

## **Major Research Paper**

**Russia-Ukraine War: Geopolitical Implications and Evolution of NATO-Russia  
Relations**

**Submitted by: Yingshu Zhao 300094677**

**Submitted to: Professor Alexandra Gheciu**

**Institution: University of Ottawa**

**Faculty of Social Science**

**Public and International Affairs**

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## **Abstract**

This study examines how the conflict between Russia and Ukraine has affected international politics, focusing on how cooperation between Russia and NATO has broken down. Therefore, the research approach is a qualitative systematic literature review, and it examines scholarly papers, foreign policy reports, and websites like Carnegie Europe and the Atlantic Council that deal with international relations. Simultaneously, Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the subsequent escalation of the conflict into a full-scale war in 2022 have had far-reaching consequences for international peace and safety and political and economic stability. In addition, significant shifts in Russia-NATO ties, repercussions for Ukraine's future NATO membership, and security concerns for neighbouring nations like Finland and Sweden are all highlighted in the study. Subsequently, the research also examines how the conflict has affected the Ukrainian economy, focusing on the country's reliance on imported energy and the urgent need for economic restoration. The study also sheds insight into how the war and the large-scale emigration of Russian nationals seeking better economic prospects have affected the country's demographic makeup. As a concluding remark, significant geopolitical ramifications coming from the Russia-Ukraine conflict are discussed in this study. Likewise, Ukraine's hopes of joining NATO have been damaged, while neighbouring nations like Finland and Sweden have sought stronger connections with NATO for increased security in response to the crisis. Similarly, the emergence of new, pressing challenges, such as energy dependence and economic rehabilitation in Ukraine and demographic shifts in Russia as a result of military service and migration, highlighted the war's far-reaching impacts. As a result, insightful information on the changing dynamics of the area and the difficulties of post-conflict international cooperation and security is gleaned from the comprehensive literature research.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1.1 Background

Ukraine became a war territory when Russia occupied Crimea in 2014. Russia was also involved in promoting different separatist groups in the region of Donbas. Consequently, there has been tension between both countries following the negative effects of various geopolitical factors. The geopolitical situation after the conflict has also been affected not just by the neighboring countries of Russia and Ukraine but also by the NATO member countries (Demir, 2022). Thousands of people have died in between 2014 and 2021, making it one of the deadliest conflicts in Europe after the Balkan Wars, which happened in the 1990s (Naz, 2023). The conflict between Russia and Ukraine over Crimea has changed the dynamics of the global security environment as well. Following the tensions in Crimea in 2014, along with separatist group movements in the east of Ukraine, the conflict resulted in a full-scale war in 2022. This full-scale invasion has contributed to many geopolitical implications across the globe and specifically for the countries that are neighbors of both Russia and Ukraine. The conflict affected not only the relations between Russia and Ukraine but also Russia's illegal invasion has damaged the mutual relations that Russia has with Western Institutions, especially with NATO (Choonara, 2022). The aim of this major research paper is to examine the geopolitical implications that have been emerged after the Russia-Ukraine war. From the geopolitical implications, the focus is to study the evolution of relations between Russia and NATO and the breakdown of cooperation between the two in the aftermath of war.

In 2021, Russia appointed troops on the borders of Ukraine and amassed them in Belarus, which is an important Russian ally. Russian troops fully invaded into the Ukrainian territory in 2022 from the east, north, and south in order to take control over the major cities. Russia wanted to de-militarize Ukraine completely in the initial stages, but Ukrainian troops succeeded in bringing down Russian forces in many areas, including the capital of Kyiv. It has

been observed by Dräger, Gründler & Potrafke (2022) that Russia miscalculated some of its military strategies, assuming that the Ukrainian forces would not be able to fight and resist for a longer period. Additionally, due to these clashes and counterattacks, thousands of people have died on both sides of the border, and major infrastructure in Ukraine has been destroyed by the Russian attacks. Russia at first targeted two of Ukraine's industrial regions in the east, further attacking the northeast and south of the country. Russia has set back its troops several times and is not able to attain full control in four of the above-mentioned Ukrainian regions. Russia, in the initial stages, claimed that it was a quick operation, but due to the Ukrainian retaliation and support from the NATO members, the short operation has converted into a full-scale war with an active front line (Chausovsky, 2022). The damage on both sides is of high degrees, with the loss of human capital as well as people facing various economic barriers due to the disruptions in supply chain operations and destruction of important infrastructure. The war's havoc on Ukraine is immense, and the Russian side is also facing damages because of the prolonging of the ongoing conflict between the two countries (Kirby, 2023).

Geopolitical implications from the political and economic perspectives have been examined in the aftermath of the ongoing Russia and Ukraine war. Russia-NATO relations, Ukraine's NATO membership, Finland and Sweden's NATO membership, changes in the post-soviet region, and security implications are some of the political effects because of the war. Additionally, in terms of economic effects, energy dependency, and crisis, the economic reconstruction of Ukraine displayed people and a high amount of refugees along with the decline in Russian demographics have been identified. Ukraine's aspiration to join NATO has been affected greatly since the start of the Russia-Ukraine War. The conflict has provided an overview of Ukraine's weak security and military capabilities. Furthermore, the support provided by the West has enabled Ukraine to combat against the Russian troops (Shah & Gedamkar, 2022). The importance of aligning Ukraine's security needs with the NATO has

also come to the surface, but its membership in NATO is still not confirmed by the NATO member countries. The possibility of making Ukraine a member of NATO has caused tensions among the NATO member countries as it could contribute to serious implications because the war is still going on between Russia and Ukraine. The timeline for Ukraine's NATO membership is still not provided, and it was agreed in the last meeting that the alliance would invite Ukraine to join when the conditions are met (Dempsey, 2023).

The war has also created implications for Finland and Sweden, which are also in close proximity to Russia. The threat to security has caused both countries to strengthen their position in the region with the alliance of NATO. Both countries have applied for NATO membership, and Finland joined as the 31st member of the alliance in April 2023 (Chatterjee, 2023). Sweden is also set to become a NATO member, given in view its history of weak military defense and in the light of the changed security environment in the region because of the Russia and Ukraine War. For the post-soviet region, the conflict between Russia and Ukraine has highlighted the tensions in the region and the potential for any further territorial disputes. Moldova and Georgia supported Ukraine in the conflict, while Belarus sided with Russia. The other countries of the region were absent in the UN general assembly resolution in 2022, and only Moldova and Georgia condemned Russian aggression and invasion of Ukraine (Iskandaryan, 2022). Russia's invasion of Ukraine has also pointed out the security concerns for the post-soviet countries. Additionally, countries with respect to the situation caused by the war, specifically Moldova, are considering enhancing closer relations with the West to maintain the security and integrity of its territory in the future. The ongoing conflict has also highlighted the security concerns for NATO member countries as well as EU member countries. Russia's aggression towards its neighbor Ukraine has increased tensions in terms of both security and nuclear weapon usage keeping in view the violation of international laws regarding invasion by Russia (Cross, 2018). The security risks are also at stake in the future, keeping in view Russia's hostility, and NATO

is also determined to enhance its military capabilities and deterrence. NATO and Russia relations have also been impacted in the aftermath of war. The Russian violation of international laws has also broken down the communication channels which both Russia and NATO had with each other on cooperation initiatives. Many areas of cooperation for mutual benefits, including combating terrorism and enhancing military capabilities, have been compromised after the conflict was started by Russia with the annexation of Crimea in 2014. The suspension of dialogue and joint ventures has further impacted the NATO-Russia relations, and the future for any of their possible cooperation in the aftermath of war seems uncertain.

From an economic perspective, a major impact was on the energy sector, as Europe has been dependent on energy from Russia. After the sanctions that were imposed on Russia by the West, the energy supply, including natural gas, was terminated, which eventually led to a hike in prices. Not only Russian supply towards Europe was disrupted, but also the Ukrainian pipelines, which were providing many European countries the gas routes, have been damaged because of Russian attacks on the Ukrainian soil. The energy crisis was caused due to the destruction of Ukrainian pipelines and because of the Russian politics of using energy resources as a weapon for weakening the support of the West toward Ukraine (Ioannou et al., 2023). This has accelerated the need to diversify the energy options by the European and NATO member countries and to decrease the dependency of energy on Russian resources. Additionally, another major economic implication of the war is the number of refugees that the recipient countries are hosting, which is impacting their own economic structure. This has put pressure on their resources and infrastructure to support the Ukrainian as well as some Russian refugees in the countries. The economic reconstruction of Ukraine is also a major geopolitical concern for the West, which is supporting Ukraine. This is because of the destruction that has been caused to infrastructure and important economic activities like trading and production because of the Russian attacks. This destruction has severely damaged the economic structure of

Ukraine, which according to Green (2023), can take a long term to make Ukraine stable on its own. Lastly, the war has also impacted the demographic situation of Russia as most of its men population is appointed to serve in the military. The working population has also declined due to casualties, and some Russians have fled to other countries due to the ongoing conflict and to acquire better economic opportunities in a safer environment.

## **1.2 Research Problem**

Ukraine and Russia share borders with many European countries, including the Baltics, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, and Romania, which are also NATO members (Ratten, 2022). The conflict between Ukraine and Russia has resulted in many sanctions on Russia, and this has also impacted the geopolitical situation of the linked European Union member countries, including Germany and Italy, alongside the Central and Eastern European region (Chen et al., 2023). Not only the regional security is on threat based on the ongoing crisis, but it has also impacted international business activities across the continent and for other transatlantic countries that had diplomatic and trade ties with both Ukraine and Russia. The problem identified for current research is the change in the geopolitical landscape and the implications that have been caused by the war, both in terms of political and economic factors. Along with the geopolitical implications of the war, NATO-Russia relations also faced a breakdown in cooperation, and several challenges, including decreased chances of further military-to-military cooperation, alongside logistical and scientific cooperation, will be an issue between the two in the aftermath of the war.

## **1.3 Research Question**

- What are the geopolitical implications of the Russia-Ukraine war?

## **1.4 Research Objective**

- To determine the geopolitical implications because of the on-going Russia and Ukraine war.

### **1.5 Significance of Research**

The study provides guidance on different perspectives of the geopolitical implications that are surfacing across the globe as a result of the ongoing Russia and Ukraine war. The implications of various important geopolitical perspectives will contribute to greater understanding for the academics as well. The research will further provide insights into the changing dynamics of the NATO and Russia relations in the aftermath of war and what key areas of cooperation have been impacted after Russia violated international laws.

### **1.6 Research Outline**

The research paper comprises five chapters, including an introduction, literature review, research methodology, analysis, and implications, and lastly, conclusion. The introduction chapter covers the background of the Russia-Ukraine conflict along with the research problem that is taken under consideration for this research paper. The research objective, research question, and the significance that this research paper will provide are also mentioned in the first chapter. The second chapter of the literature review covers the theoretical discussion with respect to the geopolitical implications of the Russia-Ukraine war and how Russia and NATO relations have been impacted in the light of this conflict. Following that, research methodology entails the methods utilised for the data collection. The next chapter is of analysis that comprises a detailed evaluation of the research paper through a systematic literature review. The geopolitical implications of the war and specifically the NATO-Russia relations have been analysed based on journal articles, foreign policy reports, NATO, and other international relations websites, including Carnegie Europe and Atlantic Council, highlighting the overall situation. Furthermore, in the discussion section, the findings of the analysis have been elaborated along with implications. Lastly, a conclusion is provided at the end of the research paper summarising all the aspects analysed for this research paper.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, a discussion about the geopolitical effects concerned with both political and economic factors, including NATO-Russia relations, Ukraine-Finland and Sweden's NATO membership, post-soviet region outlook and implications on regional security because of the Russia-Ukraine war will be discussed. Additionally, energy dependency, reconstruction of Ukraine's economy, displaced people, and lastly, demographic decline in Russia will be discussed. Due to time constraints, all the above will be discussed from the existing literature briefly, with a focus on the evolution of NATO and Russia relations in the light of war. Lastly, the conceptual framework of the research and literature gap will be discussed.

### **2.2 Geopolitical Effects of Russia Ukraine War**

#### ***2.2.1 Ukraine's NATO Membership***

Ukraine's membership in NATO has been debated over the past decade in the West, as also the effects of its membership that can completely change the geopolitical situation in the region. At first the dialogue between NATO and Ukraine started in 1991, when Ukraine joined the Cooperation Council and Peace Programme of NATO. According to NATO (2023a), the cooperation between the two expanded over time as Ukraine participated in NATO missions and operations. In 2020, after the prolonged conflict over the annexation of Crimea by Russia, President Zelensky determined to further strengthen the partnership alliance with NATO and aimed for its membership. Since the annexation, NATO has condemned Russia's aggression and supported the capability development of Ukraine. After the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine and the prolonged war, there are a few gaps between Ukraine and the West. These gaps include vague promises of membership and security assurances, as mentioned by Marta Dassù, Senior Advisor for European Affairs in Carnegie Europe, between Ukraine's NATO membership aspirations and the Western priorities. It has been mentioned in the article that

both the United States and Europe are most likely not considering crossing the redline with respect to Ukraine's NATO membership status, which can contribute to a direct confrontation between NATO and Russia (Dempsey, 2023). Accordingly, NATO's summit in Vilnius, held between 11th and 12th July 2023, as mentioned in the Foreign Policy Brief, resulted in disappointment for the Ukraine as member states have provided a joint statement for Ukraine that its membership will be functional if the "conditions are met" which is dependent on the Russia's presence in Ukraine and the status of war (Sharp, 2023). Additionally, irrespective of not providing a specific timeline for membership, the member states agreed to continue support and provide military aid to Ukraine in the ongoing conflict.

### ***2.2.2 Finland and Sweden's NATO membership***

Finland and Sweden have shown interest in becoming NATO members after the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Both Nordic countries have maintained their neutrality in the past, but given the security circumstances, they both applied to join NATO. According to a BBC article, Finland has officially become a member of NATO and joined the defence alliance in April 2023 (Chatterjee, 2023). Finland faced an invasion by the Soviets in 1939 and eventually ended up losing 10% of its territory to the Soviet Union. The decision of Finland to join NATO is after considering the past circumstances and threat to its security. Vanhanen (2022) mentioned that the threat considered by Finland is not just about the war but is also concerned with Finland's weakening geopolitical position in the region. Sweden is also now set to join NATO after objections about its membership from Turkey have been withdrawn. Sweden has also felt endangered and applied for the NATO membership. Given Sweden's military weakness, which was shown in 2013 after Russia simulated an aerial attack and the Russian airplanes got too close to Stockholm, Sweden also opted to join the defence alliance of NATO with respect to security concerns.

### ***2.2.3 Outlook on Post Soviet Region with respect to the ongoing Russia-Ukraine Conflict***

New allegiances can be observed from the UN General Assembly resolution in 2022 that condemned Russian acts and war in Ukraine. Moldova and Georgia declared to support Ukraine during this conflict. While on the other side, Belarus supported Russia, and other countries from the post-soviet region were absent, as mentioned in “Program on New Approaches to Research and Security in Eurasia-PONARS Eurasia” (Iskandaryan, 2022). The countries Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus all faced domestic political struggles and stood as competition between the East and West. Ukraine’s future is largely dependent on how the war ends and what geopolitical configurations will result, as further discussed by Iskandaryan in PONARS Eurasia. Additionally, Moldova will also be impacted in the light of war due to its support to Ukraine and the eventual stationing of Russian troops in the region. Moldova and Russian tensions are seeming to pile up due to Moldova’s breakaway part called Transnistria (Kulakevich, 2023). In contrast, Belarus has provided full support to Russia despite not sending official troops to the ongoing war. Despite being on bad terms with Putin, as described by Iskandaryan (2022), the Russian government must support the president of Belarus because the change in government can also impact the alliance which both countries have in the Ukraine war. Furthermore, the geopolitical choices of the Belarusian President will not be impactful in this regard for Russia unless a new regime will come to reconsider options for the support to Russia in war.

### ***2.2.4 Implications in Terms of Security and Nuclear Weapons Usage Risk***

The return of war in Europe has increased the focus on territorial security and deterrence and on collaborations of allied Western countries and institutions, including NATO and the EU, to work together to strengthen the deterrence of both of its member countries (Simon, 2023). The need for strengthening deterrence is in perspective of the nuclear-weapon state Russia, which has invaded Ukraine. The risk of nuclear weapon usage has also increased

by Russia as a threat to the countries and institutions that are supporting Ukraine. NATO and EU's strategic partnership has been formulated because of the threats by Russia that are aimed directly towards NATO member countries (NATO, 2023b).

## **2.3 Economical Effects of Russia Ukraine war**

### ***2.3.1 Energy Considerations:***

Ukraine is an important transit country for Russian natural gas exports to Europe. Russia has used its control over energy resources, particularly natural gas, as a tool to exert influence and pressure on Ukraine. Disputes over energy prices, debt payments, and control of energy infrastructure have been used by Russia to advance its interests and assert control over Ukraine's energy sector. The global energy markets have been impacted drastically after the Russia-Ukraine War. This impact is felt in the global markets and, most importantly, in Europe, which was dependent on energy from both Russia and Ukraine. According to Thomson (2022), in the World Economic Forum, the prices hiked following the war with changes in trade flows and supply shortages. Russia has cut the energy distribution towards Europe in 2022, leaving many European countries to experience a shortfall in their energy needs. It has been further stated in the World Economic Forum that shortly after Russia cut the energy supply and due to the sanctions, that were imposed on Russia, dependent countries were looking for alternatives. The consideration for alternatives was made to decrease the shortfall of energy sources as the duration of the war and the future relations with Russia were uncertain. The focus on developing new energy policies was accelerated in order to not only become dependent further on resources from Russia and also to adapt to the net-zero emissions initiatives.

### ***2.3.2 Economic Reconstruction of Ukraine:***

The cost of the reconstruction of Ukraine is estimated to be around 2.6 times greater than the country's whole GDP. It has been mentioned by Green (2023) that the World Bank's most recent reports calculated around 411 billion US dollars that will be required for the

country's economic stability and reconstruction. It has been further stated that the destruction of important infrastructure has displaced thousands of Ukrainians and impacted various important agricultural lands of the country. Furthermore, the latest estimates of reconstruction by the World Bank do not provide costs for the areas that Russia now occupies in Ukraine, like Crimea. The report also excluded the Russian-backed separatist group regions, including Luhansk and Donetsk. According to Quirk and Sharma (2022), the destruction caused by Russian attacks has damaged roadways, intercountry transportation systems, and social service infrastructure, along with telecommunication and production facilities. The basic facilities for citizens have also been impacted and damaged due to the attacks from the Russian side. The reconstruction of civil structures and basic facilities is a very major challenge for Ukraine. Both short and long-term challenges would hinder the ability of Ukraine to recover itself in a shorter period. Also, the human capital in Ukraine is also declining rapidly due to both casualties and the number of people that are moving towards different countries because of the ongoing war and destruction.

### ***2.3.3. Displaced People and High Amount of Refugees:***

The conflict has caused a severe humanitarian crisis, with a significant number of civilian casualties and widespread displacement of people. Both internally displaced persons and refugees have fled the conflict-affected areas, seeking safety and shelter elsewhere in Europe, with most numbers received by Poland, Germany, Czech Republic. This humanitarian crisis has strained resources and infrastructure, further straining relations between Russia and NATO. According to Hickson (2022), millions of Ukrainians have fled to other countries due to the ongoing conflict. It has been further stated that according to UNHCR figures, more than 5 million, mostly children and women left Ukraine, and half of the country's child population has been displaced in the aftermath of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

### ***2.3.4 Decline in Demographics for Russia:***

Russia was facing gender imbalance before the Ukrainian war, and after its invasion of Ukraine, many men are dying combating in the war or are fleeing to other countries. The country's demographics are already troubled, and as mentioned by Weber (2023), they are at greater risk if the war will be continued for longer. It is further mentioned in the article that Russia's supply of available employees and workers is decreasing rapidly and has reached the lowest rate since 1998. Furthermore, Britain's Ministry of Defence reported that Russia saw up to 1.3 million people leave the country in 2022, including many younger and well-educated people in high-value industries". For example, "about 10 per cent (100,000) of [Russia's] IT workforce left the country in 2022 and did not return." This is a serious concern for Russia, given in view the long-term geopolitical impacts that the country will face in the aftermath of war.

## **2.4 Evolution of NATO and Russia Relations in the Aftermath of War**

The geopolitical effects mentioned above are the aftermath of the Russia-Ukraine War, and this conflict has drastically changed the geopolitical environment across the globe. The relations between NATO and Russia have also been impacted since the annexation of Crimea in 2014. After Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the channels of communication and cooperation have been damaged to a great extent between the two. The focus of this research, among all the geopolitical implications, is on analysing NATO and Russia's relationship in the aftermath of the Ukraine war and what the future holds for both Russia and NATO's cooperation.

### ***2.4.1 History of NATO-Russia relations***

NATO and Russia started to build up their relations towards a number of cooperative initiatives after the end of the cold war, and Russia joined North Atlantic Cooperation Council in the year 1991. The practical implementation of these relations started in the year 1994 for

the Peace Programme and, after joining it, deployed peacekeepers in the Western Balkan (NATO, 2023c). Both NATO and Russia continued their bilateral relations with the “NATO-Russia Founding Act”, including the “Permanent Joint Council” in 1997 as a platform for communication and cooperation between the two. In the late 90s, NATO paused the terms of cooperation with Russia over the differences because of the Kosovo crisis. Later, the bilateral relations were resumed by NATO after the end of the air campaign led by NATO in the regions of Kosovo. The dialogue between the two was further strengthened with the establishment of the NATO-Russia Council as a platform for decision-making, cooperation, and consultancy initiatives over matters of mutual interest for both the parties and also for the region. Furthermore, to facilitate these mutual interests, including security, NATO and Russia further decided to establish political and military forums to communicate (NATO, 2023c). In this regard, NATO opened an “Information Office” in Moscow in 2001. The relations once again took a turn after Russia’s military action in Georgia in 2008 with temporary termination of the joint meetings and cooperation initiatives between NATO and Russia but later resumed in the year 2009. Also, despite the resume of initiatives for cooperation, allies of NATO denounced Russia’s decision to recognise Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent regions from Georgia.

#### ***2.4.2 Key Areas of Cooperation Before Russia’s Annexation of Crimea in 2014***

**Terrorism:** An action plan was devised between Russia and NATO in the December of 2004, which conducted regular exercises and information exchange initiatives relevant to terror related incidents. The program included crisis and consequence management with countering multiple explosive devices. The program also included an information system which handled air traffic activities, including and detection of suspicious air activities that could be traced in case of any air attacks by terrorists. Furthermore, projects of NATO and

Russia like “Standex” developed technologies for detecting advanced explosive devices in various environments.

**Arms Control and Military-to-Military Cooperation:** Discussions between NATO and Russia took place to look for practical initiatives taken against any sort of arms, including “nuclear”, “biological”, and “chemical” weapons. For military cooperation, military liaison arrangements have been enhanced at NATO-Russia Council (Clem, 2018). The prominent objective of this enhancement of military cooperation was to develop trust and confidence among the collective NATO and Russian forces for any future military operations. The focus of this military cooperation is to assist and help each in the areas of tackling terrorism, underwater search and rescue operations, defence practices, and exchanging various military academic practices.

#### ***2.4.3 Evolution of these relations from Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 until the full-scale invasion in Ukraine***

After Russia’s illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014, cooperation initiatives, both civilian and military, have been suspended between NATO and Russia (Holas, 2018). The cooperation was suspended in April 2014, and NATO condemned Russian aggression and military intervention in Ukraine. Following that, in October 2021, Russia stooped its diplomatic ties with NATO and shut off the NATO Information Office, which was in Moscow, along with the suspension of Military Liaison collaboration with NATO. As per NATO (2023c), it regrets the suspension of communication channels between the two as it was committed to transforming its military practices that could benefit both of the parties. Throughout Russia’s aggression towards Ukraine, the Russian government has rejected negotiation dialogues and diplomacy with NATO, which was repeatedly offered to Russia. International laws have been violated by Russia along with the United Nations Charter in showing aggression with military invasion and expansion in Ukraine. Russia also disregarded the principles of the NATO-Russia

Founding Act, with its military operations further deteriorating the trust of NATO and allied members. The Russian military troops fighting against Ukraine is considered as a crucial European conflict that has caused several geopolitical effects on both NATO and EU's policies, as mentioned by Bezerra 2022). The article further stated that Western Institutes, most prominently the NATO members, have provided support for the Ukraine in terms of military equipment and arms, which has further damaged the relationship between the West and Russia. Mutual accusations and geopolitical confrontation between Russia and NATO have also been heightened after the war. With respect to the ongoing clashes, Bezerra (2022) also mentioned that the relationship between NATO and Russia for the foreseeable future seems weak. The mutual understanding factor on the security needs is also crucial and can further cause challenges in restructuring the breakdown of cooperation which both NATO and Russia were considering before the Ukraine war.

## **2.5 Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework for the current research is based on the perspectives of realism, and from the two categories of realism-classical and structural, structural realism is the most suitable lens for analysing the geopolitical effects caused because of the Russia-Ukraine war. Structural realism indicates that the international system is guided by power dynamics between states, and this system influences the behaviour and action of particular states. Using structural realism as the conceptual framework for interpreting the resources has been beneficial in gaining insights into the geopolitical effects of the war and how different countries are shaping their political and economic stances keeping in view their own interests. Also, the chosen structural realism helped to interpret the evolution of the relations between NATO and Russia in the light of war.

## **2.5 Literature Gap**

There is a good amount of research that has been conducted on the geopolitical effects of the Russia-Ukraine War. But there is a noticeable gap in the literature on analysing the affected NATO and Russia relationship, specifically after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine and, most importantly, with the perspectives of secondary qualitative research. The current literature highlights the background and context of the war and its implications for the geopolitical situation not only in the Eastern European region but also in the countries that were either politically or economically connected to Russia and Ukraine. Moreover, few studies have been done on the suspension of cooperation initiatives that were previously in progress for mutual benefits between Russia and NATO. The breakdown of cooperation has impacted the communication between the two, given Russia's violations of international law. The significance of diplomatic relations and important fields of collaboration between Russia and NATO have also been impacted because of the war, and few researchers have studied the evolution of the relations in the aftermath of the war.

## **2.6 Chapter Summary**

The literature review of the current study entails a review of the existing academic studies along with the discussion of different websites, including NATO, Carnegie, Atlantic Council and several more, on the geopolitical implications of the Russia-Ukraine War. Ukraine's membership in NATO, along with Finland and Sweden's decision to join the alliance, has been analysed in perspective in the literature and different studies. Furthermore, the outlook of the post-soviet region and implications in terms of security has been described to list the changes that have occurred in the aftermath of the war. Additionally, energy considerations, including European countries' dependence on energy from Russia, have been discussed along with the high costs of reconstruction of the Ukrainian economy. The implications relevant to displaced people in Ukraine and the demographic decline of Russia

due to the ongoing war have also been explained in this chapter. The main geopolitical consideration of Russia and NATO relations in the aftermath of war has also been discussed. A conceptual framework for the study, along with a literature gap, has also been mentioned in the end section of the literature review.

## **Chapter 3: Research Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The methodology section of this research contains the method – secondary qualitative approach of conducting the study along with data collection procedure and data analysis. The data collection for this approach consists of the list of the articles that have been utilized in this research paper for analysis. Furthermore, ethical considerations have also been provided at the end of this chapter to consider the ethical stance in the data collection and the preparation and formulation of this report.

### **3.2 Research Method**

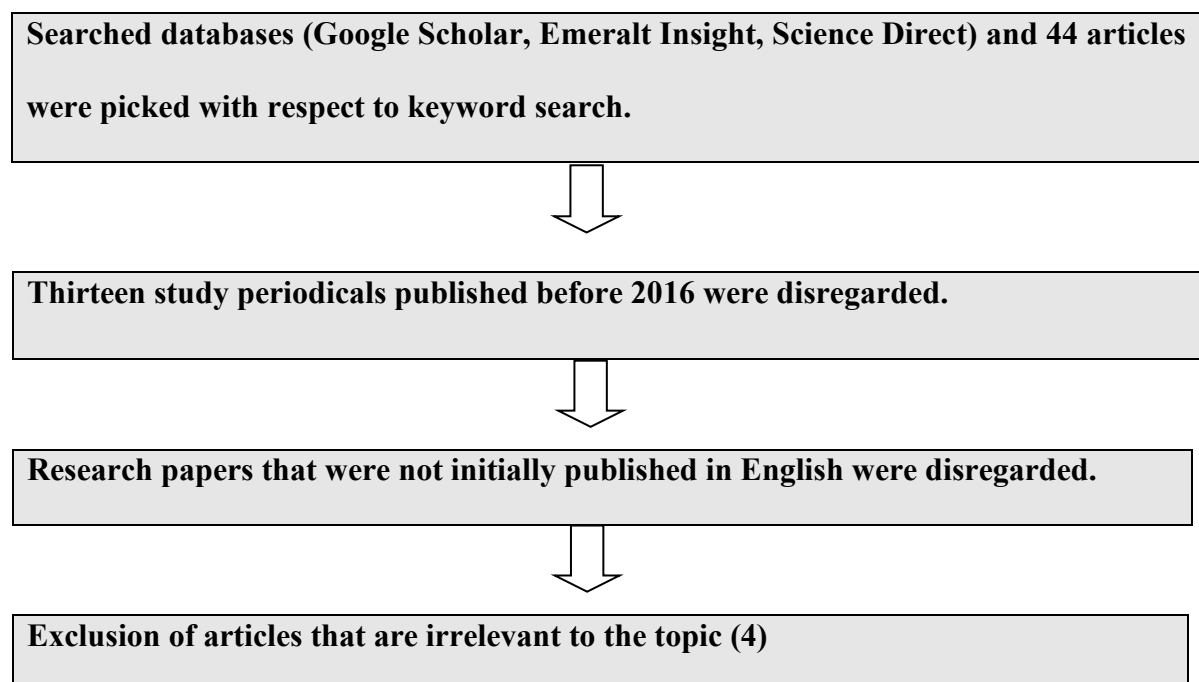
There are two research methods that are widely used for academic research, including qualitative and quantitative analysis. Qualitative research is used to understand the "nature of phenomenon" of any given situation, which helps to identify different perspectives and contexts of the underlying problems (Antwi & Hamza, 2015). The objective perspectives of such situations are neglected in qualitative research, and more of a subjective approach is considered to presume and identify different perspectives. Qualitative data generally consists of words and perspectives rather than numerical data to obtain different viewpoints on a given situation or problem that is under consideration. The qualitative research method particularly helps in the assessment of complex systems and events that need more of a perspective and in-depth analysis for uncovering the major effects of underlying problems. The approach is helpful in identifying how certain processes happen and what their contribution is to a particular phenomenon; like in the case of this research paper, the geopolitical implications of the Russia-Ukraine war have been analyzed. Questions like the implications of the war on geopolitical effects can be observed through literature and relevant reports with a broader and more in-depth approach. These observations across various aspects of the problem of impacted geopolitical situation in the neighboring region of Russia and Ukraine, as well as for other

linked countries, including NATO member countries, have been identified earlier for this research. Additionally, the qualitative approach consists of "flexibility" and "openness" that usually help researchers in the timely collection of data and then, furthermore, in responsiveness to adapt to the on-going setting and dimension for the research (Busetto, Wick, & Gumbinger, 2020). The research method utilized for this research is primarily a secondary qualitative approach for analyzing the geopolitical implications of the Russia-Ukraine war with some predefined keywords.

**Table 1: Keywords**

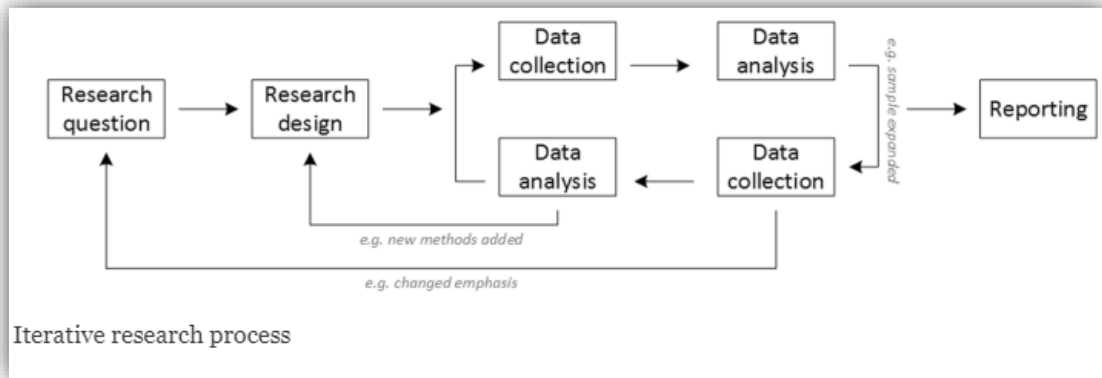
Keywords
Russia-Ukraine War
Geopolitical Implications
NATO-Russia Relations
Full-scale War
Geopolitical Factors
Balkan Wars
Global Security Environment
Military Strategies
Infrastructure Destruction
Energy Dependency
Economic Reconstruction
NATO Membership
Post-Soviet Region
Diplomatic and Trade Ties

The secondary qualitative approach is beneficial for this research paper as it provides access to in-depth data that has been presented in different articles pertinent to war and its effects on the geopolitical situation and, most importantly, the evolution of NATO-Russia relations in the light of war. Furthermore, secondary qualitative research provides ease in the collection of data, and it is a time-efficient research method which is suitable to utilize given the nature and time constraints of this major research paper.



### **3.3 Data Collection Procedure**

The research process in a qualitative study is assembled in an "iterative manner", which is more of a cyclical method rather than just following the "sampling", "data collection", and "analysis" processes one after another. The process of data collection and analysis in qualitative technique usually involves alternating steps between the collection and analysis phases. It can be observed by the figure mentioned below about the backward and forward steps that could be taken in between the data collection and interpretation processes for expanding insights into the matter that is being discussed for the research study.



**Figure 1: Iterative Research Process**

Source: Busetto, Wick, & Gumbinger (2020)

The secondary data to analyze the geopolitical implications of the Russia-Ukraine war, including both political and economic effects, have been collected from (number of articles) research articles, newspaper reports and other relevant sources. The data has been collected based on the relevance of the research questions that needed to be explored to obtain the aim of this research paper. The major focus is on identifying the geopolitical implications, including the evolution of Russia-Ukraine relations in the light of war. The empirical data from the secondary resources and reports have been particularly gathered for observing the geopolitical implications, including NATO-Russia relations, NATO, Finland and Sweden's membership, the outlook of post-soviet region and the security implications in the region. Furthermore, energy dependency, the reconstruction of Ukraine, the high number of refugees and the declining demographics of Russia were the main indicators for selecting secondary resources. The articles have been retrieved from the internet by searching the terms "Russia-Ukraine War" and "Geopolitical Implications of Russia-Ukraine War", along with the "History and Breakdown of Cooperation and Mutual Relations between NATO and Russia. The articles have specifically been chosen that have contained an analysis of the Russian-Ukraine conflict and the damaging aspects of the war on the geopolitical situation.

### 3.4 Data Analysis

A systematic literature review has analyzed the data collected from secondary sources. Different journal articles, newspaper content and foreign policy and international reports on the on-going conflict between Russia and Ukraine are considered to explore the research question. The analysis considered the geopolitical considerations of the Russia-Ukraine war in terms of political and economic perspectives. The findings from the analysis have provided an understanding of the geopolitical implications that have surfaced after Russia invaded Ukraine, violating international laws. Likewise, the following table contains the inclusion and exclusion criteria of the data analysis.

**Table 2: Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria**

<b>Inclusion Criteria</b>	<b>Exclusion Criteria</b>
Articles directly related to Ukraine, NATO, Russia, and their international relations.	Articles unrelated to Ukraine, NATO, Russia, or their international relations
Articles discussing Ukraine's potential NATO membership or its realistic prospects	Articles are not addressing Ukraine's NATO membership.
Articles analyzing the impact of the war in Ukraine on regional and global security	Articles unrelated to the Ukraine war or its implications
Articles examining the shift of Sweden and Finland from neutrality to NATO membership	Articles are not focusing on Sweden or Finland's NATO-related changes.
Articles discussing the post-Soviet space and its reformatting due to the Ukraine conflict	Articles unrelated to the post-Soviet space or Ukraine's influence on it
Articles providing insights on the Moldovan and Transnistrian security situation	Articles not discussing Moldova, Transnistria, or their connection to the Ukraine war.

Articles Examining the Effects of the Ukraine War on the European Union's security policy	Articles not related to the EU or its security and defense policy.
Articles exploring the impact of the Ukraine War on the global energy landscape	Articles are not addressing the energy world or its connection to the Ukraine war.
Articles discussing the reconstruction costs and efforts for Ukraine post-conflict	Articles not related to post-conflict reconstruction or Ukraine's situation.
Articles proposing frameworks for the stabilization and reconstruction of Ukraine	Articles are not offering frameworks or solutions for Ukraine's reconstruction.
Articles addressing the humanitarian challenges of the Ukrainian refugee crisis	Articles not focused on humanitarian crises or Ukraine's refugee situation.
Articles discussing Russia's demographic challenges and the missing men problem	Articles unrelated to Russia's demographic issues or the missing men phenomenon
Articles on the relationship between Russia and other nations or international organizations	Articles are not addressing Russia's international relations or its interactions.
Articles providing historical context or analyses of NATO-Russia relations	Articles not related to NATO-Russia relations or their historical aspects

### 3.5 Ethical Considerations

For the secondary qualitative analysis, all the information has been appropriately cited, and the credits have been given to the authors of the original content. Bias to particular content is avoided throughout conducting the research for this particular paper, and the data has been selected based on the aims of the research and not just according to the preference of a particular aspect. No plagiarism is incorporated in this study, and all of the findings are reported based on personal observations and analysis of the data collected from different secondary sources.

### **3.6 Chapter Summary**

This chapter has discussed the secondary qualitative approach used as a research method to analyze in-depth perspectives of the geopolitical implications of the Russia Ukraine war, focusing on the evolution of Russia and NATO relations in the aftermath of the Ukraine war. The chapter further entailed the data collection procedure, and for this, (number of articles) articles have been selected relevant to the formulated objectives of this research. The data obtained from these articles have been observed to analyze the geopolitical implications in terms of both political and economic perspectives that have disrupted the geopolitical scenario in the neighboring region of Russia and Ukraine as well as for the associated countries that have ties with both Russia and Ukraine.

## Chapter 4: Analysis and Discussion

### 4.1 Introduction of the Chapter

The following chapter contains the analysis of the literature pieces and discussion with the assistance of the literature review; the central claims are extracted about the geopolitical effects of the Russia-Ukraine war, including the NATO-Russia relations in perspective of the war, which are the focus of the analysis of current research. These findings are interpreted and discussed further for the analysis. Counterarguments are also provided based on the claims of the articles studied for the MRP. In the end, the terminated ties in cooperation with the challenges relevant to the cooperation of the above-mentioned fields are also discussed, which can impact future relations between the two countries. Accordingly, the implications based on the discussion analysis are also conducted at the end of Chapter 4. The review provided valuable insights into the geopolitical landscape and illuminated the challenges and uncertainties surrounding these geopolitical dynamics.

**Table 3: Analysis of the Literature**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Keywords</b>	<b>Methodology</b>	<b>Findings</b>	<b>Year</b>
Relations with Ukraine	North Atlantic Treaty Organization Website		Ukraine, NATO, international relations, security			2023
Judy Asks: Is Ukraine's NATO	Judy Dempsey	Assessing Ukraine's NATO membership	Ukraine, NATO membership, realism,	Opinion piece	Depends on the author's stance	2023

Membership Realistic?			security, international relations			
NATO Rebuffs Zelensky's Demand for Membership Timeline	Alexandra Sharp	NATO's response to Zelensky's demand	Ukraine, NATO membership, political dynamics, international relations	News report	NATO rejects the demand	2023
How Sweden and Finland went from neutral to NATO	Phelan Chatterjee	Analyzing Sweden and Finland's shift	Sweden, Finland, NATO, neutrality, security, international relations	Historical analysis	Sweden and Finland joined NATO	2023
Something New, Something Old – Finland on the Verge of a New Russia Relationship	Henri Vanhanen	Finland- Russia relations	Finland, Russia, international relations, security, post- Soviet space	Analysis of recent developments	Finland's evolving ties with Russia	2022

How the War in Ukraine is Reforming the Post-Soviet Space	Alexander Iskandaryan	Impact of Ukraine war on post-Soviet states	Ukraine war, post-Soviet space, international relations, security, conflict	Analysis of regional developments	Restructuring of post-Soviet space	2022
5 things to know about Moldova and Transnistria – and why Russia's war in Ukraine is threatening their security, too	Tatsiana Kulakevich	Moldova, Transnistria, Ukraine war	Moldova, Transnistria, Ukraine, Russia, security, international relations	Informative article	Impact of Ukraine war on Moldova	2023
The Ukraine War and the Future of the European Union's Security and Defense Policy	Luis Simon	EU's security policy after Ukraine war	Ukraine war, European Union, security, defense policy, international relations	Policy analysis	EU's security policy adjustments	2023

Relations with the European Union	North Atlantic Treaty Organization Website		European Union, international relations, security			2023
6 ways Russia's invasion of Ukraine has reshaped the energy world	Ewan Thomson	Impact of Ukraine war on energy	Russia, Ukraine war, energy world, international relations, security	Analysis of energy sector changes	Reshaping of the global energy	2022
Ukraine Reconstruction Costs "Hopefully" to Rise	Mark A. Green	Cost of Ukraine reconstruction	Ukraine, reconstruction costs, international aid, post-conflict, economic recovery	Economic analysis	Anticipating rising reconstruction costs	2023
Advancing a framework for the stabilization and	Patrick Quirk and Prakhar Sharma	Framework for Ukraine stabilization	Ukraine, reconstruction, stabilization, post-conflict, international	Policy proposal	Proposed framework for Ukraine	2022

reconstruction of Ukraine			aid, development			
Addressing the Ukrainian Refugee Crisis	Alex Hickson	Handling the Ukrainian refugee crisis	Ukraine war, refugee crisis, humanitarian response, international aid, displacement	Humanitarian analysis	Challenges in addressing the crisis	2022
Russia's 'catastrophic' missing men problem	Peter Weber	Russia's demographic challenge	Russia, demographic problem, missing men, social issues	Analysis of demographic challenges	Concerns about the missing men problem	2023
Relations with Russia			Russia, international relations, security			2022
Russia and NATO: From Windows of Opportunities to Closed Doors	Tuomas Forsberg and Graeme Herd	Russia-NATO relationship	Russia, NATO, political interaction, international relations, security	Historical analysis	Shift from opportunities to tensions	2015

NATO-Russia's 'conflictual relationship': 'Instability' as a defining factor in the political interaction between Moscow and the Atlantic alliance	Valdir da Silva Bezerra	NATO-Russia conflictual relationship	NATO, Russia, conflict, instability, international relations, political dynamics	Analysis of political dynamics	Instability in NATO-Russia ties	2022
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## 4.2 Discussion

### 4.2.1 Ukraine's NATO Membership and its Geopolitical Implications

The dispute over Ukraine's potential membership in NATO has far-reaching geopolitical consequences. Likewise, the West's contradictory reactions to Ukraine's NATO membership ambitions have reduced the country's rifts with the West (NATO, 2023a). Uncertainty and possibly conflict between NATO and Russia have resulted from hazy pledges and security guarantees provided to Ukraine on NATO membership. Therefore, Ukrainian ambitions for NATO membership are complicated and complex, as seen by the recent joint declaration issued at the Vilnius summit, which tied membership to circumstances on the ground. Additionally, Ukraine has condemned Russian aggression and worked to expand its partnership agreement with NATO, but the West has only offered vague pledges of

membership and security (Quirk and Sharma, 2022). Similarly, the United States and Europe hesitate to award Ukraine full NATO membership for fear of an all-out war with Russia. This hesitance increases doubts and divides Western nations' goals from those of Ukraine (Weber, 2023). As a result, the absence of a concrete timetable for membership only adds to the difficulties and unknowns that Ukraine faces in its pursuit of NATO membership.

Besides, there are several causes behind the problems. To begin, several allies in NATO are worried about what joining Ukraine may mean for their security (Bezerra, 2022). Consequently, a precarious security scenario has emerged due to the war between Ukraine and Russia. Fearing to provoke Russia further and perhaps cause a direct military clash, several NATO allies are reluctant to extend membership to Ukraine (NATO, 2023b). Supporting Ukraine while preventing an escalation of the crisis requires a careful strategy like this. Second, the question of Ukraine's membership has strategic and political ramifications for the relationship between NATO and Russia. Russian perceptions of its sphere of influence have been challenged by NATO's expansion into the post-Soviet region, especially near Russia (Cross, 2018). Russia is vehemently opposed to Ukraine's possible participation because it regards Ukraine's accession as a danger to Russian security (Larrabee, 2010). As NATO countries assess the advantages of Ukraine's membership against the dangers of antagonizing Russia, this resistance further complicates the decision-making process. Thirdly, Ukraine's ambitions to join NATO are complicated by domestic issues (NATO, 2023a). To achieve the conditions specified by NATO for membership, Ukraine must address corruption, internal divides, and the execution of reforms. Thus, NATO members and other Western nations have voiced worry about Ukraine's development in these areas, emphasizing the need for on-going efforts to fortify democratic institutions, improve the rule of law, and root out corruption (Demir, 2022). These difficulties doubt Ukraine's preparation and the timing for a future NATO admission. The joint statement delivered at the Vilnius summit significantly affected Ukraine's

chances of becoming a member of NATO (Dempsey, 2023). The statement confirmed support for Ukraine's NATO membership bid and pledged to keep sending weapons to the country as it fights Russia. However, it stressed that membership would be effective for Ukraine if the "conditions are met" (Clem, 2018). These circumstances are linked to Russia's current involvement in Ukraine and the state of the conflict. Moreover, the statement issued during the Vilnius summit reflects the NATO member states' cautious stance on Ukraine's membership. The conclusion of the current war, with all its complications and problems, is necessary before full membership can be given (Marten, 2023). This strategy is the outcome of trying not to escalate tensions with Russia while showing support for Ukraine's independence. However, the statement does not provide a date for Ukraine's membership. Yet, it does reaffirm NATO's commitment to Ukraine's security and resolve to aid Ukraine in enhancing its defensive capacities (Hickson, 2022). Consequently, NATO's acknowledgement of the significance of preserving peace and security in the area is reflected in this pledge. On the other hand, the statement draws attention to the challenges and unknowns Ukraine may face on the road to NATO membership. Progress in ending the war with Russia and restoring peace in Ukraine is a prerequisite for NATO membership (Sharp, 2023). The onus is now on Ukraine to maintain its reform initiatives, fortify its democratic institutions, and find a way to end the crisis peacefully.

As a result, the geopolitical ramifications of discussing Ukraine's membership in NATO are substantial. Security threats, political factors, and the need for internal changes all contribute to the uncertainty and difficulty surrounding Ukraine's objectives. NATO's declaration at the Vilnius summit reaffirmed the organization's commitment to Ukraine's security while also stressing the need to improve the situation on the ground before full membership is given. Given the numerous dynamics in the regional geopolitical scene,

Ukraine's route to NATO membership remains complex and dependent on several circumstances.

#### ***4.2.2 The Motivations and Consequences of Finland and Sweden's NATO Membership in the Context of the Russia-Ukraine War***

Ukraine and its neighbors have felt the geopolitical repercussions of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Finland and Sweden are two such nations that have made significant choices about their membership in NATO in reaction to the continuing crisis. For instance, Finland has traditionally maintained a policy of neutrality (Daehnhardt & Handl, 2018); thus, the country's decision to join NATO constitutes a significant departure from that stance. Likewise, Finland's security and territorial integrity have been questioned due to Russia's aggressive behavior in the Ukraine war (Dempsey, 2023). Aligning with a collective security framework and bolstering defense capabilities were significant factors in the decision to seek NATO membership. Simultaneously, the government of Finland expects to show its dedication to defending common principles, bolstering regional security, and discouraging prospective rivals by becoming a member of NATO (Yıldız, 2023). As a result, NATO's presence is bolstered, and the message that any confrontation against Finland would be faced with a collective reaction is reinforced by Finland's membership, making NATO a more effective deterrent in the Baltic Sea area.

Sweden is on a similar course, motivated by security concerns, in its quest to join NATO. Additionally, Sweden has reevaluated its defense capabilities in light of the closeness of the Russia-Ukraine war and Russia's growing aggressiveness (Chatterjee, 2023). Therefore, the government of Sweden also intends to join NATO to strengthen its defenses, collaborate more closely with other NATO countries, and deter more effectively against external threats. Consequently, Sweden's application to join NATO reflects the country's recognition that ensuring national security involves several countries' coordinated efforts in a unified defense

(Chausovsky, 2022). Both countries' national security interests and the necessity to handle the changing security picture in the Baltic Sea area drive Finland and Sweden's pursuit of NATO membership. Their choices will affect regional peace and security, not just their safety (Weber, 2023). Subsequently, Finland and Sweden's membership in NATO bolsters the alliance's deterrent posture and send a clear message to Russia about its commitment to collective defense. However, these choices also have the potential to raise tensions with Russia and affect NATO's diplomatic ties with Russia (Paul, 2015). Considering this, there will be far-reaching geopolitical effects of Finland and Sweden joining NATO. Simultaneously, Finland's and Sweden's actions also indicate a transition from a policy of neutrality in security to one of collective defense and collaboration (Djumala et al., 2023). This change could affect the power dynamic in the Baltic Sea area and its neighboring nations. Hence, military cooperation, joint exercises, and a more consistent approach to policymaking could all improve due to their participation in NATO (Choonara, 2022). Similarly, Finland and Sweden's participation in NATO sends a message of worry about regional security and the shifting dynamics in light of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. It illustrates their commitment to joining a common security framework and improving their military might (Djumala et al., 2023). Therefore, the choices will affect the regional balance of power, the deterrent against prospective threats, and the area's stability around the Baltic Sea. Moreover, Finland and Sweden's participation in NATO will have implications, and those consequences must be controlled carefully to prevent a dangerous escalation and preserve peace in the area (Vanhanen, 2022). It is essential to make diplomatic overtures to Russia to keep lines of communication open and reduce the risk of conflict.

As a result, Finland and Sweden's national security and shifting geopolitical concerns are reflected in their choices to seek NATO membership in the context of the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Their participation in NATO affects the security, deterrence, and balance of power in

the Baltic Sea area. These measures may improve collective defense overall but also increase tensions with Russia. Therefore, it is essential to carefully manage their NATO membership's repercussions and advocate for diplomatic solutions to keep the area stable.

#### ***4.2.3 Changing Landscape and Implications of the Russia-Ukraine Conflict on Regional Stability and Alliances***

Significant changes in the post-Soviet region's geopolitical dynamics have resulted from the Russia-Ukraine conflict, which has converged more than just the immediate parties engaged. For starters, the Russia-Ukraine war has caused a reevaluation of post-Soviet geopolitical allegiances and support. Countries with complicated links with Russia and the West, such as Moldova, Georgia, and Belarus, have adopted varying stances in reaction to the crisis (Sharp, 2023). Likewise, Moldova and Georgia publicly supported Ukraine, demonstrating their solidarity with Western values and opposition to Russia's aggression. While Russia has received complete backing from Belarus, establishing a tighter partnership with its eastern neighbor, the opposite is true (Averre, 2016). Therefore, countries in the post-Soviet area are pulled between Eastern and Western influences, and their decisions reflect that tension. These nations' geopolitical decisions also profoundly affect the area's stability and the alliances it supports. For instance, its support for Ukraine shows Moldova's connection with Western principles and goals despite its internal political challenges (Biswas, 2023). Nevertheless, Russia and Moldova already have tense ties, and the eventual stationing of Russian soldiers in Moldova might exacerbate the situation, notably in the separatist territory of Transnistria. Ultimately, the alliance might cause tensions and jeopardies Moldova's safety (Chatterjee, 2023). Conversely, Georgia's backing for Ukraine is consistent with the country's objectives to move closer to the West and away from Russia (Henrikson, 2022). Although, it also raises the question of how safe Russia-backed separatist territories like Abkhazia and

South Ossetia are. Yet, the Russia-Ukraine war makes it more challenging to resolve these regional disagreements.

Furthermore, the country's continuous support for Russia shows the complexity of Belarus' geopolitical options, notwithstanding tensions with Russian President Vladimir Putin (NATO, 2023b). Despite internal political conflicts and disagreements with Putin, the Belarusian government sees assisting Russia in the war as necessary to preserve the alliance and prevent negative consequences. In the longer run, closer ties to Russia might restrict Belarus' independence, making it harder for the country to explore new options or broaden its ties to the West (Henrikson, 2022). Thus, maintaining regional stability and establishing coalitions is complicated and challenging given the post-Soviet region's evolving geopolitical dynamics due to the Russia-Ukraine war. Geopolitical factors, regional history, and domestic priorities influence nations' decisions (Sokolsky, 2017). There is also a risk that regional stability would be affected by the internal disputes and tensions in these nations. For instance, concerns about territorial security and the potential use of nuclear weapons in Europe have also increased due to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine (Shah & Gedamkar, 2022). Those concerns have been voiced concerning the safety of neighboring nations due to Russia's aggressive behavior and the use of military force in Ukraine. Both NATO and the European Union have taken measures to increase deterrence and reduce the threat of nuclear weapons (Khilko et al., 2022). Therefore, to strengthen collective defense and safeguard member nations' territorial integrity, strategic alliances between NATO and EU member states have been formed. The goals of these actions are to reassure friends and discourage hostility. Furthermore, the influence of the Russia-Ukraine conflict on strategic alliances between NATO and the EU shows the interwoven nature of regional security initiatives. The war has made it more urgent that these organizations work together to solve shared security problems (Ajala,

2022). Joint military exercises, intelligence sharing, and policy coordination have become crucial to improve deterrence and keep the peace in the area.

As a result, the Russia-Ukraine war has drastically impacted the post-Soviet region's geopolitical dynamics. Belarus's support for Russia indicates its complicated geopolitical concerns, whereas Moldova and Georgia's support for Ukraine indicates their alignment with Western objectives. The peace and harmony of the area will be affected by these decisions. In addition, the war has prompted strategic alliances between NATO and the EU to improve deterrence and address concerns about territorial security and nuclear weapons vulnerability in Europe. Maintaining peace in the area requires persistent work towards fostering communication, collaboration, and diplomatic resolutions in a dynamic geopolitical environment.

#### ***4.2.4 Hindered Economic Growth, Discouraging FDI and Disrupting Trade Ties with Other Nations***

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has severely impacted the world economy. The war has also had long-term effects on GDP growth, FDI, and international trade connections for all the countries surrounding Russia and Ukraine and these two countries as well. For instance, price fluctuations, supply shortages, and economic instability have resulted from the global energy crisis sparked by the invasion, which has complexly hit both developed and developing countries (Bagdasaryan et al., 2023). Therefore, the war's effects on the oil industry have also altered the geopolitical environment by disrupting trade flows and supply lines. In addition, the considerable increase in energy costs is one of the most apparent effects of the war. According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), the rise in average global power output was caused by increasing fuel prices accounting for 90% of the rise (Stala-Szlugaj & Grudziński, 2022). Subsequently, this price increase has negatively impacted millions since they cannot afford power and clean fuels for food preparation, thus compounding the energy crisis.

Furthermore, there are advantages and disadvantages to increasing fossil fuel costs. For instance, the prices could be increased by incentivizing the development of renewable energy sources, hastening the shift towards more sustainable options (Singh, 2022). On the other side, the disadvantages include the rise of inflation, which may lead to a global recession and a more extraordinary resurgence of severe poverty. Similarly, Russia's gas shipments to the European Union (EU) have also been severely disrupted due to the war (Zaid & Khan, 2022). Another instance includes, between May and October of 2022, Russia reduced gas exports to the EU by around 80%, causing an energy shortage across the union (Thomson, 2022). As a result, there has been a pressing need for an immediate adjustment in trade patterns and energy policy to guarantee long-term energy security and the satisfaction of immediate consumer demand. In addition to that, impacted nations have been driven to develop new energy policies and look for other energy sources due to the interruption in trade connections (Rabbi et al., 2023). Hence, while some nations have increased their support for renewable energy, others have turned to nuclear power as a stable, emission-free alternative.

Moreover, the energy crisis brought on by the conflict in Ukraine has slowed economic expansion worldwide. The energy shock slowed growth to 3.1% in 2022, below expectations of 5%, and is expected to further lower growth to 2.2% in 2023 (Jenkins & Jenkins, 2019). As a result of this shock, the European GDP is expected to fall to 0.3% in 2023, making it the slowest region globally. Likewise, increasing interest rates make it challenging to fund sustainable energy projects due to increasing energy prices and decreased actual earnings (Ioannou et al., 2023). Clean energy programmes may encounter financial obstacles if nations strive to offset inflation by raising the cost of borrowing money. Similarly, some nations including Georgia and Moldova have expanded their coal usage, while others have strengthened their commitment to lowering greenhouse gas emissions in response to the energy crisis (Pasitselska, 2022). However, the fast expansion of renewable energy and electric cars

has helped to keep CO<sub>2</sub> emissions growth somewhat lower than in the previous year, offsetting some of the potential adverse effects of the crisis on emissions in the long run. As a result of this consequence, global investment in renewable energy sources has increased significantly in recent years, despite the difficulties presented by the energy crisis (Iacovino et al., 2023). Several nations are funding renewable energy initiatives to lessen the blow of the current energy crisis and lessen their dependency on fossil fuels. There is a movement towards sustainable alternatives, and the major economies, notably China, are investing the most in renewable energy.

As a result, Russia's invasion of Ukraine has initiated a worldwide energy crisis with far-reaching economic consequences. Global energy policies have been affected by the shifting geopolitical environment brought on by rising energy costs, shifting trade patterns, and supply constraints. Therefore, economic development has slowed due to the crisis, foreign direct investment has decreased, and trading patterns between countries have shifted. Long-term energy security and sustainable energy alternatives are top priorities for governments and companies to provide resilience in the face of energy shocks and geopolitical concerns. Despite the unknowns of the crisis, efforts to shift towards renewable energy are encouraging steps towards a more stable global energy system. Navigating the repercussions of the energy crisis and securing a secure and prosperous future for the global economy will need international collaboration, intelligent investments, and creative energy solutions.

#### ***4.2.5 The Displacement of Civilians, the Strain on Resources and Infrastructure***

The conflict between Russia and Ukraine has had far-reaching humanitarian effects, including a humanitarian catastrophe of displaced persons and refugees and political and economic upheaval. Many innocent people have died, and many more have been forced to flee their homes because of the fighting in Ukraine (Vanhanen, 2022). Likewise, many innocent lives have been lost, and millions have been forced to evacuate their homes in search of safety

as a direct consequence of the conflict, creating a humanitarian disaster (Vrsanska & Kavicky, 2016). Therefore, individuals and towns alike have had their lives upended and suffered greatly due to the fighting. Consequently, the magnitude of the emigration and the intensity of the crisis has strained the infrastructure and resources of Ukraine and its neighbors (Papadakis & Spyrahou, 2022). Furthermore, Russia-NATO ties have been affected by the demand for resources and infrastructure caused by the displacement issue. For instance, Poland, Germany, and the Czech Republic have all felt the effects of the flood of migrants and displaced persons into their nations (Larrabee et al., 2015). However, tensions and difficulties have arisen inside these nations due to the need to accommodate and care for the displaced people's needs. As a result, Russia and NATO's already tense relationship has been further strained as the war and its repercussions have become a subject of dispute. Similarly, the demographic issues facing Russia, which have repercussions for the country's workforce and the long-term geopolitical dynamics, have been exacerbated by the conflict between Russia and Ukraine (Iskandaryan, 2022). There have been losses on both sides of the conflict, and the violence has caused many Russians to leave the country. As so many men have been killed in conflict or have left the nation, there is now a shortage of male laborer's. Thus, Russia's economy faces headwinds because of the country's ageing population, which reduces the available labor force and slows economic expansion (Averre, 2016). Subsequently, long-term effects on Russia's geopolitical standing might be expected from the war's impact on the country's population. In addition, Russia's ability to innovate and compete economically might be hampered by the departure of many young, educated workers, especially in high-value areas like IT (Vajriyati et al., 2022). Hence, as Russia struggles with a dwindling population, the demographic decrease could diminish the country's overall demographic and geopolitical influence. Simultaneously, the Russia-Ukraine conflict has had far-reaching ramifications, and the demographic issues and their implications for Russia's workforce and long-term geopolitical dynamics are prime

examples (Biswas, 2023). The fall in Russia's population also threatens the country's ability to grow and advance internationally.

As a result, the conflict between Russia and Ukraine has caused a humanitarian disaster due to the upheaval of civilian populations and the resulting flood of refugees. Russia-NATO ties have been affected by the demand for resources and infrastructure caused by the displacement issue. The conflict has also exacerbated demographic problems in Russia, leading to a declining workforce and having far-reaching geopolitical consequences. Beyond the political and economic, the war's humanitarian and demographic effects show how complicated and nuanced its influence has been. The rehabilitation and stability of the afflicted areas will depend on how healthy efforts are made to solve the humanitarian catastrophe and alleviate the demographic issues.

#### ***4.2.6 Cooperation Before the Annexation of Crimea and the Subsequent Breakdown and Challenges in Relations***

As the conflict between Russia and Ukraine has progressed, so have ties between NATO and Russia. For starters, NATO and Russia had improved their relationship before the Russia-Ukraine conflict. NATO-Russia ties have evolved, demonstrating an increasing willingness to work together and communicate openly (Kulakevich, 2023). Likewise, their partnership thrived on shared endeavors, meetings, and knowledge. Therefore, the desire to improve communication and collaboration on topics of common concern was reflected in the creation of the NATO-Russia Council as a venue for decision-making and dialogue (Daehnhardt & Handl, 2018). In addition, trust and confidence were cultivated via military-to-military cooperation and weapons control agreements. These efforts were made to fight terrorist threats and stop the spread of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons (Cross, 2018). However, difficulties and tensions existed in the relationship between NATO and Russia. The pause in collaboration after Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea was a watershed moment

(Iskandaryan, 2022). Similarly, breaking international law by annexing territory has also damaged relations between the two countries. Therefore, the severing diplomatic and communication connections between NATO and Russia has further aggravated an already tense situation. Tensions were exacerbated by disagreements over how to treat Georgia's breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia (Iskandaryan, 2022). The breakdown in trust and safety in the area was a direct result of these difficulties and the halt in collaboration.

Moreover, the deterioration of ties between the two organizations impacted critical areas of collaboration between NATO and Russia before the invasion of Crimea. For instance, the fields of cooperation included joint military operations, weapons control, and the fight against terrorism (Demir, 2022). The communication breakdown also made it more challenging to address shared security concerns and advance efforts to foster calm. Hence, the inability to effectively address common problems was hampered by the dissolution of collaborative efforts and the failure to communicate relevant information (Kulakevich, 2023). The deterioration of ties severely hampered confidence in one another and hindered efforts to work together, undoing years of progress. Furthermore, there will be long-term repercussions from NATO's and Russia's breaches of international law and confidence in each other. Differences and divergent interests between NATO and Russia were brought to light by the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the annexation of Crimea (Thompson, 2022). The war has changed regional geopolitical dynamics and has more comprehensive regional stability and security ramifications.

As a result, NATO-Russia ties have progressed through phases of cooperation, difficulty, and friction at the same time. The loss of confidence and collaboration that followed the takeover of Crimea was devastating. The break in communication and diplomatic connections compounds the inability to handle common security threats effectively. The geopolitical environment has changed due to breaches of international law and worsening

relations. Moving ahead, it will be vital for the future of NATO-Russia ties and regional security to reestablish trust and identify common ground.

### **4.3 Implications**

The discussion presents critical literature that draws numerous essential conclusions on the geopolitical effects of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. The geopolitical ramifications of Ukraine's possible NATO membership imply that the country's security challenges, political considerations, and internal reforms require serious study. Likewise, efforts to clarify and overcome the obstacles and unknowns on Ukraine's route to NATO membership must continue. Therefore, the geopolitical ramifications of Ukraine's debate over joining NATO are significant. As the literature suggests, the divergent responses from Western countries have further widened the chasm between Ukraine and the West and stoked tensions with Russia (Mark & Green, 2023). Similarly, this implies that Ukraine's membership ambitions are complicated by a need to resolve security concerns, political factors, and internal changes. Subsequently, this also suggests that the pursuit of Ukraine's NATO membership will continue to affect the geopolitical environment, influencing regional alliances and the balance of power.

The literature also suggests that Finland and Sweden's intentions to pursue NATO membership in reaction to the Russia-Ukraine crisis affect regional peace, security, and balance of power (Iskandaryan, 2022). Likewise, this implies that NATO's deterrent posture is bolstered, and a strong message is sent to Russia, but tensions are raised, and diplomatic relations are impacted by their involvement. However, consequences management and diplomatic measures are needed to avert escalation and preserve peace in the Baltic Sea area (NATO, 2023b). Finland and Sweden's membership in NATO signals a departure from their long-held neutral stances, which may have far-reaching effects on the area's balance of power and level of security.

The literature also suggests that the war between Russia and Ukraine has significantly altered the post-Soviet region's geopolitical dynamics (Quirk and Sharma, 2022). Similarly, this also implies that countries like Moldova, Georgia, and Belarus have taken different actions and alliances in reaction to the crisis, which has impacted regional stability and alliances. In contrast to Belarus, whose support for Russia shows the complexity of its geopolitical concerns, Moldova and Georgia are aligned with Western principles and ambitions, as seen by their support for Ukraine (Bezerra, 2022). The implications involve these actions affecting the regional balance of power and the alliances forged in the post-Soviet area. Therefore, efforts must be made to maintain peace in the area, increase lines of communication, and seek diplomatic solutions to common security issues.

The literature also suggests the war has badly hampered Russia's economic development, FDI, and commercial connections. Foreign direct investment (FDI) has decreased, and access to cash, technology, and managerial knowledge has shrunk because of geopolitical dangers emerging from the conflict (Thompson, 2022). Simultaneously, this implies that the breakdown of trade linkages, including Western economic sanctions and Russian countersanctions, has further harmed international trade volumes and many sectors of Russia's economy. Therefore, Russia's long-term economic prospects need to attract international investment, diversify the economy, and reestablish trade relations.

The literature also suggests that the fighting forced civilians and refugees to flee their homes. Additional difficulties have arisen due to the demand for Ukraine's and its neighbors' resources and infrastructure (Mark & Green, 2023). Moreover, the implications involve countries like Poland, Germany, and the Czech Republic have had to adapt and handle the constraints, which has harmed Russia-NATO ties. Long-term effects on Russia's workforce and geopolitical power may be seen in the demographic issues arising from the war, such as a shrinking population and a scarcity of trained employees (NATO, 2023b). The humanitarian

situation must be addressed, impacted communities must be supported, and diplomatic solutions must be found if the area is to be stabilized.

The literature also suggests that severing ties between NATO and Russia, especially after Russia invades Crimea, has hampered their ability to work together in vital areas. Trust and security in the area have been weakened by the interruption of communication and the breaking of international law (Hickson, 2022). Additionally, this implies that the consequences of this breakdown and the difficulties in working together highlight the need to mend fences and find common ground. For the sake of future ties and regional security, it is essential to address common security issues and open lines of communication.

#### **4.4 Conclusion of the Chapter**

In conclusion, as the war has progressed, it has become clear that the geopolitical impacts go well beyond the parties directly engaged, severely affecting regional security, alliances, economic growth, and humanitarian issues. The Ukrainian government's desire to join NATO has become a divisive topic with far-reaching geopolitical implications. Henceforth, discussions on Ukraine's future membership have brought to light the risks and unknowns associated with the country's aspirations, including security concerns, political factors, and the need for internal changes. Western countries and Russia's responses have widened the gap, making decision-making more difficult. Consequences include the need for diplomatic measures to handle the rising tensions between NATO and Russia and the altering power balances in the post-Soviet area. Finland and Sweden's decision to join NATO in reaction to the crisis between Russia and Ukraine has far-reaching consequences for the stability of the area and the distribution of power. As a result, the Western-aligned stances of Moldova and Georgia in backing Ukraine contrast with the geopolitical interests driving Belarus's backing of Russia. These choices affect the whole area and need constant work to ease tensions, improve lines of communication, and seek out peaceful alternatives.

Overall, implications drawn from the debate and analysis of the Russia-Ukraine conflict demonstrate geopolitical processes' intricate and interconnected nature. There must be diplomatic endeavors, joint projects, and a dedication to regional stability if the problems and unknowns are to be overcome. The repercussions are not limited to those directly engaged but affect regional security, alliances, economic growth, and humanitarian issues. A more stable and peaceful geopolitical environment may be achieved if relevant parties know and take steps to mitigate these effects.

## **Chapter 5: Conclusion, Limitations and Contribution of the Research Paper**

### **5.1 Conclusion**

For the current research paper, firstly, the initial chapter has been developed with respect to the background and history of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Both countries had close relationships with each other for centuries, but after the collapse of the Soviet-Union certain strategic preferences of both of the nations caused Russia at first to annex Crimea in the year 2014 and further fully invade Ukraine in 2022 (Miller, 2020). The research problem has been constructed in relation to the ongoing conflict and the geopolitical implications that have been caused over multiple aspects, including both political and economic disruptions across the globe. The main objective explained at the start of the research paper is to determine the broader geopolitical implications of the war while focusing on the NATO-Russia relations further in the research. The objective is to understand the implications caused to the geopolitical environment across different countries, including neighbor countries of NATO and Russia, because of the Russian violation of international laws and violent behavior in Ukraine. Furthermore, research significance is mentioned stating the importance of this study to provide insights about the effects of the geopolitical disruptions that are causing major damages and uncertainty not only for Russia and Ukraine but also for linked NATO and EU member countries. Research structure has also been outlined to give a brief overview of all the aspects that have been covered for determining the geopolitical implications of the Russia-Ukraine war and the focus on how NATO and Russia's relations have been evolved throughout the years and later disrupted due to the on-going Ukraine war.

Furthermore, the research methodology chapter contains the methodology for this research paper, including the research method, data collection procedures, data analysis and ethical considerations. A secondary qualitative research method has been utilized for this research to gain in-depth knowledge on the matter between Russia and Ukraine and its

geopolitical implications, including the evolution of relations between NATO and Russia from published journal articles, newspaper articles and different foreign institute analysis websites. The geopolitical implications of the war have been analyzed from the articles that have been searched and selected based on their relevancy to the research objective and question formulated earlier. Also, the articles have been chosen in accordance with the research problem stated of geopolitical disruptions that have caused security and various economic and political disturbances and uncertainties.

Moreover, the analysis chapter comprises the table of the articles along with the observations that have been extracted from each piece of literature studied. The discussion focused on elaborating on the implications of different geopolitical factors. It has been observed that Ukraine's NATO membership is uncertain because NATO member countries are considering the security threats and political factors which can be impacted further, given in view the Russian aggression in terms of war. Additionally, Finland and Sweden's decision to join NATO is also fueled by the geopolitical dynamics that have been created after the Ukraine war. Both countries are considering their security threats and the balance of power in the region. These considerations are in the perspective of collective defense that they can acquire from the NATO alliance. Moreover, the Russia and Ukraine war has drastically impacted the post-soviet region, and two countries, including Moldova and Georgia, have come forward in support of Ukraine. Moldova has also accepted thousands of Ukrainian refugees and condemned the Russian invasion since the beginning of the war. Energy alternatives should also be at the core of the policy of the European and NATO member countries, as dependency on energy resources from Russia has disrupted major economic activities all over the world. The displacement of people is another issue with an increased amount of expenses on recipient countries that have contributed to further challenges for those countries.

Furthermore, the breakdown of cooperation between NATO and Russia has increased the inability of both of parties to tackle common challenges, most importantly in the field of terrorism and arms control. The geopolitical environment thus further deteriorated because of the international violations by Russia, and this has created a sense of mistrust in communication and cooperation that was previously flourishing. Also, it is important in the aftermath of the war that both Russia and NATO should come together to find common ground to reestablish the trust that has been broken down after Russia's aggression in Ukraine. Lastly, the implications with respect to the findings have been mentioned that the war has severely impacted the future of NATO and Russia and their ability to work together in vital areas of broader contexts. Additionally, findings and their implications have been observed and interpreted from the selected secondary sources relevant to the research objective. The current chapter summarizes the content and discussion covered for this research paper, and after this section, below are the limitations of the research paper, along with its contribution to the research field for understanding the geopolitical implications because of the ongoing conflict.

## **5.2 Limitations of the Research**

The secondary qualitative nature of the research has limited the availability and reliability of the data from different sources. Additionally, the scope of the evolution of Russia and NATO relations may be limited due to the low availability of studies conducted on this aspect. The time constraints of the MRP have also limited some of the areas of the research. The latest perspectives on the geopolitical implications of the war have been added, given in view their significance, but some of the latest advancements might have been left due to limited time. Also, the findings of the research are not generalizable as it is specific to Russia and Ukraine war and can't be related or analyzed with respect to any other war and its geopolitical implications. Despite of the limitations, the research study has aimed to identify the possible and most prominent geopolitical implications because of the war and highlighted the evolution

of Russia and NATO relations after Russia's annexation of Crimea and then further full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

### **5.3 Contribution to the Research Field**

The research paper would be beneficial for both students and researchers in analyzing the geopolitical implications of the Russia-Ukraine war and its effects on various global political and economic aspects. The study will also be beneficial to analyze the war dynamics and how Russia and NATO's cooperation initiatives have been impacted in the aftermath of war. In accordance, the analysis of this research paper will provide an overview to the students with relevant fields of education, especially from the field of international relations, to utilize the findings for developing their knowledge when it comes to war and its implications on the geopolitical situation of the associated countries. From the discussion of this study, researchers can also better understand the challenges faced in the geopolitical environment due to the aggression and violation of internal laws by Russia.

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