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**NATO's New Frontier, the Russo-  
Ukrainian Conflict in Light of  
Huntington's Clash of civilizations  
Theory**

**Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial fulfilment  
of the Requirements for the Master's Degree**

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## **Declaration of Originality**

We, Souhaib El Hadi DAIAH and Sohaib Akram MAZOUZI hereby declare that the work presented here is entirely our own and have not been submitted to any institution or university. Any sources used have been properly acknowledged and cited in the reference list. Besides, this work is conducted and completed at the University of M'sila, Algeria.

## **DEDICATION**

This research is dedicated to my beloved parents, sister and two little brothers who have been the source of my strength and will whenever I think of giving up, who continually provided their moral, spiritual and emotional support.

To my skilled supervisor Mr. Youcef BENAA who have been more than reliable mentor by guiding me through my research step by step.

To my teachers who believed in me and inspired me with their own stories and experiences.

To my friends who became a strong source of support, I appreciate every word and every text that encouraged me through my research.

And lastly, I would thank all mighty Allah who guided me and gave me the strength and power of mind to accomplish this research paper.

**Souhaib El Hadi DAIAH**

## **DEDICATION**

I, Sohaib Akram MAZOUZI, dedicate this dissertation to my family, whose unwavering love and support have been my anchor throughout this academic journey. Your belief in me and your constant encouragement have fueled my determination to reach this milestone. This accomplishment is as much yours as it is mine.

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## ABSTRACT

This research delves into the impact of NATO's expansion on the Russo-Ukrainian conflict, emphasizing the underlying civilizational divisions and heightened tensions that arise as a result. Drawing from Samuel Huntington's Clash of Civilizations theory, the study aims to enhance comprehension of the intricate dynamics driving the conflict and its implications for regional and global security. Employing a qualitative approach with content analysis as the primary method, the research investigates the relationship between NATO's enlargement and the Russo-Ukrainian conflict, while assessing the applicability of Huntington's theory in understanding the interaction between NATO's expansion and the civilizational fault lines at play. The research findings suggest that Huntington's theory offers valuable insights into comprehending the Russo-Ukrainian conflict and NATO's expansion. Notably, the division within Ukraine, characterized by historical, cultural, and linguistic disparities between its western and eastern regions, significantly contributes to the escalation of the conflict. The western regions, influenced by European culture and values, seek alignment with the Western civilization represented by NATO. Conversely, the eastern regions, with stronger ties to Russia, endeavour to preserve their Slavic identity and resist Western influences. Russia perceives NATO's expansion as a threat to its security and influence, aligning with Huntington's theory as it underscores the clash between Western and Slavic civilizations. The defence of Slavic culture and identity in Ukraine, particularly in the eastern regions, can be interpreted as a response to the perceived Western cultural invasion through NATO partnerships and the imposition of Western values and ideologies. Studying the clash between the Western and Slavic civilizations within the framework of Huntington's theory provides a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities that arise from cultural diversity in our interconnected world.

**Keywords:** NATO, Russia, Ukraine, clash of civilizations, Slavic, Western.

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

**NATO** The North Atlantic Treaty.

**USSR** The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

**US** United States.

**WW1** World War 1

**SHAPE** The Supreme Headquarters Allied Power Europe.

**UN** The United Nations.

**SFOR** A Stabilization Force NATO-led multinational peacekeeping force deployed to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

**IFOR** Interagency Forum for Operational Requirements,

The Kosovo Force is a NATO-led international peacekeeping force in Kosovo.

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## **GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

The Russo-Ukrainian conflict and NATO's expansion in Eastern Europe have been pivotal events in shaping the geopolitics of the post-Cold War era. This research aims to explore the interplay between these two significant developments while examining them through the lens of Samuel P. Huntington's theory of the Clash of Civilizations. Huntington's Clash of Civilizations thesis posits that cultural and civilizational differences, rather than ideological or economic factors, will be the primary source of conflict in the post-Cold War world. According to Huntington, the fault lines between different civilizations, defined by religion, history, and culture, would become the dominant source of tensions and clashes between nations.

NATO's expansion in Eastern Europe and the subsequent Russo-Ukrainian conflict provides a compelling context to examine the validity and applicability of Huntington's theory. The expansion of NATO into countries formerly within the Soviet sphere of influence has been perceived by Russia as a direct challenge to its security and a violation of its perceived sphere of influence. This has led to heightened tensions and territorial disputes, particularly in Ukraine, where pro-Russian and pro-European forces have clashed. This research will utilize a qualitative approach, drawing upon political history, international relations, and cultural studies. A comprehensive analysis of secondary sources, including historical documents, political speeches, and academic literature, will be undertaken to provide a nuanced understanding of the complex dynamics at play.

The findings of this research endeavor to shed light on the significance of cultural and civilizational factors in the Russo-Ukrainian conflict, as well as the broader implications of NATO's expansion in Eastern Europe. By examining the clash between Western and Russian identities within the framework of Huntington's theory, this study aims to contribute to our understanding of the interplay between geopolitics, culture, and conflict in the contemporary world.

## Literature Review

Huntington's Clash of Civilizations theory proposes that civilizations serve as the fundamental building blocks of the global order, emphasizing that future conflicts will predominantly arise along the fault lines that separate different civilizations. While the applicability of this theory has been subject to debate among critics, it offers a valuable framework for analysing the intricate cultural and geopolitical dimensions at play in the Russo-Ukrainian conflict (Huntington, 1993).

The significance of NATO's enlargement in shaping the dynamics of the Russo-Ukrainian conflict has been highlighted by Asmus, Larrabee, and Kugler. They argue that the expansion of NATO into Eastern Europe, encompassing the Baltic states and countries geographically close to Russia, has heightened Russian apprehensions regarding encirclement and the potential loss of influence in their traditional sphere of geopolitical control (Asmus et al, 1994).

The Russo-Ukrainian conflict has been profoundly influenced by the Russian perception of NATO expansion as a direct threat to their security, as articulated by Vladimir Putin during the annual Munich conferences in 2007. Moscow perceives NATO's eastward expansion as a direct challenge to their geopolitical interests, and as a violation of implicit post-Cold War agreements. Consequently, Russia has taken assertive actions in response to these perceived threats, including the annexation of Crimea and providing support to separatist movements in Eastern Ukraine (Putin, 2007).

One of the key driving factors behind the conflict, as stated by Kuzio, is Ukraine's strong desire for closer integration with Western institutions, notably NATO. Proponents argue that NATO's expansion would provide essential security guarantees and act as a deterrent against further Russian aggression. However, critics contend that NATO's promises of membership

have contributed to a zero-sum mindset, exacerbating the conflict and impeding potential diplomatic solutions (Kuzio, 2008).

Beyond its immediate region, the Russo-Ukrainian conflict carries significant geopolitical implications. It has strained Russia's relations with Western countries, resulting in economic sanctions and heightened tensions. Moreover, the conflict has raised critical questions regarding the future trajectory of NATO, European security dynamics, and the overall balance of power in Europe. The repercussions of this conflict extend far beyond the borders of Ukraine, impacting international relations and shaping the geopolitical landscape on a broader scale.

### **Statement of the problem**

The expansion of NATO and its implications in the context of the Russo-Ukrainian conflict pose significant challenges to regional stability and security. This research aims to investigate the relationship between NATO's expansion and the Russo-Ukrainian conflict, focusing on the Clash of Civilizations perspective proposed by Samuel Huntington. The study seeks to analyse the role of NATO's enlargement in exacerbating tensions and explore the civilizational fault lines at play in the conflict. By examining the impact of NATO's expansion into Eastern Europe and its effects on Russian concerns about encirclement, as well as considering the Clash of Civilizations framework, this research aims to contribute to a better understanding of the complex dynamics influencing the Russo-Ukrainian conflict and its implications for regional and international security.

## **Research Questions**

This study aims to answer these following questions How does the expansion of NATO contribute to the Russo-Ukrainian conflict, particularly in light of Huntington's Clash of Civilizations theory? What are the historical and geopolitical factors that have influenced NATO's enlargement and its impact on the Russo-Ukrainian conflict? How do the civilizational fault lines identified by Huntington intersect with NATO's expansion and the dynamics of the Russo-Ukrainian conflict?

## **Aims and Objectives**

This research aims to examine the relationship between NATO's expansion and the Russo-Ukrainian conflict, with a particular focus on the perspective offered by Huntington's Clash of Civilizations theory. The primary objectives of this study are. Firstly, it seeks to analyse the historical context and motivations behind NATO's enlargement, investigating its impact on the Russo-Ukrainian conflict. Secondly, it aims to explore the applicability of Huntington's theory in understanding the interaction between NATO's expansion and the civilizational fault lines at play in the conflict. Thirdly, the research intends to assess the implications of NATO's expansion for regional stability, security, and the balance of power in Eastern Europe. By addressing these objectives, this research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics between NATO's enlargement and the Russo-Ukrainian conflict.

## **Motivation and Significance**

The motivation behind this research stems from the need to understand the consequences of NATO's expansion on the Russo-Ukrainian conflict. By exploring the conflict through the lens of Huntington's Clash of Civilizations theory, this study aims to contribute to

the existing literature and provide insights into the complexities of the conflict dynamics. The significance of this research lies in its ability to shed light on the multifaceted nature of the Russo-Ukrainian conflict, providing a deeper understanding of how NATO's expansion has impacted the conflict dynamics. By exploring the conflict from a civilizational perspective, this study expands the analytical framework and provides a fresh lens through which to examine the complexities of the conflict. This research also highlights the importance of considering the cultural, ideological, and geopolitical fault lines that intersect with NATO's expansion, enriching the understanding of the conflict's underlying causes and potential avenues for resolution.

## **Methodology**

This study employs a qualitative approach with content analysis as the primary method to investigate the topic of NATO's new frontier and the Russo-Ukrainian conflict in light of Samuel Huntington's clash of civilizations theory. The objective is to gain an in-depth understanding of the alignment or divergence between the conflict and Huntington's theoretical framework.

A content analysis approach will be utilized to examine a wide range of textual sources, including official documents, policy statements, media reports, and academic literature. This analysis involves categorizing and analysing the content of these sources to identify recurring themes, arguments, and perspectives regarding NATO's expansion and its impact on the Russo-Ukrainian conflict. The content analysis aims to uncover patterns and trends in the discussions surrounding the topic, providing valuable insights into the discourse surrounding NATO's enlargement.

By employing a qualitative approach with content analysis, this methodology aims to uncover insights and shed light on the complex dynamics between NATO's new frontier and

the Russo-Ukrainian conflict within the framework of Samuel Huntington's clash of civilizations theory.

## **Plan of the research**

The thesis is structured into two distinct chapters, each addressing specific aspects of the research topic. The division of the thesis allows for a comprehensive exploration of the subject matter, providing a thorough analysis from different angles.

The first chapter will focus on examining the historical context and dynamics of NATO-Soviet relations, specifically within the context of the Russo-Ukrainian conflict. Through a comprehensive analysis of key events, policies, and decisions, the research will explore the factors that shaped the interactions between NATO and the Soviet Union. It will investigate the historical background of the conflict, including the origins of NATO, the Soviet response, and their implications for the region. By analysing the historical aspects, this chapter aims to provide a solid foundation for understanding the historical roots of the Russo-Ukrainian conflict within the framework of NATO-Soviet relations.

Building upon the historical analysis, the second chapter will focus on the clash between the Western and Slavic civilizations within the specific context of the Russo-Ukrainian conflict. It will examine the cultural, ideological, and geopolitical dimensions that have contributed to this clash, particularly between Western-oriented Ukraine and predominantly Slavic Russia. The research will analyse how these factors have influenced the conflict dynamics, perceptions, and actions of the involved parties. Through an in-depth literature review and case studies, this chapter aims to shed light on the complex interactions and implications of the clash of civilizations in the Russo-Ukrainian conflict.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

# **Reevaluating the NATO-Russo Relations and History**

## INTRODUCTION

Over the past 25 years NATO has been crawling closer to the Russian borders, former soviet states had become NATO members. This military alliance has technically concorded the entire security belt of Moscow. Russia sees these expansions as provocation; it threatens their security interest. In 1989 The berlin wall collapsed. In 1991 The Soviet Union disintegrated and the Iron curtain completely demolished. Europe's regional order focused on one question; Should Germany Allie itself with the US and NATO? or should it join the Russians through the Warsaw pack. The US government under George.W. Bush made an offer with the Russian president Mikhail Gorbachev, the deal was if Germany became a NATO member, NATO will stop expanding; not an inch eastward. Today the USA made no such promise saying that no such deal was ever done, but hundreds of memos and transcripts from US archives say otherwise, nevertheless Moscow bought the offer, it demolished the WARSAW pact and hoped that the west will follow soon; That NATO two would be dissolved. But that never happened, NATO refused to cease operations and to push it even further NATO kept the door for membership wide open. Russia saw it as a stab in the back and NATO kept pushing the knife deeper.

In 2021 NATO officially recognized 3 more future members Bosnia, Georgia and Ukraine, NATO was also in talks with Sweden, Finland and Serbia for membership. That meant that much of eastern Europe which once was part of The USSR has now joined NATO despite Russia's protest and warnings, the last friendly Russian warning came in the year 2007, Vladimir Putin addressed and the annual Munich conference where he said

NATO has put frontline forces on our borders, this expansion represents a serious provocation that reduces the level of mutual trust, and we have the right to ask Against whom is this expansion

intended? And what happened to the assurances our western partners made after the dissolution of the WARSAW pact (Putin, 2007).

Furthermore in 2004 William.J. Burns The US ambassador to Moscow wrote a letter to the state department where he said "Ukrainian entry into NATO is the brightest of all redlines for the Russian elite. From knuckle-dracker in the dark recesses of the kremlin to Putin's sharpest liberal critics, I have yet to find anyone who views Ukraine in NATO as anything other than a direct challenge to Russian interests" (Ronald, 2023), it doesn't end there, Strobe Talbott a former deputy secretary of state indicated that many Russians see NATO as a vestige of the Cold War, then pointed out that the Russians disbanded the WARSAW pact and asked why the west didn't the same ? So, several voices in the western world had pointed that Russia's warnings are more than obvious and NATO's expansion could cause a world of trouble yet, all American administrations paid no attention the Russian warnings (Guardian News and Media, 2022).

## **1-1 NATO's Creation**

Washington, April 1949, NATO which stand for The North Atlantic Treaty Organization 'was formed by a dozen European and north American countries, this would be a collective organized military alliance which would stop soviet threat and prevent the repeat of nationalist militarism in Europe. by uniting under one umbrella, if one nation was attacked the others must defend it militarily under what's known as article 5. Lord Hastings Lionel Ismay NATO's first secretary general said that NATO was found to "keep the Soviet Union out, the Americans in, and the Germans down"(NATO, 2016). NATO was formed for several reasons in 1949, so far, the United States had initiated the Marshall plans which would fund the rebuilding of post WW1 western Europe and encourage wider cooperation between Europe and the United States. The ongoing berlin's blockade from 1948 particularly earged to do so,

the Soviet Union had cut off access to Berlin, so supplies under the Marshall Plan were air-lifted by the United States, Britain and France. The Soviet Union has installed Soviet regimes through eastern Europe forming the Eastern Bloc, a Soviet-sponsored coup in Czechoslovakia also resulted in a full Soviet take-over in February 1948. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization would be signed in Washington DC in April 4th, 1949, 12 countries signed it, the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, Holland, Luxembourg, Norway, Iceland, Denmark, Italy and Portugal. Now the United States has a presence in Europe which garners immediate retaliation against any Soviet aggression (U.S. Department of State, 1949),

this extended to escalate the extreme possible scenarios in case of a Soviet threat where NATO members would drop atomic bombs on the USSR as a last resort, this would also enable members to spend more on their economies rather than large scale armies. The collective power of the 12 nations who promised to defend each other if one was attacked worked as a brick wall to the USSR and signaled that Western Europe would defend itself against communist aggression and USSR expansionism, moreover smaller countries now would be more secure as a result of having stronger nations now defending them (U.S. Department of State, 1949).

## **1-2 NATO's Expansion During the Cold War**

Although technically NATO was formed during the Cold War, but one can argue that the formation of NATO was the trigger for the Cold War. NATO was formed with 12 Western powers, however more countries would join NATO including Greece and Turkey in 1952, West Germany in 1955 and Spain in 1982. In 1966 France withdrew from the military command structure of NATO but remained a part of the NATO alliance. In 1954 the Soviet Union itself offered to join NATO to preserve peace in Europe, this was rejected by NATO members because they feared that the USSR's motive was to weaken the alliance. The threat of West Germany pushed the Soviet Union to retaliate by forming the Warsaw Pact, like NATO a

collective military was formed but signed among the soviet satellite states of eastern Europe and was dominated by the USSR (Asmus et al, 1994).

the territorial scope of NATO defined by article 6 did not include Asia, however soon after the signing of the north Atlantic treaty developments in Asia would have a significant impact on the evolution of the alliance, the analogy between a divided Korea and the division of Germany obviously were a serious matter to NATO members, particularly as the war started in the Korean peninsula in June, 1950. thoughts in the west not only on one communist aggression, but the unity of goals of two communist mega powers after given creation of people's republic of China in October 1949. This impacted heavily on Washington's threat assessment system, as the iconic document of the US national security council (NSC-68) stated "The cold war is in fact a real war in which the survival of the free world is at stake" (U.S. National Security Council, 1950). in the United States this resulted an increased defense spending and a sudden reconstructing of national security concerns to focus on the need to be prepared for potential war in Europe. consequently, the north Atlantic treaty assumed an even greater importance to USA, following the outbreak of the Korean war the allies decided to enhance the military structure of the alliance, by the end of 1950 NATO had a supreme allied commander general Dwight David Eisenhower and operational headquarters in Paris, the supreme headquarters allied power Europe or SHAPE. a few years later as the Korean war continued, the north Atlantic treaty council meeting in Lisbon formally recognized the structure of the alliance, the north Atlantic treaty had thus evolved into NATO, a permanent military alliance. The alliance moved to strengthening its southern flank signaling the growing strategic importance of the Mediterranean. In February 1952 resent Turkey and Greece joined NATO thereby greatly strengthen its western flank, the militarization of cold war therefor had direct impact on the evolution of NATO as greater infuses was given to military preparedness to detrend any potential communist aggression (Asmus et al, 1994).

In the 1950s the issue of Germany became the dominant question , while the European countries had tried to respond to the shifted threat perception with the proposal on an European defense community , the so called Plain plan , domestic opposition in France prevented the plans to go further , consequently the idea of adding a rearmed Germany in NATO started to take hold.in October 1954 the three western powers terminated their occupation areas and recognized the federal republic of Germany as a sovereign state , this paved the way for the federal republic of Germany to become a NATO member state in 1955, the soviet union responded with the creation of the WARSAW pact in may 1955 . the cold war therefor evolved from two opposing political and economic systems to two opposing military alliances (Asmus et al, 1994).

The unsettled matter of berlin caused a reemerging of tensions where in 1958 soviet leader Nikkita Krushiv issued warnings to the western powers to evacuate west berlin, both sides however showed that neither was willing to escalate to potential nuclear war, the crisis upside with decision to build the berlin wall in 1961 , as the united state and the western powers accepted and did not challenge the building of the wall it become obvious that the division of Germany and of Europe is a reality to live with and not define . during the 1960s the challenges to the NATO will be a different kind, the French decision to withdraw from alliance's integrated military structure in 1966 following De Gaulle's refusal to accept any collective control over his troops or to limit the French nuclear program exposed the first cracks within the western block (Wenger, 2012). American leadership where obviously welcomed and needed , however started increasingly questioned, From a wider angle the first signs of detente between the west and east lead to the approval of the Harmel reports named after Belgium foreign minister Pierre Harmel in 1967 formally called "the report of the council on the future tasks of the alliance" it was one of NATO's most important documents in history, the report introduced the notion of deterrence and détente, thus setting the bases towards more cooperative methods to security issues that would characterize NATO's role and goals in the coming years . The 1970s and the

1980s brought yet another edging issue, the outer broad dilemma; that is how to deal with challenging problems and potential threats coming from areas out of the territorial scope of the alliance. with oil crisis, the 1973 and war in the middle east, the Iranian revolution, the soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the Iran-Iraq war, all of those factors paved the way for NATO members to link their interest with outer area issues (Asmus et al, 1994).

When the berlin wall suddenly collapsed followed by the collapse of the soviet union, the cold war which was the core purpose of NATO came to an end, as debates on the future of the alliance emerged, some of the issues that dominated its existence throughout the cold war remained on the schedule ; the matter of burden sharing, the political dimensions of the alliance and the dilemma of how to deal with outer issues , while during the cold war the need of the alliance of being focused on the soviet threat pushed those questions to the sideline , however in the post-cold war era those questions would resemble a serious challenges on the alliance(Asmus et al, 1994).

### **1-3 NATO-Soviet Relations**

NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) and the Soviet Union were key players in the global geopolitical landscape during the Cold War. Their relationship, characterized by tension and confrontation, shaped the dynamics of international politics for decades. This document aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of NATO-Soviet relations, examining key events, underlying motivations, and their impact on global security.

The establishment of NATO in 1949 as a collective defence alliance marked a significant turning point in post-World War II international relations. NATO was formed primarily as a response to Soviet expansionism and perceived threats to Western Europe. The Soviet Union responded by creating the Warsaw Pact in 1955, forming its own alliance system as a counterweight to NATO.

The Berlin Blockade (1948-1949) intensified tensions between NATO and the Soviet Union. The blockade, imposed by the Soviet Union to gain control over West Berlin, led to the Berlin Airlift by NATO member states, successfully providing essential supplies to the city. The division of Germany into East and West, with the creation of the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany), became a symbolic representation of the broader East-West divide (G. Schmidt, 2001).

The arms race between NATO and the Soviet Union became a defining feature of the Cold War. The Soviet Union's acquisition of nuclear weapons in 1949 and subsequent development of an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) capability escalated tensions. NATO responded with the deployment of American nuclear weapons in Europe, leading to a doctrine of mutual assured destruction (MAD) aimed at deterring a nuclear conflict. NATO and the Soviet Union engaged in proxy conflicts in various regions, such as the Korean War (1950-1953) and the Vietnam War (1955-1975). These conflicts represented ideological and strategic battlegrounds, where both sides supported opposing factions. The Third World became an arena for competing for influence and control, further exacerbating tensions between NATO and the Soviet Union (G. Schmidt, 2001).

In the 1970s, a period of *détente* emerged as both NATO and the Soviet Union sought to ease tensions and reduce the risk of direct confrontation. The signing of the Helsinki Accords in 1975 marked a significant milestone in efforts to promote cooperation and security between the two blocs. However, underlying distrust and competition continued to shape their relationship. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 fundamentally altered the dynamics of NATO-Soviet relations. With the end of the Cold War, NATO sought to redefine its role, ultimately expanding its membership to include former Soviet satellite states in Eastern Europe.

This expansion was viewed by Russia as a violation of previous understandings and led to a new era of tensions between NATO and Russia (Kenez, n.d.). NATO-Soviet relations were characterized by mutual suspicion, ideological rivalry, and military confrontation. From the

formation of NATO as a response to Soviet expansionism to the collapse of the Soviet Union and subsequent NATO expansion, these relations shaped global security and influenced international politics for much of the 20th century. Understanding the historical context of NATO-Soviet relations is crucial in comprehending the complexities of the current geopolitical landscape and potential future challenges (G. Schmidt, 2001).

## **1-4 Post-cold War NATO**

With the defeat of the soviet threat, what would be the purpose of the alliance? Would NATO indeed continue to exist and why? Following the reunification of Germany in 1990 and the fact that Germany remains in NATO , questions appeared concerning the future of the alliance from the beginning about the potential NATO expansion eastward, NATO's expansion indeed emerged as a key matter after the end of the cold war , as the US president George H.W. Bush in 1990 said "A new world order was taking shape" "A new era freer from the threat of terror, stronger in the pursuit of justice and more secure in the quest for peace. AN era in which the nations of the world, east and west, north and south, can leave in harmony." (Bush, 1990). NATO member countries far from realizing that their role is done , saw a new path for the goals and quests in NATO's agenda , a more wide ranging role on the pursuit of the so called peace and stability in Europe and beyond , the first test case for NATO's new role came during the Balkan wars of the 1990s , as war broke out in the former Yugoslavia the alliance issued a statement urging all members to allow the deployment of the UN peacekeepers , this was the beginning of a partnership between NATO and the UN in seeking to bring hostilities to an end , NATO then intervened directly in the conflict with air strikes authorized by the united nations, in 1995 the alliance deployed forces called "IFOR" and "SFOR" which remained in the country until 2004, moreover when the tensions reemerged in Kosovo NATO rapidly engaged with an air campaign under UN security council mandated aimed to bring violence to an end, a peace support operation "KFOR" was deployed in 1999 under a newer mandate remains in Kosovo

until this day , obviously NATO has evolved to be a new player under the cause of seeking peace and stability in the new post-cold war era. Concretely the alliance reached out the non-member states through the partnership for peace launched in 1994, this was and is a program of dual and individual cooperation between euro-Atlantic countries and NATO, it allows partners to build up an individual relationship with NATO (Kuzio, 2008). the new role of NATO was clearly spelled out in the new strategic concept of 1999, in the 50th anniversary allied leaders have adopted new strategic concept that committed members to common defense and peace and stability of the wider euro-Atlantic area, it was based on a wider definition of security which recognized the political, social, economic, environmental to the defense mechanism , it identified the new risks that had appeared since the end of the cold war which included ; terrorism, ethnic conflicts, human rights, politics, economic fragility and spread of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and their means of delivery(Kuzio, 2008) .

the broader and more global role that was played by the western alliance was reflected on the repeated and continued enlargement rounds , starting in 1999 when the check republic Hungary and Poland become members of the alliance, and with an even greater enlargement in 2004 when 7 more countries entered the alliance so NATO almost doubled his members since 1949, far from being an exclusive club NATO was growing bigger and bigger by letting the door open for membership and seem to have a growing momentum in the post-cold war era (Smith, 2011). The first real test of the significance of NATO was at the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 when confirming the unity and purpose of its members “article 5” were evoked for the first time in the history of the alliance on September 12, 2001, “An attack on the United States was considered an attack against all member states of NATO” Lord George Robertson. Looking at the fact that article 5 had never been evoked in the cold war but was evoked in 2001 demonstrated that the real mission and the real purpose of the western alliance is still needed as if the cold war never ended (Hendrickson, 2006). the major role of NATO played in Afghanistan with the deployment of international security assistance force “ISAF” which

remained in the country until 2014 confirmed the redefinition of the alliance to include missions outside the territorial scope of the alliance, the out of area dilemma which had been discussed and planned during the cold war had been resolved where actions and solutions of NATO's agenda were applied on reality(Hendrickson, 2006).

## **1-5 Key Countries in NATO's Agenda**

Needless to say, that NATO's enlargement process has been criticized and with the softest tone questioned for being influenced by geopolitical considerations and power dynamics, however NATO maintains to claim that its expansion is driven by its principles and values with the aim of promoting security, stability, and cooperation among member states. NATO's process for selecting new members is based on a set of criteria and principles that potential candidates must meet, these criteria are outlined in the "Membership Action Plan" (MAP) and serve as a framework for evaluating a country's readiness to join the alliance. And here's some of the most important countries in the agenda of the western alliance (Larrabee, 2003).

### **1-5-1 Poland**

Poland its located in a strategic position in Central Europe, bordering several NATO allies and sharing borders with Russia and Belarus. NATO's acceptance of Poland's membership was primarily driven by political and strategic considerations rather than objective criteria. The decision to include Poland in NATO was influenced by several factors

**Geopolitical Motives** Poland's location in Central Europe made it strategically important for NATO. By expanding its influence into Eastern Europe, NATO sought to contain Russia's power and prevent its further expansion. Accepting Poland as a member allowed NATO to establish a military presence closer to Russia's borders, thus increasing its deterrence

capabilities. Cold War Legacy Poland's historical position within the Warsaw Pact, the Soviet-led military alliance, played a role in NATO's decision. As the Warsaw Pact dissolved following the end of the Cold War, NATO saw an opportunity to weaken Russia's influence in the region by integrating former Soviet-aligned countries into its own alliance. Poland's membership was seen as a symbolic victory for NATO and a demonstration of its dominance over the former Eastern Bloc. Political Considerations Poland's aspirations to join NATO were supported by its political leadership, which sought security guarantees and closer ties with Western Europe. Poland, along with other Central and Eastern European countries, underwent significant political and economic transformations after the fall of communism. NATO's acceptance of Poland's membership was seen as a validation of these reforms and a signal of Western support for the country's democratic transition. Military Capabilities Poland's armed forces were relatively modern and capable compared to some other countries in the region. Its military potential and defense expenditures made it an attractive candidate for NATO membership, as it could contribute to the alliance's overall military strength and capabilities (Larrabee, 2003).

### **1-5-2 The Balkan States**

The Balkans occupy a strategic location bridging Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. Its position at the crossroads of major trade routes, such as the Danube River and the Adriatic Sea, has historically made it a coveted region for controlling trade and exerting influence over neighboring regions. The Balkans possess valuable resources, including minerals, energy reserves, and agricultural land. Control over these resources has been a motivating factor for external powers seeking to exploit or secure their access to them. Moreover, the area has long been characterized by ethnic and religious diversity, which has been a source of tension and conflict. External powers have often exploited these divisions to pursue their own political agendas, exacerbating existing conflicts or supporting certain groups to advance their interests.

Nevertheless, The Balkans have been the stage for numerous historical power struggles, with empires and nations vying for dominance in the region. The Ottoman Empire, Austro-Hungarian Empire, and Russian Empire, among others, have sought to control or influence Balkan states for political, economic, or territorial reasons.

The emergence of nationalism in the 19th and 20th centuries further complicated the political landscape in the Balkans. Nationalist movements sought self-determination and independence, often leading to conflicts and redrawing of borders. External powers have often taken advantage of these nationalist sentiments to assert their influence or establish spheres of influence in the region. Looking at the fact that during the Cold War, the Balkans became a battleground for ideological competition between the United States and the Soviet Union. Both superpowers sought to gain influence over Balkan states, either through political alliances or supporting proxy conflicts (Larrabee, 2003).

Finally, The Balkans have been seen as a potential market and investment opportunity due to their strategic location and economic potential. External powers have sought to exploit economic opportunities in the region, including infrastructure projects, energy resources, and trade routes (Larrabee, 2003).

### **1-5-3 Ukraine**

First and foremost, Ukraine's geographical location makes it a crucial asset for NATO's expansionist agenda. With its borders touching Russia, Belarus, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Moldova, Ukraine serves as a valuable springboard for NATO's eastward expansion. This expansion allows NATO to encroach on Russia's sphere of influence, undermining its regional dominance and exerting pressure on its borders. Furthermore, Ukraine possesses significant natural resources, including fertile agricultural land and substantial energy reserves. By aligning with Ukraine, NATO gains access to these resources, enhancing the economic and energy security of member states. The exploitation of Ukraine's resources

provides NATO countries with a strategic advantage and reduces their reliance on other resource-rich regions. In addition, Ukraine has a large population and a well-trained military. Incorporating Ukraine into NATO allows the alliance to augment its military capabilities significantly. Ukraine's military forces, despite their recent struggles, have demonstrated their resilience and combat readiness. By integrating Ukrainian troops and equipment into NATO, the alliance can bolster its overall military strength and enhance its capacity to deter potential adversaries. Moreover, Ukraine's political alignment with NATO aligns it with Western values and institutions. By bringing Ukraine into the alliance, NATO can further consolidate its influence and promote democratic principles in the region. This alignment strengthens NATO's ideological and political influence, creating a united front against perceived threats from Russia and other non-aligned nations. Lastly, Ukraine's inclusion in NATO would serve as a warning to other neighboring countries considering resistance against NATO's expansion. It would send a strong message that any opposition to NATO's interests will be met with consequences. This deterrent effect ensures the alliance's hegemonic aspirations and discourages any challenge to its dominance (Kuzio, 2008).

In conclusion, Ukraine's importance to NATO lies in its strategic location, access to valuable resources, military capabilities, and alignment with Western values. The integration of Ukraine into NATO expands the alliance's reach, weakens Russia's influence, and enhances NATO's military strength and economic security (Kuzio, 2008).

## **1-6 The Clash of Civilizations Theory**

Samuel P. Huntington's theory of the Clash of Civilizations, introduced in his 1993 essay "The Clash of Civilizations?", proposes that cultural and civilizational differences will be the primary sources of conflict in the post-Cold War world. Huntington argues that the era of ideological and economic struggles between nations has ended, and that the world is now characterized by clashes between major civilizations with distinct cultural and religious

traditions. Huntington identifies these civilizations as the fundamental building blocks of global politics, shaping the identities, values, and behaviors of individuals within them. He highlights seven or eight major civilizations, including the Western, Islamic, Hindu, Chinese, Orthodox, Latin American, African, and possibly Japanese civilizations. According to Huntington, these civilizations are based on shared history, language, religion, and other cultural attributes, and they act as distinct entities with their own interests and aspirations. The Clash of Civilizations theory suggests that conflicts between civilizations will arise due to their divergent values and interests. Huntington argues that these conflicts will occur along cultural fault lines, leading to political, economic, and even military confrontations. He provides several examples to support his theory, such as the tensions between the West and the Islamic world, the historical struggles between Orthodox Christianity and Islam in the Balkans, and the clash between Western and indigenous cultures in Latin America. Huntington's theory has attracted both support and criticism. Proponents argue that it offers a valuable framework for understanding global conflicts in a world increasingly shaped by cultural differences. They believe that acknowledging and appreciating these differences can help nations develop more effective foreign policies and promote peaceful coexistence. Additionally, they contend that the theory emphasizes the need for dialogue and understanding between civilizations. Critics, however, raise various objections to the theory. They argue that Huntington oversimplifies the complex dynamics of global politics by reducing conflicts to cultural clashes. They also highlight the diversity within civilizations and the existence of overlapping and hybrid identities, which challenge the notion of rigid civilizational boundaries. Critics further argue that the theory can lead to essentialism, stereotypes, and discrimination, as it categorizes entire societies based on cultural traits. Despite the criticisms, Huntington's Clash of Civilizations theory has had a significant impact on academic and policy debates. It has stimulated discussions on cultural diversity, identity politics, and the role of religion in international relations. While it is important to approach the theory critically, acknowledging its limitations

and potential for misinterpretation, it remains a thought-provoking contribution to the understanding of global conflicts in a rapidly changing world (Huntington, 1993).

## **Conclusion**

Regarding NATO's motives to expand, it is important to consider the historical context and the interests of its member states, particularly the United States. One of the primary motivations for NATO's expansion is the desire to maintain and extend the influence of the United States and its allies in the post-Cold War era. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, NATO sought to prevent any power vacuum from emerging in Eastern Europe. By expanding its membership, NATO aimed to solidify its presence in the region and project its military strength closer to Russia's borders. This move serves the strategic interests of the United States, as it enables a stronger military presence in an area that was previously within the Soviet sphere of influence. Furthermore, NATO expansion can be seen as a means to promote Western democratic values and institutions. Advocates argue that by incorporating new members, NATO offers security guarantees and helps stabilize countries transitioning from communism to democracy. This perspective suggests that NATO's expansion is driven by a genuine desire to spread democratic principles and promote stability in Europe.

However, critics argue that NATO's expansion is inherently provocative and antagonistic towards Russia. They contend that the enlargement of NATO, especially into former Soviet republics like the Baltic states, undermines Russia's security and fosters an adversarial relationship. From this standpoint, NATO's expansion is viewed as an encroachment on Russia's perceived sphere of influence, sparking tensions and potentially triggering a new Cold War.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

**The clash of The Western and The  
Slavic Civilizations.**

## **Introduction**

The clash between the Western and Slavic civilizations has been a recurring theme throughout history, marked by complex interactions, cultural conflicts, and geopolitical rivalries. These two distinct civilizations, with their unique cultural heritages, values, and historical experiences, have shaped the course of global politics, economics, and cultural norms. The Western civilization, originating from the ancient Greek and Roman traditions, has been a dominant force, advocating democratic values, individualism, and liberal traditions. On the other hand, the Slavic civilization, encompassing countries such as Russia, Ukraine, Poland, and the Balkan states, holds a rich history and cultural heritage rooted in Eastern Orthodox Christianity and Slavic traditions. This clash between the Western and Slavic civilizations has given rise to tensions, misunderstandings, and conflicts, making it an intriguing and significant subject of study in understanding the complexities of intercultural relations and global affairs.

### **2-1 The Western-Slavic Similarities**

Slavic civilization and Western civilization have distinct cultural and historical characteristics, but they also share some similarities. Slavic civilization primarily emerged in Eastern Europe, characterized by a different historical trajectory compared to Western civilization. Slavic territories experienced different patterns of political development, cultural interactions, and external influences, leading to distinct historical experiences. The historical interactions and external influences on Slavic and Western civilizations have been distinct. Western civilization has been influenced by the Greco-Roman heritage, the Renaissance, Enlightenment ideas, and colonialism, which have had a profound impact on its political development. Slavic civilization, while also influenced by neighboring cultures and empires,

experienced different historical dynamics and interactions, often shaped by invasions, conflicts, and the legacy of communism (Curta, 2001).

Slavic civilization has been significantly influenced by Eastern Orthodox Christianity, which has shaped its religious, cultural, and social practices. In contrast, Western civilization has been influenced by various forms of Christianity, including Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, which have played a vital role in shaping Western political and cultural institutions (Jervis, 1998). Moreover, it is worth to highlight Huntington's categorization of Slavic civilization as a "swing civilization" is based on several factors. Huntington argued that Slavic civilization shares both cultural and religious affinities with both Western and Orthodox civilizations. Slavic nations have historical connections and influences from both Western Europe and the Eastern Orthodox world, which makes them occupy a unique position between the two.

Huntington also considered the geographic location of Slavic nations in Eastern Europe, which acts as a transitional zone between Western and Orthodox civilizations. The historical interactions and geopolitical dynamics in this region contribute to the "swing" status of Slavic civilization. Huntington noted that throughout history, Slavic nations have experienced periods of alignment with both Western and Eastern influences. For example, during the Cold War, some Slavic nations were part of the Soviet bloc, while others aligned with Western interests. These historical events further support the notion of Slavic civilization as a swing civilization (Huntington, 1993).

Ultimately, the categorization of Slavic civilization as a swing civilization by Huntington reflects a logical interpretation of historical and cultural factors that influence the position of Slavic nations between Western and Orthodox civilizations. Furthermore, it also has historically exhibited a diverse range of political systems. Feudalism, autocratic monarchies, and communist regimes have been prominent in various Slavic regions. Western civilization, on the other hand, has seen a broader spectrum of political systems, including

feudalism, constitutional monarchies, republics, and modern democracies (Huntington, 1993). Overall, understanding the differences between Slavic and Western civilizations requires a nuanced and contextual analysis that considers the complexities of history, politics, culture, and geography.

## **2-2 Russia vs USSR**

While acknowledging that both entities share a historical connection, it is worth mentioning the contrasting aspects of Russia and the USSR and the complexities of their historical and contemporary relations. The differences presented here reflect the vanished threat of USSR and communism that NATO claims to fight. The most apparent difference between Russia and the USSR lies in their political ideologies. The USSR was founded on the principles of communism, which sought to establish a classless society and the means of production under state control. In contrast, Russia, after the dissolution of the USSR, transitioned to a market-based economy and embraced a more mixed system with elements of capitalism and state control.

**Territorial Scope:** The USSR was a multinational federation composed of multiple republics, spanning vast territories across Eastern Europe and Central Asia. It encompassed diverse ethnic groups and languages, all falling under the central authority of the Soviet government. In contrast, Russia refers specifically to the largest and most dominant successor state of the USSR, with a narrower geographic focus on the territory of present-day Russia (Francisco, 2017).

**Global Ambitions:** The USSR, driven by its communist ideology, sought to spread its influence and export revolution to other countries. It aimed to establish socialist states across the world and challenge the capitalist Western powers. Russia, on the other hand, while still seeking to protect its interests and project influence, does not espouse the same global ideological mission as the USSR (Francisco, 2017).

The USSR operated as a centralized state with power concentrated in the Communist Party and its leadership. It had a planned economy and a highly structured political system, characterized by strict party control, censorship, and limited political freedoms. Russia, following the collapse of the USSR, transitioned to a more pluralistic political system, with multiple political parties, greater press freedom (although with certain restrictions), and a market-oriented economy (Francisco, 2017).

The USSR maintained a significant military presence and projection of power globally, with a focus on maintaining a balance of power with the United States during the Cold War. Russia, while still possessing a formidable military, has scaled back its global military presence and has a more regional focus, with a particular emphasis on protecting its perceived sphere of influence.

International Relations: The USSR was engaged in a global ideological struggle with the West, particularly the United States, during the Cold War era. It was often characterized by intense rivalry and competition in various spheres, including politics, military, economics, and ideology. Russia, while still having disagreements and competing interests with the West, engages in a more pragmatic approach to international relations, often seeking cooperation in areas of mutual benefit.

In conclusion, the historical connection between Russia and the USSR cannot be denied, but it is essential to recognize the contrasting aspects that exist between them and the complexities of their historical and contemporary relations. While both entities share certain similarities, such as a shared past and geopolitical influence, it is crucial to acknowledge the differences that have emerged over time (Francisco, 2017).

The vanished threat of the USSR and communism, which NATO claims to fight against, plays a significant role in shaping the present-day dynamics between Russia and the Western world. The collapse of the USSR marked the end of an era characterized by Cold War tensions and ideological conflicts. However, it is important to note that Russia, as the successor state to

the USSR, still retains certain aspects of its Soviet legacy, such as its military strength and geopolitical ambitions. The complexities of Russia's relationship with the West are multifaceted (drew, 2023).

## **2-3 Common Cultural and Religious Aspects between Russia and Ukraine**

Russia and Ukraine, geographically and historically intertwined, have experienced centuries of shared cultural and religious exchanges. This section provides an overview of the historical connections between the two nations and sets the stage for exploring their commonalities. Russia and Ukraine are both part of the East Slavic cultural and linguistic group, sharing a common linguistic origin and a significant overlap in vocabulary, grammar, and historical dialects. This linguistic similarity has fostered cultural affinity and facilitated communication between the two nations. Both Russia and Ukraine boast rich folk traditions characterized by vibrant music, dance, costumes, and folklore. These traditions often exhibit striking similarities, reflecting shared cultural roots and historical interactions.

The establishment of Kievan Rus in the 9th century laid the foundation for both Russian and Ukrainian statehood. The Kievan Rus period witnessed shared political, cultural, and religious developments, including the adoption of Orthodox Christianity from Byzantium. The Mongol invasion of the 13th century had a profound impact on both Russia and Ukraine. Both nations experienced Mongol rule, which influenced their political structures, economic systems, and cultural practices (Cross, 1948).

Orthodox Christianity has played a central role in the cultural and religious heritage of both Russia and Ukraine. The Kievan Metropolitan, which eventually evolved into the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, became the cradle of Orthodox Christianity for the Slavic world, including Russia. The Moscow Patriarchate later emerged as a significant religious institution with influence over both nations (Cross, 1948).

Russian and Ukrainian literature, poetry, and visual arts have often intersected, sharing common themes, motifs, and influences. Prominent figures like Taras Shevchenko, Nikolai Gogol, and Ivan Franko have contributed to a shared literary heritage that transcends national boundaries. The architectural and artistic styles of Russia and Ukraine display similarities, especially in ecclesiastical structures. Iconography, frescoes, and religious art demonstrate shared artistic traditions rooted in Byzantine and Orthodox influences.

Orthodox Religious Festivals and celebrations, such as Easter and Christmas, are widely observed in both Russia and Ukraine, often accompanied by traditional customs, music, and food. These shared religious festivities foster a sense of cultural unity and continuity. Folk Festivals and Traditions Many folk festivals, such as Maslenitsa (Shrovetide) and Ivan Kupala, are celebrated with similar rituals and customs in both Russia and Ukraine. These festivities reflect common agricultural and seasonal traditions, reinforcing cultural connections (Cross, 1948).

Russia and Ukraine share a complex and intertwined history, characterized by common cultural and religious aspects. The linguistic similarities, historical events, shared religious traditions, cultural exchanges, and artistic influences have contributed to a sense of interconnectedness between the two nations. While acknowledging the biases that may influence this historical perspective, it is important to recognize the enduring legacy of this historical relationship. The intertwined history of Russia and Ukraine has shaped the identity of both nations and their people. From the early Kievan Rus to the Mongol invasion, the reign of the Tsars, and the Soviet era, these events have left an indelible mark on the collective memory and cultural fabric of both societies. The shared religious traditions, such as Eastern Orthodox Christianity, have played a significant role in establishing common values and moral frameworks. Cultural exchanges, including literature, music, and art, have fostered a sense of appreciation and admiration for each other's heritage. Despite political tensions and conflicts, the historical interconnectedness between Russia and Ukraine cannot be ignored or diminished.

It is through acknowledging and understanding this complex history that a path to reconciliation and mutual respect can be forged, paving the way for a more harmonious future between these two nations (Cross, 1948).

## **2-4 Ukraine before and during Zelenskyy's Presidency**

The pre-Zelenskyy era in Ukraine was characterized by strong pro-Russian cultural leanings, which reflected the historical, linguistic, and cultural ties between the two nations. Throughout history, Russia and Ukraine have shared deep cultural, linguistic, and historical connections. The pre-Zelenskyy era in Ukraine was marked by a cultural orientation that favored alignment with Russia, both politically and socially. This alignment was seen as a natural reflection of the close bonds and shared heritage between the two nations.

The pro-Russian cultural leanings in Ukraine were rooted in the strong historical ties between Russia and Ukraine. These ties were exemplified through the common language, traditions, and customs shared by both nations. The Russian language held a prominent position as the lingua franca, and Russian literature, music, and art were widely celebrated and admired in Ukrainian society.

Religion played a pivotal role in shaping cultural beliefs during the pre-Zelenskyy era. The dominant influence of the Russian Orthodox Church and its historical ties with the Ukrainian Orthodox Church fostered a deep sense of religious unity between Russia and Ukraine. The Orthodox Christian faith provided a moral compass and guided societal norms and practices. Furthermore, the pre-Zelenskyy era witnessed a close political relationship between Ukraine and Russia. Political leaders often maintained strong ties with Moscow, and cooperation between the two nations extended to various aspects of governance, economy, and security. This political alignment further reinforced the pro-Russian cultural leanings prevalent in Ukrainian society (Santora, 2022).

The pro-Russian cultural leanings in Ukraine were seen as a reflection of the shared heritage and cultural affinity between the two nations. The close historical, linguistic, and cultural connections fostered a sense of unity and kinship among the Russian and Ukrainian populations. Cultural exchanges, migration, and intermarriage contributed to the strengthening of these bonds and the development of a sense of common identity. Moreover, the pro-Russian cultural leanings were not limited to the political and social sphere but also encompassed economic and trade ties. Russia has historically been Ukraine's largest trading partner, and economic cooperation between the two nations played a crucial role in shaping Ukraine's cultural landscape. The reliance on Russian markets and economic integration further deepened the pro-Russian orientation prevalent in Ukraine (Akaliyski, 2023).

The presidency of Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Ukraine has been viewed as a concerning shift towards Western cultural values. Zelenskyy's administration actively pursued policies that aimed to align Ukraine with Western norms and ideals, disregarding the historical and cultural ties between Russia and Ukraine. For centuries, Russia and Ukraine have shared deep cultural, linguistic, and historical connections. The pro-Russian leanings that were prevalent in Ukraine before Zelenskyy's presidency was seen as a natural reflection of this shared heritage. However, Zelenskyy's administration took a different approach, actively promoting Western cultural values that disregarded the historical and cultural bonds between the two nations (Akaliyski, 2023).

One of the main concerns from a Russian perspective is the embrace of progressive social issues. Zelenskyy's presidency witnessed a growing acceptance of LGBTQ+ rights, gender equality, and individual freedoms. While these issues may be prevalent in Western societies, they are seen as a departure from the traditional values and beliefs that have shaped Ukrainian culture, which has been heavily influenced by Orthodox Christianity (Akaliyski, 2023).

The promotion of media freedom and pluralism under Zelenskyy's government is also viewed with suspicion from a Russian perspective. While media plurality is an important aspect of any democratic society, it is concerning when it leads to the dissemination of biased and inaccurate information. The diversification of media sources and the challenges posed to the dominance of state-controlled media can contribute to the spread of misinformation and propaganda, ultimately undermining the social fabric of Ukraine. Moreover, the influx of Western cultural influences in Ukraine, including music, fashion, art, and entertainment, is seen as a threat to the preservation of traditional Ukrainian culture. Russian cultural expressions have historically been influential in Ukraine, reflecting the shared history and heritage of the two nations. However, the growing popularity of Western cultural icons and trends among the younger generation is viewed as a dilution of Ukraine's unique cultural identity (Akaliyski, 2023).

From a religious perspective, the establishment of an independent Ukrainian Orthodox Church is seen as a deliberate attempt to distance Ukraine from its historical ties with the Russian Orthodox Church. This move has been perceived as a politically motivated decision, undermining the religious unity that has long existed between Russia and Ukraine. It has caused tension and division within the Orthodox Christian community and has further strained the already complex relationship between the two nations (Santora, 2022).

### **2-5-1 A Broken Promise**

The issue of whether NATO promised Russia not to expand eastwards is a topic of debate among historians, scholars, and policymakers. The key question revolves around the interpretation of verbal assurances given by Western leaders to Soviet and Russian officials during the negotiations surrounding the reunification of Germany in the early 1990s.

At the time, there were discussions between Soviet and Western leaders about the future of NATO and its potential enlargement. The Soviet Union, faced with internal challenges and

a changing international landscape, was concerned about the possibility of NATO expanding into former Warsaw Pact countries or other former Soviet states. Some Soviet officials claim that they received assurances from Western leaders that NATO would not expand eastward (Sarotte, 2021). However, from the Western perspective, no formal, written commitments were made not to expand NATO. The negotiations primarily focused on the reunification of Germany and the withdrawal of Soviet troops from East Germany. Western leaders contend that any verbal assurances given during these negotiations were not binding commitments and were merely intended to ease Soviet concerns at the time (Sarotte, 2021).

It's Important to note that the reunification of Germany and the subsequent dissolution of the Soviet Union significantly altered the political landscape of Europe. In the following years, several former Warsaw Pact countries, such as Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, expressed their desire to join NATO. These countries went through a democratic transformation and sought to align themselves with Western institutions, including NATO, as a means of ensuring their security and stability however it was perceived as a betrayal for the verbal assurances given by Western leaders to Soviet and Russian officials (Itzkowitz Shifrinson, 2016).

## **2-5-2 NATO's Pursuit for Purpose**

Following the end of the Cold War, a spirit of cooperation and partnership was envisioned between Russia and the West. However, NATO's shift from a defensive alliance to a more interventionist role to expand its membership and include former Warsaw Pact countries, as well as the Baltic states, was viewed by Russia as a violation of the understanding reached during the negotiations for German reunification. Russia felt betrayed, as it believed that NATO had given assurances that it would not expand eastward (Kamran, 2022).

NATO's interventionist role raises concerns about the principles of state sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs. The interventions conducted by NATO, such as the

Kosovo conflict in 1999, were conducted without explicit approval from the United Nations Security Council, thereby disregarding international legal norms. This perception reinforces skepticism of NATO's actions and intentions. The new adopted Interventionist role undermines the principles of international law and the United Nations system. Russia advocates for multilateral decision-making processes, arguing that interventions should only be authorized by the United Nations Security Council. By bypassing these mechanisms, NATO, in Russia's view, weakens the authority and effectiveness of the United Nations and erodes the global order (Kamran, 2022).

Furthermore, NATO's interventionist role has been applied selectively, leading to accusations of double standards. Russian officials have pointed to instances where NATO has engaged in military interventions without a clear mandate, while similar situations in other regions have been met with different responses. This selective approach, according to Russia, undermines the credibility and fairness of NATO's interventionist policies. The NATO-led military intervention in Kosovo in 1999 is one of the examples where the organization's selective application of principles is evident. NATO justified its intervention on humanitarian grounds, aiming to prevent ethnic cleansing and protect the civilian population. However, from a Russian narrative, the intervention was seen as a violation of international law and an infringement on the sovereignty of a sovereign state. The absence of a UN Security Council resolution further reinforced the perception that NATO's actions were driven by its own interests rather than adherence to established international norms (Kamran, 2022).

Moreover, the ongoing crisis in Ukraine has been a significant point of contention between Russia and NATO. the organization's support for Ukraine and its expansionist aspirations are viewed as provocative and detrimental to regional stability. NATO's decision to provide military assistance to Ukraine, including training and equipment, has been perceived as a direct interference in Russia's backyard. Moreover, the alliance's reluctance to

acknowledge Russia's legitimate security concerns in the region has deepened the divide and exacerbated tensions.

### **2-5-3 NATO's Expansion, Neo-imperialism**

One of the key criticisms leveled against NATO is its expansion beyond its original purpose. While NATO was initially established to counter the Soviet Union's influence during the Cold War, its enlargement into Eastern Europe and Central Asia has raised eyebrows. Critics argue that this expansion into former Soviet territories and Eastern Bloc countries represents a form of encroachment into regions traditionally outside of NATO's sphere of influence. This posits that NATO's expansion has been driven by geopolitical motivations rather than genuine security concerns. By incorporating these nations, NATO has expanded its reach and established military bases in areas that were once aligned with the Soviet Union. This expansion has been interpreted as a means for Western powers, particularly the United States, to consolidate their influence and project power beyond their traditional boundaries (Kamran, 2022).

Critics argue that NATO's expansion into Eastern Europe and former Soviet territories goes beyond its original mandate of collective defense. Instead, they contend that the alliance's enlargement is driven by geopolitical ambitions and a desire to exert hegemonic influence. From a non-Western standpoint, NATO's expansion is seen as a deliberate encroachment into regions historically aligned with Russia's sphere of influence. This perceived intrusion into Russia's backyard is viewed as a strategic move to diminish Russian power and increase Western dominance. By establishing military bases and integrating former Soviet republics into the alliance, NATO is accused of pursuing a neo-imperialist agenda aimed at consolidating Western control over resource-rich areas and strategic corridors (Kamran, 2022).

Another aspect of NATO's expansion seen through the neo-imperialist lens is the pursuit of resource access and economic exploitation. Non-Western critics argue that NATO's enlargement into regions with valuable resources, such as oil and gas reserves, is a calculated move to secure Western interests and maintain control over critical economic assets. By expanding its influence into resource-rich territories, NATO facilitates the access and exploitation of these resources by Western corporations. This perspective portrays the alliance as a vehicle for neo-imperialist economic policies, benefiting Western powers and their economic elites at the expense of the local populations and their sovereignty (Kamran, 2022).

NATO's expansion has also been criticized as a means of strategic militarization and power projection. Non-Western nations perceive the alliance's enlargement as a step towards encircling potential rivals and expanding Western military presence beyond traditional boundaries. The establishment of military bases in newly incorporated NATO member states, particularly those geographically close to strategic regions, is seen as a means to project Western military power and influence. Critics argue that these actions contribute to an environment of increased tension and potential conflicts, destabilizing the affected regions and perpetuating a neo-imperialist approach to global security (Kamran, 2022).

NATO's military interventions in non-Western countries have been a focal point of the neo-imperialist critique. Instances such as the intervention in the Yugoslav Wars, Afghanistan, and Libya have been viewed as examples of NATO's agenda extending beyond its stated mission. Critics argue that these interventions were not solely motivated by humanitarian concerns but rather aimed at advancing Western interests. These interests include securing access to resources, expanding markets for Western corporations, and establishing military bases in strategic regions. The presence of NATO forces in these countries has been perceived as an assertion of Western dominance and control over global affairs (Kamran, 2022).

An important aspect of the neo-imperialist critique is the unequal power dynamics within NATO, with the United States as the dominant force. Non-Western nations contend that

NATO serves as a platform for Western powers to exert their influence, sidelining the perspectives and interests of other nations. This Western-centric approach to international relations perpetuates a system where decisions are made primarily by Western powers, reinforcing the perception of NATO as an instrument of Western dominance (Kamran, 2022).

#### **2-5-4 The Ukrainian Investment**

NATO's support to Ukraine in the ongoing war with Russia is primarily focused on political and practical assistance, as well as moral support. While NATO has not been directly involved in the conflict, it has expressed solidarity with Ukraine and condemned Russia's actions. Here are some aspects of NATO's support

**Political Support:** NATO has consistently expressed political support for Ukraine's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and right to choose its own path. NATO member states have condemned Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and its ongoing support for separatist groups in eastern Ukraine (Duggal, 2023).

**Practical Assistance:** NATO has provided practical assistance to Ukraine to enhance its defense capabilities and security sector reforms. This includes advice, training, and capacity-building support in areas such as military modernization, command and control, and defense institution building (Duggal, 2023).

**Enhanced Cooperation:** NATO and Ukraine have deepened their cooperation through various mechanisms such as the NATO-Ukraine Annual National Program and the NATO-Ukraine Joint Working Group. These platforms facilitate dialogue, cooperation, and joint planning between NATO and Ukraine (Duggal, 2023).

Trust Funds: NATO has established trust funds to assist Ukraine in areas such as logistics, cyber defense, medical rehabilitation, and disposal of explosive remnants of war. These funds are financed voluntarily by NATO member states (Duggal, 2023).

Monitoring and Verification: NATO has conducted monitoring and verification activities to assess the security situation in Ukraine and provide valuable information to both NATO and Ukraine.

Between January 24 and November 20, 2022, NATO members dedicated a minimum of 75.2 billion euros (\$80.5bn) towards financial, humanitarian, and military assistance. (Duggal, 2023).

Nevertheless, one might question whether the purported justifications behind NATO's substantial funding and unwavering backing are truly worthwhile. Furthermore, what can NATO anticipate as a return on its generous support, and how is Ukraine expected to repay its debts to the Western alliance.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the clash between the Western and Slavic civilizations has had a profound impact on the course of human history. The Western civilization's emphasis on democratic values and liberal traditions, contrasted with the rich Eastern Orthodox Christian and Slavic traditions of the Slavic civilization, has led to tensions and conflicts between these two cultural spheres. Exploring this clash is crucial for understanding the complexities of intercultural relations and global affairs. By delving into the historical, cultural, and geopolitical dimensions of the Western-Slavic clash, researchers can gain valuable insights into the factors that shape contemporary conflicts, such as the Russo-Ukrainian conflict, and analyse them through the lens of Huntington's Clash of Civilizations theory. It is through such investigations that a deeper understanding of the dynamics between these civilizations can be

achieved, contributing to the broader field of international relations and fostering intercultural dialogue and cooperation.

## **General conclusion**

This research aimed to explore the relationship between NATO's expansion and the Russo-Ukrainian conflict through the lens of Samuel Huntington's Clash of Civilizations theory. By analysing the historical background, geopolitical dynamics, and cultural aspects of the conflict, this study sought to shed light on the applicability and limitations of Huntington's theory in explaining the complex interplay between these two significant factors.

The findings of this research conclude that NATO's expansion can contribute to the Russo-Ukrainian conflict in several ways, as viewed through the lens of Huntington's Clash of Civilizations theory. Firstly, NATO's expansion towards Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union is perceived by Russia as a threat to its security and influence in the region. This perception stems from the clash between Western and Slavic civilizations, as highlighted by Huntington. Secondly, NATO's presence in countries neighbouring Russia, such as Ukraine, can be seen as an encroachment on Russia's perceived sphere of influence, leading to increased tensions and potential conflict. Finally, the expansion of NATO can exacerbate the cultural and civilizational fault lines within Ukraine itself, creating divisions and conflicts between the Western-oriented regions and those with closer ties to Russia. By exploring these dynamics, this study aims to provide insights into the relationship between NATO's expansion and the Russo-Ukrainian conflict from the perspective of Huntington's theory.

This research delved into the historical and geopolitical factors that have shaped NATO's decision to expand, particularly towards Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. It analysed the motivations, strategic interests, and power dynamics driving NATO's

enlargement and assess how these factors have impacted the Russo-Ukrainian conflict. In addition, this research examined the civilizational fault lines identified by Huntington and explored their intersection with NATO's expansion and its impact on the Russo-Ukrainian conflict. It analysed how cultural, historical, and religious differences between the Western and Slavic civilizations have influenced the conflict dynamics, and whether NATO's expansion has exacerbated or mitigated these fault lines.

Huntington's categorization of the Slavic civilization as a "swing civilization" recognizes the historical complexities and influences on the Slavic peoples. Situated between Europe and Asia, the Slavic lands have experienced cultural assimilation and power struggles. This categorization does not diminish the competitiveness or agency of the Slavic civilization but acknowledges its potential to align with different civilizations based on the geopolitical context.

Future research might consider conducting a comparative analysis of other geopolitical conflicts or instances of territorial disputes within the context of Huntington's Clash of Civilizations theory. Explore how civilizational fault lines, power dynamics, and cultural clashes contribute to these conflicts. By examining a broader range of cases, researchers can enhance our understanding of the applicability and limitations of Huntington's theory in different conflict contexts. Additionally, it is important to acknowledge the limitations and areas of expertise. we may not possess an expert-level understanding of International Relations and Political Science, as well as History and Geopolitics. Also, the inherent subjectivity and ongoing developments in the conflict further add to the limitations of this discussion.

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يتعمق هذا البحث حول تأثير توسع الناتو على الصراع الروسي الأوكراني ، مع التركيز على الانقسامات الحضارية الكامنة والتوترات المتزايدة التي تنشأ نتيجة لذلك. بالاعتماد على نظرية صراع الحضارات لصموئيل هنتنغتون ، تهدف الدراسة إلى تعزيز فهم الديناميكيات المعقدة التي تقود الصراع وآثاره على الأمن الإقليمي والعالمي. باستخدام نهج نوعي مع تحليل المحتوى كطريقة أساسية ، يبحث البحث في العلاقة بين توسع حلف الناتو والصراع الروسي الأوكراني ، مع تقييم إمكانية تطبيق نظرية هنتنغتون في فهم التفاعل بين توسع الناتو وخطوط الصدع الحضاري القائمة. تشير نتائج البحث إلى أن نظرية هنتنغتون تقدم رؤى قيمة لفهم الصراع الروسي الأوكراني وتوسع الناتو. وتجدر الإشارة إلى أن الانقسام داخل أوكرانيا ، الذي يتسم بالتفاوتات التاريخية والثقافية واللغوية بين مناطقها الغربية والشرقية ، يساهم بشكل كبير في تصعيد الصراع. تسعى المناطق الغربية ، المتأثرة بالثقافة والقيم الأوروبية ، إلى التوافق مع الحضارة الغربية التي يمثلها الناتو. على العكس من ذلك ، تسعى المناطق الشرقية ، التي تتمتع بعلاقات أقوى مع روسيا ، إلى الحفاظ على هويتها السلافية ومقاومة التأثيرات الغربية. تعتبر روسيا توسع الناتو تهديدًا لأمنها ونفوذها ، وتتوافق مع نظرية هنتنغتون لأنها تؤكد على الصدام بين الحضارات الغربية والسلافية. يمكن تفسير الدفاع عن الثقافة والهوية السلافية في أوكرانيا ، لا سيما في المناطق الشرقية ، على أنه رد على الغزو الثقافي الغربي المتصور من خلال شراكات الناتو وفرض القيم والأيديولوجيات الغربية. توفر دراسة الصدام بين الحضارات الغربية والسلافية في إطار نظرية هنتنغتون فهمًا أعمق للتحديات والفرص التي تنشأ من التنوع الثقافي في عالمنا المترابط.