven countries were selected because they are leading economies in Africa, and among the selected are South Africa, Senegal, Uganda, Zambia, Comoros, Congo-Brazzaville and Egypt. South Africa, led by President Cyril Ramaphosa, led the initiative and visited Ukraine and Russia as part of condemning the violence (Khadiagala, 2023).

### **The Impact of the Ukraine War on Africa's Economy.**

The negative consequences of the Ukraine-Russia war on Africa's economy are enormous and catastrophic to some African countries. To make a compelling example, Tanzania, Egypt, Sudan, Benin, Djibouti and Eritrea import more than 70% of their wheat from Ukraine and Russia (Khadiagala, 2023). The blockage of the supply chain as Russia controls the black sea, where Ukraine ships their wheat and other commodities. It is reported that Russia's invasion of Ukraine caused a shortage of about 30 million tons of grains and an insane increase in cost.

As a result of the Ukraine-Russia war, some African countries faced economic hardships because of the energy prices (oil and gas) going up and also disruption of food systems, worsening food insecurity. African Development Bank reported that the above-mentioned African countries spent over \$72 Billion to just import 100 metric tons of cereals in 2020. According to (Khadiagala, 2023), 15 African countries depend mainly on Russia and Ukraine

for fuel, fertilizers and food; as of 2022, they imported 50% of Wheat from the two countries at war.

#### **4.8 Conclusion**

This chapter consists of two sections. In section one, the researcher dealt with the presentation of the data generated for the study, and the findings that emerged from the collated data in terms of themes. The findings are therefore highlighted thematically for purposes of analysis. This section essentially and primarily relies on the researchers' synthesised views and opinions of scholars, writers and public affairs analysts on the seemingly interminable Russian/Ukrainian war, which has spanned over two years as at the time of this study.

The second part dealt with discussion of findings, in which case, the emerging themes of points of convergence in the opinions and views of the identified scholars are matched against the theories adopted for the study, in order to be able to respond to the research questions posed in chapter one of the study. The next chapter, being the last chapter of the study, is planned to contain a summary of the chapters; summary of the findings/themes; conclusive remarks and recommendations, after which the study will be concluded, and most likely with remarks on possible future research engagements in yet uncharted but related areas.

### **Chapter Five**

#### **5.0 Summary of Findings, Conclusion and Recommendation**

##### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the summary of findings, conclusion and recommendations of the study, based on the interpretation given to the findings discussed in Chapter Four. As suggested by the Hamilton College Writing Centre (2015), the purpose of the concluding chapter in graduate research, is to bring a researcher's argument to a logical close, by justifying the argument to the reader(s). It includes a description of key points of the study, and the consequences of the argument, by answering the "so what" questions. Accordingly, this chapter provides a summary of the entire chapters into which this study was compartmentalized, beginning from chapter one to chapter four. It also contains concluding remarks derived from the results that emerged after juxtaposing the analysed data generated against the research questions posed in



chapter one. The chapter ends with recommendations which acknowledged the possibility and propositions for further studies on themes that arose in the course of the research.

The researcher had proposed to interrogate the under listed research questions with a view to achieving the aim of the study which is – *seeking to examine the strengths and weaknesses of the different positions of international players in relation to the Russian-Ukraine war.*

The questions included the following –

- Q1, What are the roles and positions of different players in the Ukraine-Russia war?
- Q2, What strengths and weaknesses of the roles and positions of different players in the Ukraine-Russia war towards peacebuilding and stability?
- Q3, What are the implications and the potential of those positions of different players on peacebuilding and stability between Russia and Ukraine?
- Q4, What is the impact of the Ukraine-Russia war on Africa's relations with the East and the West?

In order to give effect to this exercise, the researcher decided to compartmentalize the thesis into four chapters, as highlighted sequentially below.

## **5.2 Summary of chapters**

Chapters one to four were principally and entirely informed by, and based on literature – books and journal publications (physical and online). It will be recalled, and as indicated in chapter one, secondary data collection sources are government publications, websites, books, journal articles, internal records etc. The researcher also pointed out that, since the war is still an ongoing, there are few published books on the subject matter. Currently, the data is only available on documentaries, academic reports, essays, journals, and television broadcasts including online newspapers and case studies. The chapter also laid out the problem to be investigated; aim of the study; significance/rationale of the study; research objectives/questions; methodology to be employed; sources of data, and instrument for collection; statement of ethical considerations and anticipated limitations of the study.

Chapter two dealt with a literature review which underpinned the study. The intention was to provide academic justification for this study. This was to be done through an examination of accessible literature on the Russian/Ukrainian war, and to place in perspective, the different roles of both the protagonists and antagonists, including the countries, whose position could be described as non-aligned, and particularly the countries in Africa. The chapter also

presented a synthesized views and opinions of scholars and authors on the strengths and weaknesses of the different positions of international players in relation to the war.

Chapter three dealt with the theoretical framework considered applicable to underpin the study. In this chapter, the researcher identified two theories viz, realism and liberalism, and the features of the theories are highlighted and expatiated upon in the chapter. The intention was to underline the relevance of the theories to the study.

Chapter four was divided into two parts. The first part dealt with the presentation of the data generated for the study, and the findings that emerged from the collated data in terms of themes. The findings were therefore highlighted thematically for purposes of analysis. The second part dealt with discussion of findings, in which case, the emerging themes of points of convergence in the opinions and views of the identified scholars were matched against the study research questions to determine how much they correlate. This section essentially and primarily relied on the researchers' synthesized views and opinions of scholars, writers and public affairs analysts on the seemingly interminable Russian/Ukrainian war, which has spanned over two years as at the time of this study.

### **5.3 Summary of findings**

Findings relating to **research question one (Q1)**, which relates to *the roles and positions of different players in the Ukraine-Russia war*, the researcher indicated that the maintenance of the status quo, to sustain nationalistic and ideological orientations, remains an objective for which the group of protagonists (supporters of Russia) are prepared to go to war anytime. The researcher had noted from the outcomes of the studies reviewed, wherein certain scholars had put forward suggestions on what they believe may have driven their affiliations and solidarity, and their level of support to their favoured side in the war. The researcher further indicated that, in most cases, factors of security, territorial integrity and economics tend to be prominent, and for which countries could go to war.

This implies that, every nation-state is ever ready to become an aggressor if it feels for instance, that its sovereign integrity or security has been breached, and would take measures towards resistance regardless of what the outcomes might be. At this point, it must be noted that, in the contemporary international system, issues of national interests, provide the basis for articulating countries' foreign policies, often serve as determinants of how countries react to developments beyond their borders. This perspective, in the opinion of the researcher, can be advanced for the decision of Russia to embark on the invasion of Ukraine in the first place.

When evaluated from the standpoint of the offensive realist perspective, the position of the protagonists in terms of preserving the status quo remains valid. According to the realists in this circumstance, “states pursue security and are prone to take actions that could cause and lead to war (D'Anieri, 2019).

In the opinion of Mearsheimer (2018), Russia is a status quo power, which planned and executed the first invasion in 2014 after the invocation of Ukraine's request to join NATO filed in 2008, and that was seen as a violation by the West expanding NATO and EU, provoking Russian reaction (Mearsheimer, 2018). Following from the perceived violation, it was believed that the proposed solution for Mearsheimer, is that Ukraine must never join NATO for peace to prevail, as that changes the status quo by expanding West imperialism and influence. To guard against this development therefore, Mearsheimer argued that, in line with the beliefs of offensive realism, Russia is preserving security and is prone to take action to maintain and preserve the status quo of pre-2008 (Mearsheimer, 2018).

Closely related to this, is the unfettered desire to address and guarantee territorial integrity and protecting geo-strategic and security concerns. In this case, Russia, and its allies may also be justified in their invasion claims. Earlier in the study, the researcher had indicated that Russian may have found it discomforting to have Ukraine, an old ally and a former republic-colleague under the umbrella of the defunct Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, to be aligned or joined with the “enemy camp” which the West, and its allies, represent or deemed to be. From the foregoing, it can be argued that, every sovereign state will not hesitate to go on the offensive, to protect its territorial geographical space; towards guaranteeing security and professed ideological orientations. Interestingly, every sovereign and independent states within the international system, and on both divides, in terms of the East and the West, consciously and unconsciously, strive to maintain their positions.

Furthermore, the admittedly loose nature of the international system, which is seen to be anarchical, without any globally established leader as in an organized setting is also one of the factors contributing to the unrestricted political and military turbulence. To this extent, Golovics (2017), posited that Russians responded aggressively not because of President Putin's personal attitude or irrationality, but because the structure of the international system compels him to act so. He argues that Russia had no choice, since the international system is anarchic. He suggests that the West, the US, and NATO must surrender and refrain from interfering in East Europe, and only when that happens can peace may be possible.

**In reaction to the research question two, (Q2)**, relating to - the strengths and weakness of those position on Ukraine-Russia war, the deployment of military and economic support become relevant to appreciate. The researcher considers it relevant to point out that, both the protagonists (supporters of Russia) on the one hand; and the antagonists (supporters of Ukraine) on the other, openly showed evidence of support in solidarity. For example, some of the protagonists, such China, Hungary, North Korea, Iran, etc, reportedly deployed military hardware in support of Russia; and in the same way did the antagonists (supporters of Ukraine), including more prominently the US, UK, Germany and some NATO members. This is in addition to funding support. Reports indicate that the European Union and its members have provided the most aid in total (military, financial and humanitarian), while the United States has by far provided the most military aid.

There is no denying the fact that the European allies, and the US, have been instrumental in Ukraine's war effort as donors. In a report by Buchholz (2024), "Ukraine currently received the most aid from the U.S. and EU institutions (Commission and Council). The amounts shown include financial support (loans, grants, etc.), humanitarian aid (food, medicine, etc.) and the value of weapons and equipment supplied, including donations in kind for the Ukrainian army and financial aid linked to military purposes". At the level of individual state contribution, records have it that "Ukraine has received the greatest support for weapons and equipment also from the United States". "In the period from January 24, 2022 to August 31, 2024, weapons and funds for military purposes amounting to around \$62 billion flowed from the country". With these statistics, it is arguable that Ukraine may have been better served by its allies, which are basically countries who profess to be democratic nations, according respect for the rule of law, and the committed to the promotion of fundamental human rights. As at the time of this study, the West, and particularly the European Union members continue to pledge financial assistance in support of Ukraine, and there are plans underway for the rehabilitation of Ukraine, to rescue the country from the ruins it has had to experience as a result of the war. For the analysts, and particularly those in Africa, the implications of this target attention to Ukraine implies much less attention or none, to the needy countries, including those in Africa.

For Russia, it is interesting to note that, support by its allies, in terms of military aid, seems to be shrouded in secrecy, to the extent that, some of the Russian supporters appeared to be operating in denial. This researcher thinks that, perhaps this attitude may be to avoid being seen to be providing restricted military weapons considered harmful to the international environment. As reported by the *The Week, UK (2024)*, it will be recalled that, "having signed

a comprehensive strategic partnership treaty last summer that commits both countries to providing military assistance to each other if either is attacked, Russian forces have become increasingly reliant on millions of rounds of North Korean artillery shells and ballistic missiles”.

Prior to this, there had been palpable fears over the "budding alliance" between Vladimir Putin and Kim Jong Un, which have peaked in recent weeks, owing to the controversial personality of the North Korean leader, in terms of his obsession with nuclear weapons development. To this extent, the reports of North Korea deploying thousands of troops to support Russia's invasion of Ukraine is the latest escalation in what has been described as "largely transactional" though (*The Week, 2024*). In the midst of all these, speculations are rife that fighting in Ukraine would enable North Korea to test the abilities of both its soldiers and weapons, while also gaining "income and assistance to its missile and nuclear programmes from Russia". The reality is that the longer the war in Ukraine goes on, the more forces Putin will need from North Korea, only making the Kim family stronger by the day and filling the regime's bank accounts,"

It can therefore be argued from the foregoing that, while countries engage in warfare to pursue their interests, the essence of economics (trading relationships) cannot be lost, as massive funds are required to prosecute wars, and funds can only come from exports. This aligns with the need to protect the economic interest theme that emerged from the review of literature as highlighted in chapter four of the study.

**In reacting to the research question three (Q3)**, which relates to the implications and the potential of those positions of different players on peacebuilding and stability between Russia and Ukraine, the relevant theme, as discerned by the researcher from reviewed literature, is the desire to ensure the sustenance of international peace by concerned state outside of Europe. Given the globally shared view of adopting the “jaw jaw” approach instead of “war war”, which means the application of diplomatic measures of resolving conflicts, majority of countries, particularly on the African continent, and in Asia, have variously called on the warring parties to ceasefire, and discuss peace terms.

For example, the African countries, through the African Union, have jointly urged both Russia and Ukraine leaderships to resort to dialogue and negotiations to achieve peace. This is in addition to those countries, who have also been using their bilateral relationships with either of the warring parties, to call for an end to the war. It is also understood that both the

protagonists and antagonists of the warring parties, have equally called for ceasefires to allow for peaceful talks to commence.

Unfortunately, the defiance attitude of the warring parties to the calls for ceasefires, has continued to lead to an escalation of the war, in the midst of unimaginable destructions and havoc on both sides. As of the time of this study, it is not clear how soon the war could be deescalated. Besides, the absence of a collective security arrangement to force a ceasefire is not helping the situation either. For the researcher, the violation of rule of engagement by the fighters on both sides, thus resulting into indiscriminate killings of unarmed civilian population, and particularly children and mothers.

In the opinion of the researcher, the inability of the world body, symbolised by the United Nations to engender global peace remains a cause for concern. This in a way, calls to question the multilateral world body's commitment to ensuring global peace, and the promotion of equity and justice. The composition of the Security Council, in terms of its leadership structure and the exercise of Veto powers, has attracted criticisms over the years, but without any sign of the willingness on the part of the holders of power to address concerns in this regard.

The researcher finds it regrettable that issues of conflict between and among the powers that be in the international system, are conducted or fought on the basis of ideological orientations and affiliations, without regard to the resulting negative consequences on other sovereign members within the system. In this instance, the countries on the African continent, as those in other developing societies, appear to be the "whipping child" when the super powers are at loggerheads with themselves and or with one another. The effects in most cases, are in the area of economic imbalance in trade relationships, and lack of military support, to contend against domestic insurrection and terrorism, which have become a regular occurrence in the struggling societies.

In reaction to the research question four (Q4), which relates to the impact of the Ukraine-Russia war on Africa's relations with the East and the West, reviewed literature revealed that the effect of the war is monumental in several ways. Firstly, African countries contend with the challenge of how to react to the war, which is ideologically inclined on the one hand, thereby underscoring the age-long the East and West divide; and a struggle for the survival of sovereign entities on the other. The Africa countries, being undeniably dependent on both divides for much of their varied needs, will have to tread cautiously and meticulously to be in the "good

books” of the competing powers, for their economic and military needs for survival and security.

For example, at the level of economic need, both Russia and Ukraine are notable producers of oil, wheat and grains, respectively, and the disruptions caused by the war, as a result of the break in the logistics chain of supply to the world, meant a serious challenge for the African nations, that had always dependent on the two countries for supplies.

An interesting point deserving of attention is the readiness of the West, including the US and the European Union, for the rehabilitation of Ukraine, as a result of the ruins from the war. This is in addition to the massive support that is still ongoing for the prosecution of the war. In furtherance of the execution of their collective security arrangement projects, a recent report indicates that the European Union has sent €1.5 billion to Ukraine, using the extraordinary revenues obtained from the Russian Central Bank's assets that remain immobilised as part of the bloc's far-reaching sanctions. The transfer is the first of its kind under the novel scheme based on Russia's immobilised assets, estimated to be worth €210 billion across the bloc (Liboreiro, 2024).

Unfortunately, Russia is not having so much of support from its allies, except for some occasional provision of military troops and some weapons, as has been done by North Korea in recent time, amidst criticisms. And this is not aid in the real sense of it, because Russia is expected to pay for such weapons as in a trading relationship. Another of Russia’s allies which has demonstrated support openly is Belarus, which has provided Russian army easy passage way into Ukrainian territory.

#### **5.4 Concluding remarks**

This study set out to examine the strengths and weaknesses of the different positions of international players in relation to the Russian-Ukraine war. To this extent, the researcher began by providing a basis for the study, through the identification of gaps in existing literature on the war, and responding to the research questions proposed for engagement. The study was hinged on a considerable amount of literature available, onsite and online to be able to delineate and maintain a line of focus, and reinforced by a select of two theoretical paradigms engaged for analysis. The study adopted the qualitative research methodology in the generation of data, identified the method for data collection, which is a critical literature review of secondary data, and a content analysis procedure for data presentation. The study noted the need for making a

statement on ethical considerations, pointing out that, being a purely desktop research, the required approval to proceed with the study was obtained from the university as required.

It is relevant to point out that the study was informed by the need to contextualise the varied narratives that have arisen since the Russian/Ukrainian war began, in terms of how the various actors (both state and non-state entities), whose influences, strengths and weaknesses have impacted African relations in the context of the East and West divide, cannot be over emphasised. It must be recalled at this point that, due to the ongoing nature of the war, the researcher is of the strong opinion that it is difficult to make definitive conclusions on how the war will end and how. Besides, the data for the current study were sourced primarily from secondary sources as mentioned in Chapter One of the study.

The researcher had mentioned in the same chapter one that, in checking the availability of sources, there are few published books on the subject matter. It is therefore relevant to emphasise that the data sourced for the study are only available on documentaries, academic reports, essays, journals, and television broadcasts including online newspapers and case studies. Against the foregoing, the researcher considered it worthwhile to conclude that the Russian/Ukrainian war serves to accentuate the ideological rivalry which has characterized the European politics, with the “players” poised to sustain the status quo as desired. Incidentally, the positions of the East/West powers and their political and economic orientations of Capitalism/Marxism, by which the international system has come to be defined, will continue to dictate the pendulum for societies outside of Europe. It is therefore left for every sovereign state outside of Europe, to determine which way, and how to cling to the pendulum, given the interdependence of the international system, and the level of vulnerability of the African continent in particular, to the vagaries of the global community.

## **5.5 Recommendations**

In the light of this study, the researcher is of the opinion that reflecting on the results of this study, as espoused in chapter four, which dealt with the analysis of data, and the discussion of the findings therefrom, the conclusive remarks above, theory and extant literature reviewed, the researcher makes recommendations on the following areas.

**In relation to the research question one (Q1)**, the researcher categorised the players in the Russian/Ukrainian war into state actors and non-state actors, and further classified the players as either protagonists or antagonists. The protagonists comprise of both state actors and non-state actors, who are in support of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine; while the antagonists are those against the invasion. In



addition to this compartmentalization, is the non-European countries, whose role can be considered to be minimal. Countries in this category are those in Africa, and those in Asian and the Latin American continents. The roles played, and are being played by the respective players are in line with their affiliations and ideological orientations. For the antagonists, i.e, the West, led by the US; and their European Union members, particularly those who profess democratic ethos; the NATO, etc, their role is both military and financial. European member states such as the UK; Germany, France, have not hidden their support for Ukraine, and each has made notable contributions in support of Ukraine in the prosecution of the war.

The USA has stood out in terms of its contribution, both militarily and financially. According to Buchholz (2024), Ukraine receives the greatest support for weapons and equipment also from the United States. In the period from January 24, 2022 to August 31, 2024, weapons and funds for military purposes amounting to around \$62 billion flowed from the country. The nature of assistance in solidarity in this respect includes, financial support (loans, grants, etc.), humanitarian aid (food, medicine, etc.) and the value of weapons and equipment supplied, including donations in kind for the Ukrainian army and financial aid linked to military purposes. On the other hand, Russia, which has been regaling in isolation as a result of the war, cannot be said to be having the same level of support from its allies. This is probably due to the little strength of the allies in military terms, and the need to tread cautiously not to be caught in the high-stake politics of the big powers.

**In reaction to research question two (Q2)**, which relates to strengths and weaknesses of the roles and positions of different players in the Ukraine-Russia war towards peacebuilding and stability, the researcher notes as follows - That no one country has the ability to coerce or persuade either of the two warring parties into a ceasefire towards a peaceful resolution; Apart from this, the UN, which has the statutory responsibility for maintaining international peace does not offer any hope to the surprise of the international community; That the affiliations of the countries, in terms of ideological orientation and geo-political and strategic interest would seem to have restrained any action beyond the ordinary to cause an abrupt halt to the war; and finally, the economic circumstances and domestic issues confronting each country within the international system may be a limiting factor hindering any strong action towards pushing for a ceasefire between the warring parties.

**In reaction to research question three (Q3)**, What are the implications and the potential of those positions of different players on peacebuilding and stability between Russia and Ukraine, the following commentaries can be expressed –

- That no matter how long the war will last, there is the likelihood that both parties will eventually resort to the application of diplomacy to reach a compromise and eventual peace and stability. This is because, the destructions on both sides, in terms of human lives and infrastructure damage, cannot be quantified. Further elongation can only imply more havoc, grief and sorrow;
- That the positions of the players, in terms of affiliations and ideological orientations are not likely to change, and players will continue to advance and project their beliefs and their governmental structures;
- That the power structure may experience a moderate change, in terms of the creation of power centres, which will be based on economic capacity to influence global affairs.

**In reaction to research question four (Q4)**, which is the impact of the Ukraine-Russia war on Africa's relations with the East and the West, the researcher considered the following scenarios –

- That the war does not have any military bearing with African countries, even though the ability to contribute in that regard is non-existent, given the sophistication of modern warfare, for which Africans are not notable;
- That the war has the potency to determine the level of bilateral relations between Africa countries in the context of the East/West politics, either to increase or decrease in loyalty;
- That the war has the potency to further cause frictions among African countries in their affairs, thus leading to divided solidarity in their relationships with the East/West countries;
- That the war may either reinforce or weaken the non-alignment principle which is associated with the African continent;
- That the African Union should be strengthened to be a clearing house for engaging in crises or frictions between the power blocs in the international system, while still maintaining bilateral relations. That way, a continental solidarity may present a better and more solid approach as a player in the global arena;
- Consequently, the researcher is inclined to recommend that the African continent is better served in relation to the Russian/Ukrainian war, by engaging in the call for the adoption of diplomatic approach in resolving the issues associated with the war. That

way, the possibility of being caught in the middle would have been avoided, given the seeming guile characteristic of the international system.

As indicated earlier in the study, the fact that the war is ongoing makes any categorical and definitive claims impossible. Against any form of prejudice, the defiance personality of President Putin remains a hard nut to be cracked in all attempts to broker a ceasefire. With the change of government in the US, and the second coming of Donald Trump, there are speculations that the possibility of a thaw may be imminent in the Russian/Ukrainian war. How far or soon this reality will be, remains in the realm of conjectures.

The study submits that, except the two warring parties see the need to discontinue the war path, or a collective security arrangement to force both parties into a ceasefire, towards a lasting peace happens, no accurate predictions can be made in the circumstance.

## **5.6 Potential areas for future research**

This study sought to examine the strengths and weaknesses of the different positions of international players in relation to the Russian-Ukraine war. In the opinion of the researcher, the achievement of the aim of the study ultimately meant to that the study is really to examine the effectiveness of the positions and roles in ending the war, for peace and stability to prevail between Russia and Ukraine.

The researcher believed that this current study has provided considerable justification, through literature survey findings for this thesis, and hopes that it will enrich existing studies in related researches. However, in the course of study, the researcher observed that about all or majority of the study outcomes as gleaned from literature tended to pay attention on speculations and insinuation on the causes of the war, and the respective positions by state and non-state actors on the war. In a nutshell, commentaries and analyses on the Russian/Ukrainian war seem to be centred only on its impact on the European corridors, without concerns for the other continents, such as Africa, in terms of effects on economic and trade relations, and climate impact of the use of missiles and explosives. The seeming lack of concern in this regard may require some consideration in the form of research inquiry, not only within the rank of scholars, but also on the part of the general African peoples. Besides, the researcher notes that the entrenched rivalries resulting from the divergent ideological orientations and experiences between and among the powerful nations require critical research attention. This is because, the attendant culture of distrust, disharmony and disunity pervading the global environment, and its impact of the African continent in particular, deserve some inquiry perhaps to seek ways of enhancing

cohesion necessary for growth and development. In so doing, the aspiration to achieve an integrated and peaceful world will sooner or later become a reality.

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