

A HUNDRED-YEAR-OLD STORY: THE INFLUENCES OF NEO-EURASIANISM ON RUSSIAN *STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION*

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Abstract:

As an ideological current, Eurasianism emerged in the early 1920s among young Russian emigrants. It is based on the idea that the Russian people is neither European, nor Asiatic, but bears the influence of both spaces, which gives it unique characteristics. After falling in a cone of shadow during the Communist regime, the Eurasian ideas, reinterpreted under the form of Neo-Eurasianism, have regained popularity during president Vladimir Putin's time in office, generating the neo-Eurasian current, with Aleksandr Dugin as its main promoter. As a result, these concepts have strongly influenced the strategic communication of the Russian Federation, especially after the beginning of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

This paper is going to outline the main ideas of both the classical and modern interpretations of Eurasianism, highlighting the resemblances and the differences between the two, and also to identify the influences of Neo-Eurasianist ideas over the Russian strategic communication.

The case study aims to interpret the Russian invasion of Ukraine through the lens of Eurasian ideology, thus providing a new point of view on the actions of the Russian Government and especially of president Vladimir Putin. Moreover, some pieces of information that are part of the propaganda campaigns concerning the invasion will be analysed, in order to highlight the Eurasian influence.

Keywords: *propaganda, Eurasianism, Neo-Eurasianism, Ukraine, Russia.*

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The emergence and development of Eurasianism and Neo-Eurasianism

Eurasianism, as a school of thought, appeared shortly after the First World War and the Bolshevik Revolution, among the young Russian emigrants in Sofia and Prague. The first people to adhere to the Eurasian theory, known as the “classical” Eurasianists were Nikolai Sergeevich Trubetskoi¹, Petr Savitskii², Georgii Florovskii³, and George Vladimirovich Vernadsky⁴ (Meyer, 2009). Their writings are centred on the idea that the Russian territory is neither European, nor Asian, but something altogether different. This unique character is the result of special geographical and historical conditions that have led to a seamless blend of three major pillars. The Slavic ethnic substrate is seen as the first of these, which has been developed through the integration of Byzantine traditions and culture, seen as the second pillar. Throughout the history of the Tsarist Empire, this influence has been materialized through the Russian Orthodox Church, an institution that maintains its influence to this day. The third element that defines this unique geographical and cultural area is the existence of state-building elements of Asiatic inspiration (Balatska, 2023). Some authors, such as Nikolai Trubetzko, consider this last element to be much more important than the others, The Tsarist Empire and later the USSR being nothing but heirs of the empire built by Genghis Khan (Balatska, 2023). Due to these special characteristics, the Eurasian theory implies that the Russian state, no matter its name, has a unique place in history – that of “re-establishing the rightful, traditional values, in a world that goes through a continuous process of degradation led by the decadent Western culture and

¹ Prince Nikolai Sergeevici Trubetsko was born in 1938 as part of the princely Lithuanian family of Trubetskoi. He was a linguist, his greatest contribution to this field being the development of structural linguistics.

² Petr Savitskii, born in 1895, was a geographer and economist. He graduated from the University of Sankt Petersburg, but after the Bolshevik Revolution, he immigrated to Sofia and later, to Prague.

³ Georgii Florovskii, born in 1979, was a theologian and a philosopher. He immigrated to Paris in the 1920s and later to the USA, countries in which he held positions within academic institutions of the Orthodox Church.

⁴ Born in 1887, George Vladimirovich Vernadsky was a naturalized American citizen who held multiple positions within Yale University, after spending a few years in Prague, where he met and exchanged ideas with the other Europeanists.

civilization" (Savitsky, 1925). Moreover, this territory is meant to be one political entity, undivided by borders, as Savitsky himself affirms: "The nature of the Eurasian world is minimally favourable to any sort of 'separatisms,' be they political, cultural, or economic." (Savitsky, 1934) In Savitsky's opinion, this situation occurred due to the heterogeneous distribution of resources within this space, which forced the different populations to interact and eventually merge together (Savitsky, 1934). On the other hand, both European and Asian populations have not been subjected to such conditions, which has led to the development of "statal" entities that control a relatively small geographical area (Savitsky, 1934).

As Eurasianists considered History and Geography to be fundamentally intertwined, this idea is closely tied to the concept of "mestoravitie" [development of a place], defined as "a certain geographic environment, which imprints the mark of its uniqueness on human communities which develop in that environment" (Vernadsky, 1927, p. 102). The Eurasian identity was thought to be the result of the existence of such a "mestoravitie" that encompassed the territories controlled by the Tsarist Empire or the USSR. As a result, the expansion of Moscow's control over foreign territories was considered a natural phenomenon, the adaptation of the inhabitants of the "mestoravite" to the specific characteristics of the geographical area they lived in (Titov, 2005). Thus, the Eurasian view of the Russian identity is noticeably broad, encompassing all the citizens of the Tsarist Empire, opposing the international movement for the self-determination of peoples which led to the creation of numerous new states and the disintegration of the European empires.

One noteworthy idea developed by the Eurasian scholars is the concept of "ideocracy" – the utopian way of organising the state that can only be achieved by the Eurasian civilization. This regime makes no difference between the citizens of the state based on religion or ethnic background, everyone being linked by a common historical destiny, and the ideas and wishes of the population are unitary and in perfect concordance with the decision of the state apparatus. However, in order for this perfect state to be achieved, the citizens have to give up their personal and familial interests and dedicate themselves to the state completely (Savitsky, 1925). Of course, this utopia is unachievable in any society, as each and every citizen has their own wishes and needs that

usually diverge from one another, so “ideocracy” is nothing but a façade for an oppressive regime.

During the Communist period, the main Eurasian author was Lev Gumilev, whose writings circulated mainly through clandestine canals during the period of the USSR. Gumilev adopted Vernadsky’s idea of “mestorazvitie” [the concept of “place-development” or “topogenesis”], and considered that the Eurasian people should be encompassed within one great state (Gumilev, 1990). However, compared to his predecessors, his work focuses more on the scientific aspects that found his theories than on the ideological facets of the theory, such as the idea of the special destiny of Russia. Also, he introduced a new concept that of “positive Komplimentarnost” – the affinity between two cultures that facilitates their merging within the “mestorazvitie”, in this case that of the Slavs and the peoples of the steppe (Titov, 2005).

Thus, it becomes clear that one of the main traits of the Eurasian theory that has remained a focal point from the classical Eurasianists to Gumilev is the all-encompassing view of the Russian identity. If Europe and Asia are composed of multiple ethnicities that generate multiple states, the Eurasian “mestoravitie” has to be included into one single state. This idea aligned with the expansionist tendencies that the Russian state has manifested all through modern history, a tendency that for the Empire meant the physical expansion of borders and for the USSR, enlarging its sphere of influence in order to become the most powerful state in the world and the winner of the Cold War. However, this definition of what is a Russian that focuses more on territory than on ethnicity, predates the birth of Eurasianism by centuries and can be best understood by examining the expansion of the Tsarist Empire (Tishkov, 2009). Starting from the fifteenth century, the Russians conquered other territories, inhabited by different ethnicities, thus expanding the borders of their states. The same tendencies were manifested by other European states as well, such as Great Britain or Spain that became veritable colonial empires. However, what set The Tsarist Empire apart was that there was no ocean separating the capital from the conquered territories. As a result, there was no clear distinction between the territory that constituted the heart of the Empire and what was the periphery, a fact that profoundly impacted the development of the Russian national identity (Petersson, 2020, p. 3). In time, it became hard to distinguish

between a member of the Russian ethnicity, called “ruskii”, and one of the Russian state, the “rossians”, a fact that led to the defining of a Russian through three characteristics: the loyalty towards the Tsar and the Empire; the Orthodox faith; and the use of the Russian language (Tishkov, 2009).

The fall of the Soviet Union meant not only the end of the Cold War, but also the end of Moscow’s status as the capital of a global superpower. Having been bested by the United States and confronted with a major crisis on multiple levels, the Russian state could no longer exert its influence as it had done in the prior decades. During this time, multiple thinkers turned their attention to the Eurasian writings, adopting some of their ideas. Although such ideas had been conveyed in Russian far-right circles since the early 1990’s, the Neo-Eurasian current of thought emerged during the mid-1990’s, with Aleksandr Dugin being the main figure of this movement, which he remains until this day. A main difference between the Eurasianism of the twentieth century and Neo-Eurasianism is that the second current is actively trying to influence politics, as a Eurasian political party was formed in 2002 (Woo, 2022), while Dugin became part of president Vladimir Putin’s inner circle.

Aleksandr Dugin’s⁵ interest for the right-leaning ideas manifested early, as he became part of an intellectual group from Moscow that focused not only on right-wing ideas, but also on more occult themes, such as mysticism and paganism (Dunlop, 2004). During this time, Dugin came into contact with multiple works of far-right thinkers from all around Europe that he was tasked with translating, such as Julius Evola, an Italian philosopher of pagan-fascist orientation. During Gorbachev’s presidency, he became the leader of an anti-Semitic organization called Pamyat (Ingram, 2001, p. 3). In 1989, he travelled around Europe, strengthening ties with European leaders of the New Right movement, such as Alain de Benoist from France or Jean-Francois Thiriart, from Belgium, which are considered to be one of the main factors that influenced Dugin’s later views on geopolitics (Dunlop, 2004). After the fall of the Soviet Union, he became a prominent writer, having his own

⁵ Aleksandr Dugin comes from a long line of military men, his father allegedly having been a member of the Soviet secret service, the GRU.

publishing house⁶, and publishing multiple works, the most prominent of which is *Foundations of Geopolitics* (Dunlop, 2004).

One of Dugin's main ideas that of the fight between the righteous East and the degenerate West, was also a focal point of the classical Eurasian writings, but now is interpreted in a fundamentally different manner. In Dugin's view, the main antagonist the Eurasian people have to fight against is not Europe, but the space of Anglo-Saxon Atlantica, a territory controlled by the United States and the United Kingdom (Dunlop, 2004). He sees these two spaces in contrast, with Eurasia being an earth-based empire, while Anglo-Saxon Atlantica is a sea-based empire. In Dugin's opinion, earth-based empires respect the differences between cultures and ethnicities, while Sea-based ones do no such thing, which explains the tendency of the United States to forcefully impose the American societal model over the cultures it has influenced over. However, Dugin does not view the whole of Europe as an enemy, the central and Eastern countries being potential allies in the upcoming fight against Anglo-Saxon Atlantica (Dugin, 2017). Also, Dugin's interpretation of the physical borders of the Eurasian space is different, as he advocates for the Russian expansion beyond the old borders of the Tsarist Empire and the Soviet Union, in order for Russia to be strong enough to counteract the Atlantic influence. In a post from 2014 on VKontakte, also known as VK, a Russian social media network, Dugin stated that the collapse of the Tsarist Empire happened because of Tsar Nikolas the Second's inability to conquer new territories and that an unstable, paranoid leader is good for a country as long as the state expand over new territories (Dugin, 2014).

Regarding the way Russia should be led, Dugin created the concept of the "state in depth", reminiscent of the "ideocracy" conceptualized by the Eurasianists of the 1920's and 1930's. This idea refers to the fact that the state should identify with a small portion of the elite, composed of experts in multiple domains that understand the true nature of stationality, and the needs and objectives of the country should be more important than those of the citizens (Dugin, 2013).

⁶ Arktogetya is the name of Dugin's Publishing House, a name borrowed from a German racist writer that combines the Greek words for "north" and "earth".

Identifying Neo-Eurasian influences on Russian strategic documents

Although Dugin's ideas have been regarded as inconsequential in the first decade of the twenty-first century, they have become more and more influential after the beginning of Vladimir Putin's third term as president in 2012, and even more so after the annexation of Crimea in 2014 (Kurt 2023).

The last ten years have been marked not only by military conflicts between Moscow and Kyiv that led to the invasion of Ukraine in 2022, but also by continuous informational attacks orchestrated by the Russian Federation against Ukraine and the Western world. In the following part of the paper we aim to highlight the way Dugin's Neo-Eurasianist ideas influence the strategic communication of the Russian Federation.

One of the main ideas promoted by the Russian Federation is that of the fight against the West. Although some measure of conflictuality undoubtedly exists, the Russian view is that this situation arose as a result of the unprompted hostility of the West against Moscow, such as the strategic documents released by the Kremlin or the official interviews of president Vladimir Putin, which will be analysed later. The aim of these actions is to inhibit its rise as a global power, so as not to threaten Washington's status as the main centre of geopolitical power (Rodkiewicz, 2023). In accordance with the Neo-Eurasian doctrine, the Occidental world is seen as degenerate, poisoned by modern culture, with Russia being the sole keeper of the traditional, Orthodox values (Dugin, 2017).

This idea is clearly visible in the strategic documents released by the Government of the Russian Federation since the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula (Składanowski, 2023, p. 2), which serve a double purpose: on one hand, they outline the main matters Russia is going to dedicate resources to within the following years, but on the other hand, they state the values and ideas the Russian government adheres to, which makes them indispensable for the building of a strong narrative.

In the Russian *National Security Strategy* of 2015, "the West" is painted as a unitary entity, which is one of the main threats to multiple facts of the Russian national security, intentionally acting against Russia through political and military means. For example, Russia frames every

NATO military exercise as a threat to its national security, an idea which developed into a full-scale disinformation campaign in the context of the “Spring Storm 21” exercise (EUvsDisinfo, 2021). Also, in 2021, an article on the Italian Sputnik website claimed that the European Union implemented economic sanctions against the Russian Federation because of a rusophobic lobby within the Union (EUvsDisinfo, 2021a). The National Security Strategy clearly states that the expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation towards the Russian border is a threat to the military security of the state (*Russian National Security Strategy*, 2015, art. 15). Moreover, the events that happened in Ukraine in 2014 are classified as an “anti-constitutional *coup d’etat*” (*Russian National Security Strategy*, 2015, art. 17) supported by the West that has generated a great amount of instability and suffering in the Ukrainian state. The process of “Eurasian integration”, though not comprehensively explained within the strategy, is regarded as an integral part of achieving cultural security (*Russian National Security Strategy*, 2015, art. 81), but this process is hindered by the actions of the West. The Strategy also enumerates the “Traditional Russian spiritual and moral values,” such as “the priority of the spiritual over the material”, “service to the homeland” or “the historical unity of the peoples of Russia”, cataloguing them as assets of cultural security (*Russian National Security Strategy*, 2015, art. 78). If this document acknowledges the existence of an Ukrainian state, its successor, the *National Security Strategy of 2021*, denies the rightful existence of an Ukrainian state, only talking about “the Ukrainian People” (*Strategy of the National Security of the Russian Federation*, 2021, art. 100), which aligns with the Eurasianist theory of a borderless “mestoravitie” (Vernadsky, 1927, p. 102). Moreover, the West is explicitly accused of trying to maintain world domination, as “The desire of Western countries to maintain their hegemony” (*Strategy of the National Security of the Russian Federation*, 2021, art. 7) is catalogued as one of the main trends that characterize the actual geopolitical climate.

The idea that certain entities wish to harm Russia is present through the mention of “The desire to isolate the Russian Federation and the use of double standards in international politics” (*Strategy of the National Security of the Russian Federation*, 2021, art. 18), which inhibits Moscow’s ability to properly establish international relations.

After the invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the Russian official discourse started to rely in an even heavier manner on Dugin's Eurasian ideas regarding the Messianic character of the Russian people and the malevolent nature of the West, a situation made clear through the *Concept of Foreign Policy* of 2023. This document invokes the narrative of the thousand-year-old state in the first chapter, which is one of the main factors that determined "Russia's special position as a unique country-civilization" (*The Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation*, 2023, art.4).

The states that pose a threat to the Russian Federation are referred to as "the United States of America (USA) and their satellites" (*The Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation*, 2023, art.13), which aligns with Dugin's view that the United States are the main centre of power within the Anglo-Saxon Atlantic area.

The conflict in Ukraine is considered the result of the machinations of the Occident, aimed at deterring Russia from its path to the status of global power, so as to maintain "Western hegemony" (*The Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation*, 2023, art.13). According to the Russian President, the West has pressured the Ukrainian state in order to weaken its economic ties with Moscow – "U.S. and EU countries systematically and consistently pushed Ukraine to curtail and limit economic cooperation with Russia" (Putin, 2021). In the same article, Vladimir Putin proposes a history of the Ukrainian and Russian states that justifies the idea that these two peoples should be part of the same "statal" entity. The name of the Ukrainian people comes, in the President's view, from the Old Russian word for border ("okraina"), which was used in the twentieth century to refer to the Russians that lived close to the border of the state. The idea of a Ukrainian state appeared at the beginning of the nineteenth century, in the context of geopolitical unrest in the area. This idea was promoted by the Polish elite and during the First World War, by the Austro-Hungarians, which used it to counterbalance the Polish national movement. The article states that there are no cultural or ethnic reasons why the Ukrainian state should exist and this situation is the result of the manner in which the Soviet Union was organised. Today, any action of the Ukrainian people that tries to distance itself from the Russian identity is portrayed as a result of

Western interference that has to be counteracted for the good of the Russian and Ukrainian citizens. (Putin, 2021)

The same anti-Western narrative can be observed in the official discourses of the Russian president, with one of the most recent being the Victory Day speech from May 9th 2025, the day that marks the anniversary of the end of the Second World War for the USSR. With this occasion, Putin invokes the success of the USSR over Adolf Hitler's Third Reich. That anti-Western characteristic is clearly visible through the parallel drawn between the Western countries that act today in a manner that endangers Russia's national identity and the Nazis. Putin directly accuses the leaders of Europe for imposing their will on Ukraine "the elite in the West, they keep talking of their exceptionalism, of how they are different, and they are the ones creating a sense of disruption between our people" (Putin, 2025), in order to weaken Russia and maintain the status of the West as the centre of international power.

Channels of influence and mechanisms for propagating Eurasian ideology

Russia opts for a combination of soft-power and hard-power elements in order to propagate Eurasian ideals and undermine public trust in the capabilities and principles of Western powers. Soft power – also known as co-optive power – is the ability of a country to get "other countries to want what it wants", while hard power – or command power – is the ability of a country of "ordering others to do what it wants" (Nye, 2023, p. 12).

The neo- Eurasianism finds practical expression in Moscow's policies toward the so-called "near abroad", namely the post-Soviet space, and the protection of Russian compatriots, initiatives that emerged during Vladimir Putin's second presidential term (2004-2008) and can also be interpreted through the conceptual framework of soft power. Also, in this context, the concept of the "Russian World" (Russkiy Mir) emerged, which is actually a soft security strategy aimed at "protecting" all Russian speakers outside the Federation. Following the Colour Revolutions in Georgia (2003), Ukraine (2004) and Kyrgyzstan (2005), as well as insignificant support from the population of Moscow's traditional allies, such as Kazakhstan and Belarus.

Russia has intertwined the Eurasianist ideology with soft power instruments in order to improve its international image and increase its attractiveness among the CIS states (Sergunin and Karabeshkin, 2025, p. 349). Thus, the following presents the main tools used, as well as the operating mode adopted by the Kremlin in the process of consolidating soft power.

The propaganda media apparatus is one of the Kremlin's main soft-power tools and is made up of various channels, including state-funded media outlets such as RT and Sputnik, multilingual multimedia platforms, and an active social media presence, to convey messages tailored to each country's culture and language (Wilson, 2015). The goal is not persuasion, but the creation of moral and factual confusion by multiplying versions of reality, so that the target audience loses its "cognitive basis for making political decisions" (Makhashvili, 2017), becoming passive and easy to manipulate. This tactic is compared by the specialized literature to the Soviet "4D" strategy: to discredit, to distort, to distract and to demoralize. However, its "post-modern" variant aims to reinvent reality (Makhashvili, 2017).

Since, in the vision of neo-Eurasianism, Russia is invested with a messianic mission to unify the Eurasian space into a single empire led by a single ruler, the Kremlin seeks the integration of all the states of the former USSR, as well as the extension of Russian protection over Eastern Europe (Zeyliger, 2025, p. 6) Thus, the countries of the post-Soviet space are the main targets of Eurasian propaganda. For example, in Belarus, Russian channels dominate the media space, and 62.3% of the population perceived the annexation of Crimea as "the return of historical lands." (Independent Institute of Socio-Economic and Political Studies, 2015). In Armenia, although trust in Russia declined after the Nagorno-Karabakh War⁷, the Russian press remains the main source of information, supported by the presence of "peacekeepers" troops (Asgarli, 2024).

⁷ The Second Nagorno-Karabakh War (September-November 2020), precipitated a significant erosion of public confidence in Russia among Armenians. Despite Moscow's role in mediating the ceasefire agreement and deploying peacekeeping contingents, its non-intervention military assistance in support of its Collective Security Treaty Organizations (CSTO) ally – Armenia – resulted in widespread accusations of failing its security guarantor role against Azerbaijan.

In Georgia, Russian propaganda exploits the popularity of Russian TV channels, such as Channel 1, RTR or Russia 1, due to the fact that the inhabitants are Russian speakers, but also the lack of access to local media in some regions, which explains why 30% of the minority population supports a pro-Russian orientation (National Democratic Institute, 2016). In Azerbaijan, Russia's influence is weaker, due to cultural proximity to Turkey, but there are still 340 schools teaching in Russian and the authorities avoid directly contradicting Moscow (Asgarli, 2024, p. 90). In Central Asia – Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan – considered Russia's "backyard," cultural and linguistic dominance remains evident, even if in some regions there are nationalist manifestations (Asgarli, 2024, p.88).

In order to disseminate its narratives, including those regarding Eurasianism, to the widest possible audience, Russia also uploads propaganda content to social networks. It has been observed, since 2019, that Russian propaganda has also expanded among social media platforms, such as Facebook or Twitter (X), which are infested with messages such as "The Soviet Union was a politically stable and socially protected system" (Kintsurashvili and Gogoladze, 2020). Russia has developed a series of strategies over time to increase the visibility and credibility of pro-Russian content. Thus, in the context of sanctions suffered by the Kremlin, as well as the blocking or limiting of access to networks such as Facebook, Twitter (X) or YouTube⁸ Russia has reoriented itself to Telegram in order to communicate with both external and internal audiences, due to the difficulty that the authorities face in trying to control the application. The Kremlin took advantage of the lack of a native recommendation mechanism, exploiting the platform's vulnerabilities through well-known influencers, such as Vladimir

⁸ LinkedIn was officially blocked in 2016 for non-compliance with local data storage laws concerning Russian citizens. Access to Twitter (now X) became restricted starting in 2022, officially citing violations of Russian legislation regarding the dissemination of "fake news" related to the war. The most severe restrictions targeted Facebook and Instagram, which were officially banned in March 2022 after Meta was designated an extremist organization. The limitation of YouTube was primarily achieved through deliberate bandwidth throttling by the Roskomnadzor agency, rendering the platform nearly unusable without the aid of a Virtual Private Network (VPN) (https://russiapost.info/society/social_media_in_Russia).

Soloviev, who became “recommendation engine” for smaller accounts (Vavryk, 2022). Soloviev’s recommendations increased channel views by up to 70% in the first few months, which also had a negative effect on larger channels. Users are generally attracted to small or medium-sized accounts that post original content with moderate frequency, and the Russian propaganda system monitors these preferences, constantly adjusting its strategies in a way that allows it to gradually remove channels that become irrelevant (Vavryk, 2022). In the broader context of information warfare campaigns deployed across media landscapes, analysts point to pro-Russian media outlets operating within the territories of former Soviet States. In Georgia, for instance, the propaganda system is also supported by the media through the portals Sakinformi, Sakartvelo da Msoplio, Iverioni and the publications Asaval Dasavali, Newspaper Alia or Svobodnaia Gruzia (Makhashvili, 2017). Pro-Russian narratives have also been promoted with the help of vocal personalities, such as Nino Burjanadze and Irma Inashvili (Makhashvili, 2017).

Another strategy developed by the Kremlin is determined by the emergence of a new stage, namely the Kremlin troll and the development of the Internet Research Agency (IRA), established in 2013⁹. Although it is currently no longer officially active, the organization is widely known, reaching over 600 employees, each with a daily technical sheet. Some of the workers were engaged in direct trolling by publishing and supporting propaganda messages on social networks, through comments and artificial discussions. Their goal was to attract users’ attention to the topics and create the illusion of a popular consensus. The rest of the employees created apparently apolitical blogs and accounts, and gradually inserted messages pro-Russian interests. The agency carried out its activities on popular platforms such as LiveJournal, Vkontakte, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, as well as in the comment sections of

⁹ The IRA is a Russian organization, created, managed and financed by Yevgeny Prigozhin, focused on conducting online influence operations in order to manipulate public opinion. The agency gained notoriety for its involvement in the 2016 US Presidential election, the Brexit referendum and the ongoing war in Ukraine. Although the agency is no longer officially active under this name, having been publicly exposed and sanctioned internationally, its activities have been decentralized into less visible structures, allowing the continuation of the online manipulation campaigns.

news sites (Morrison, 2021). Even though the IRA is the only known such agency, there are researchers who believe that it exists as “an effective distraction from the wider network of troll farms, or the organization behind them” (Giles, 2016, p. 45). Typical of Kremlin propaganda, Eurasianists flood the media space with messages created and multiplied by “troll farms” (Gerber and Zavisca, 2016, p. 79).

Also, the Russian Orthodox Church is not only a key aspect of the Eurasian identity, as previously mentioned, but also “one of the main assets of Russia’s soft power”, but “foreign counteragents are frightened by it even more than by traditional leverages” (Lukyanov, 2009), therefore, it is also one of the main channels for the dissemination of Eurasian ideas. Russian propaganda promotes principles such as “Moscow is the third Rome” or “Holy Rus” which induce the idea that the Moscow Kingdom, and later Russia, is the spiritual successor of Byzantium, being the true “citadel of Orthodoxy” (Balatska, 2023, p. 127). Russia is considered the sacred source of the “correct” faith, which has the mission of spreading it to other peoples. Furthermore, according to Eurasianism, being “Orthodox” is equivalent to being “Russian”, and thus, any Orthodox community is considered part of the “Russian World” (Balatska, 2023, p. 127). In this way, two distinct elements of collective belonging – religion and ethnicity – are combined, causing confusion at the level of identity (Balatska, 2023, p. 127). For example, propaganda in the Georgian space includes the demonization of the EU and NATO, which are presented as threats to the identity, value and the Orthodox Church, while Russia is portrayed as an ally and protector of Georgia (Makhashvili, 2017).

On the other hand, in promoting the Eurasian ideology, the Russian Federation also uses a series of institutional actors, including think tanks and quasi-governmental organizations, the latter being known as GONGOs (Government-Organized Non-Governmental Organizations). Think tanks are institutions that conduct analysis and research, acting as a bridge between academia and politics, while GONGOs are organizations that, although presenting themselves as non-governmental, are created and controlled by the government (Pallin and Oxenstierna 2017). In a study conducted by Denis Yu. Ivanov, in which he analyses the research directions of seven analytical centres specialized in the field of political

studies in the Eurasian space, it is noted that the theme of “Greater Eurasia” represents a priority for institutions with a strategic and geopolitical profile (Ivanov, 2023).

“Greater Eurasia” is part of a series of concepts that “describe and form the so-called political images of the world,” along with some political initiatives as Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), BRICS, One Belt, One Road (OBOR) or the Community of Shared Future for Mankind (Bazavluk, Kurylev and Savin, 2022). The concept was defined in 2015, although it has been a topic of interest before, and Sergey Karaganov, founder of the Council on Foreign and Defence Policy, views it as “a movement towards a new geostrategic community – a pan-Eurasian space of development, peace and security, intended to overcome the divisions left over from the Cold War, to prevent the emergence of new ones, to manage misunderstandings and frictions” (Karaganov, 2018). Thus, the Council for Foreign and Defence Policy¹⁰ shows a particularly high interest in this concept, producing 98 publications in the period 2014-2023 on this topic. It is followed by the Foundation for World Policy Research, whose main interest focuses on the “Greater Eurasia”, considered an integrative image of the world (Ivanov, 2023).

Another channel used to propagate Russian narratives is pseudo-think tanks, which are organizations that emerged as proxies of the Kremlin “that blur the lines between news, think tank content, misinformation, and propaganda” (Williams and Carley, 2023, p. 3). According to Williams and Carley (2023), the role of pseudo-think tanks is to disseminate pro-Russian propaganda to the Western public, and, according to their research, their credibility and visibility are increased through an artificial boost process through a network of low-quality websites, which generate millions of backlinks to these platforms. Among the examples identified by the two authors are: Global Research

¹⁰ The Council on Foreign and Defence Policy (CFDP/ SVOP) is an influential, semi-official think-tank established in Moscow in 1992, and serves as a principal provider of strategic consultancy on Russia’s foreign and defence policy issues. Due to its institutional role and the presence of Karaganov Sergey as its Honorary Chairman, the CFDP is pivotal in the conceptual development and ideological promotion of the “Greater Eurasia” project.

(globalresearch.ca), Strategic Culture Foundation (strategic-culture.org), New Eastern Outlook (jurnal-neo.org), Geopolitica.ru (geopolitica.ru-en), SouthFront (southfront.org), Katehon (Katehon.com-en), en.news-front.info (Williams and Carley, 2023) (Williams and Carley 2023).

Moreover, organizations such as the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), or initiatives such as The Greater Eurasia Project/ Greater Eurasian Partnership, are considered instruments through which Eurasian ideas are implemented, as Russia's strategies to become a pole of power independent of the West by creating a multipolar world order (Bazavluk, Kurylev, and Savin, 2022). For example, the EAEU was established without being based on a common system of ideas, and a number of leaders such as Nursultan Nazarbayev and Sergey Glazyev supported the adoption of Eurasianism as the organization's ideology, but member states oriented towards cooperation with the West opposed it (Pantin, 2022). However, Russia, as the core state of the EAEU, continues to promote the principles of Eurasianism, seeking to expand its influence beyond the economic sphere and proposing an ideological formula structured in the form of a triad – “peace and security, human capital, support points” (Pantin, 2022). In practice, the Kremlin wants to portray the EAEU as a “third way” between Western liberalism and Chinese socialism (Kharitonova, 2024). This is also supported by pro-Russian authors, such as V. I. Pantin who believes that “Eurasianism, if developed and adapted to modern realities, can ensure stronger economic integration” and that it is necessary to “overcome illusions regarding the possibility of integration into the EU” (Pantin, 2022, p. 17). Also, S. Yu. Glazyev and I.F. Kefeli proposes “an ideology of Eurasian integration that would express not only economic interests, but also common socio-political and spiritual interests” (Glazyev and Kefeli, 2022, p. 10). For example, in Georgia there are a number of organizations involved in the dissemination of Eurasian narratives, including the Eurasian Institute – which carries out analytical and outreach work through conferences and seminars – and Eurasian Choice – which organizes social actions, protests and demonstrations, both of which have direct or indirect connections to the International Eurasian

Movement, which is led by Aleksandr Dughin. Around them revolve a number of associated entities, such as the Young Political Scientists Club, the People's Movement of Georgian-Russian Dialogue and Cooperation, the Erekle II Society, Patriot TV (Makhashvili, 2017). The activity of these pro-Russian organizations in Georgia during the 2008 Russian-Georgian conflict represented a testing ground for the strategies that the Russian Federation uses in information warfare, the "propaganda machine" being used on a large scale for the first time.

In parallel, in order to maintain its influence over the former Soviet republics, the Kremlin created a constitutional¹¹ clause on the protection of "compatriots" living outside Russia's borders, which stipulates the protection of Russian rights, interests and cultural identity (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2020). This vague formulation provides the Russian Federation with a justification for its interventions in its "near neighbourhood", under the pretext of securitising the "Russian world" (Asgarli, 2024). In the same context, the policy of issuing Russian passports to the populations of the separatist regions of the former USSR was also created. Thus, citizens of Transnistria (Republic of Moldova), Abkhazia and Ossetia (Georgia), as well as the Ukrainian territories of Donbas, Kherson, Luhansk and Zaporizhia received Russian identity cards, even though some of them did not express a desire to become Russian citizens (Asgarli, 2024). These actions had served to legitimize the military interventions – namely the hard power elements – that Russia has carried out over time in these regions. Among the Kremlin's aggressive steps, we recall: involvement in the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan since the end of the Soviet era, granting support to Armenia in 2020, conditional on abandoning negotiations with the European Union and joining the EAEU and stationing Russian forces in Karabakh, supporting the separatist republics of Abkhazia and Ossetia, the Russian invasion of Georgia in 2008 (Bantaş and Bălănică, 2023).

¹¹ The provision is Article 69, Paragraph 3 (Art.69, Sec.3) of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, a clause included in the context of the constitutional amendments added in 2020 through which Kremlin sought to adjust the balance of power and adapt the fundamental law to the new reality, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2020/651935/EPRS_BRI\(2020\)651935_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2020/651935/EPRS_BRI(2020)651935_EN.pdf).

Case Study: The War in Ukraine through the Lens of Eurasian Ideology

The invasion of Ukraine by Russia on February 24, 2022, is itself a geopolitical and ideological manifestation of Eurasianism, the Russians claim the Kyivian Rus as the cradle of Russian civilization, the territory around Kyiv being a key point of their identity as a thousand-year-old independent state (Balatska, 2023, p. 2). The loss of the Ukrainian territory as a result of the dissolution of the Soviet Union has meant, from an ideological point of view, the loss of that identity, which dealt a powerful psychological blow to the inhabitants of the newly-formed Russian Federation. Today, the Neo-Eurasian school of thought promoted by Dugin relies on the idea that Kyiv and the territories that surround it are an integral part of the Eurasian space, which means they have to be encompassed again within the area controlled by Moscow (Dughin, 2015). This fact is evident even from the ideologue's statements, "For its greatness, Russia will pay with bloodshed" (Dughin, 2015, p 1) and "Sacred war for sacred order will rescue the current world [from] its darkest place" (Dughin, 2023, p 11).

In the Eurasian perspective, Ukraine is part of the Russian state, and "the Little Russians have been 'one of the individuations of the Russian people' along with the Great Russians and Belarusians (Balatska, 2023, p. 131). As experts stressed, Dugin argues that Ukrainian identity did not develop naturally, but was manufactured by Western states (Kurt, 2023, p. 361), and that Ukraine's sovereignty and independence represent a "highly adverse condition" for Russian geopolitics and a significant threat to the integrity of Eurasia (Kurt, 2023, p. 360). Furthermore, the ideologist believes that Ukrainian territory is easily divisible between Russia and the USA. The loss of Kiev, considered to be "the first Russian state", represents "a vital geopolitical setback for the Russian state", which not only affected Russia's foreign policy and geostrategic options, but also created "the most acute psychological and ideological problems" (Balatska, 2023, p. 124-125).

The solution to the so-called "Ukrainian question", as promoted by propaganda machine, is exclusively military (Dugin, 2000, p. 86) and the annexation of Crimea is considered an essential stage for Russia's return as a global power and for securing access to the Black Sea, and the

events of 2014 have been catalogued as the “sacrificial awakening” of Russia. Dugin’s Neo-Eurasianism proposes a phased plan to conquer Ukraine, firstly commencing with the geopolitical announcement represented by the capture of Crimea, step followed by the “collection of the Russian Empire”, focusing on the eastern and southern parts of Ukraine, which would serve as a base for mobilization and recruitment. Ultimately, the plan aims at the unconditional military solution, leading to the re-division of Ukrainian territory and the extermination of the Ukrainian ethnos (Dughin, 2015). This war is legitimized as a “civilizational war” aimed at ensuring the survival and consolidation of Eurasian civilization, and the territory of Ukraine is considered indispensable for the achievement of “Russia’s historical mission” (Zeyliger, 2025). Moreover, experts highlight that Dugin also points out that during the Leninist Soviet regime, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic was artificially united from regions with distinct histories and ethnicities (Kurt, 2023, p. 361). Thus, the myth of the “disintegration of Ukraine” is a central element of the anti-Ukrainian discourse of Eurasianism, but also of some internal political forces, such as the Progressive Socialist Party, the Communist Party, the Union of Left Forces, and the Party of Regions (Balatska, 2023, p. 139).

Eurasianists are trying to exploit the identity division at the level of Ukrainian society in order to destabilize the state. The societal rupture is highlighted by the contrasts between the east and the west of the country. A correlation is observed between the spoken language, religious affiliation and political options, so that in the west and centre, ethnic Ukrainians, speakers of the official language, supporters of strengthening relations with the West and followers of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Kiev Patriarchate predominate (Rațiu and Munteanu 2018, p. 194). In parallel, in the east and south of Ukraine, ethnic Russians are the majority, who communicate in Russian, support the intensification of relations with Russia and are affiliated with the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Moscow Patriarchate (Rațiu and Munteanu 2018, p. 194). Also, in this sense, the political and social crises of 1994, 2004 and 2013-2014 were reinterpreted by pro-Russian propaganda as evidence of a “civilizational cleavage”, and the map created by Timofey Sergeytsev, which divided the population of Ukraine into three degrees, emphasized

the artificial idea of a fragmented and unstable nation (Balatska, 2023, p. 139). However, this “trend” reached its peak with the promotion of the “Novorossiia project”, a historical name, by the Kremlin during the “Russian-Ukrainian” war, through which an attempt was made to legitimize a “quasi-state” made up of the southern and eastern regions of Ukraine – Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, Kirovohrad, Luhansk, Mykolaiv, Odessa, Kharkiv, Kherson regions and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea (Balatska, 2023, p. 140). In these regions, the Russian-speaking population predominates and since 2014 a media campaign has been launched to support “cultural and historical ownership of these regions by Russia” (Balatska, 2023, p. 140).

In 2014, the anti-Ukrainian propaganda centred on the “Zionist/ Khazar conspiracy” and hybrid labels such as the “Jewish-Banderist junta,” with Ukrainian Jews, Freemasons, and nationalists paradoxically associated with the Nazis (Balatska, 2023, p. 141). However, with the invasion of 2022, the myth of “Nazi Ukraine” emerged, despite the Jewish origin of Ukrainian President Zelensky, who would be responsible for a so-called “genocide of the population of Donbas”, considered the “genocide of the Russian people”, which was the official reason for “denazification” (Balatska, 2023, p. 142).

Eurasian propaganda tends to demonize Ukraine, promoting fake news about “the spread in Kyiv of the “Thelema, liberal-satanic and Atlanticist sect” and obsessively assigning it labels such as “ukro-fascists”, “neo-Nazis”, “junta”, “Banderists”, “puppets of the West” (Balatska, 2023, p. 135-136). Moreover, in March 2022, T. Sergeytsev published an article entitled “What Russia Should Do with Ukraine” in which the Ukrainian people were entirely transformed into a “collective culprit”, and “debanderisation” was transformed into “de-Ukrainisation,” which implies the abolition of the state, culture and even the name “Ukraine”, presented as an “artificial anti-Russian construction” (Balatska, 2023, p. 141-142).

As proof of the effectiveness of propaganda, domestically, President Vladimir Putin has managed to impose the narrative of a “special military operation” carried out for the purpose of “demilitarizing and denazifying” Ukraine, with the invasion being portrayed as a vital action for Russia’s security (Asgarli, 2024, p. 88). The success of the discourse is highlighted

in the results of surveys conducted among the Russian population: according to the Russian Centre for Public Opinion Research (VCIOM), 78% of citizens say they trust Putin, and 68% support the “special operation” (Russian Public Opinion Research Centre (VCIOM), 2023). Even with a slight increase in scepticism after the second half of 2023, the majority of residents continue to legitimize the Kremlin’s actions, with Statista recording a level of 75% in terms of population support (Asgarli, 2024, p. 88).

These Eurasian narratives are also found in the official speech delivered by the Russian Federation internationally, through the Russian President, Vladimir Putin. A clear example is the lecture given by Putin in Moscow, on 14.06.2024, at a meeting with the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He emphasizes that the crisis in Ukraine is not “a conflict between two states,” but the result of aggressive policies of the West aimed at “dismembering our Motherland” (the former Soviet Union), Russians and Ukrainians being “united by a common history and culture, spiritual values, millions of family ties,” more precisely by “Russian language, culture, traditions, historical memory” (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2024). Putin accuses the West of trying to turn Ukraine into their “bridgehead”, turning it anti-Russian by supporting neo-Nazi and radical groups. He claims that there were a series of pogroms, violence and crimes in Ukraine, and that the radicals who took power rehabilitated the Nazis, tried to “abolish the Russian language in the state and public sphere” and put pressure on Orthodox believers (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2024). Putin also invokes Article 1, paragraph 2 of the UN Charter and the 2010 decision of the International Court of Justice on the status of Kosovo to legitimize the referendums held in the separatist regions of Donetsk and Lugansk: “If the West recognized Kosovo, then Donetsk and Lugansk have the same right.” (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2024). In addition, Russia is portrayed as the guarantor of the security of the Russian-speaking populations in Crimea and Donbas, with Russian troops having a “civilizational mission to protect the “Russian world” (Russkiy Mir)” (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2024). In practice, the Kremlin assumes the role of protector of Russian-speaking communities, while

Kiev is presented as the aggressor who allegedly started the war against the “independent people’s republics” (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2024).

The myth of genocide is also propagated, with Putin declaring that in Donbass “terrorist attacks, murders were committed, a belly blockade was organized” and that women, children and the elderly were labelled as “second-class people, subhumans” (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2024). In addition, Putin claims that he tried all political and diplomatic solutions through negotiations in Belarus, Turkey and Istanbul, invoking the “Treaty on Permanent Neutrality and Security Guarantees for Ukraine” as evidence of a possible compromise, but rejected by the “Bucha provocation” (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2024).

The president also mentions that Russian troops approached Kiev only as a means of pressure for negotiations, not with the aim of conquering the capital. Last but not least, Putin proposes conditions for peace, through which he demands that Zelensky completely withdraw troops from Donetsk, Lungask, Kherson and Zaporozhye, but also to abandon the steps to join NATO, so that the neutrality, demilitarization and denazification of Ukraine are accepted (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2024). The discourse with Eurasian undertones continues today, so that at the 2025 Alaska Conference, Putin states that “we’ve always considered the Ukrainian nation, and I’ve said it multiple times, a brotherly nation” and that “We have the same roots, and everything that’s happening is a tragedy for us, and terrible wound” (CBS News, 2025). Peace is also still conditioned by the fulfilment of Russia’s “legitimate concerns” and the restoration of a “just balance of security in Europe and the world” (CBS News, 2025).

The invasion was also supported through social media, with the Kremlin trying to gain support from users by publishing propaganda posts and creating the illusion that there were many legitimate pro-Russian accounts. Moreover, Russia manipulated authentic footage from the front, presenting “Ukrainian atrocities” in order to create panic and erode support for Kiev (Peresyphkina, 2025).

However, a famous example of material that pro-Russian propaganda used is the image of Anna Ivanovna, a 69-year-old woman of

Ukrainian origin, waving a red flag (Bettiza and Khomenko, 2022). The moment was transformed into a sign of nostalgia for the USSR period and of the alleged popular support for the Russian invasion, the woman being associated with the image of “Mother Russia”. Her pose was transformed into a propaganda symbol, being multiplied through murals, statues, songs, poems and stickers, the old woman becoming the iconic figure of “liberating Russia”. However, the case of “Babushka Z”, as she was called, is a well-known example of distortion and narrative simplification, as the old woman does not support the Russian military operation, and when Anna was interviewed she stated: “How can I support my people by dying? My grandchildren and great-grandchildren were forced to go to Poland. We live in fear and terror” and that “If I could talk to Vladimir Putin, I would tell him that you made a mistake. We, the Ukrainian workers, what did we do to deserve this? We are the ones who suffer the most”. Unfortunately, the woman is now being attacked online, and her neighbours are avoiding her, considering her a traitor (Bettiza and Khomenko, 2022).

In parallel with such posts, Russia is building its own user base through fake accounts and bots. In the early stages of the 2022 invasion, the Kremlin mobilized state television, troll farms, and bot networks to spread contradictory justifications for the “special military operation,” ranging from “denazification of Ukraine” and protection of Russian-speaking communities to defence against “NATO encirclement” (Bronk, Collins, and Wallach, 2023).

The information campaign was also accompanied by cyber-attacks on Ukrainian government websites, which aimed to undermine trust in the authorities (Peresyphkina, 2025). According to the study conducted in 2023 by Geissler et al., between February and July 2022, 349,455 pro-Russian messages were collected on Twitter (X), which generated almost 1 million likes and an audience of approximately 14.4 million users. These ranged from simple hashtags, such as #IStandWithPutin or #StandWithRussia, to state verbal affirmations of support for Vladimir Putin, such as “@RWApodcast I literally love Putin. The most honest leader in the world” (Geissler, Bär, Pröllochs, and Feuerriegel, 2023, p. 13). Bots also played an important role in the propagation of pro-Russian posts, with the analysis by Geissler et al.

showing that over 132,000 accounts spread the messages, of which approximately 20% were operated by bots. Moreover, a significant part of these accounts was created right around the invasion and played an essential role in amplifying the messages through retweets – approximately 25.7% (Geissler, Bär, Pröllochs, and Feuerriegel, 2023, p. 13).

The Russian information warfare strategy against Ukraine has unfolded through a series of distinct, adaptive phases. The first one – the Shock and Confusion phase - focused on minimizing the invasion as a “special operation” and denying atrocities. Starting with 2023 – the second phase, also known as the adaptation and recalibration phase – due to unexpected resistance from Ukraine, the propaganda reoriented, promoting narratives such as “Kiev fatigue” (Peresyphkina, 2025). Taking advantage of the state’s energy insecurity and the socio-economic costs of supporting Ukraine, Russian propaganda fuelled the discontent and fears that caused protests in countries such as Germany, France and Italy. Also, traditional tools like RT and Sputnik have gradually been replaced by indirect methods, such as proxy influencers, pseudo-independent press, and local sympathizers.

In the accelerated technological phase – the third one – of Russian propaganda and disinformation in 2024, deep fakes depicting Ukrainian officials “surrendering” or Western leaders denigrating Kiev were notable, going viral on platforms such as Telegram and TikTok, taking advantage of the low level of digital literacy of users (Krlis, 2024). Automated tools for “comment flooding” appeared and fake articles, fictitious “leaks” of NATO information, and fabricated reports of war crimes were published. Thus, Russia adopted a strategy called “spray and pray” (Niemien, 2024), through which it flooded the online space with huge volumes of apparently credible fakes, exceeding the capacity of fact-checkers. These efforts are countered by phase IV (2024-2025), which is focused on Resilience and strategic communication from Ukraine.

Finally, in phase V (2025), Russia is trying to weaken NATO unity, presenting Trump’s return to the US presidency as a sign of a possible fracturing of the organization. The Kremlin is also trying to exploit divisions within American society, launching fakes on X or Truth Social about Trump’s alleged recognition of Russian control over Ukrainian territories (Krasnodemska, Marchenko, Ostapchuk, and Sonechko,

2024). In addition, there is a tendency for Russia to insert propaganda content into restricted groups on Telegram, WhatsApp, or Facebook, so as to create discontent at the community level and be difficult to detect at the macro level (Peresyphkina, 2025).

Conclusions

In conclusion, Neo-Eurasianism represents a revival of centuries-old ideas about the uniqueness of the Russian state that comes to strengthen the expansionist tendencies of Putin's Russian Federation. Ideas belonging to this current have been influencing the strategic communication and propaganda campaigns coordinated by the Russian Federation since the re-election of president Vladimir Putin in 2012, a phenomenon that was intensified first by the events of 2014 and later by the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2021. The discourse analysis has revealed that the recent Russian strategic documents, be they actual or recently replaced, that serve as coordinates of Russian state policy bear the mark of Neo-Eurasianism, as do the discourses and interviews of the President. The Russian narratives interpret the international stage through the lens of these ideas, which depicts the West as a hostile, rusophobic entity that has rejected the "true" values in order to maximize its financial gains and its influence over other peoples. In this narrative, the Kremlin is the sole keeper of these authentic, Orthodox values, its unique mission being that of protecting the neighbouring countries from the decadent Western influence. After 2021, the idea of the homogenous Russian population that is spread over the whole Eurasian space has made its presence felt through the denial of the existence of a Ukrainian people, as it can be seen both through the strategic communication and propaganda campaigns of the last four years.

Moreover, these ideas are spread through propaganda campaigns across multiple channels, both within and outside the borders of the Federation. This variety of channels aims to spread the propaganda message to all members of the society, as each of them has its own specificity and reaches a different segment of the population. The propaganda campaigns are used as a form of soft power aimed at increasing Russian influence over the neighbouring states. However,

when the soft power elements are not enough, the Kremlin does not shy itself from employing hard power as well. Regarding the war in Ukraine, it can be easily explained through the Neo-Eurasianist ideas upheld by Dugin. The “special military operation” is perceived as a necessity of the state, as the Eurasian and Neo-eurasian doctrines do not consider the Ukrainian territory as a separate country. In this regard, the propaganda machine targets the people inside the Russian Federation, in order to rally the population behind the war effort, and those outside the Russian borders, in a manner that would justify the military invasion. These two are branches of the same campaign, drawing inspiration from Dugin’s ideas. As a result, the way Moscow positions itself in relation to Kyiv can be seen as an extension of the Neo-Eurasianist and Eurasianist ideas.

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