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# Fronteiras

## Revista Catarinense de História

### Evaluating different strategies in Ukraine and its effects on the international systems

### Avaliando diferentes estratégias na Ucrânia e seus efeitos nos sistemas internacionais

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#### Abstract

The recent war between Russia and Ukraine, which is considered as the biggest and most important military conflict in Europe after the Second World War, will leave deep consequences on the relations of countries in addition to the pervasive effects on the level of the international system. A crisis in one region affects the interests of other actors in other regions; therefore, the disruption of the balance of power in the relations between the great powers following Russia's attack on Ukraine includes opportunities and threats for international actors. Based on this, the current article aimed to answer the question, "What impact will Russia-Ukraine conflict have on the international system?". The research hypothesis was proposed in such a way that the recent crisis in Ukraine can affect the international system in economic, security, and social axes. The findings of the research showed that the war in Ukraine would probably have had global effects on the food, energy and economic systems. The analysis method used in this research was descriptive and analytical, and to achieve the main goal of the research, which was to investigate the possible effects of the war between Russia and Ukraine on the international system and global actors, the theoretical framework of offensive realism was used.

**Keywords:** Russia; Ukraine; International system; Offensive realism.

#### Resumo

A Guerra recente entre Rússia e Ucrânia, considerada como o maior e mais importante conflito militar na Europa após a Segunda Guerra Mundial, deixará consequências profundas nas relações de países, além de efeitos generalizados a nível do sistema internacional. Uma crise em uma região afeta os interesses de outros atores em outras regiões; portanto, a ruptura do equilíbrio de poder nas relações entre grandes poderes após o ataque da Rússia na Ucrânia inclui oportunidades e ameaças para atores internacionais. Baseado nisso, o presente artigo busca responder a questão: quais impactos o conflito entre Rússia e Ucrânia possui no sistema internacional? A hipótese da pesquisa foi proposta na forma de que a crise recente na Ucrânia pode afetar o sistema internacional nos eixos econômico, de segurança e social. Os resultados da pesquisa mostraram que a guerra na Ucrânia provavelmente teria efeitos globais nos sistemas de comida, energia e economia. O método de análise utilizado nessa pesquisa foi descritivo e analítico, e para atingir o objetivo principal da pesquisa, que era investigar os possíveis efeitos da guerra entre a Rússia e a Ucrânia no sistema internacional e atores globais, o quadro teórico do realismo ofensivo foi utilizado.

**Palavras-chave:** Rússia; Ucrânia; Sistema internacional; Realismo ofensivo.

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## Introduction

Events that produce new patterns of cooperation and conflict among actors occur periodically in the global system. Aside from other international events, the developments in Ukraine and Russia's military invasion in 2022, which caused widespread discontent in this nation, have also had a significant impact on the political, economic, and social dynamics of the global order. Foreign policy of regional and extra-regional actors has been impacted by the Ukrainian war's emergence as one of the world's most controversial issues in the twenty-first century. Vladimir Putin has long seen the fall of the Soviet Union as a major geostrategic tragedy that has deprived Russia of its status as a superpower. Directly as a result of the First World War, the imperial system fell and the Romanovs were overthrown in 1917, in the same way that the Soviet Union became a global superpower following World War II and had an impact on how the international system and interactions between great powers were structured as a bipolar order, this superpower fell apart in 1991 as a result of the Cold War. Russians saw changes in their approach to foreign policy after the fall of the Soviet Union, particularly after Vladimir Putin assumed power in their immediate neighborhood. The foundation for this strategy was laid in Georgia in 2008 with the military assault on Georgia and the takeover of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Following a local vote in 2014, it proceeded with Russia's acquisition of the Crimean Peninsula, and it has continued with its invasion of Ukraine in 2022. This article aimed to address the fundamental question, "What are the international system's consequences of Russia's aggressive strategy toward Ukraine?". The main argument of the current research is that the increase in grain and fuel prices, particularly in the Middle East region, economic problems and consequences, loss of life and humanitarian crisis, displacement of numerous people, and significant geopolitical effects are all consequences of the war between Ukraine and Russia. The research findings demonstrate Russia's aggressive approach, strategy, and policy toward Ukraine, with the main consequences being disruption in the food supply chain, increased political unrest in Russia, problems in the energy economy (oil and gas), and the European energy crisis. In order to accomplish the primary objective of the study, which is to look into the consequences of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine on the players in the international system, the analysis approach employed in this research is descriptive and analytical. Aggressive realism is the theoretical framework that the author utilized. Through the use of library and online resources, the research issue was examined in this research.

## Research literature

Putin and the annexation of Crimea to Russia; a geopolitical analysis of Russia's action in the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula by Yari (2016) examined the Ukraine crisis and Putin's foreign policy towards Ukraine while also exploring the geopolitical elements that influenced Russia's decision to annex the Crimean Peninsula. According to this study, Russia's decision to annexes Crimea in order to protect its interests was primarily motivated by Ukraine's crucial geopolitical position. Russia was subjected to numerous sanctions from the West and Europe after annexing Crimea, but it refused to ignore Ukraine and Crimea due to its geopolitical interests, including its strategic, cultural, and economic ones, all of which depend on the preservation of Crimea. Hafeznia (2022) in an article entitled "Future scenarios of the world in the light of the Ukraine crisis", while examining the developments of the war between Russia and Ukraine from a geopolitical point of view, he considers the main cause of the crisis in Ukraine in 2022 to be the internal political transformation, the establishment of the Western-oriented government and the beginning of the separatist process in the Donbass region in eastern Ukraine and near the Russian borders. The following are the five scenarios that the author took into account regarding the future of the conflict in Ukraine: The first scenario is a constrained and managed conflict in which Russia will prevail; the second is the defeat of Russia and the Ukrainian resistance with the help of Russia's rivals, including the US, Europe, and NATO; the third scenario calls for an agreement between Russia and Ukraine to negotiate a ceasefire through both bilateral and global channels; the fourth scenario is the escalation of the conflict and its expansion outside of Ukraine in the form of an unlimited but controllable war, and the final scenario involves a military battle that spreads outside Ukraine's boundaries, then spreads to the rest of the world and the entire planet. Mearsheimer (2022), in an article in "Foreign Affairs" about the recent developments in Ukraine and the role of Russia and the West, especially the United States, under the title "Why is the West responsible for the crisis in Ukraine?" It has been emphasized that what is said today about the story of Russia's military invasion of Ukraine, which is interpreted as Moscow's ambition to form Great Russia in the form of the former Soviet Union, is a completely wrong perception. The crisis that began in February 2014 was primarily caused by America. According to Mearsheimer, in order to maintain its security against its large neighbor, Ukraine should continue to be a neutral nation that is neither pro-Russian nor pro-Western. As a result, the Western approaches are escalating this critical situation, and as long as the West continues and insists on these policies, we cannot hope to resolve this crisis. The Economist magazine investigated the passage of the global

nuclear agenda during the Ukraine War on the cover of its newest issue (2022), and in an editorial titled “The New Nuclear Age”, it said that the Russian President’s threats to use the atomic bomb had nullified nuclear. It is essential to protect Ukraine from nuclear weapons, but it is insufficient. Putin’s onslaught will not be as successful as it was in 2014, and if he thinks his strategies will again be effective, he will issue additional nuclear threats in the future. The following was stated by Welfens (2022) in an article titled “Russia’s attack on Ukraine: economic obstacles, sanctions issues, and the new international order”. In addition to its effects on the food and energy markets, Russia's conflict against Ukraine has had a significant impact on the European Union, and its member states’ ability to secure their energy supply is undermined. This is especially true for Germany, because it buys nearly 60% of its natural gas and 50% of its coal from Russia, and in this situation, it has not even begun to build any liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminals. On the other hand, the large displacement of asylum seekers along with the sharp increase in gas prices is one of the consequences of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in the international system.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The popular theory in international politics is realism. In the theoretical consideration of the subject covered in this article, an effort will be made to understand the conflict between Russia and Ukraine using the theories of realism and aggressive realism. According to realism theories, factors like value, ethics, norms, culture, ideological interests, and the structure of the political system are irrelevant to national and international players’ strategies. This doctrine places a strong emphasis on four underlying assumptions, including the primacy of states, the value of power and survival, the balance of power, and the anarchy of the international system. In the theory of realism, the main goal of governments is to defend the country, and the option of survival is of higher importance for them, because without the element of survival in the behavior and actions of governments, no government will take action to increase national power in the field of international politics; therefore, the increase in national threats provides the basis for increasing the motivation of power in order to protect political survival (Waltz, 1979, p. 12). Maintaining survival and establishing balance is one of the main motivations in international politics, since the structure of the international system is anarchic, unlike the internal structure, and each of the constituent units of the system is responsible for its own security; therefore, every government is free to pursue different internal and external goals as it sees fit (Yazdan Fam, 2016, p. 730). There are two categories of realism used in international politics: offensive

and defensive. We will come to the conclusion that the causes of the Ukraine crisis in 2022 are more than just divergence when we take into account the origins of the crisis in Ukraine as well as the objectives and strategies of the actors from Russia, America, Europe, Ukraine, and Iran regarding the crisis in Ukraine; therefore, the approach taken by Russia and Ukraine in the face of this crisis will be evaluated in order to better grasp the situation while paying attention to aggressive reality. Among the most significant theorists and intellectuals in the area of aggressive realism are Zakaria and Mearsheimer. According to this view, the ability of rival governments to act aggressively and the lack of knowledge about the motivations of the adversaries are the primary causes of the actors' desire for dominance in the international system's anarchic structure (Mashirzadeh, 2009, p. 132). John Mearsheimer, a professor of international relations at the University of Chicago, as the author of aggressive realism of aggressive neorealism, is based on five assumptions that explain the main reason for the background of power in the anarchic international system by countries. The first reason is that now, as great powers in world politics, countries are the main and major players in the international anarchic system. The second reason is that although the capabilities of different countries are different, each country has a certain amount of military capability and is able to strike and damage its neighbors when necessary. The third issue is the unpredictability of other nations' intentions in the present and the lack of awareness and comprehension of their prospective objectives. Fourth, preserving life and ensuring survival is the primary objective of every nation. Fifth, as sensible players, countries should adopt the right tactics and avoid making poor foreign policy decisions in order to ensure their survival in the future (Mearsheimer, 2001, p. 30-31). Aggressive neo-realism generally holds that increasing relative power can help guarantee the security and survival of the nation. Therefore, proponents of aggressive realism question the balance of power and contend that those who participate in international affairs are never satisfied with their positions of authority and are constantly working to ensure their own safety. They contend that these individuals will go to great lengths to undermine international order in order to prevent the emergence of rivals of a comparable value (Mearsheimer, 2001, p. 21-42). In general, it can be said that Mersheimer's theory of aggressive neorealism has more explanatory power for this research. This theory should be considered as one of the main approaches of realists in designing the security model. In a general view, the most important reason for choosing this approach was to explain Russia's offensive strategy and its effects on the international system. The reason for using the theory of aggressive neorealism in this article was that it is compatible with the changes. It seems that the

above model can provide different contexts of actions of the studied actors (Russia and Ukraine) and a proper understanding of their relationships and analysis of their behavior.

## **Methods**

This study used a descriptive-analytical research design to examine the hypothesis and demonstrate the research problem. We used Persian and Latin library sources, internet sources, and an analytical approach.

## **Results and Discussion**

After independence, Ukraine's foreign policy has always rotated between the West and the East, and along with the spread of nationalist tendencies in Ukraine, its Russian residents also showed interest in joining the eastern regions of Ukraine to Russia (Woehrel, 2014, p. 9). The Ukrainian authorities never managed to create a stable balance in foreign relations in order to reduce the sensitivity of Russia and the West towards them (Fisher, 2014). The Eastern Partnership initiative from 2009 brought the cooperation between Ukraine and the European Union into a new phase of rapprochement, and as expected, Ukraine's European choice was opposed by Russia, and the Russian government declared that integration with the European Union would bring terrible results for Ukraine. Despite the established historical and ethnic ties with the peninsula, the annexation of Crimea is a major step towards a change in the geopolitical landscape of Europe since German reunification. Territorial annexation shows that Russia no longer behaves according to established international rules. The recognition of Kosovo by the West and the recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia have created widespread mistrust between the two actors. Figure 1 shows the conflict areas in eastern Ukraine.



Figure 1: The conflict area in eastern Ukraine



Source: Aljazeera, 2022.

In recent years, the Russian Federation has emerged as one of the most significant and influential global players. In an effort to preserve the status quo, revive and solidify Moscow's hegemonic position in the area, and ultimately confront the objectives and strategies of rival powers (particularly NATO, the European Union, and the United States of America), it has put into place a variety of measures at the level of bilateral and multilateral relationships. Putin saw an opportunity during his second term as president to prioritize reestablishing Russia's authority abroad and in the regional and global arenas after the relative improvement of the country's economic and political conditions. Moscow's policies towards Ukraine are consistent with Russia's continuous orientation since the collapse of the Soviet Union. The national interests of Russia that drive this direction are maintaining Russia's influence in the post-Soviet countries and preventing NATO's eastward expansion. While Moscow's interests have not changed over time and only the strategy of achieving these goals has undergone changes. Russian President Vladimir Putin approved a new national security strategy on December 31, 2015. This doctrine paid a lot of attention to the internal aspects of Russian security. In particular, security threats such as terrorism, extreme nationalism and religious fanaticism, separatism, organized crime and corruption were identified as sources of threats to the country. As for external threats, the 2015 National Security Strategy calls the West into creating the Ukraine crisis, inciting "color revolutions", destroying "traditional Russian religious and moral values", "creating seas of tension in the Eurasian region" and pursuing diverse and interconnected threats against Russia's national security accused. The National Security Strategy of 2015 shows the culmination of a relatively long process of destroying relations



between Moscow and the West and how Russian security elites understand the country's security threats and challenges. On the other hand, Russia's new national security doctrine contains indications that Moscow still welcomes cooperation with its Western and other foreign partners (Rumi, 2017, p. 90). Russia's military attack on Ukraine is the crystallization of a new chapter of historical turns at the level of international relations; An event which itself is the product of a series of economic and political variables as well as developments that have disturbed the structure of the world order and the balance of power in the world during the past three decades. Russia's foreign policy is to ensure its survival and authority in the world system, with the two main goals of preventing the further expansion of NATO to Eastern Europe and weakening and collapsing the sources of authority of competitors and major regional and global powers in the economic sphere and delegitimizing the European Union and America is in global public opinion.

### **Factors affecting the occurrence of the 2022 crisis in Ukraine**

Russia's invasion on Ukraine is one of the significant occurrences that will impact not only the Middle East but also the rest of the world. Actually, since 2014 until now, there has been political tension between Russia and Ukraine, which has continued in this war. The fundamental cause of the military conflict between Russia and Ukraine was the latter's ascent to full NATO membership. When the Trump administration chose to sell Kiev defense equipment in December 2017, this procedure got under way. However, it is difficult to ascertain their "defensive" component, and these weapons would undoubtedly be offensive to Moscow and its allies in the Donbass region. As a result, other NATO nations also took action and provided Ukraine with arms, military training, and access to joint air and sea drills. In the summer of 2022, naval ships from 32 nations took part in a significant naval exercise that was jointly hosted by Ukraine and the United States in the Black Sea region. Operation Sea Breeze actually provoked Russia to fire on a British Navy destroyer that it claimed had deliberately entered Russian territorial waters. This led Russia to a full-scale diplomatic deadlock in December. As Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said: "We have reached our boiling point". Thus, Russia demanded a written guarantee that Ukraine would never become part of NATO and that the alliance would abandon its military facilities and equipment that it had deployed in Eastern Europe since 1997; but the answer he received was: "There will be no change in policies". A month later, Putin launched an attack on Ukraine to eliminate the threat he felt from NATO (Mearsheimer, 2022, p. 2). Tension between Russia and Ukraine increased

as a result of Ukraine's continued Western orientation and ambition to compete with Russia (through America, Europe, and NATO). Based on this pattern, Russia recognized the secession and independence declarations of the Donetsk People's Republic and the Luhansk People's Republic in the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine on February 21, 2022/2. Additionally, he stressed the Ukrainian military's support for the recently formed republics and the denial of Ukraine's participation in NATO. The Russian Federation Council gave President Putin the go-ahead to use military force outside of its boundaries, particularly in Ukraine, and on February 24, 2022/5, Putin's special military command got underway in the east of the country. Parallel to the start of the operation, the Russian ground forces entered Ukraine and by firing missiles and in the form of a military war from the east of Ukraine, the country of Belarus and the Crimean Peninsula to the interior of Ukraine took place (Hafeznia, 2022, p. 2). The Crimean peninsula is located in the south of Ukraine and in the Black Sea. In fact, Crimea was one of the republics of the Soviet Union in the past and was handed over to Ukraine in 1954 after the Second World War, but after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, it emerged as the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. The annexation of Crimea to Russia made it easier to access the open seas deep in the western borders of Russia. After the annexation of the peninsula to Russia based on the March 17, 2014 referendum, the West and Europe imposed sanctions against a group of Russian officials and capitalists in order to punish Russia's continued illegal actions in Ukraine. Although the policy based on pressure on Russia was increasing day by day and its effects were directed at the Russian economy, but it did not lead to Putin's resignation (Yari, 2016, p. 478).

### **The impact of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine on the international system**

Despite its widespread repercussions, Russia's war against Ukraine has not yet changed the global balance of power, but it has had an impact on world politics. However, whether or not the power relations and their balance have changed at the global level will depend on how future events pan out and whether the war in Ukraine ends. In fact, due to the geostrategic competition with the West and the problems caused by the Ukraine crisis, the missile shield and the expansion of NATO in the regional environment, and especially the Ukraine issue, Russia is forced to adopt a foreign policy of multilateral balance with other actors in a multipolar international system. Therefore, Moscow has adopted a multi-faceted policy regarding the possibility of power transfer in the international system, and in order to balance the threats caused by the Ukraine crisis, it has turned to expanding relations with China or Iran. On

February 24, 2022, Russia threatened Ukraine with a nuclear attack and started a military assault on that country. Although the tensions between the two countries, as mentioned, cover a significant portion of their history, from the conflicts in Crimea and Donbas to Russia's support for Ukrainian separatists, maritime incidents, cyber war, and political tensions after Russia's military reinforcement on Ukraine's borders, all of it indicated the possibility of such a conflict. Russia's attack on Ukraine on February 24 can be considered the biggest war in Europe since World War II.

Nevertheless, Russia launched a four-front attack against Ukraine. These attacks began on the fronts running from Crimea in the south, from Belarus in the north, from Kharkiv in the northeast, and from Donetsk and Luhansk in the southeast. Despite significant setbacks and fierce opposition, Ukraine was able to halt the Russians' push on Kiev in March 2022 and drive them back. Russia placed its troops in the Donbas on April 8, 2022, and on April 19 of the same year, it started conducting operations along 500-kilometer fronts from Kharkiv to Donetsk and Luhansk. The Russian soldiers were forced to leave Kharkov by Ukraine on May 13; nevertheless, on May 20, 2022, Mariupol fell into the hands of Russian forces following the long-term siege of the Azofstal steel factory. By raising Russia's nuclear arsenal and promising to subjugate Ukraine, Putin threatened countries tempted to intervene with such consequences. In this regard, even if Putin never uses a bomb in Ukraine, he has disrupted the nuclear order. The consequence of Putin's action can be described in two ways: one, vulnerable countries that see the world from Ukraine's point of view, feel that the best defense against a nuclear-armed aggressor is to have their own weapons. Another consequence is that other nuclear-armed states will believe that by imitating Putin's tactics, they can benefit in future wars (The Economist, 2022, p. 1). Finally, Russia's military offensive has become an important milestone in bringing the world closer to a multipolar international system, in which several countries in the region will become more prominent and play a more active role in global affairs. In fact, Russia's invasion of Ukraine has become another element in the post-Cold War great power rivalry that will shape the international system in the coming years. Therefore, the war in Ukraine heralds a global change from the international system dominated by the West after the Cold War to a multipolar system (Kusa, 2022, p. 7-10). In the following, we will discuss the most important consequences of the Russia-Ukraine war on the international system.

### **Russian politics are becoming increasingly volatile**

The Ukraine conflict prompted the imposition of previously unheard-of sanctions intended to harm the Russian economy, to the point where even Switzerland – a nation renowned for its historical neutrality – blocked a portion of Moscow’s foreign exchange reserves. Before the start of Russian attacks on Ukraine, in mid-December 2021, the Russian Foreign Ministry issued a set of demands, including: banning Ukraine from entering the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and reducing NATO forces and military equipment in Eastern Europe in order to allow for the presence of military forces. This was the country. The United States and other NATO allies have rejected these demands and have warned Russia of retaliation if it invades Ukraine, including economic sanctions and other aid, including small arms and other defensive weapons. According to the West, the sanctions are anticipated to result in significant economic unrest in Russia, which might spark an uprising or coup and pave the way for a long-awaited regime change. Conversely, sanctions on Russia have been enacted jointly by Western nations and Japan. The sanctions’ aim is to delay Vladimir Putin’s objectives by threatening and, if implemented, having a greater economic impact on Russia. After four months of war, Russia faced a shortage of manpower. Fearing protests, the Kremlin is reluctant to call for mobilization and has to resort to extraordinary measures (such as extending the age limit for volunteers ready to join the war) and opting for a covert form of recruitment, such as the use of reserve forces. Several cases of forced burning of offices in Russia strongly indicate that many young people are against being sent to the front lines in Ukraine. In 2022, about four million Russians had already departed the country; many of them made the decision not to go back at this time. This would result in a brain drain across Russia and would be the biggest outflow since the Bolshevik Revolution. What the IT industry is going through right now.

### **Disruption in the food supply chain**

Among the world’s major producers of grains are the Russian Federation and Ukraine. They supply a fifth of the world’s grain, about 30% of its wheat and barley, and more over half of its sunflower oil (United Nations, 2022, p. 3). The most significant problem that could arise in the interim as a result of Russia’s conflict with Ukraine is the shortage of raw materials and the interruption of the food supply chain, as there will likely be a disruption in the large-scale production and export of wheat in both Russia and Ukraine. In some countries such as Egypt and Lebanon, this situation can cause famine and political unrest. On the other hand, the decrease in the import of corn, wheat, rapeseed and sunflower oil and flour from Ukraine affects the price of food and the food industry in the European Union. High market prices and

inflationary trends caused by the war in Ukraine have caused concern for the European Union. Russia's military attack on Ukraine has a direct impact on global food security and the affordability of raw materials. In this regard, the leaders of the European Union stressed at the June 23–24, 2022, European Council meeting that only Russia is to blame for the current global food crisis and urged it to immediately cease targeting agricultural infrastructure and permit the transfer of grain from Ukraine. Based on this, the EU leaders stressed that the Russian invasion of Ukraine has terrible effects for the people there as well as around the world, and that Russia's action has considerably worsened the food security problem (European Council, 2022). The European Union is not the only region where food prices are rising. Ukraine and Russia are the world's top exporters of natural gas and the second-largest exporters of oil, in addition to being the primary suppliers of wheat, barley, corn, and sunflower oil. These two nations export around 5% of the fertilizers used worldwide. Therefore, the price of items will rise as a result of their conflict. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) published its third consecutive record food price index on April 8, 2022.

Figure 2: Food index provided by the Food and Agriculture Organization



Source: United Nations, 2022, p. 3-8.

Food costs have never been higher since the Food and Agriculture Organization started keeping track of them, as you can see in the figure 2, which shows that they are currently 34% higher than last year (2022). The cost of gasoline has more than doubled, the cost of fertilizer has more than doubled, and the price of crude oil has climbed by almost 60%. The effects of the war in Ukraine are felt not only in the region, but also around the world due to this region's significant contribution to providing food and energy. Vulnerable populations in developing countries are particularly exposed to these price fluctuations, as they spend a greater share of their income on food and energy (United Nations, 2022, p. 3-8). Before the 2022 invasion,

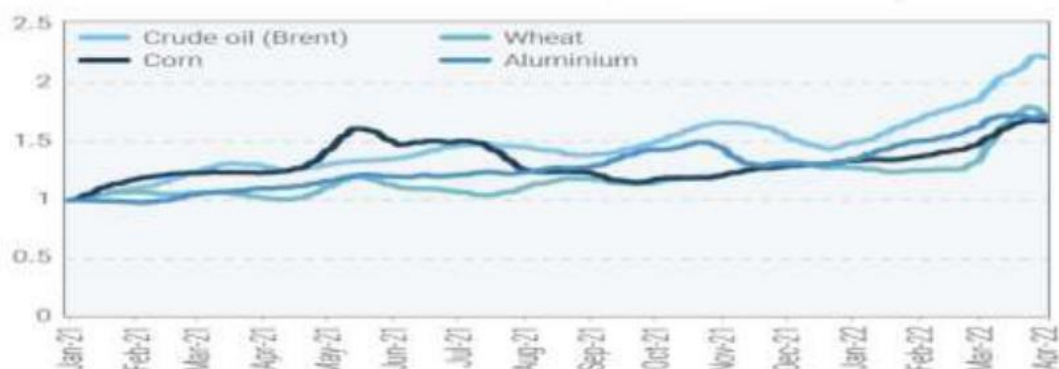
Ukraine exported more than 40% of its goods to the EU, making the EU the country's leading trading partner. According to the agriculture and food sector, Ukraine supplied about half of the grains, vegetable oils and a quarter of the meat consumed by the European Union. In this regard, the Russian invasion will have a negative impact on Ukrainian trade (Vinci, 2022, p. 1) and UNCTAD's assessment of the impact of the Ukrainian war on trade and development confirms the prospect of an increase in food, fuel and fertilizer prices. In addition to the export sector, Ukraine is one of the important countries in the field of importing goods. In fact, the total import of Ukrainian goods in 2020 amounted to 53.7 billion dollars, which ranks Ukraine 47th in the world in terms of trade value (Barklie, 2022).

### **Decrease in the dollar's share in global trade**

Many nations are economically starving themselves of Russian energy and raw commodities, but others may hasten the US dollar's demise as the world's reserve currency. At the end of March 2022, Russian President Putin declared that he would prefer to pay the price of export gas in rubles rather than dollars for the so-called "unfriendly" countries, which actually represents a clear strategic move in terms of economic conflict in the global system and it is between the West and Russia. Putin's conduct may therefore impose an energy supply embargo on Germany and other member states of the European Union. For example, the US will be limited in redistributing energy in the form of liquefied natural gas (LNG) to the EU, as the pipeline network for transporting the gas is still weak. On the other hand, India has quadrupled its oil imports from Russia and the two countries are exploring exchanges using the ruble and rupee. Also, major oil producers such as Saudi Arabia are considering trading with China using the Yuan, which overshadows the petrodollar. On the other hand, this will further increase the price of energy in Europe. The price of agricultural goods and basic metals such as: Wheat, aluminum, cobalt, nickel, palladium, titanium, neon, nitrate, ammonium and rare earths have also increased (Figure 3). If these prices increase further and remain high, industrial sectors, especially automotive and electronics, will be hit hard worldwide (UN DESA, 2022, p. 3-4).



Figure 3: Global prices of energy, metals and agricultural commodities



Source: Wagner, 2022, p. 4.

Russia and China are trading their own currencies, hoping to find an alternative to the Western-designed SWIFT banking system. Russia is largely isolated on the international stage politically, but apparently still has China on its side (Welfens, 2022, p. 1). Russia's military invasion of Ukraine was preceded by a lengthy meeting between Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping on February 4, 2022 – coinciding with the start of the Chinese Lunar New Year celebrations and the Beijing Winter Olympics. On February 4, 2022, Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping met, seemingly ushering in a new era in China-Russia relations. Following the summit, “no limits” or “no red line” ties became the norm, and as a result, China supported Russia's “legitimate security concerns” in Europe and opposed the expansion of NATO, while Russia likewise supported China in Asia. But as a result of Putin's and Russia's war against Ukraine, Beijing is compelled to take a position in favor of Moscow's rivalry with the West on the subject of Ukraine. The largest unknown in the short term is the extent of China's assistance to Russia, and the long-term course of these relations depends on internal developments in Russia following the election of Putin (Kaczmarek, 2022, p. 1-5). After Russia's military attack on Ukraine on February 24, 2022, China has continued its relations with Russia and refused to accept Western sanctions against the country. Therefore, today Moscow not only does not consider Beijing as a threat, but has tried to take advantage of this opportunity to reduce the dangers of the West by expanding its bilateral, regional and global relations with this country (Karmi; Karimkhani, 2022, p. 274).



## **Ukraine war's effects on global security**

There is little doubt that the rise in tensions in Ukraine poses a threat to the security and stability of both countries. Regrettably, Ukraine has grown to be the primary focus of contention between Russia and the West. However, Russia's military aggression has led to huge military casualties and negative effects on the global economy (Kusa, 2022, p. 7). The events of February 24, 2022 will have an impact on how the modern world is remembered in history. In addition to creating a serious security risk that disturbs the peace in Europe, Russia's military invasion of Ukraine has fundamentally undermined the security architecture that has been patiently constructed on the continent over many years, including the international commitments made in that time (Robert, 2022). The agony of Ukraine is a moral test for Europe and the entire globe. The damage caused by violations of human rights and the United Nations Charter is significant and continues to grow. Ukrainians – both military personnel and civilians – are killed only for being Ukrainians. Whole cities, including Mariupol, are leveled. On Russian official media, there are overt acts that fit the definition of war crimes, along with mentions of genocide. Children among the hundreds of thousands of migrants who have been forcibly deported to Russia. Many people are internally displaced in Ukraine, while many others were compelled to evacuate. Hospitals, infrastructure, cultural landmarks, private residences, and industrial facilities are robbed or destroyed, and stolen commodities are organized and transported to Russia. In addition, Russia has further globalized the consequences of its war by creating economic shocks in energy markets and creating famine as a political tool (Robert, 2022). Russia has also purposefully raised the threat level of the possible use of nuclear weapons, with the main goal of discouraging Western allies from providing military support to Ukraine and instilling fear in decision-makers.

## **Ukrainian crisis' effects on the energy sector**

The Covid-19 crisis and the issue of climate change were the most crucial global concerns up until the recent crisis in Ukraine, but the conflict in Ukraine has marginalized these two issues and removed the Covid-19 epidemic crisis from the public spotlight. The price of crude oil has grown due to the embargo on Russian oil imposed by Western nations like the United States, Canada, and England, while European nations have made significant efforts to lessen their reliance on Russian oil. Recent forecasts of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD, 2022) indicate that GDP growth in the global economy will be

one percent lower than expected, due to the war, which severely restricts already limited food, energy and financial markets (United Nations, 2022, p. 3). In this situation, Russia's GDP will be affected by these measures. Based on this, it is predicted that the real GDP of Russia in 2022 will be about 4.4% less than the current base of OPEC, i.e. from minus 6% to minus 10.4%, and if the tension continues, it will reach 10.8% in 2023. These conditions of Russia will significantly affect other economies of the Euro zone, England and the world; therefore, the effects of the war in Ukraine will continue until 2023, and more sanctions will be imposed by the West against Moscow. Russia will not remain silent and will take countermeasures, including limiting gas exports to Europe. Economically, the beginning of Russia's conflict in Ukraine caused average crude oil prices to rise by 11.5% to \$93 per barrel at the end of February 2022 from \$83 per barrel at the end of January 2022. Additionally, as winter approaches and tensions between the European Union and Russia intensify, the price of liquefied natural gas (LNG) for cash import into Europe has jumped by 76%. On the basis of this, it is anticipated that a continuation of the conflict or any action that raises tensions further will result in a rise in the price of oil and gas or a maintenance of the current high prices.

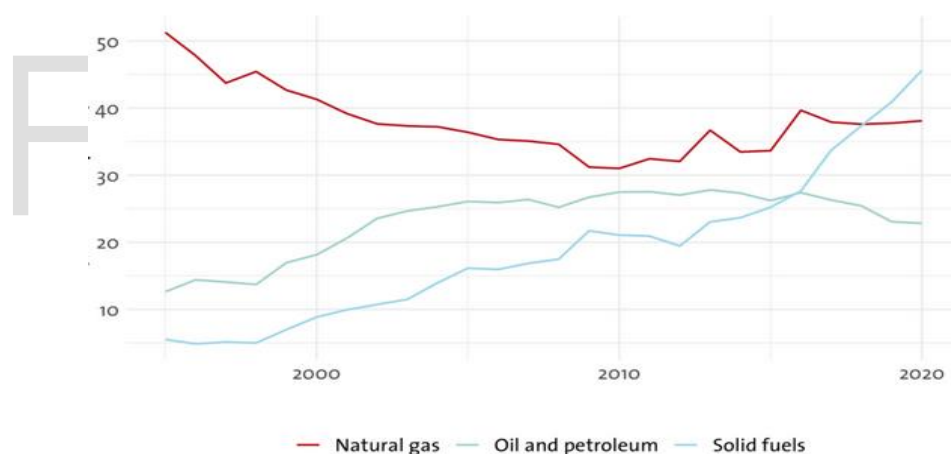
### **The effects of the Ukrainian conflict on Europe**

In addition to causing great suffering for the Ukrainian people, the start of Russia's war against Ukraine on February 24, 2022, marked a turning point in Europe. As a result, the conflict in Ukraine may be seen as a historical turning point in Russia's expulsion from Europe and Western civilization. The main fallout from the Ukraine conflict is the return of geopolitical conflict to Europe and the shift from a normative, values-based Europe to a power – and interest – driven Europe. The strengthening of the Atlantic axis (America - England and the northern and eastern flanks of Europe, including Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, Poland, and the Czech Republic) against the weakening of the continental current (Europeanists led by France, Germany, and the western and southern flanks of Europe) is another consequence of the Ukraine crisis (Iranian Diplomacy, 2022). The geopolitics of energy in Europe and the rest of the globe will change if Europe severs its energy ties with Russia or if there is undue mistrust of Russia as Europe's primary energy supplier. The European Union has made every effort over the past ten years to implement its energy security strategies, including diversifying energy supply sources, switching to renewable energy sources, and reducing reliance on gas imports from Russia. However, this union's biggest weakness is that its energy security policies have not been able to do so. Currently, about 45% of Europe's gas is supplied through Russia, which,

taking into account the ongoing projects of this country to transfer more gas to Europe, such as the Nord Stream-2 pipeline and Turkish Stream, it is predicted that the Europeans' dependence on this country will increase more than before (Deshyar *et al.*, 2021, p. 219). Russia's actions in February 2022 in Ukraine, such as the recognition of the independence of the two republics of Donetsk and Luhansk and the military attack on Ukraine, made Germany hesitant to support the Nord Stream 2 project. A plan that Germany and some EU members signed with Russia's Gazprom in September 2021. But Germany's achievement of this goal was in doubt because the West, in response to Russia's aggressive action in Ukraine, placed this country under extensive sanctions. Russia has also tried to use the energy lever as a weapon in response to the Western sanctions (Vatoghi; Musaei, 2022, p. 374). Assuming that the source and route of energy transmission from Russia to Europe is cut off, alternative sources and routes to provide energy for the huge industrial and consumer machine of Europe, including West Asia and North Africa, will enter the scene and increase their credibility and role-playing. This means that the energy factor intensifies the geopolitical competition in West Asia and increases the amount of intra-system conflicts and conflicts between the major energy players. Perhaps more than resources, it is the routes and corridors of energy transfer to Europe that have gained importance and give double credit to the countries of origin, hub and route of energy transfer. As we can see, during the Russian attack on Ukraine, the Biden government did not take an aggressive approach except for a series of sanctions against Russia; But the European Union wanted no war. Because this crisis directly affects the interests of the European Union. Poland, Bulgaria, Austria, Germany and Italy are likely to face problems with natural gas supplies if Moscow imposes energy import sanctions. If there is a shortage of energy and a reduction in supply by Russia, the economic recession in Germany will hit the EU economy hard. Because Germany buys nearly 60% of natural gas along with 50% of coal from Russia and has not even started to build any liquefied natural gas unloading terminals in order to be flexible in the international supply of natural gas until 2022 (Welfens, 2022, p. 2). The main goods traded between Russia and Germany are raw materials, vehicles and machinery. Despite rising political tensions between Germany and Russia, trade between the two increased significantly in 2021 compared to the first year of the corona virus pandemic in 2020. Germany imported mainly crude oil and natural gas worth €19.4 billion in 2021 – an increase of 49.5%, accounting for 59% of all imports from Russia. Some economists suggested Germany to embargo energy imports from Russia. However, with a realistic analysis, losses can be significantly higher than the actual income. Although Russian retaliatory measures (for example, increased tariffs) and other

consequences must also be considered; but the issue of increasing the unemployment rate is conceivable as a general effect in Germany (Bachmann *et al.*, 2022). The impact of the Ukraine issue has always been dual since there has always been friction between Russia and the European Union about the sale of shale gas, favoring the United States. Russia's air, missile, and land attacks on Ukraine have always had an effect on the security of Europe's borders and resulted in political, economic, and social repercussions. A brief ceasefire to establish humanitarian corridors to evacuate inhabitants from besieged cities in Ukraine resulted from negotiations between France and Russia, but it did not last long. In addition to being the world's top exporter of natural gas and oil, Russia is also a major supplier of energy to Europe (Bhattarai *et al.*, 2022). The European Union imported over 23% of its oil, 40% of its natural gas, and nearly 45% of its total coal imports from Russia in 2020, as shown in Figure 4. In other words, even while trade has declined since 2014 and the annexation of Crimea in other industries, imports of gas and coal have increased significantly since then (Redeker, 2022, p. 8).

Figure 4: Amount of energy and coal imported by Europe from Russia



Source: Redeker, 2022, p. 9.

Russia supplies 25% of the oil and 40% of the natural gas that European nations import from Russia. This action will have a number of negative effects, including a 20% increase in natural gas prices, an increase in inflation, and higher water and energy costs (Wiseman; McHugh, 2022). Therefore, the war on Ukraine has significantly affected how people and products move within the EU using all types of transportation. Fuel availability and price increases, as well as logistical difficulties associated with border crossings and airspace restrictions, are among the key problems. Additionally, the industry is facing operational difficulties as a result of the import of commodities and the enormous influx of Ukrainian migrants into EU nations. In an effort to show solidarity with Ukrainian refugees, a number of

EU nations established transport and information hubs at the main border crossings and made it easier for humanitarian aid to be transported (European Council, 2022).

## Conclusion

Due to its unique geopolitical situation, Ukraine has become more prone to coercion by powerful actors than other former Soviet republics. The tension in the relations between Ukraine and Russia has been formed for many years. Major issues such as ideological differences, historical ties, Russified and undemocratic government institutions are the sum of the issues that affect bilateral relations. The developments of 2014 were an important turning point in Ukraine's foreign relations. Along with the proximity of Kyiv to the European Union through the Eastern Partnership Initiative, Russia's dissatisfaction and opposition increased, and finally Russia reacted to Ukraine's recent orientations by annexing Crimea. In this research, we evaluated Russia's aggressive strategy and policy towards Ukraine using the arguments of the aggressive neo-realism approach. Aggressive neorealism's theories contend that governments that are never satisfied with their own power and constantly work to ensure their own security use all of their resources to prevent the emergence of rivals in the anarchic international system because of the anarchic structure of the international system, making maximizing relative power their primary objective. As a result, protecting national security and interests is crucial for Russia as a global force. Due to Ukraine's desire to join NATO and Moscow's apprehension that NATO was encroaching on its borders, Russia attacked Ukraine militarily in February 2022, which was followed by international financial sanctions. Given the aforementioned circumstances, it is understandable that Moscow's aggressive stance against Ukraine and the start of a war between these two nations had an impact on the global system in terms of politics, economics, social issues, and security. The Ukrainian crisis causes higher inflation, a drop in household spending due to rising energy, wheat, and mineral costs, a disruption in the supply chain, a shortage of oil, and a decline in global investment and stock market volatility; as a result, the price of grain and gasoline rises, notably in the Middle East and North Africa, causing economic issues and consequences, human tragedy and displacement of a huge number of people due to the fact that both Russia and Ukraine are important exporters. Nevertheless, it must be said that Russia's offensive strategies against Ukraine has had a wide impact on the international arena.

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