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*The Clash of Civilizations Thesis in Light of US Foreign
Policy: The Global War on Terror and the 2022 Russia-
Ukrainian War*

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Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master's Degree in Language and Culture

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Dedication1

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Didecation2

In the name of Allah, grateful to him for everything he gave me to complete this piece of work,
To me, myself, and I, to my beautiful reflection in the mirror, to my unique soul because she
deserves.

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To the one whose name is etched in my heart, yet never dare to crosses my lips.

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Abstract

Amongst the many theories that attempted to anticipate the post-Cold War world, the Clash of Civilizations theory emerged as one of the most popular. The theory, proposed by Bernard Lewis and later developed by Samuel P. Huntington in his book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, is based on the idea that the post-Cold War world would witness conflicts based on purely religious and cultural differences. Because the foundational values of certain civilizations are incompatible, Huntington and Lewis argued that conflicts between them are very probable and even inevitable. Lewis stressed the core differences between the Western and Islamic civilizations. Scholars have been revisiting the propositions of this theory every time a grand conflict takes place. Two of the most significant recent global events that brought to the mind the propositions of the Clash of Civilizations are the post-9/11 Global War on Terror, launched by the USA and its allies, which is perceived by many Muslims as a war on Islam, and the 2022 Russian-Ukrainian war. This dissertation examines the clashes that have taken place during these events in light of the clash of civilizations theory inquiring whether the two conflicts lend any support to its propositions. Many factors including the propaganda that accompanied the GWOT, loaded with historical memories of bloody encounters between Islam and the West, and the rise in Islamophobia, appears to suggest that the cultural aspect is relevant. As for the second case, it can be argued that the 2022 Russian-Ukrainian war is not really a Ukrainian-Russian war, but rather a Russian-Western war on Ukrainian territory, whose origins go back to the Cold War era. Despite the fact that the religious and cultural differences are among the reasons of the conflict, but are not the main reasons.

ملخص

برزت نظرية صدام الحضارات كواحدة من أشهر النظريات التي حاولت التنبؤ بما سيكون عليه عالم ما بعد الحرب الباردة، النظرية التي اقترحها برنارد لويس و تم تطويرها لاحقا من قبل صامويل ب. هنتنغتون في كتابه "صدام الحضارات وإعادة تشكيل النظام العالمي"، تقوم على فكرة أن عالم ما بعد الحرب الباردة سوف يشهد صراعات مبنية على اختلافات دينية وثقافية بحتة. نظرًا لأن القيم المؤسسة لبعض الحضارات تتميز بعدم التوافق، زعم هنتنغتون ولويس أن الصدامات بين تلك الحضارات محتملة للغاية بل وحتى حتمية. ركز لويس على الاختلافات الجوهرية بين الحضارتين الغربية والإسلامية على وجه التحديد. لطالما أعاد العلماء مراجعة افتراضات هذه النظرية كلما وقع صراع كبير. من أهم الأحداث العالمية الحديثة التي أحييت افتراضات نظرية "صدام الحضارات" هما الحرب العالمية على الإرهاب التي أطلقتها الولايات المتحدة وحلفاؤها بعد أحداث 11 سبتمبر، و التي اعتبرها الكثير من المسلمين حرب على الإسلام، و الحرب الروسية الأوكرانية التي بدأت في عام 2022. تقوم هذه المذكرة بدراسة الصراعات التي وقعت خلال هذين الحدثين على ضوء نظرية صدام الحضارات، وتطرح التساؤل عما إذا كان هذان النزاعان يشكلان تجسيدا لأطروحات النظرية. يبدو أن العديد من العوامل، بما في ذلك الدعاية التي رافقت الحرب العالمية على الإرهاب، والمشحونة بذكرات دموية للمواجهات بين الإسلام والغرب، وارتفاع الإسلاموفوبيا، تشير إلى أن الجانب الثقافي له صلة. أما بالنسبة للقضية الثانية، فيمكن القول إن الحرب الروسية الأوكرانية لعام 2022 ليست في الواقع حربًا روسية أوكرانية، بل هي حرب روسية غربية على أراض أوكرانية، و التي وتعود جذورها إلى فترة الحرب الباردة. على الرغم من حقيقة أن الاختلافات الدينية والثقافية هي من بين أسباب الحرب، إلا أنها ليست الأسباب الرئيسية بل المصالح السياسية الخارجية التي تأمل أوكرانيا في تحقيقها مع الغرب و التي تصطدم مع المصالح الروسية هي الأسباب الرئيسية للحرب.

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

9/11	September 9, 2001
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
EU	European Union
GWOT	Global War on Terror
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
ROC	Russian Orthodox Church
SOAS	School of Oriental and African Studies
SU	Soviet Union
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nation
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UOC-MP	Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate
US	United States
USA	United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist of America
WMDs	Weapons of Mass Destruction
WTC	World Trade Centre
WW2	World War Two

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- Figure 1** : A map that represents the division of the world into civilizations according to Huntington (1996) .Kelly, Robert E. “Stop Invoking the ‘Clash of Civilizations.’” *Robert E Kelly* .Accessed 8 June 2024.....12

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Introduction

At the end of the Cold War between the world's two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, which was predominantly an ideological conflict, scholars began hypothesizing about how the world would be like in the future. Questions have been posed about whether peace would prevail within the newly emerging uni-polar world order, or conflicts of another kind will take place. They also inquired about the new causes that will lead to conflicts between countries in the future. One of the theories that emerged in this regard is the Clash of Civilizations Theory, introduced by the famous Orientalist historian Bernard Lewis, and later developed by the American political scientist Samuel Huntington. This idea suggested that cultural and religious identities will become the primary source of future conflicts in the world.

Lewis, in many of his works, discussed the growing tensions between the Islamic world and the West, highlighting the cultural and historical factors contributing to these tensions, while Huntington's thesis proposed that the future will witness a "Clash of Civilizations," marked by differences in historical backgrounds, cultural traditions, and particularly religious affiliations. Huntington's thesis was based on the proposition that the clash between these civilizations is inevitable due to several factors.

This proposition sparked widespread controversy among researchers and thinkers worldwide, with many rejecting and criticizing it, while others supported and confirmed its validity. In every war or conflict occurring in any region, supporters emerge declaring that the conflict's origin is the clash of civilizations. However, it remains just a theory subject to denial or confirmation. Two of the most famous and significant global conflicts that raised

questions among researchers and thinkers are the post-9/11 Global War on Terror, which is perceived by many Muslims as a war on Islam, and the 2022 Russian-Ukrainian war.

This study examines the clashes that have taken place during the Global War on Terror, and the 2022 Russian-Ukrainian war in light of the clash of civilizations theory. In order to measure the validity and relevance of the theory in these two conflicts, the study sheds the light on the backgrounds of both the Global War on Terror which was declared after the events of September 11, 2001 and the 2022 Russian-Ukrainian war. A historical approach analysis and description method is used to explore this problematic.

Regarding the GWOT, which is perceived by many as a war between the West and the Islamic world, the theory prophesized that Islam and the West would inevitably clash, based on the idea that the main conflict in the contemporary world is not between countries or economic systems, but rather a conflict between different civilizations. Huntington argued that the clash between Islam and the West is not about military or political dominance but is ingrained in social issues like gender equality, religious values, and cultural identity.

Huntington pointed out that relations between the Western world and the Islamic world may be fraught with tensions due to cultural and religious differences. He argued that the resurgence of Islam represented a rejection of Western culture and a recommitment to Islamic values, highlighting the importance of religion in shaping world politics. Additionally, he suggested that Islamic and Sino-European cultures might collaborate against the West.

In the case of the Ukrainian crisis, Huntington's prediction was based on his theory that nations would revert to their historical and cultural roots, particularly in countries divided along civilizational lines. He described Ukraine as deeply divided along historical, geographic, and religious lines, with western Ukraine leaning towards Europe and eastern Ukraine and Crimea aligning with Orthodox Russia. Despite being published before the 2013

Ukrainian crisis, Huntington's renowned book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* contains warnings about the risks associated with the Ukrainian situation.

In order to accomplish this study, the bulk of this dissertation is written based on the findings in a set of primary and secondary sources, including books, journal articles, web articles, newspaper articles, reports and speeches, that best serve the topic. In the reading and data collection, the research is based on works which dig deep in the debate of the Clash of Civilizations theory before and after the post-9/11 war on terror which was accompanied by a hateful anti-Muslim propaganda, and the outbreak of the 2022 Russian-Ukrainian war.

One of the main references used in this research is Samuel Huntington's article "A Clash of Civilizations?" (1993) published by *Foreign Affairs* magazine which was later developed to a book untitled *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996). In the two works, Huntington argues that in the post Cold War world, conflicts will be based on cultural and religious differences and will take place between civilizations.

"The Roots of Muslim Rage" written by Bernard Lewis, first published in 1990 in *The Atlantic* magazine, in which the author explains the roots of rivalry and animosity between Islam and the West, explores the reasons behind the deep resentment many Muslims hold towards the West. Lewis, in his article, introduces the concept of "A Clash of Civilizations". He argues that out of Arab Muslims' rage over the West and its civilization, a clash between Islamic and Western civilizations will inevitably take place.

Edward Said, in "The Clash of Ignorance" (2001) published in *The Nations* magazine, argued that ignorance and prejudice fuel misunderstandings between cultures, highlighting the need for critical self-reflection and dialogue, the article criticizes the clash of civilizations theory.

"The Clash of Civilizations in Ukraine" written in 2023 by Paweł Ukielski published by *Centre for Eastern European Studies*, analyzes the war between Russia and Ukraine through

the lens of Samuel Huntington's theory of the clash of civilizations. The author provided a deep analysis of Huntington's assumptions over the Russian-Ukrainian relations.

This work is divided into three chapters. The first chapter, entitled "The Clash of Civilizations Thesis", gives a historical background of the concept of the clash of civilizations, traces back the development of the theory and sheds light on the scholars who advocated the theory and contributed to the debate around it, in addition to their main works. It also gives an overview on the theory and its main propositions, starting with Bernard Lewis and his writings about the clash of civilizations between the West and the Muslim world then his article and book with a conceptualization of the phrase "clash of civilizations" according to him.

The chapter also focuses on the "inevitability of the clash" proposition and the reasons behind it, highlighting the inherent differences between civilizations which make them incompatible and make the clash between them very probable.

Moreover, the chapter sheds the light on some criticisms of the theory, highlighting in particular two of the most prominent scholars who directed harsh criticism to it. First, the Palestinian American critic Edward Said's discussion of the theory and his arguments are presented. Second, the point of view of the American theoretical linguist Noam Chomsky in which he clearly rejected the validity of the theory is discussed.

The Second chapter which is entitled "The Global War on Terror in the Light of the Clash of Civilizations Theory", examines the GWOT launched by the USA and its Western allies in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. Because the victims of this war were mostly Muslims, it is perceived as a war on Islam not on terrorism. The chapter provides a historical overview on the US relationship with the Islamic World during and post the Cold War era and explores the construction of Islam as the new enemy of America after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

It also analyses the justifications given by the leader of Al-Qaeda Osama Bin Laden for the attack on American Lands on September 11, 2001. This chapter also discusses the reaction of the Bush administration to those attacks, by launching a GWOT mainly against two Muslim countries, Afghanistan and Iraq.

Most importantly, the chapter checks and tests the validity of the thesis of the Clash of Civilizations in relation with the GWOT. It investigates whether the conflict between the Islam and the West is an embodiment to Huntington's theory introduced in his book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* or not. Two opposing views of two famous scholars were presented. While Bernard Lewis' arguments came in support to Huntington's theory, Edward Said criticized this theory and rejected its propositions altogether.

The third chapter deals with the 2022 Russian-Ukrainian war in light of the clash of civilizations theory. To better understand the conflict, the chapter scrutinizes the roots of the tension between Russia and Ukrainian tracing back their relations to the period just before the dissolution of the Soviet Union and until the war of 2022. It explains the relations between them, going back to the Russian annexation of the Crimean Peninsula, and ending with the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian forces. It sheds the light on the role of the US in the relations between Ukraine and Russia, and the American reaction to the 2022 events. The chapter also investigates the role of culture, identity, and religion, and other factors effecting the decades-long tension between the two countries and the outbreak of the war, as well as its course.

The chapter also brings insights from Huntington's analyses and speculations about the future of the Russian-Ukrainian relations in his book *The Clash of Civilizations and*

Remarking of World Order. Huntington gave three possible scenarios about how the tension between Russia and Ukraine, backed by the West, would develop in the coming years.

Lastly, the chapter highlights and analyses two opposing views that discussed the validity of the clash of civilizations theory and its relevance in the context of the 2022 conflict between Russia and Ukraine. The first view confirms that the war is a clear realization of the propositions of the clash of civilizations thesis, while the other clearly declines the possibility of a clash of civilizations between the two countries.

Chapter One

The Clash of Civilizations Thesis: An Overview

In the realm of international relations and cultural studies, few concepts have stirred as much debate and controversy as the notion of the "Clash of Civilizations." This chapter embarks on a comprehensive exploration of this seminal concept, tracing its historical roots, examining its theoretical foundations, and critically assessing its implications for contemporary global dynamics.

At its core, the "Clash of Civilizations" represents a paradigmatic shift in understanding the nature of international relations. It posits that the primary source of conflict in the post-Cold War era will not be ideological or economic, as suggested by earlier paradigms, but rather cultural and civilizational. This thesis challenges conventional wisdom and forces a reevaluation of the dynamics shaping our world.

This chapter provides a historical background of the concept of "the Clash of civilizations". It sheds light on its appearance for the first time and development in the academic and political world since 1946. It focuses on how this new concept becomes widely popular around the world over decades. Examples of the scholars who introduced this concept and worked on developing it into a theory are highlighted.

"The Clash of Civilization" as a theory was first introduced by the British Orientalist Bernard Lewis who stressed the historical rivalry and tension between the West and the Islamic world. Later, the American political scientist Samuel P. Huntington brought the theory to fame. Through his idea on the division of the world into eight major groups after the Cold War, Huntington created a new "Civilization paradigm".

This chapter also explores Samuel Huntington's controversial proposition in his theory on the inevitability of clash between civilizations, as outlined in his influential book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. Huntington argued that conflicts between civilizations are not only likely but are bound to occur due to deep-seated cultural, religious, and historical differences.

Hence, the theory of the clash of civilizations is explored through the lenses of three prominent scholars: Francis Fukuyama, Bernard Lewis, and Samuel Huntington. Each of these figures offers valuable insights into the cultural, religious, and historical dynamics that underpin global conflicts.

Additionally, examining the criticisms of this theory by Edward Said and Noam Chomsky is vital for understanding its possible limitations. Said challenged the oversimplification and essentialization of cultural identities, while Chomsky criticized the theory for serving political interests and neglecting power dynamics and imperialism.

1.1.A Historical Background

The term "clash of cultures" or "clash of civilizations" was originally introduced by the French philosopher Albert Camus in 1949. During an interview where he discussed the French Colonization of Algeria, Camus stated: "Ce ne sera pas un choc des empires; nous assistons au choc des civilisations". He claimed that the conflicts of the future won't necessarily be solely about territorial expansion or power struggles between dominant nations or empires, but rather about clashes between different cultural or civilizational identities ("Populism Studies").

Subsequently, historian Bernard Lewis used this term in a 1957 speech at Johns Hopkins University, explaining the roots of future clashes between civilizations. In a September 1990 article in *The Atlantic Monthly* titled "The Roots of Muslim Rage", Lewis delved into the

escalating tensions between the Islamic world and the West, emphasizing cultural and historical factors contributing to these conflicts, such as differing values between the two sides (“Populism studies”).

In his 1992 book *the End of History and the Last Man*, Francis Fukuyama posits that the end of the Cold War signifies the end of history and global conflicts. He asserts that the triumph of Capitalism and liberal democracy over Communism and Communist countries implies the conceivable perfection of ideology and institutions (Yang 3). Fukuyama states that:

The end of history will be a very sad time. The struggle for recognition, the willingness to risk one’s life for a purely abstract goal, the worldwide ideological struggle that called forth daring, courage, imagination, and idealism, will be replaced by economic calculation, the endless solving of technical problems, environmental concerns, and the satisfaction of sophisticated consumer demands. In the post-historical period, there will be neither art nor philosophy, just the perpetual caretaking of the museum of human history. I can feel in myself, and see in others around me, a powerful nostalgia will continue to fuel competition and conflict even in the post-historical world for more time to come. (18)

His argument on the end of history or the death of history doesn’t imply the literal end of history or historical events, but rather that there would not be any force qualified enough to challenge the superiority of Western liberal values and democracy (Bitout and Hamane 67).

The term "Clash of Civilizations" was later adopted by American political scientist Samuel P. Huntington in his 1993 article "The Clash of Civilizations?" and his subsequent work *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996). Huntington appears to reject Fukuyama's claim of "The end of History" as a deceptive vision of unity. Huntington stated:

It is my hypothesis that the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural. Nation states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations. The clash of civilizations will dominate global politics. The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future. (Huntington 22)

According to Huntington, the end of the Cold War does not signify the end of conflicts within Western civilization but rather the beginning of a new era characterized by conflicts between different civilizations (Lubjuhn).

1.2. The Clash of Civilizations Theory and its Propositions

In his article “The Roots of Muslim Rage”, Bernard Lewis wrote:

We are facing a mood and a movement far transcending the level of issues and policies and the governments that pursue them. This is no less than a clash of civilizations — the perhaps irrational but surely historic reaction of an ancient rival against our Judeo-Christian heritage, our secular present, and the worldwide expansion of both. (22)

This quote suggests that the conflict between the West and Islam is no longer based on political affairs or government issues, but has become based on purely cultural and religious matters. According to Lewis, the religious and cultural differences between the two worlds will inevitably lead to a clash. Lewis referred to the Islamic world as "ancient rival" because it was an ancient civilization that had long been in a tense relationship with the Christian West.

Samuel P. Huntington, the American political scientist, introduces the concept of the Clash of Civilizations in his book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World*

Order, considering that: “cultural communities are replacing Cold War blocs, and the fault lines between civilizations are becoming the central lines of conflict in global politics” (Huntington125).

In this quote, Huntington indicates that the post-Cold War period will not witness any ideological or political conflicts, but rather cultural and religious differences will become the primary source of conflict in the world. His thesis is based on the argument that cultural divisions will become the primary lines along which future conflicts will be oriented. Furthermore, he proposes that the concept of distinct civilizations, which embody the heights of cultural identity, will increasingly serve as a valuable tool in predicting potential conflicts. In his theory, Huntington begins by challenging earlier paradigms that failed to adequately explain or forecast the current state of the world political order. "We need a map," Huntington states, "That both portrays reality and simplifies reality in a way that best serves our purposes"(Huntington 31).

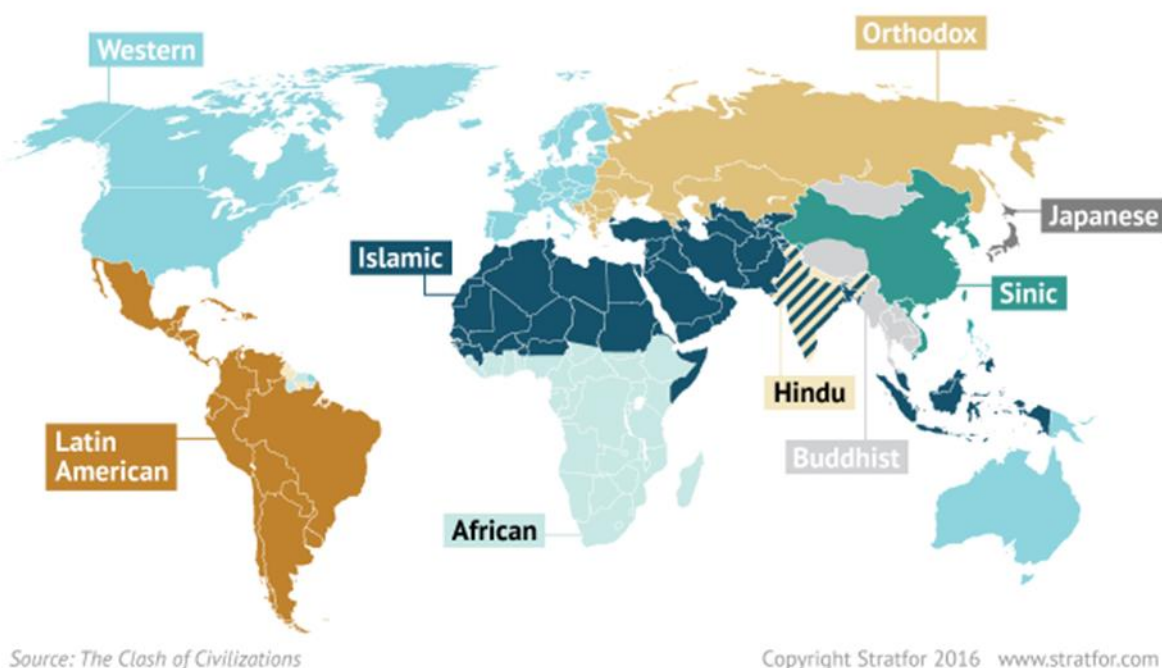
In order to bridge the gaps in the pre-existing paradigms and provide a fresh perspective on the post-Cold War order, Huntington creates a new "Civilization paradigm." He categorizes the world's civilizations into eight "major" groups, which are:

1. Sinic: Southeast Asian Chinese communities and China share a common culture. Includes Korea and Vietnam.
2. Japanese: Japan's culture is distinctly different from that of the rest of Asia.
3. Hindu: Considered the foundation of Indian culture.
4. Islamic: Having its roots in the Arabian Peninsula, the religion has expanded throughout Central Asia, the Iberian Peninsula, and North Africa. Among Islam's numerous subgroups are Arab, Turkic, Persian, and Malay.
5. Orthodox: Centered in Russia, differs from Christianity in the West.

6. Western: Centered on North America and Europe.
7. Latin America: Nations in Central and South America that historically had an authoritarian, corporatist culture. There is a Catholic majority in most countries.
8. Africa: According to Huntington, although the continent does not have a notion of a pan-African identity, Africans are diverse

The map below represents the eight civilizations according to Huntington.

Figure 01: A map that represents the division of the world into civilizations according to Huntington (1996) *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*.



Source: (Robert E Kelly professor of international relations in the Political Science and Diplomacy Department of Pusan National University in Bussan, South Korea.)

1.3.The Inevitability of the Clash Thesis

Bernard Lewis maintained that the differences in ideals between Islam and the West could only be reconciled through conflicts. Huntington has also claimed that cultural identity is becoming increasingly significant and that these civilizations' cultural fault-lines may eventually cause wars. Among the causes of a clash of civilizations, he included the following:

- The great gap in differences between civilizations, which include language, history, culture, costumes, and most importantly religion, which cannot be changed in any way because it is not a flexible thing, but rather its roots go back thousands of years in many civilizations.
- The world is turning into a small village, and this is what caused an increase in cultural awareness and the observation of the difference between the self and the other in terms of culture, which made civilizations come into contact with each other and fall into conflict.
- The deceit of the West contributes to the growing consciousness of civilization. Non-Western civilizations are trending towards reverting to their ancestral ways, even while the West is at the height of its strength.
- People are losing their long-standing local identities as a result of global social and economic modernization processes. They also diminish the nation state's capacity to provide identity. Political and economic conflicts can be settled and addressed more easily than cultural ones since they are less malleable.
- A growing trend is economic regionalism. A prosperous regional economy will promote awareness of civilization. It is only via a shared civilization that economic regionalism may be successful (Belkacemi32).

1.4. An Analysis of the Theory

The theory of the Clash of Civilizations, advanced by Samuel Huntington and Bernard Lewis, has been commented and criticized by some outstanding scholars such as Francis Fukuyama, Noam Chomsky and Edward Said who contributed much to enriching the debate over this theory. The most prominent advocates of the Clash of Civilizations remain Huntington and Lewis.

The theory examines the interactions between different cultures and their potential for conflict. Fukuyama focuses on the evolution of societies towards liberal democracy, while Lewis offers insights into Islamic civilization's historical dynamics. Huntington's work emphasizes the clash between civilizations with distinct values and interests. Together, these scholars have influenced discussions on global politics and cultural conflicts.

1.4.1 Bernard Lewis's Analysis

Bernard Lewis, a prominent British-American historian specializing in Orientalism, Islam, and the Middle East. He was born in London on May 31, 1916, to a middle-class Jewish family. His early fascination with languages and history led him to pursue higher education at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) at the University of London, where he obtained a B.A. in history with a focus on Middle East studies. Continuing his academic journey, Lewis earned his Ph.D. in Islamic history from SOAS, studying under the mentorship of Louis Massignon, a renowned French scholar of Islam (Jewish virtual library).

He furthered his studies with a postdoctoral position at the University of Paris, where he earned the "Diplome des Etudes Semitiques" in 1937. Lewis then commenced his academic career as an assistant lecturer in Islamic history at SOAS.

In his 1990 essay "The Roots of Muslim Rage", Lewis begins his discussion on Islam by acknowledging it as "one of the world's great religions" (Lewis 48), even if he frequently refers to it as a tradition or civilization rather than solely as a religion. He argues that Islam promotes principles of peace, tolerance, and equality, fostering coexistence among diverse groups. Moreover, Lewis highlights Islam's historical contributions to global civilization, emphasizing its enriching influence (Lewis).

However, he also acknowledges instances where Islam has engendered feelings of "hatred and violence" among its adherents, particularly towards the West. Lewis asserts that Muslims'

antipathy towards the West is evident in their rejection of Western practices and values, often viewing Western civilization as inherently "evil" and its people as "enemies of God" (Lewis 48).

He explores the underlying causes of the resentment felt by many Muslims towards the West. He examines how Muslims have experienced a series of setbacks, ranging from global power shifts to internal challenges within their societies, prompting a desire to reaffirm Muslim values and greatness.

He also emphasizes the impact of Western colonialism on Islam and the subsequent emergence of resistance against Western influence. Moreover, he discusses the perception of America as a primary adversary, particularly among Muslims, attributing this sentiment to intellectual influences from Europe, including a negative portrayal of America found in German thought (Lewis).

He anticipated a fundamental clash between two broad cultural spheres: the Islamic world and the West rooted in Judeo-Christian traditions. He painted a picture of Muslim nations, especially Arab ones, as stuck in the past and hostile to the West, particularly the Americans. This animosity, according to Lewis, is built into Islam itself, which he portrays as an inherently uncivilized, undemocratic, and anti-modern religion. This, he argues, creates resistance among Muslims to adopting Western values and democracy, leading to widespread resentment towards non-Muslims (Suliman 3-21).

1.4.2 Samuel P. Huntington's Analysis

Samuel Phillips Huntington, a prominent figure in Harvard's Department of Government from 1927 to 2008, held various prestigious positions including the Albert J. Weather head Professorship. He was renowned as a leading political scientist of the 20th century.

While primarily focused on teaching and scholarship at Harvard, Huntington also intermittently engaged in political activities at national, state, and local levels. His academic journey began at Yale University, followed by military service and further studies at the University of Chicago and Harvard. Returning to Harvard in 1962, he held key roles such as Chairing the Department of Government and directing strategic studies institutes (Biography - Samuel Huntington).

Huntington wrote seventeen books and contributed nearly one hundred scholarly articles. His work ranks prominently among the most referenced social scientists of the previous century, and he played a pivotal role in advancing various domains including civil-military relations, modernization and democratization theory, American political philosophy, and international relations (Betts).

Huntington's renowned work *the Clash of Civilizations and the remaking of World order* (1996), building upon his earlier 1993 article "The Clash of Civilizations?", posited that the primary source of conflict in future generations would stem from cultural differences, marking significant divisions among humanity. Upon its initial publication, the book sparked considerable controversy. However, in the aftermath of the events of September 11, 2001, it garnered significantly increased attention and popularity and sparked ongoing global discourse and debate (Biography - Samuel Huntington).

Huntington asserted that the world was not converging toward a universal ideology or set of values. Instead, he argued that different civilizations, each characterized by distinct cultural and religious traditions, would increasingly clash with one another. These clashes, according to Huntington, would define the fault lines of global conflict in the future.

In his book *the Clash of Civilization and the Remaking of World Order*, Huntington claimed that : " In this new world, the most pervasive, important, and dangerous conflicts will

not be between social classes, rich and poor, of other economically defined groups, but between peoples belonging to different cultural entities, tribal wars and ethnic conflicts will occur within civilizations”. This means that in the future the biggest and most significant fights and conflicts will happen between different aspects of cultures and cultural divisions that separate civilizations (Huntington 28).

Thus, when Huntington stated in his article “the Clash of civilizations?” that: “the dominating source of conflict will be cultural”, he was emphasizing his belief that conflicts in the post-Cold War era would not arise primarily from ideological or economic differences but rather from clashes between civilizations with distinct cultural identities and values. This viewpoint contrasts with Fukuyama's assertion that liberal democracy had become the universally accepted endpoint of socio-political development (Huntington 22).

1.3. The Criticism of the Theory

The Clash of Civilizations thesis has garnered attention and piqued the interest of researchers and policymakers around the world as it presents a compelling theory about the future of the global order following the end of the Cold War. Researchers, scholars, and experts have engaged in its study and meticulous examination due to its widespread acclaim.

However, despite the theory's wide popularity within academic and political circles, many opinions for and against have emerged, consequently, many scholars have acknowledged their rejection of it, and it has faced criticism from some of the leading researchers and critics, each presenting their arguments and perspectives regarding the thesis.

Two of the most famous critics of the clash of civilizations theory are the Palestinian-American academic and literary critic Edward W. Said, and the American professor Noam Chomsky.

Edward Wadie Said (1935, Jerusalem—2003, New York) is a Palestinian American academic, political activist, and literary critic who examined literature in light of social and cultural politics. In 1960, Said achieved a Master of Arts from Harvard University, where he later achieved a Doctor of Philosophy in 1964. From 1963 up until his death in 2003, Said taught at Columbia University. Alongside teaching at Columbia, Said was a visiting professor at Harvard in 1974, and a Fellow at Stanford University between 1975 and 1976 (Edward Said, Britannica).

In a lecture titled “the Myth of the Clash of Civilizations”, at the University of California, Berkeley, on April 19, 2001, and later in an article published by *the Nation magazine* on 22 October from the same year under the title of “the Clash of Ignorance”, Said discussed the theory and showed his strong rejection to the propositions of Lewis and Huntington, presenting several arguments.

One main argument put up by Said is that cultures and civilizations are not distinct, fixed, or homogeneous entities, contrary to what Huntington implies. Rather, via migration, trade, history, and other forms of interaction, they are linked to and impacted by each other. This casts doubt on Huntington's theory that conflicts mostly result from collisions between different civilizations (The Myth of the Clash of Civilizations).

Second, Said highlights the diversity that exists within every civilization and culture. In his view, cultures are not static entities but rather are shaped over time by a multitude of factors. The idea that civilizations are homogeneous groups with consistent morals and ideologies is contested.

Third, Cultural Commonalities: According to Said, there are common values, concepts, and goals among various cultures and civilizations. He claims that highlighting these

similarities will encourage collaboration and mutual understanding between individuals from various backgrounds (The Myth of the Clash of Civilizations).

In his critique of Huntington's analysis of conflicts between civilizations, Said points out that the latter ignores historical causes. Instead of being founded only on differences in culture or religion, he contends that many conflicts have intricate historical foundations.

Additionally Cultural dynamics are oversimplified, according to Edward Said, who claims that Huntington's theory oversimplifies the intricate relationships that exist between many civilizations. Huntington presents them as monolithic entities with fixed identities rather than recognizing their diversity and internal intricacies.

Finally, disregarding communication and collaboration: Huntington's argument, by setting civilizations against one another in a struggle for supremacy, fosters a "us versus them" mentality rather than encouraging understanding and collaboration between cultures. Said highlights the value of communication, respect for one another, and participation as more beneficial ways to deal with the world's problems (the Myth of the Clash of Civilizations).

Overall, Edward Said challenges Samuel Huntington's thesis by drawing attention to how oversimplified cultural dynamics are and stressing how important it is to grasp the linkages between various cultures in order to advance peace and understanding in our increasingly interconnected world.

Noam Chomsky (1928) the American theoretical linguist has discussed the clash of civilizations in several works, including his books *9-11* (2001), and also in many of his interviews and lectures. He offered commentary on the theory, stating that in the aftermath of the Cold War, "everybody is failing around for some paradigm, some big idea you can use to control people" (Chomsky, "the Clash").

In the quote, Noam Chomsky challenges the assumption that the "Clash of Civilizations" is a paradigm, or great idea, which is used to manipulate people. Instead of genuinely knowing and conversing with one another, he says that individuals are looking for large tales or notions to control and sway others. According to Chomsky, this quest frequently results in divisiveness and oversimplification rather than fruitful solutions.

He also questioned the possibility of a fight with Islam given that Saudi Arabia, the most conservative Islamic state in the world, is the strongest friend of the West. Chomsky acknowledges that there is conflict between "the rest" and "the West." He believes, however, that the West is at conflict with those who are choosing the poor no matter who they are. They could be Communists in Afghanistan or Catholics in Latin America (Noam Chomsky- Clash of Civilization).

This chapter began by tracing the historical roots of the clash of civilizations thesis, understanding how geopolitical forces and cultural dynamics have shaped its evolution over time. Exploring it as a theory, the chapter dove into Samuel Huntington's framework and its implications for global politics, highlighting the categorization of civilizations and the predictions of future conflicts.

The debate on the inevitability of such clashes added small difference to understanding, with perspectives ranging from deterministic to more hopeful outlooks emphasizing dialogue and cooperation. Examining the key figures Bernard Lewis and Samuel Huntington provided valuable insights into their contributions to political theory and their influence on contemporary discourse.

Furthermore, the critical perspectives offered by Edward Said and Noam Chomsky underscored the need to scrutinize assumptions and power dynamics inherent in such theories. As conclusion, it is clear that while the clash of civilizations offers a lens through which to

understand global complexities, it also necessitates caution against oversimplification and the dangers of cultural essentialism. Moving forward, fostering empathy, dialogue, and mutual respect among civilizations remains paramount in navigating the intricate web of international relations and promoting a more peaceful and interconnected world.

Chapter Two

The Global War on Terror in the Light of the Clash of Civilizations Theory

Since the appearance of the Clash of Civilizations thesis and its coming to the spotlight with the publication of Huntington's famous book *the Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, scholars have been revisiting its propositions every time a big international conflict takes place. Perhaps no other event has reminded scholars and policy makers of Huntington's theory as did 9/11 and the GWOT that followed. Many academics revisited the theory inquiring whether the events came in support for its propositions and whether they represent a clash between two incompatible civilizations: Islam and the West.

To understand the roots of this proposition, the second chapter of this thesis provides a historical account of the relations between the United States and the Islamic World from the Crusades to the Cold War era until the collapse of the Soviet Union. In addition, it gives a description of the nature of this relationship and how it has developed with time.

Moreover, this chapter focuses on the idea of the new enemy of America and the West after the collapse of the Soviet Union, describing the construction by some scholars of Islam as the new "Green Threat" to America and the West in replacement to the fading "Red Threat.

The chapter also sheds light on the justifications listed by the leader of Al-Qaeda organization for the attacks against the United States on September 11, 2001, and the US reactions with its Allies to those attacks by launching a GWOT whose major victims were Muslims. This war involved the invasion two Muslim countries; Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003.

However, the main focus of this chapter is on linking the GWOT to the clash of civilizations theory; whether the conflict between Islamic countries and the West is inevitable and based on cultural and religious aspects or not. Bernard Lewis as a supporter of Huntington's theory, and Edward Said as a critic to the theory, were two famous scholars who discussed this point and each of them explained his point of view on the question.

2.1. The Roots of Animosity between Islam and the West

The animosity between Islam and the West stems from centuries of negative representations and historical conflicts such as the Crusades, which entrenched distrust and resentment. The bitter legacy of the Crusades, colonialism and other wars widened the hostility, hatred, and dissent between the West and the Muslim world. During the Cold War, geopolitical tensions further complicated their relationship, as both sides sought alliances in the Muslim world. Post-Cold War, issues like Western intervention in Muslim-majority countries and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict have perpetuated further animosity.

The rivalry between Islam and the West has deep roots. The Crusades, for instance, had a very negative impact on the relations between Islam and Christian West. Crusades sabotaged the interfaith dialogue between these two communities who were initially living peacefully during the time of Prophet Muhammad (peace is upon him) (Wani 44).

The ruthless and widespread massacre of Muslims, Jews, and other non-Christians during the Crusades left a lasting mark of bitter resentment that reverberated through the annals of history. The atrocities committed during these religious conflicts became entrenched in the collective memory of affected communities, fueling animosity and mistrust that endured for generations. Today, echoes of this tumultuous past continue to resonate, as some Muslims, recalling the historical injustices inflicted upon their ancestors, perceive the West's modern-day interventions in the Middle East with a sense of skepticism and disdain (Onion).

The Crusades had a terrible effect on some of the Muslim and Jewish inhabitants of the Middle East, during the First Crusade, for example, adherents of the two religions joined together to defend the cities of Antioch (1097 CE) and Jerusalem (1099) from European Crusaders who laid siege to them. In both cases, the Christians sacked the cities and massacred the Muslim and Jewish defenders. It must have been horrifying for the people to see armed bands of religious zealots approaching to attack their cities and castles. However, as bloody as the battles could be, on the whole, the people of the Middle East considered the Crusades more of an irritant than an existential threat (Szczepanski).

In the context of the Cold War, the United States aimed to develop its presence in different parts of the world, including predominantly the Islamic countries with the dual aim of curbing the influence of the Soviet Union and to achieve its own international interests and objectives. Notably, the Middle East countries emerged as a focal point of the American attention due to its significant position. However, the Soviet Union was also willing to expand its sphere of influence within the same region (Yazdani 38).

The Middle East was important to the US due to the large oil and gas reserves that can help the US industries and the strategic location which could help America to stop Communist expansion. The Soviet government also wanted to develop its influence in the region. Both of the two superpowers were trying to impose on the scene the Cold War rivalry habits, “The Cold War came about because the United States and the U.S.S.R. were deeply suspicious of each other, and with good reason. Economic rivalry and ideological differences helped fuel the rivalry” (Ambrose and Brinkley 154).

The United States was a supporter of the Muslim fighters (*Mujahedin*) against Communists during the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Red Army (1979-1989). America supported the Islamic groups in the country by arming them. Certain groups, including those associated

with Osama bin Laden, who were engaged in fighting against Soviet forces during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, initially received training and support from the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) during that period (Yazdani 38).

As Wesley M. Bagby argued in his article “America’s International Relations since World War 1”, US interests in the Middle East appeared to necessitate the exclusion of Soviet influence, ensuring reliable access to the region's oil resources, and maintaining the openness of key trade routes for strategic purposes (Bagby 207).

To achieve these objectives, the United States had to provide assistance to Arab and non-Arab nations such as Iran and Turkey aligned with Western interests to maintain their sovereignty during the 1950s and 1960s. This strategy aimed to support their capacity to confront and resist Soviet expansionist efforts (Yazdani 38).

2.2. Islam as the New Threat after the Cold War

Following the end of the Cold War, the United States emerged as the dominant global superpower, coinciding with significant shifts in its relations with the Islamic world. With the collapse of Communism and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the ideological battleground shifted, leading to a recalibration of US foreign policy priorities. The US, unchallenged in its superpower status, sought to assert its influence in regions where Islamic nations held strategic importance. This often entailed complex engagements, including military interventions, diplomatic overtures, and economic partnerships. Commentators started giving anticipations about the new enemy of America and the West, thought of Islam as the new green threat in replacement of the red Communist threat.

The end of Cold War meant that the United States no longer had a distinct and easily identifiable adversary. Despite this shift, the US maintained a significant military capability, and the defense industry continued to generate substantial profits. Consequently, there was no

apparent catalyst for a shift away from American internationalism. The absence of the Soviet Union not only necessitated a reevaluation of strategy but also created a void in terms of identifying a new adversary. In essence, without a clear and defined threat, the United States had “lost its guiding principle for calibrating its foreign policy” (Schlesinger 17).

Using Islam and Muslims as a single threatening subject emerged toward the collapse of the Soviet Union, the outcome of the Gulf War and the Palestinian uprising. Islamic organizations played a big role during the Cold War era by providing religious epistemic to counter socialism and Communism. However, the end of the Cold War and the appearance of the USA as the only superpower produced competition in and abroad to define “new world order” (Bazian).

The emergence of political Islam as a significant force in global world politics has sparked various portrayals of it as a threat to the continued influence of western liberal democratic norms and principles in shaping the political, economic, social and cultural landscape in vast areas of the planet. The American political commentator Patrick Buchanan noticed: “For a millennium, the struggle for mankind’s destiny was between Christianity and Islam; in the 21st century, it may be so again. For as the Shiites humiliate us, their co-religionists are filling up the countries of the West” (Qtd in Salla 729).

In his 1992 article “the End of History and the Last Man”, Francis Fukuyama meant by the end of history, the end of competing ideologies, and that liberal democracy appeared as the only player in the world. He stated: “What we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular period of postwar history, but the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government” (4).

The new mission for America would be to lead in a supposedly intensifying clash of civilizations. The West has become easy to project hatred onto large segments of Muslims, especially in the Middle East, they viewing Islam as the new enemy, especially when Iranian revolutionaries labeled America the “Great Satan”. Bernard Lewis, in his 1990 famous article “the Roots of Muslim Rage”, warned:

It should by now be clear that we are facing a movement far transcending the level of issues and policies and the governments that pursue them. This is no less than a clash of civilizations – the perhaps irrational but surely historic reaction of an ancient rival against our Judeo-Christian heritage, our secular present, and the worldwide expansion of both. It is crucially important that we on our side should not be provoked into an equally historic but also equally irrational reaction against that rival. (66)

The idea of “the Clash of Civilizations” has a long history, but it gained prominence in Washington’s policy circles largely through the influence of Bernard Lewis and similar elite figures. According to Lewis and others, Islam is “*irrational*” and an “*ancient*” rival, set in opposition to “*our Judeo-Christian heritage*”. While Lewis considered various causes that might contribute to Anti-American sentiment in Muslim nations, such as US imperialism, its support to authoritarian regimes, and support for Israel, he ultimately attributed the roots of “Muslim rage” directly to the Islamic religion itself (Malici).

Samuel Huntington built on the arguments made by Bernard Lewis. In his 1993 article “the Clash of Civilizations?” which appeared in *Foreign Affairs*, Huntington argued that the most significant source of conflicts and clashes in the world would be between the Western civilization and the Islamic world, he argued:

The great division among humankind and the dominant source of conflict will be cultural. Nation-states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations. The clash of civilizations will dominate global politics. The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future. (Huntington 22)

Dividing the world into distinct civilizations, Huntington argued that the tension or the clash between Islam and the Christian West emerges as a significant concern for Western policymakers and becomes a widely debated topic in subsequent discussions on civilizational conflicts. The extensive history of conflicts between Islam and Christianity, particularly the Crusades and Jihad, holds a prominent position in the collective memory of their centuries-old relationship. The ongoing clash between these two entities, in various manifestations, harkens back to these historical events and shapes contemporary perceptions of their interaction (Majeedkhan 6).

Huntington contended that democratic principles, individual liberties, and private property values upheld by Western world hold little significance. Rather, he saw the Islamic civilization as the new enemy. Certain Western leaders and scholars, at the end of the war, articulated a portrayal of Islam and the Islamic world as the subsequent enemy such as the French Marxist historian, sociologist and Orientalist Maxime Rodinson, in his book *the Western Image and Western Studies of Islam* where he stated that “the Muslims were a threat to Western Christendom long before they became a problem” (Qtd in Ghazali).

Huntington emphasized the importance of searching for a new enemy and hostile rival to the United States of America. In his 1997 work, “The Erosion of American National Interests”, he inquired:

“Without the cold war, what's the point of being an American?” If being an American means being committed to the principles of liberty, democracy, individualism, and private property, and if there is no evil empire out there threatening those principles, what indeed does it mean to be an American, and what becomes of American national interests. (28-29)

On the other hand, Bernard Lewis viewed that the historical relationship between Islam and the West has deep roots. In his 1990 article “the Roots of Muslim Rage”, Lewis stated that:

For the first thousand years Islam was advancing, Christendom in retreat and under threat...however, for the past three hundred years, since the failure of the second Turkish siege of Vienna in 1683 and the rise of the European colonial empires in Asia and Africa, Islam has been on the defensive, and the Christian and post-Christian civilizations of Europe and her daughters has brought the whole world, including Islam, within its orbit. For a long time now there has been a rising tide of rebellion against this Western paramountcy, and a desire to reassert Muslim values and restore Muslim greatness. (49)

2.3. The September 11, 2001 Attacks

The attacks of September 11, 2001 were motivated by survival factors. Some of the reasons presented by the perpetrators and their leader Osama Bin Laden include the presence of US military forces in Saudi Arabia, American support for Israel (the eviction of Palestinians from their homeland), and the US sanctions on Iraq after the Gulf war (Dennis 20).

Hence, the attacks were not based on the interests of one country or group; it was in the imagination of perpetrators in defense of a whole civilization and religion. The perpetrators,

driven by a distorted interpretation of Islam and a sense of duty to protect their faith, viewed the attacks as a defiant stance against perceived Western hegemony and aggression.

Robert Pape in his article “the Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism” argued that al-Qaeda’s attacks started during the US deploying of its troops in Arab countries such as; Qatar, Bahrain and especially Saudi Arabia. He noticed that: “since al-Qaeda attacks began in 1995, the organization’s strategic logic has been to compel Western combat forces to leave the Arabian Peninsula” (29).

Many other US politicians believed that US foreign policy towards Muslim nations remains the primary root cause of the attacks. Former US politician Ron Paul of the house Representatives stated the main cause behind the attacks was: “America’s arrogant policy of bombing nations that do not submit to our wishes. This generates hatred directed toward America . . . and exposes us to a greater threat of terrorism; since this is the only vehicle our victims can use to retaliate against a powerful military state” (Paul 6-24).

The Saudi *Sheikh* Osama bin Laden believed that the presence of the US troops in Saudi Arabia during the Gulf War encroached upon the sanctity of Mecca and Medina. Bin Laden saw this as an affront to the Muslim world. He considered that it is his duty to resist what he perceived as foreign occupation. Consequently, in 1996, he openly declared a war against the United States, viewing it as the primary enemy in the region. This declaration marked the beginning of al-Qaeda’s confrontational stance against the US and its allies (Reed).

In an interview in May 1998, a little over two months before the US embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania, Osama bin Laden stated that:

The call to wage war against America was made because America has spear-headed the crusade against the Islamic nation, sending tens of thousands of its troops to the land of the two Holy Mosques over and above its meddling in its affairs and its

politics, and its support of the oppressive, corrupt and tyrannical regime that is in control. These are the reasons behind the singling out of America as a target. And not exempt of responsibility are those Western regimes whose presence in the region offers support to the American troops there. We know at least one reason behind the symbolic participation of the Western forces and that is to support the Jewish and Zionist plans for expansion of what is called the Great Israel. Surely, their presence is not out of concern over their interests in the region. ... Their presence has no meaning save one and that is to offer support to the Jews in Palestine who are in need of their Christian brothers to achieve full control over the Arab Peninsula which they intend to make an important part of the so called Greater Israel. (Bin Laden)

From the 1960's until now, the United States has been the great and the biggest supporter of the Israeli occupation of Palestine. The US played a significant role in the fabrication of good and strong relations with the Arab countries neighboring Palestine, such as Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt. While it was an "enemy" for some countries notably Syria and Iran, The US Congress has placed considerable importance on the maintenance of a good and supportive relation between the US and Israel.

Al-Qaeda's attacks on the United States on September 9, 2001 were also influenced by the American support for Israel in Palestine. They saw the creation, continuation and the existence of Israel as a grave injustice and crime against the Palestinian people because they have been evicted from their homeland. In his letter to America on November 24, 2002 Bin Laden stated:

The creation and continuation of Israel is one of the greatest crimes, and you are the leaders of its criminals. And of course there is no need to explain and prove the degree of American support for Israel. The creation of Israel is a crime which must

be erased. Each and every person whose hands have become polluted in the contribution towards this crime must pay its*price, and pay for it heavily. (Bin Laden 1)

Bin Laden called for collective action, solidarity and sacrifice with the Palestinian people in response to the violence and suffering endured by the Palestinians, saying: “The blood pouring out of Palestine must be equally revenged”, he emphasized the duty of revenge for the human losses suffered by the Palestinian people, and that the suffering of the Palestinians should not pass without those responsible for harming them being punished.

He also confirmed that the conflict in Palestine impact and effect entire communities and families, calling for support and solidarity for the Palestinians: “You must know that the Palestinians do not cry alone; their women are not widowed alone; their sons are not orphaned alone.” In his view, Palestinian people are purely Arabs and original Semites, and their religion is Islam and Palestine is there home: “The people of Palestine are pure Arabs and original Semites. It is the Muslims who are the inheritors of Moses (peace is upon him) ... If the followers of Moses have been promised a right to Palestine in the Torah, then the Muslims are the most worthy nation of this.”(Bin Laden 1-2)

Bin Laden also, cited the sanctions imposed against Iraq by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), as one of the main causes behind his attacks. Those sanctions came in a response to the Iraqi invasion to Kuwait on August 2, 1990. The UNSC imposed sanctions against Iraq in response to Saddam Hussein’s invasion of Kuwait, an order for comprehensive trade, financial and military embargo of Iraq with limited humanitarian provisions.

In January 1991, a coalition of twenty-six countries led by the United States launched military raids against Iraq. The conflict resulted in extensive bombing including the use of depleted uranium; not only military installations have been attacked, but thousands of

civilians also were killed. One tragic incident was the bombing of the Amariyah Shelter on February, 13, 1991, where as many 1.600 women and children died, burned alive during bombardment (Bahdi 1-2).

This was used as a justification presented by Osama bin Laden to attack the United States, because of the high level of death and suffering of the Iraqi people particularly among women and children; bin Laden in his letter to America declared: “You have starved the Muslims of Iraq, where children die every day. It is a wonder that more than 1.5 million Iraqi children have died as a result of your sanctions, and you did not show concern. Yet when 3000 of your people died, the entire world rises and has not yet sat down”(Bin Laden 2).

In a recorded message aired after the commencement of U.S. military operations in Afghanistan in October 2001, Osama Bin Laden attributed the plight of the Iraqi populace to the actions of the United States. The assertion that global sanctions have resulted in the deaths of one million Iraqis is frequently taken as fact by scholars, advocates, UN representatives, and even certain decision-makers (“Sanctions on Iraq: A Valid Anti-American Grievance?”).

The September 11, 2001 attacks are a series of acts done by nineteen militants associated with the Islamic group al-Qaeda against US targets. It was the worst attacks on American territory in US history; it led to about 3000 casualties. The police and fire department in New York City faced significant challenges, not only during the attacks but also in the attempts to help those involved, and over 400 police officers and fire fighters lost their lives (Miu 64).

The militant group al-Qaeda, led by Osama bin Laden, created a plan to hijack four airplanes and target multiple buildings. The first plane crashed into the World Trade Centre (WTC) north tower, causing their eventual collapse. The news of this attack spread rapidly, leaving people around the world shocked to hear that a country like the USA was attacked (Marjan 2).

The second plane 'Flight 175', hit the south tower of the WTC eighteen minutes later, at this time every one realize that the United States was under attack, some people who worked in WTC jumped from windows to escape. Subsequently, the third plane 'flight 77' of other American company, targeted the Pentagon, causing an explosion. Following this event, the Federal Aviation Authority called all aircrafts on ground after this incident. Later the fourth plane 'Flight 93' hit a field in Pennsylvania (Miu64-65).

In the evening of the same day, the American president George W. Bush addressed the American nation confirming that those attacks were terrorist attacks, describing this act as evil and despicable, saying:

Today, our fellow citizens, our way of life, our very freedom came under attack in a series of deliberate and deadly terrorist acts. The victims were in airplanes, or in their offices; secretaries, businessmen and women, military and federal workers; moms and dads, friends and neighbors. Thousands of lives were suddenly ended by evil, despicable acts of terror. (Bush)

Bush used the term 'war on terror' in his formal speech to Congress on September 20, 2001, saying: "Our war on terror begins with el-Qaeda, but it does not end there. I will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated".

For him, the Islamic organization Al-Qaeda led by Osama bin Laden is the first and the only responsible of the 9/11 attacks. He argued that this organization hates Americans because of their democratic government, and their freedom of religion saying: "They hate what we see right here in this chamber; a democratically elected government. Their leaders are self-appointed. They hate our freedoms; our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other" (Bush).

On December 27, 2001, Osama bin Laden said in a broadcast statement that: “Terrorism against America deserves to be praised because it was a response to injustice, aimed at forcing America to stop its support for Israel, which kill our people.”, he admitted that he was responsible for the attacks, explaining that America deserved this because of its support for Israel in the Middle East in general and against Palestine in particular (Timeline: Messages from bin Laden).

In the aftermath of the attacks, Bush declared that the issue according to him is terrorism, specifically Al-Qaeda organization and all governments that support it, saying:

Al Qaeda is to terror what the mafia is to crime. But its goal is not making money; its goal is remaking the world — and imposing its radical beliefs on people everywhere..... I also want to speak tonight directly to Muslims throughout the world. We respect your faith. It’s practiced freely by many millions of Americans and by millions more in countries that America counts as friends. Its teachings are good and peaceful, and those who commit evil in the name of Allah blaspheme the name of Allah. The terrorists are traitors to their own faith, trying, in effect, to hijack Islam itself. The enemy of America is not our many Muslim friends; it is not our many Arab friends. Our enemy is a radical network of terrorists, and every government that supports them. (Bush)

Bush used his speech to identify al Qaeda and its collaborators as the perpetrators of the attacks and the target of retaliation. He also asserted that al Qaeda was an enemy not just to the United States but to the entire free world. The war against al Qaeda, said Bush, would not be America’s alone: "This is the world’s fight. This is civilization’s fight"(George W. Bush on the 9/11...).

2.4. US Reactions to the Attacks

Western political leaders, notably President George W. Bush, framed the response to the September 11 attacks as a religious crusade, signaling a broader hostility towards Islam. This characterization positioned Islam as the new ideological adversary following the end of the Cold War, akin to Communism. The West viewed Islam not only as a religious entity but also as a cultural and civilizational opponent, heightening concerns about the threat posed by the Islamic world to Western interests (Belkacemi 37).

Bush's administration launched a "Global War on Terror" focusing on the worldwide terrorist threat not on al-Qaeda alone, targeting the regimes that succored and helped this organizations. Techniques like detention, rendition and torture were used in order to extract actionable intelligence and gather useful information. The administration also announced a policy of anticipatory self-defense, meaning they would engage in preventive warfare. Bush stated that he would take actions to preclude gathering threats, this strategy eventually led to war in Afghanistan and Iraq as well (Leffler 34).

The Global War on Terror (GWOT) encompassed military and non –military initiatives, including activities such as gathering intelligence, enforcing laws effectively, combating narcotics trafficking, freezing terrorist financing, implementing economic sanctions, disabling terrorist cells and training facilities, and fighting insurgencies. Additionally, it entails training military and police units, and strengthening infrastructure and assisting emerging governments, preserving human rights, and making humanitarian aid (Kayani 3).

In response to those attacks, a coalition of NATO forces (North Atlantic Treaty Organization), led by the United States, commenced military operations in Afghanistan on October 7, 2001. The primary objectives outlined by the bush Administration for the American invasion were multifaceted: firstly, to dismantle the Al-Qaeda network responsible

for the attacks, secondly, to hold the Taliban regime which supported al-Qaeda, and thirdly, to capture Osama bin Laden. Those aims were mentioned by President Bush in his speech on September 20, 2001:

Who attacked our country? The evidence we have gathered all points to a collection of loosely affiliated terrorist organizations known as al-Qaeda... This group and its leader - a person named Osama Bin Laden -are linked to many other organizations in different countries. (“From the archives: George W. Bush addresses...”)

A day before Bush’s declaration, the leader of the Taliban Mullah Mohammed Omar too, addressed religious leaders in Kabul, suggesting that the United States took the attacks as a pretext to remove the Taliban regime from power, he hinted at the Taliban’s willingness to engage in negotiations with the United States over Bin Laden (“the US refuses...”).

The US government refused to negotiate with the Taliban, the White House spokesman Ari Fleischer said in responding to comments by the Taliban leader: “the president message to the Taliban is very Simple-- it’s time for action not negotiation”, when he was asked to explain more, Fleischer said that President Bush wanted the Taliban to “take the actions necessary to no longer harbor terrorists—whatever form that takes” (Nast).

In October 2001, the United States, with support from Britain, initiated Operation Enduring Freedom with air strikes against Taliban forces in Afghanistan. Other countries like Australia, Canada, France, and Germany also pledged assistance. Initially, the campaign focused on air strikes against Taliban and Al-Qaeda targets, with limited ground operations involving US Special Forces, the Northern Alliance, and anti-Taliban Pashtun groups. The Taliban suffered significant losses, leading to the rapid collapse of their regime after key defeats in various Afghan cities, including Mazar-e-Sharif, Kabul, and Jalal Abad (Laub).

The issue of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) was utilized as a justification to shift the focus of the GWOT against Iraq. In order to do so, President Bush asserted that Saddam Hussein was linked to al-Qaeda and was actively pursuing the development of WMDs, which he might turn over to terrorists or use on their behalf, thus posing an imminent threat to the United States. However, these claims haven't only been discredited but there is also substantial evidence suggesting that the war party in Washington deliberated exaggerated unreliable claims and was aware that Iraq posed no direct threat to the US. The real concern appeared to be the potential for WMDs to limit US actions in the Middle East or threaten Israel, rather than posing an immediate danger to the US (Hinnebusch 11).

In the Office of the Press Secretary, on October 7, 2001, President Bush stated that:

The threat from Iraq stands alone -- because it gathers the most serious dangers of our age in one place. Iraq's weapons of mass destruction are controlled by a murderous tyrant who has already used chemical weapons to kill thousands of people. This same tyrant has tried to dominate the Middle East, has invaded and brutally occupied a small neighbor, has struck other nations without warning, and holds an unrelenting hostility toward the United States (President Bush Outlines Iraqi Threat).

2.5. Revisiting the Clash of Civilizations Theory after the 9/11 Attacks

When the attacks of 9/11 took place, there was a notable shift in global perceptions, leading to the reinforcement of the notion that Islam had become the new enemy; there was a surge in fear, suspicion, and hostility towards Islam and Muslims. This narrative of Islam as the new enemy was reinforced by the portrayal of Islam as inherently violent or incompatible with Western values, leading to widespread Islamophobia and discrimination against Muslim communities worldwide.

The idea of the clash of civilizations proposed by Samuel Huntington attracted new interest worldwide after the 9/11 attacks, which made those who support it confirm that Islam is the main and primary enemy of the Western world. At the same time, some Muslims considered this war as a war against Islam because the major victims were Muslims.

Although Huntington did not predict the 9/11 attacks, he highlighted the cultural and religious dynamics that could lead to such an incident. Despite advocating for tolerance and mutual understanding, he sees the west increasingly in conflicts with Islam. Five years after the 9/11 attacks, in Huntington's home, an interviewer asked him if the world knew in a full-fledged clash of civilization, he answered: "not simply one clash, but clashes of civilizations certainly occur. And this doesn't mean, as I think I emphasized in what I wrote, that there are no clashes within civilizations; obviously there are" (Qtd in Vineyard).

After the 9/11 attacks, Huntington revisited his clash thesis in his Newsweek article "The Age of Muslim Wars." He acknowledged the potential for a clash between Muslim and non-Muslim civilizations but emphasizes that such conflict is not inevitable, contrary to his previous stance. He argued that the root causes of conflicts between Islam and the West are political rather than inherent in Islamic doctrine. This marks a significant departure from his earlier views. He even suggested the possibility of a future world politics free from clashes of civilizations (Erdem 95-96).

The American president George W. Bush has stressed the fact that the conflict at hand was not a clash between civilizations. Nonetheless, both he and other American politicians have employed rhetoric infused with religious undertones when referring to groups or states suspected of harboring terrorists. Similarly, figures like Tony Blair have portrayed the terror attacks as a battle against "civilization," "democracy," and "our way of living." This narrative, propagated by Western leaders and media, has contributed to portraying Islam as a major

threat to Western values. One potential consequence of framing this conflict using Huntington's theories is that individuals from the Muslim world may increasingly view it as a Western crusade against Islam. This perspective might align with the objectives of the perpetrators behind the New York and Washington attacks (Islam).

Noam Chomsky, a prominent critic of American foreign policy, dismissed the notion of a war of civilizations as lacking any substantial basis, deeming it absurd. Even Huntington himself refuted the idea, asserting that it cannot be labeled a war of civilizations because Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda do not represent Islamic civilization (Islam).

Huntington, in his 2001 article entitled "the Age of Muslim Wars" retrieved his thesis confirming that the reason behind the contemporary conflict between Islam and the West doesn't lie in the religious doctrines but in a lot of political factors, and that there is a tension and discord between Islam and the West driven by complex socio-political and cultural factors, saying: "throughout the Muslim world, ... there exists a great sense of grievance, resentment, envy and hostility toward the West and its wealth, power and culture" (9).

Bernard Lewis as well, supported the clash of civilizations thesis. Churning out a spate of books and articles such as *What Went Wrong? : The Clash between Islam and Modernity in the Middle East* (2002), Lewis expanded his earlier work into a monograph, aiming to explore the decline of Islamic civilization and its encounters with modernity. He recognized legitimate political grievances while also emphasizing historical and theological factors. Similar to Huntington, Lewis posited that conflicting theologies and political ideologies underlie many of these conflicts (Parrott).

Lewis presented his perspective on the 'war on terror' as a 'clash of civilizations', referring to "the war in which we are engaged" without contesting the assumption that "we" are presently in conflict with terrorism. He emphasized that animosity from the Muslim world is

aimed at "us," extending beyond specific interests, actions, policies, or nations, evolving into a rejection of Western civilization itself, not solely for its deeds but for its essence. Hence, 'Islam' is portrayed as disdainful of "Western civilization" for "what it is." This portrayal distinctly illustrates a 'clash of civilizations', notably stemming not from the policies or deeds of "Western civilization" but merely due to the animosity of 'them' towards 'us' (Dunn 3).

Edward Said as one of the commentators, in his 2001 article "the Clash of ignorance" noted that the clash of civilizations thesis fails to offer a nuanced framework for analyzing the conflict between various segments of Western and Muslim civilizations. Instead, it proposes that the root causes of this conflict primarily arise from ignorance rather than being inherent and unavoidable consequences of cultural or religious disparities. Without addressing this prevailing cultural ignorance, there's a risk that the analysis of ongoing events will remain obscured, potentially prolonging senseless conflicts (Karim and Mahmoud 10).

Said criticized Huntington for his detrimental impact through his ideas. According to Said, Huntington acts as an ideologue, distorting the true nature of "civilizations" and "identities" by constraining them into rigid, isolated constructs, saying: "Huntington is an ideologist, someone who wants to make "civilizations" and "identities" into what they are not: shut down, sealed off entities" (Said02).

He contended that Huntington's bias towards Western civilization is apparent, as Huntington portrays it as superior, emphasizing its democratic values, such as freedom of enterprise, human rights, and globalization processes. Furthermore, Huntington promotes various political and economic systems aimed at improving societal life ("Clash of Ignorance" by Edward Said Critical).

In his work "From Oslo to Iraq and the Road Map", Edward Said criticized the clash of civilizations thesis, likening it to extreme racism reminiscent of Hitler's ideology. He argued

that this theory unfairly targets Arabs and Muslims, portraying their cultures as inherently incompatible with the West. Said emphasizes the harmful nature of this racism and its use of academic language to disguise discriminatory beliefs. He stated that the clash of civilizations thesis is an example of: "the purest invidious racism, a sort of parody of Hitlerian science directed today against Arabs and Muslims"(293).

This chapter has highlighted how the US response to the attacks, characterized by military interventions and the implementation of security measures, has shaped global politics and exacerbated tensions between the West and the Islamic world.

At the same time, the chapter has examined the Clash of Civilizations theory as a framework for understanding the dynamics of the GWOT. While some scholars argue for its relevance in explaining the cultural and ideological dimensions of conflicts, others contest its applicability and criticize it as a simplistic and essentialist view of world politics.

Overall, this chapter underscores the complex nature of the GWOT and the multifaceted factors contributing to its perpetuation. It emphasizes the importance of critically evaluating theoretical frameworks such as the Clash of Civilizations theory in understanding contemporary geopolitical challenges.

After presenting a description of the GWOT from several sides, and depending on the data collected and provided in this chapter, it appears that the possibility that the highly tense relations between America and Muslims everywhere and the wars waged in the aftermath of 9/11 in the name of fighting terrorism are based on a clash of civilizations is strong. This conflict is at least fueled by the deep-seated cultural and religious differences between the two civilizations.

Hence, it can be argued that the conflict between Islam and the West is an embodiment to Huntington's theory of the clash of civilization. His concept of the Clash of Civilizations

accurately captures the enduring tensions between Islam and the West, rooted in deep-seated cultural and religious differences. The events following the September 11, 2001 attacks underscored the stark contrasts in values and worldviews between these two civilizations, leading to a protracted conflict characterized by ideological confrontation and military intervention. Moreover, historical antecedents, such as the Crusades and colonial encounters, provide further evidence of the persistent clash between Islamic and Western civilizations.

Chapter Three

The 2022 Russian-Ukrainian War in the Light of the Clash of Civilizations Theory

Ukraine has been a source of tension in the US-Russian relations since the end of the Cold War at least. This tension reached a new peak on February 24, 2022 when Russia launched what it called a “special military operation” in Ukraine. Russia knew well that Ukraine would not stand alone in this war as the United States and the West would be involved in various ways including by providing military and diplomatic support for Ukraine.

The roots of this conflict and its complexity pushed scholars, journalists and political commentators to start making references to the propositions of the Clash of Civilizations thesis to examine the relevance of cultural and civilizational factors to this conflict which is clearly much more than a mere war between two countries . By shedding light on the events, actions, and reactions surrounding the war, this chapter examines aspects of the Clash of Civilizations theory and questions whether the war gives support to the propositions of this theory.

In order to understand the origins of the conflict, this chapter delves into the roots of the Russian-Ukrainian relations since the end of the Cold War until the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine, describing the shared history between the two countries and the increase of the political tension between them. It also looks at the internal and external factors that led to the worsening of the political relations between Russia and Ukraine including the direct and indirect role of the US in this conflict.

In addition, the chapter describes the outbreak of the 2022 war and the principle events in the war. It also analyses the role of cultural identity, language and religion and to what extent they contributed to the old tension and how they impacted the war.

This chapter revisits Samuel Huntington's theory the Clash of Civilizations and his perception of the course of global events as well as his speculations about potential conflicts that may occur in the future, including the issue of Ukraine and Russia. In his book, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996), he provided his analysis and expectations to the situation, and presented three hypotheses on how possibly the relations between the two countries will take a shape in the future.

This chapter also presents two opinions discussing the applicability of the clash of civilizations theory on the 2022 Russian-Ukrainian war. The French political scientist Olivier Roy in an interview and Polish political scientist Paweł Ukielski in an article. The two presented their views and arguments on the case.

3.1. Historical Background of the Russian-Ukrainian Relations

To better understand the roots of this war, it is necessary to go back to the conflict of the Cold War and its legacy. This is because it can be argued that the continuous tension over Ukraine cannot be understood without going back to its seeds which can be found in the conflict of the Cold War and its unsettled legacy.

To begin with, the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, or the Iron Curtain, as the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill refers to it, was the first sign foretelling the end of the Cold War between the two world super powers; the Western bloc under the leadership of the US and the Eastern bloc led by the USSR. The United States emerged victorious in an ideological war that lasted for about forty years, and in which weapons were never used in a clear direct way between the two parts, but rather in proxy wars.

This was officially announced after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, and the independence of the countries that used to be part of it, such as Ukraine, Belarus, and others. Hence, Ukraine, along with a number of other republics, declared itself an independent state

from the Soviet Union on August 23, 1991. After its independence, the country started its attempts to rebuild its national identity, and develop its economy by getting rid of the remnants of the Communist system and transform it into a free market economy (Lutsevych and Wallace).

America was first taken aback by Ukraine's resolute independence movement, even with this surprise America had to stay closely involved because Ukraine at that time had a sizable nuclear arsenal inherited from the Soviet Union. The Budapest Memorandum, which committed Ukraine to dismantling its nuclear weapons, was signed in 1994. In return, Ukraine received security guarantees from the US, Russia, the UK, and France to protect its territorial integrity (Lutsevych and Wallace).

Until 2004, Ukraine achieved the highest rates of economic growth in the world, but this did not prevent the exacerbation of many problems in the country, including corruption within the government, regional and ethnic divisions, as well as the opposition's growing severity, such that Western Ukrainians were demanding a reduction in relations with Russia and enhancing rapprochement with the West, while the Eastern Ukrainians were against these demands and the government was trying to achieve a balance between the eastern and western parts of the country (Khodunov 501).

Increased domestic instability culminated in the outbreak of the Orange Revolution in the same year. President Viktor Yanukovich was accused for rigging the results of the votes in the elections, and the opposition succeeded in removing him from power with the support of the West through mass demonstrations and protests. The government was obliged to reorganize the elections and give Viktor Yushchenko the opportunity to be president of the country (Khodunov).

The former president was replaced by Victor Yushchenko, who was pro-Western. During the election period, Yushchenko was poisoned but he survived and served as head of state for a term that started in 2005 and lasted for five years. There were doubts about Russian involvement in the attempt to poison Yushchenko. Yanukovich would once again take the seat of presidency after him (Mendoza).

It was clear that Russia was not ready to give up its right to maintain influence in a country perceived as part of its natural sphere of influence despite Western attempts to undermine its influence. In terms of culture and religion, the media and cultural sphere in Ukraine remained mainly dominated by cultural products made in Russia. The state's support for Ukrainian language and culture was not at its best, and for the religion, Ukraine did not have a separate Orthodox church prior to 2018. The canonical region of Ukraine was under the whole jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC), which maintained about equal numbers of parishes in Russia and Ukraine (Lutsevych and Wallace).

As for security and military influence, the 2010 agreement, called the Kharkiv Pact guaranteed the Russian navy's Black Sea fleet would stay stationed in the Crimean Peninsula for many years to come (Until 2042). At Russia's demand, neutrality was ingrained in Ukraine's constitution, barring the country from joining NATO, one of the most sensitive files and a main source of tension between Russia and the West (Kuzio and D'Anieri 9).

With the increase in temptations from the European Union and its attempts to attract the Ukrainian people towards it, the people's demands increased to strengthen the country's relationship with Europe and the West, while Russia was trying to protect its sphere of influence from European expansion, which led to the postponement of the new Association and Trade Agreement with the EU (Lutsevych and Wallace).

Subsequently, in 2013, numerous demonstrators took to the streets nationwide, protesting Yanukovich's decision to delay the EU agreement, yet they remained resolute and unwavering in their demands. As a reaction to the widespread protests, police marksmen took the lives of over a hundred individuals in the streets of the capital Kiev. After the deterioration of the country's situation, president Yanukovich escaped to Russia (Steinzova).

As a final consequence, in 2014, the Crimean Peninsula was annexed to Russia after a controversial referendum took place locally. Russian President Vladimir Putin mentioned the protection of rights for Russian citizens and Russian-speaking individuals in the Crimea and the southeastern regions of Ukraine. However, historically, the region was under Russian control for centuries before its governance was passed to Ukraine amid the Cold War due to Nikita Khrushchev's initiative (Lutsevych and Wallace).

During this period, the United States and its allies began to provide support to the Ukrainian Armed Forces (UAF), as Obama provided non-lethal security assistance. However, this changed after Donald Trump becomes a president, as US's security assistance to Ukraine became represented in lethal weapons. From 2014 until the year of the invasion in 2022, the US allocated about \$19.6 billion as a form of security assistance to Ukraine (El-Saeid).

The United States also strengthened its relationship with Ukraine in September 2021 through a joint statement on the 'US-Ukraine Strategic Partnership' in the occasion of three decades of the cooperation between them. Then, in November of the same year, the two parties signed the US-Ukraine Charter on Strategic Partnership agreement, which established the basis of their bilateral relations, supporting each other's sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity, and inviolability of borders (Mishra 3).

All those agreements and political events between Ukraine and the West, whose role was to strengthen Ukraine's relationship with the United States, were, according to Putin, a threat

to his country's security. This ultimately led to Russia launching a war on Ukraine on February 24, 2022.

3.2. The Outbreak of the 2022 Russian-Ukrainian War

On February 24, 2022, President Putin declared the beginning of what he called a special military operation involving land, naval, and aerial forces against Ukraine, with the operations focusing on large Ukrainian cities and military establishments. Putin rationalized the incursion, stating its objectives were to disarm Ukraine, eradicate Nazism within it, and to end the purported persecution of Russians within Ukrainian borders, according to his claims (D'Anieri1).

In response to the strikes, the United States promptly started supplying the UAF with military support rather than adopting a neutral posture. US president Joe Biden condemned the military action as “unprovoked and unjustified”, responding by imposing stringent sanctions. These restrictions targeted high-ranking officials within the Kremlin, encompassing President Putin, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, and numerous other members of the Russian government (Vox), while the EU announced the start of the process of purchasing weapons for the purpose of evaluating them as support for the UAF (Rashid).

During the first months of the war, Biden announced an embargo on Russian gas and oil as one of the many sanctions imposed against Russia (Rashid). Russia considered this move an attempt at a diplomatic blockade. In an emergency session of the United Nations General Assembly held on March 2, an overwhelming majority of the member states (141 out of 193) voted in favor of a resolution condemning the Russian military incursion into Ukraine. The resolution demanded an immediate cessation of hostilities and the withdrawal of Russian forces from Ukrainian territory (Diuket, al.).

The president of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy announced that Russia had already been able to control over 20% of Ukrainian territory, the missile strikes targeted population centers, military, health and commercial centers, and hospitals as well. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres commented on the matter saying “the world is one uncalculated step away from nuclear annihilation.” (Al Jazeera Documentaries | Russia - Ukraine... A War like No Other).

In June 2022, when the war was at its most intensity, Ukraine gained the position of a candidate for membership in the EU, and the association agreement between Ukraine and the EU was finally achieved. The process of the agreement began in 2014, and it was delayed and postponed several times before the outbreak of the Orange Revolution as a kind of Western solidarity with this country (Azimah 9).

After 11 months of Russian attack and Ukrainian defense, a number of countries from the EU and America sent financial assistance and military support to the UAF, including tanks, long-range guns, and artillery shells. The war resulted in thousands of casualties and deaths on both sides. According to the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, the war also caused the migration of large numbers of citizens towards neighboring countries (Khinkulova and Brydskaya).

As a part of the Western assistance, Zelenskyy received promises from the EU to provide him with military support, including weapons such as American Abrams, German Leopard, and British Challenger attack tanks, in addition to American Patriot anti-aircraft missiles (“6 stages of the Russian-Ukrainian ...”).

In May 2024, after two years of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the war resulted in massive material and human losses and the use of a huge number of destructive weapons by both sides. Russia declares that its aim is to protect its area of influence, and Ukraine is attracted to the temptations of the West and hopes to achieve rapprochement with the USA.

This latter wants to protect and expand its political and military influence near its former enemy's borders, and seeks to keep Ukrainian an ally to the West.

For his part, Putin claimed, in a 2024 interview with the American journalist Tucker Carlson that he is ready for dialogue and negotiation to find a solution to the situation, and he has been calling for discussing a peaceful solution since 2014. According to his statement, it was Kiev that rejected the negotiations based on orders from Washington. Putin also explained that NATO has broken its promises regarding its expansion eastward (The Vladimir Putin interview).

As the complicated conflict continued, This war aroused the interest of many thinkers, researchers, and scholars around the world, as many theories and ideas revolved around what this war really is and whether it can be considered a clash of civilizations or not.

3.3. The Role of Identity, Culture, and Religion in the Conflict

The complexity of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict necessitates looking at different factors transcending geopolitics. To assess the relevance of the propositions of the clash of civilizations theory to the case of the Russian-Ukrainian war, we must understand the role of cultural identity and religion and how they affected the tension in relations between the two countries.

Russia and Ukraine are two countries with a common history, whose origins go back centuries. KievanRus (the current capital of Ukraine, Kiev) served as a cradle for the Russian people, currently represented by Russia, Belarus and Ukraine, all of which share the Russian language, the Orthodox doctrine, and the Slavic race. Then the colonizing countries took over Kievan Rus, and Moscow was separated to form an independent state. After that it tried to recover Kiev from the Polish colonizer, only then did the Ukrainian people begin to split into

supporters of Russian rule and supporters of European rule. The result was that Russia regained control of the capital Kiev again (El-Hidri).

Years later, in 1918, Ukraine benefited from the Bolshevik Revolution and achieved independence from Russia. Then after the end of World War II and the appearance of the Eastern and Western blocs, both Russia and Ukraine merged under the leadership of the Soviet Union. After the USSR's dissolution, Ukraine declared itself as an independent state (El-Hidri).

In his famous speech, the Russian President Putin confirmed that Russia and Ukraine are "one people" due to their shared history. Announcing the start of the special military operation, he emphasized the unity of Eastern ancestors, by which he meant the Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians, and suggesting that the future political fate of these countries should be shared (Maknoff 1).

He also claimed that the goal of this operation is to protect people who feel connected to Russian culture in Ukraine declaring that they are being exposed to danger and genocide. And he must protect them in any possible way (Sazhniev and Sułkowska).

As far as religion is concerned, prior to 2014, the majority of Orthodox Ukrainians were loyal to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate (UOC-MP), which was formed at the end of the Soviet Union as an independent division of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC). However, shortly after gaining independence, religious leaders associated with President Kravchuk established a competing Orthodox Church with its own patriarch in Kyiv, which was considered illegitimate by the ROC and the majority of the global Orthodox community (Maknoff 1).

This means that Russia's efforts are aimed at reviving the national unity of Russian identity and restoring the sanctity of the mother of Russian cities; Kiev, which Putin and many

nationalist Russians consider as the origin of the Orthodox culture and religion and the cultural identity of Russians. However, a large number of Ukrainians were trying to build a Ukrainian identity independent of the Russian one after the independence. This led the President of Ukraine, Leonid Kuchma, who headed the country for a period lasted from 1994 to 2005 to publish a book titled "Ukraine is not Russia!!" (El-Hefnawi).

Then, after years of independence, the Ukrainian people (especially the youth) became more culturally separated from the Russian identity, especially in areas far from the Russian borders and near to the European countries, such as the center and the west, and more inclined and influenced by the European West, which was making efforts to attract this group specifically (El-Hefnawi).

The war launched by Russia led to a clear change in the cultural content of the Ukrainian identity, as this people became more isolated and distant from Russia, which in the eyes of the Ukrainians is considered an aggressor. The thing that was confirmed by the results of the data from a survey conducted a month after the invasion revealed that 98% of participants consider Russia a hostile state and 56% said that its intention is "the complete annihilation of the Ukrainian people" according to them (Kulyk).

As for the language, back in the pre-war period, Ukraine was a bilingual country: Russian and Ukrainian languages were spoken, with symbolic priority for the Ukrainian language. This changed after the outbreak of the war. The Ukrainian people strengthen their attachment to their national language and work to spread it within the society with greater force. In addition, a large number of people who were accustomed to adopting the Russian language began to speak their mother tongue and completely abandoned the Russian language (Kulyk).

The results of the 2022 survey showed that 80% of the participants preferred to generalize the Ukrainian language in all areas of the country's management in the future, in contrast to

the results of the same survey 5 years ago, when only 60% of the participants wanted to popularize the Ukrainian language in the country (Kulyk).

3.4. Huntington's Analysis of the Russian-Ukrainian Relations and the Future Scenarios

Since the Russian-Ukrainian relations began to become tense and problems emerged between them, many scholars, critics, and other political specialists began to revive the clash of civilizations theory and to question whether what Huntington wrote about the relationships between Russia and Ukraine in his book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* was right or not, and whether we can consider the 2022 Russian-Ukrainian conflict a result of a clash of civilizations.

Huntington in his book reshaped the map of the world after the end of the Cold War, dividing the world into eight major civilizations. One of those major civilizations is the Orthodox, which is led by Russia and includes countries such as Ukraine, Belarus, Greece, Bulgaria and many others, considering those countries as one united civilization sharing cultural and religious roots according to his claim (figure 01).

However, Ukraine in Huntington's map was divided by a civilizational fault line that separates the East of the country from its West, annexing the East and the Crimean Peninsula to the Orthodoxy civilization with Russia, and categorizing the west of Ukraine under the Western civilization, he predicted the Russian-Ukrainian crisis years ago, even before tensions over the Crimean Peninsula began (figure 01).

Although Huntington's map divided Ukraine between two civilizations, he did not deny the fact that there are cultural and historical ties between Ukraine and Russia, and he said, at that time, that the expected model in the future is the division of Ukraine. Rather, it confirms the possibility of cooperation with Russia, as it is expected from Ukraine, to give up its

nuclear weapons, inherited from the Soviet Union, in exchange for international protection (Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations*..37).

In his book, Huntington stated:"Ukraine, however, is a cleft country with two distinct cultures. The civilizational fault line between the west and orthodoxy runs through its heart and has done for centuries"(165).

In this quote Huntington attributes the cultural schism in Ukraine to centuries ago, when the Western part of it was under Poland's control, and spoke the Ukrainian language, while the East belonged to the Orthodox Church and fully adopted the Russian language.

Huntington presented three possibilities of how relations between Russia and Ukraine would be like in the future (*The Clash of Civilizations*..165).

The first possibility set by Huntington, the prospect of a war occurring between Russia and Ukraine is very small, and if a war does occur, the reasons will never be civilizational or cultural, but rather purely political and economic. As he summarized these reasons in facts related to very important issues, which are mainly Ukraine's retention of nuclear weapons and the conflict over the ownership of the Crimea and the Black Sea Fleet, as well as the rights of the Russian population in Ukraine (*The Clash of Civilizations*..165).

Huntington wrote: "If civilization is what counts, however, the likelihood of violence between Ukrainians and Russians should be low" (Huntington "A Clash of Civilizations?"38). He Explained his argument by stressing the fact that Russians and Ukrainians are two Slavic peoples, and before that Orthodox, connected to each other by a common ancient history (*The Clash of Civilizations*..166).

The second possibility set by the Huntington is the division of Ukraine according to its civilizational fault line into two parts, with the eastern half and the Crimean Peninsula merging into Russia and the western half annexed to the nationalist West. He supports his

opinion with the results of a popular referendum conducted in 1992 which showed that 33% of Russians in western Ukraine felt hostility towards Russia, while only 10% said that they felt the same way in the capital, Kiev (166-167).

Huntington also stated that it is clear that Western Ukraine is approaching Western Europe, but the possibility of Ukraine existing as a unified bloc belonging to the West is difficult to achieve unless it is supported significantly and completely by the West (*The Clash of Civilizations*..166-167).

Huntington also supported the hypothesis of the division in Ukraine with the pretext of the results of the Ukrainian presidential elections that were held in 1994. There was intense competition between two candidates: Leonid Kravchuk, who published a media election campaign representing him as a nationalist, and his opponent, Leonid Kuchma, who received lessons in Ukrainian public speaking during his election campaign (*The Clash of Civilizations*..166).

The results showed that Kravchuk won the votes of thirteen districts in western Ukraine with a majority of more than 90%, while Kuchma dominated the thirteen provinces located in the east with a similar majority and won the presidential elections by 52% .He presented a map showing the distribution of these results between Eastern and Western Ukraine (*The Clash of Civilizations*.. 166).

The last and most expected possibility for Huntington is that Ukraine will remain as an independent, unified state with good and close diplomatic relations with Russia, and their relationship will be characterized by cooperation as soon as the outstanding military issues surrounding nuclear weapons in Ukraine are resolved. The thing that may lead to the emergence of tension between the two countries in the long term will be based mainly on purely economic issues, which in turn will not be serious, but rather a solution will be found

for them easily back to the shared culture and history and the ancient roots between Russia and Ukraine, according to his claims (*The Clash of Civilizations*..168).

3.5. Views on the Applicability of the Clash of Civilizations Theory to the 2022 Russian-Ukrainian Conflict

However, everything predicted by Huntington about the possibility of an armed conflict breaking out between Russia and Ukraine, and the reasons he expected for this war, remain just hypotheses that were put forward 24 years before the actual conflict took place in 2022. The war that aroused the interest of scholars and political experts and motivated them to analyze its causes and discuss its background, thus invoking the clash of civilizations theory and trying to understand the extent of its validity in this case.

The Polish political scientist Paweł Ukielski discussed the Russian-Ukrainian war in light of the clash of civilizations theory in an article published on February 2024 titled “The Clash of Civilizations in Ukraine”, in which he analyzed Huntington's theory and his ideas about what might happen between Russia and Ukraine in parallel with what actually happened in 2022. His analysis ended up by agreeing with the clash of civilizations theory in specific parts and disagreeing with it in other parts.

Ukielski confirmed the validity of Huntington’s idea that Ukraine is a country torn between an east that is closer to Russia and a west that seeks an alliance with the West and is slowly moving towards a nationalist Europe. This is what forced Ukraine to try to achieve a balance between its relations with Russia and the West. According to Ukielski, the Orange Revolution (2004) and the Revolution of Dignity (2013-2014) were the clearest confirmation of the Ukrainian people’s desire to join the West. In response, the West made every possible effort to win Kiev to its side. On the other hand, since Putin took power in 2000, he has tried

to reunite the lands of the former Soviet Union, which according to Putin, belong to Russia by virtue of their common history (“The Clash of Civilizations in Ukraine”⁵⁵).

The political scientist stated that Putin wanted to protect his area of influence from an old enemy trying to expand around his atmosphere. This led him to invade Ukraine in 2022. However, what the clash of civilizations theory addresses is that the potential war between Ukraine and Russia is essentially a war based on the gap of cultural and religious differences between the two countries. Huntington himself has stated that the likelihood of a war between Russia and Ukraine over cultural and religious identity should be very low (“The Clash of Civilizations in Ukraine”⁵⁵⁻⁵⁶).

Ukielski doesn't dispute the weak possibility of a clash of civilizations, but rather questions the true identities of the parties involved in the clash. In this regard, he argued: “It is not the case as it is not merely a conflict within the “Slavic-Orthodox” civilization but rather a conflict between the Western (or Euro-Atlantic) and Eurasian civilizations.” What is meant by this is that the real parties to this clash of civilizations are not Russia and Ukraine, but rather Russia and the West, as Ukraine was merely a battlefield for two great civilizations whose history of conflict extended to the era of the Cold War (“The Clash of Civilizations in Ukraine”⁵⁶).

In the conclusion of his argument, he acknowledged that Russia has always considered Ukraine an integral part of it, and this is how Huntington also considered it when he proposed the theory of the clash of civilizations. Then, with the passage of time, the Ukrainian people began to respond to the West's attempts to attract them, which Russia saw as a threat to its security, and it ended up with the Russian war on Ukraine.

As the Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov announced “This is not about Ukraine at all, but the world order. The current crisis is a fateful, epoch-making moment in modern

history. It reflects the battle over what the world order will look like.”(Lavrov said that there is hope for a compromise in negotiations with Ukraine).

In response, US President Joe Biden claimed: “When Russia invaded, it wasn’t just Ukraine being tested. The whole world faced a test for the ages.” Ukielski declared that it is clear that the matter is not related to Ukraine at all, but rather much bigger than that, which both the Russian and Western parties are well aware of (57).

The political scientist Olivier Roy conducted an interview with *Le Nouvel Observateur* newspaper on March 2022, about the validity of the theory of the clash of civilizations in the case of Russia and Ukraine in which he clearly stated his view on the applicability of the theory in this case. He affirmed that Putin never recognized Ukraine as an independent state, but rather part of Russia and part of the old Soviet alliance, arguing that the war launched by the Russian Federation against the Ukrainian people was and still a brutal and unjust. Roy also considered the Russian president as Soviet leader from the nineteenth century and clinging to old Communist ideas, and he did not accept that Ukraine had created for itself a new Ukrainian identity far from the Russian one.

Roy also answered a question related to his previous article entitled “Is Europe Christian?” In which he said that Russia, since Putin’s rule in 2000, has become a bastion of traditional values that prevent openness, and he gave examples of actions prohibited by the Russian Orthodox Church, such as homosexuality and abortion, in contrast to the Catholic Church, which appeared as an open heroine.

The political scientist re-introduced the theory of the clash of civilizations and Huntington's idea about Russian-Ukrainian relations, and his low expectation of the occurrence of war, justifying his view by stating that the occurrence of a war between Russia

and Ukraine is the greatest evidence that Huntington made a mistake in his prediction and that what is happening is not at all a clash of civilizations.

Roy stated that the pretext of purging Ukraine of Nazism is false and that Putin covered up his real desire to control Ukraine with that argument, and what he said about his fears of NATO approaching its borders cannot be believed. He also claimed that Putin considers the disintegration of the USSR a historical catastrophe in the twentieth century, and that he came 30 years later to try to reunite the former countries of the USSR and realize an old dream trying to build a new identity and gain other interests.

Paweł Ukielski and Olivier Roy presented their arguments regarding the theory of the clash of civilizations and its applicability to the Russian war launched against Ukraine. Ukielski confirmed the validity of the theory in the case, explaining that he acknowledged few objections with Huntington in his opinion, while Roy rejected the theory and claimed frankly that the conflict in Ukraine is not a clash of civilizations. Many other political and international relations scholars offered different opinions over the relevance of the clash of civilizations paradigm after the war occurred in 2022 and are divided into supporters and opponents.

The military operation launched by Russia on Ukraine in 2022 was a turning point in world history, inspiring many politicians around the world to write about it and try to link it with the theory of the clash of civilizations that Samuel Huntington came up with.

Ukraine, the country that gained its independence from the Soviet Union after its dissolution, aspired to achieve foreign political relations with the USA away from Russian atmosphere. This ambition was strongly encouraged by the West, and if achieved, will allow the West to expand NATO's influence near to Russia's borders. This Ukrainian ambition did

not serve Putin's interests, and he began to feel his country's security was threatened. This has been a constant cause for tension which ended up with the 2022 Russian-Ukrainian war.

In an attempt to understand the nature of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, and question whether it is a clash of civilizations, this chapter discussed the historical background of the two countries and their relationship in the period extending from the end of the Cold War until the 2022 war, including the actual war and its most important events, as well as cultural identity and religion and their impact on the conflict.

To better understand the situation, Huntington's ideas and analyzes in his book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* have been revisited. The opinions of two outstanding political scientists, Olivier Roy and Paweł Ukielski, provide important insights on the extent to which the theory of the clash of civilizations could be applied to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

After presenting a description of the Russian-Ukrainian war from several angles, and based on the data provided by this chapter, it appears that the possibility that the war is based primarily on a clash of civilizations is weak, this does not neglect the fact that the cultural components have a role in the tension that subsequently led to a war between the two countries, including the difference in Ukraine about the popularization of the Ukrainian language and the marginalization of the Russian language, and also about the Ukrainian Church and its separation from the Russian Orthodox Church.

Hence, it can be argued that the conflict is based mainly on other external interests far from religion and culture, represented by Ukraine's desire to strengthen foreign ties with the West and its future ambition to join the European Union and NATO, and the Russian Federation's discomfort with these interests and Putin's desire to keep Ukraine under his political and diplomatic cover. These are the factors that led to the outbreak of the 2022

Russian war on Ukraine, and the emergence of the West's military and financial support for the Ukrainian defense.

Conclusion

The clash of civilizations theory is based on the idea that the post-Cold War world would witness conflicts that transcend the borders of countries. The anticipated clashes would take place between civilizations and due to civilizational differences. The phrase “clash of civilizations” and some of the main propositions of the theory appeared first in the works of Bernard Lewis. His main interest was in the relation between the Islamic world and the West and his works highlighted their different religious and cultural backgrounds which Lewis believed will inevitably result in conflict. The theory was later developed by Samuel Huntington who brought it to fame, in a book entitled *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*.

Scholars recall the theory with every grand conflict that occurs in the world, raising the same question about whether certain conflicts lend support to the theory of the clash of civilizations. The Global War on Terror and the 2022 Russian-Ukrainian war are two of the recent conflicts which recalled to minds the theory. Ever since the very first spark of the two conflicts ignited, political experts began debating the extent to which it may be applied in these two conflicts.

In light of the clash of civilizations theory, this study looked at the global war that have arisen on terror and the Russian-Ukrainian war which broke out in 2022. The study explained the backdrop of both the Russian-Ukrainian war in 2022 and the Global War on Terror, which was launched in the wake of the events of September 11, 2001, in order to assess the validity and applicability of the theory in these two conflicts.

The first chapter traces back the origin and development of the concept and delved into the theory itself as discussed by Lewis and Huntington in many of their works, specifically Huntington’s book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. Huntington

divided the world into eight civilizations and explained the idea of the inevitability of the clash putting arguments which confirm that the occurrence of conflicts between some of these civilizations is very probable.

However, there are many critiques raised against the propositions of the theory especially the suggestion that the clash is inevitable. Two of the most well-known academics in particular made strong arguments against it. The American critic Edward Said and the American scholar Noam Chomsky strongly objected the theory's viability.

The second chapter addressed the Global War on Terror initiated by the United States of America following the 9/11 attacks, which many viewed as a war on the Islamic world as a whole. It starts by referring to the history of the relationship between the two parties during and after the Cold War. The events of 9/11 unfolded in a new era of tension between America and the Muslim world as Muslims have been the main victims of the war on terror. The American invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan increased the tension and distrust between Muslims and the west led by America.

The chapter also presented the opinions of two scholars regarding the viability of applying the clash of civilizations theory to the Global War on Terror. In light of these data, and the analysis of Lewis and Huntington's book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, it was evident that the Global War on Terror could be seen as embodiment of the clash of civilizations theory regarding the two sides' vastly disparate cultural origins, religious affiliations, and the elements of their distinct civilizations.

The last chapter discussed the 2022 Russian-Ukrainian war in light of the clash of civilizations theory, starting by referring to the roots of the two countries and the nature of their relationship since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, to the increased tension between them over the annexation of the Crimea in 2013 up to the 2022 war. It also delved into the

main events of the 2022 Russian-Ukrainian war shedding the light on the important role that the United States of America played in this conflict, including the military and diplomatic support it provided to Ukraine.

The chapter also examined the impact of cultural and religious factors on the outbreak of this conflict. The most significant aspect of this study was that it re-presented Huntington's analyses regarding potential developments in Russian-Ukrainian relations, which he made long before the conflict broke out in 2022, and then applied this theory to the actual events. Finally, the chapter summarizes and evaluates two opposing opinions that addressed the applicability of the clash of civilizations thesis and its validity in light of the confrontation between Russia and Ukraine in 2022.

By analyzing these data, it appears that religious and cultural differences are among the reasons for the outbreak of the Russian-Ukrainian war, but they are not the main reasons. Rather, the foreign political interests that Ukraine hopes to achieve in partnership with the West, which conflict with the interests of its neighbor Russia, are the main reasons for launching the Russian war on Ukraine. This means that the Russia-Ukraine conflict of 2022 does not seem to be an embodiment of the theory of the clash of civilizations.

The idea of a clash of civilizations remains a theory that cannot be denied or confirmed with absolute accuracy but can be tested. That's what this research attempted to achieve in two of the most important global conflicts: the Global War on Terror, which began after the 9/11 attacks, which essentially targeted the Islamic world as a whole and not just extremist terrorist groups. The conflict that revived the theory of the clash of civilizations, and what was shown through this research is that the Global War on Terror can be considered an embodiment of the theory of the clash of civilizations due to several factors.

As for the second case, the 2022 Russian-Ukrainian war, which is not as old as the West's war on Islam, but its history extends years ago since Russia annexed the Crimean Peninsula to its territory in 2013, which led to a crisis in relations between the two countries. Ukraine, which was previously an ally of the former Russian Federation, now aspires to achieve Western cooperation that guarantees its accession to NATO and the European Union. But this rapprochement does not serve Russia's interests and is even considered a threat to the state's security. This led to the outbreak of the Russian-Ukrainian war in 2022

This research aimed to measure the extent of the applicability of the Clash of Civilizations theory to the 2022 Russian-Ukrainian war, through an analytical study of the causes of the war, showed that the causes of this conflict are not primarily summarized in cultural and religious factors, and that the conflict between Russia and Ukraine is difficult to consider as an embodiment of the clash of civilizations theory. Rather, it is based on political reasons represented by Ukraine's attempt to achieve Western interests with the USA, and the Russian Federation's discomfort with this rapprochement.

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