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ABSTRACT

In direct relation to the Ukraine crisis, the world is confronted with an existential **problem** that threatens our human existence, especially with the possibility of an all-out nuclear war. Moreover, mainstream media only show one side of the story and take sides in the conflict. The **purpose** of this research was to show the contending narratives about the Ukraine crisis and its impact on the rest of the world, depict, and provide the recommendations for conflict transformation and peacebuilding. The **literature** used consisted of materials not only from mainstream media, but also seldom heard or read alternative media and social media from which divergent and at times contending views were explored. The research **methodology** used in this article was the qualitative case study research design, focusing on the "special military operation" in Ukraine. **Narrative analysis** was employed to present the different perspectives, namely those of Ukraine, NATO, and Russia. The **findings** yielded results that critically portrayed different perspectives, critically identifying and exposing post-truth fake news, and offering recommendations. This paper **recommended** raising critical consciousness that leads to action that advances positive policy alternatives and social transformation for durable justice and peace in Ukraine in particular and its impact to the rest on the world.

Keywords: Conflict Transformation, Peacebuilding, Special Military Operation, Ukraine crisis, War and peace

INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement

We live in a dangerous time during which the world is confronted with a **general crisis** involving climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, conflicts, corporate super profits, climate emergency, food insecurity, war, refugee crisis, and the threat of nuclear annihilation. The Ukraine crisis has aggravated the food crisis, energy crisis, and the possibility of a major regional or global war, which could lead to the nuclear annihilation of the world. Wherever we are in the world, there is a one-sided coverage of the situation in Ukraine. The **problem**, though, consists of most people not thinking critically but only absorbing news that the corporate mainstream media dumps on us. We automatically take one side of the conflict and as a consequence reject the other views.

Rationale of the Study

The rationale of this paper was to fill the gap in encouraging learning, teaching, research, and education that promotes **critical thinking** as well as knowing, understanding, analyzing, considering, applying, developing alternative perspectives and courses of action. As there is a need to listen to narratives from all sides, this paper tried to reveal all the different major perspectives of the conflict without taking any side.

Research Questions

The **research questions** raised are the following:

- 1) What are the contending narratives about the key issues of the Ukraine crisis?
- 2) From the perspectives of conflict and peace studies, what steps must be undertaken to stop the Ukraine crisis?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research included laying down the different narratives about the Ukraine crisis with a view to provide recommendations to end the war.

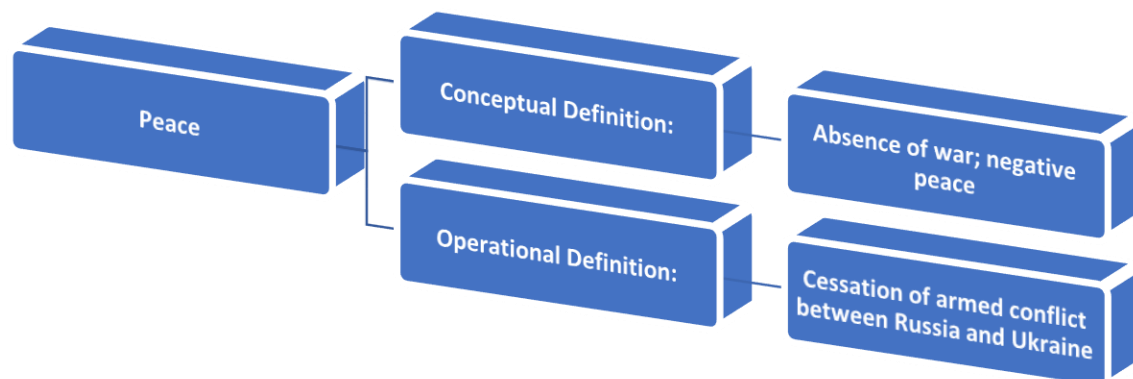
Scope, Limitation, and Delimitation of the Study

The case in point for this academic paper was the conflict in Ukraine, which focused on the parties to the conflict, including the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Ukraine, and Russia as well as its impact. It was limited to geopolitics, armed conflict, and calls for efforts at peace making, peace keeping, conflict transformation, and peacebuilding. The article delimited the area of research not to include other matters not related to the armed hostilities. See Figure below 1:

Figure 1*Scope, Limitation, and Delimitation of the Study***Definition of Terms**

The following key terms were defined in this paper: peace, conflict transformation, peacebuilding, and special military operation.

The key term of this article was peace. For the purpose of this study, peace is conceptually defined simply as the absence of physical violence, armed conflict, or war. It is sometimes referred to as negative peace (Galtung, 1996). For this research, peace is operationally defined as the cessation of armed hostilities between Ukraine and Russia as well as other countries that support their armed fighting. See Figure 2 below:

Figure 2*Conceptual and Operational Definition of Peace*

Peacemaking refers to efforts to get the two or more sides of the conflict to meet for a dialogue, which could be directly among the parties to the conflict or through the efforts of a third party. Although the concept of conflict transformation and peacebuilding are closely related, they are however different. On the one hand, conflict transformation refers to “many efforts to create sustainable positive peace” (Askandar, 2021, p. 20) in order to “transform relationships, communication, perceptions, issues, and social organizations (Lederach, 1995, p. 201) for the purpose of the “empowerment of parties” to the conflict (Askandar, 2021, p. 21). On the other hand, peacebuilding refers to “a long term effort to transform conflict through comprehensive plan to change all aspects of the conflict,” including the parties to the conflict, their relationships, as well as “the structure of the conflict itself” (Askandar, 2021, p. 17).

Russia uses the term “special military operation” to describe the military actions it has initiated since February 2022 in Ukraine. Under international humanitarian law (IHL), the so-called special military operation qualifies as armed conflict of an international character (Wilmschurst & Breau, 2007). Basically, it is an act of armed conflict which describe the intentions of Russia, which is clear to the minds of the Russian president and his military but not explicitly expressed to the rest of the world. Though not a *de jure* war, the “special military operation” is nevertheless a *de facto* war, as defined by the Geneva Conventions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review offered the frameworks which guided the conduct of this research. The paper as such was situated in the realm of peace studies in general. In particular, it was supplemented with historical approach, critical thinking, hermeneutics, and nomology.

The historical approach was used to examine current history involving the special military operation in Ukraine. Critical thinking was utilized to question warmongering as the only responses of all sides to the ongoing armed conflict in Ukraine. Hermeneutics was resorted to in order to interpret the different narratives regarding the armed hostilities in Ukraine. Nomology was employed so as to name the general trends or patterns that emerge in the ongoing situation in Ukraine.

Figure 3*Theories in the Literature that Guided This Research*

METHODOLOGY

The **philosophy** that guided this research was dialectical ontology of actions, words, and attitudes as they change through time. This paper used the **qualitative descriptive research design**. The Ukraine crisis was the **case study** under consideration. Using a powerful non-linear literary narrative device (Twain, 2013), the chronology of the narratives of events was presented in a nonlinear fashion based upon the arguments during the special military operation of Russia and moving backwards to cite different narratives about the provocations of such military actions.

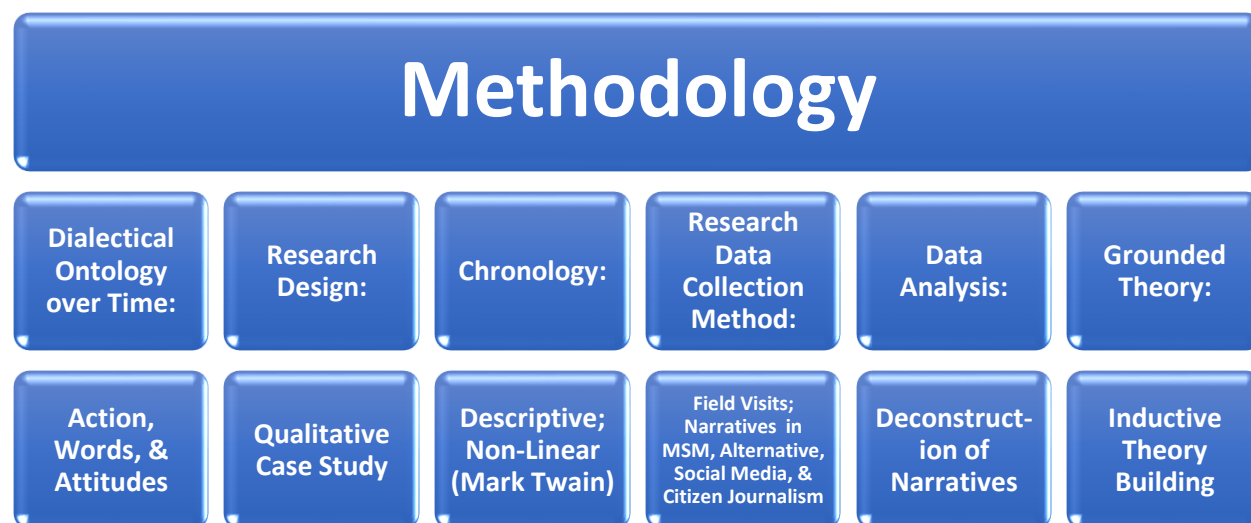
Data collection for this research involved gathering accounts in mainstream media (MSM), alternative media, social media, and citizen journalism. **Data analysis** involved the deconstruction of narratives. Here, **narrative theory** (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2015) refers to breaking down or deconstructing and interpreting the types and role of stories as expressed in texts, speeches, policies, and pronouncements that the key actors have constructed as well as match them with their actions in the Ukraine crisis.

The author of this article **deconstructed** and **reconstructed** (Derrida, 2018) the words as well as **interpreted** (Barthes, 1967) the meanings of the texts and speeches of major actors in the major countries involved in the Ukraine conflict. The author matched the theory (or words) with the actions (or practice) of these main participants in the crisis in Ukraine (Derrida, 2019). The author analyzed the narrative discourses

of key actors in the context of current history (White, 1987), the output of which was an inductive grounded theory (Babchuk, 2008) of the Ukraine crisis based on the empirical data from the different media sources.

For data collection, data analysis, and interpretation of the findings, this qualitative research entailed the resort to purposeful convenience sampling of informants with whom the author had conversations, which led to the data collection of open-ended responses, data analysis of texts, and interpretation thereafter. Before the pandemic and Russia's "special military action," the author spent about one month in Ukraine for an ethnographic visit. He traveled throughout the country, from Kiev, to Odessa, Lvov, Dnieper, Chernihiv, and back to Kiev. His homestay in the residences of Russian-speaking and Ukrainian-speaking Ukrainian friends all over Ukraine provided him with limitless opportunities to interact with them, including engaging in dialogue with them about the situation of its current history in relation to both its eastern and western neighbors. All Ukrainian research collaborators remain anonymous in this article.

Member check was conducted in two stages. The first stage was conducted when the author was in Ukraine during his ethnographic visit. The second stage of member check was conducted after the author left Ukraine. The purpose of member check was to ensure the accuracy of the research findings by sharing back the major findings, the case analysis, specific cultural descriptions as well as the emerging themes back to the Ukrainian contact persons for the latter's confirmation of the accuracy of those statements (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In this way, the Ukrainian research collaborators served as a check throughout the process of data analysis. Member checking was a validity strategy in this qualitative research with a view to establish the accuracy of the findings. Different views were shared back with Ukrainians both during the ethnographic visit and up to the present time with a view to clarify or validate or both the sensemaking of the author. After leaving Ukraine, member check was accomplished via different social media, including, inter alia, electronic mail, Facebook, Viber, video chat, WhatsApp, and Zoom. As of this writing, the author is still in contact with them, almost all of whom are opposed to the war. Some women and children whom this author knows have left the country and are scattered everywhere, while some women decide to stay put with their husbands. Later on, some women and their children who left Ukraine have returned back to their homes in Ukraine. For a summary of the methodology, see Figure 4 below:

Figure 4*Methodology of the Research*

FINDINGS

The Findings of this research is composed of two parts: the Analysis section and the Discussion section. The Findings responded to the research questions regarding 1) the divergent narratives about the conflict and 2) the call for action in order to achieve conflict transformation and peacebuilding.

Analysis

Contending Narratives. This section answered Research Question 1 about the different narratives regarding the Ukraine crisis, of which are three alternative narratives. The sources of data gathered were mainstream media, alternative media, social media, and citizen journalism of people who were or are on the ground in the different parts of Ukraine in general and the conflict zones in particular. Mapping the conflict, NATO flanks Ukraine from the west and Russia flanks Ukraine from the east. See Figure 5 below:

Figure 5*Conflict Mapping*

At the outset, to be clear, Ukraine has the right to self-determination to decide its political, economic, and cultural destiny. Thus, Ukraine can choose to join NATO and the European Union. The dominant narrative asserts that Russia is the villain, from the perspective of NATO. From this narrative, Russia's attack on Ukraine was unprovoked. The second narrative, which is the alternative story, stresses that NATO is the culprit that brought forth this conflict. In this case, NATO provoked Russia to wage its "special military operation" in Ukraine. The third narrative expresses the sentiment according to which all key actors to the conflict are equally culpable and calls for a halt to the armed hostilities. "In the Ukraine crisis, there are no angels" (Sheliazhenko, 2022).

Mainstream news assert that Russia is the aggressor against which the world must work in unison for its defeat. Ukraine is winning the media war, as NATO and most mainstream news agencies endorse news from the perspective of Ukraine. Zelenskyy is omnipresent in mainstream news and social media 24/7. However, in contrast, Russia destroys one city after another. New York Times was quoted as asserting that by June 11, 2022 that "Russian forces did appear to be making slow, methodical and bloody progress toward control of eastern Ukraine" (New York Times, as quoted in Countercurrents Collective, 2022).

Alternative news reveal that Russia has grievances that NATO does not address, including among others, NATO eastward expansion, rabid anti-Russian neo-Nazis playing an active role in Ukraine, biolabs (Hill TV, 2022), and others. Alternative news stress that NATO ignores the inconvenient truth about the existence and role of neo-Nazis in Ukrainian politics and military as early as in the year 2014 (Parry, 2022). Russia claims that the eastward expansion of NATO, especially up to its border by way of Ukraine poses an existential threat to its national security. See Figure 6 below:

Figure 6

Contending Narratives of the Ukraine Crisis

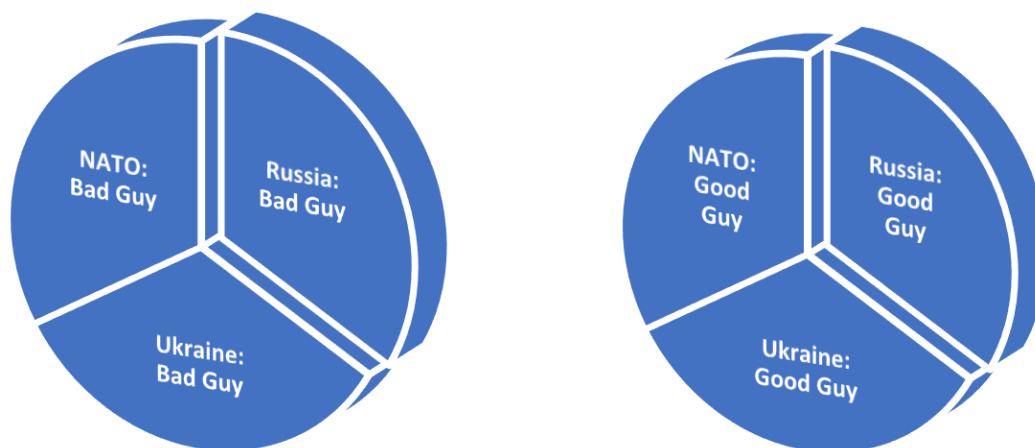


Citizen journalists are people who were or are on the ground in Ukraine who documented their experiences and what they have been seeing as well as posting texts, photos, and videos in social media and all other different types of online accounts, including among others, Facebook, Telegram, TikTok, Twitter, YouTube, and other websites. There are many kinds of citizen journalists. One, foreign students and residents who documented the way in which they were treated as they were leaving Ukraine as refugees were citizen journalists who posted evidence of their experiences. Two, foreign volunteers and mercenaries who joined the Ukrainian armed forces likewise documented their testimonies and posted them online. Three, some who have been living in Ukraine started to record day-to-day occurrences and posted them as news widely viewed and read online.

There is name calling on all sides. Each party to the conflict calls itself the good guy. Each party to the conflict calls the other side of the conflict as the bad guys. Demonization of the others is the picture we get in the media. See Figure 7 below:

Figure 7

Three Parallel Narratives of Protagonists and Antagonists in the Ukraine Crisis



Scholars, such as John Mearsheimer, Jeffrey Sachs, and Yuri Sheliazhenko are some academicians who have aptly summarized the contending narratives on all sides to the conflict. For quotations about the clashing narratives on the side of Ukraine, Russia, and NATO, please see Table 1 below:

Table 1*Contending Narratives about the Ukraine Crisis*

NATO Blames Russia	Ukraine Blames Russia	Russia Blames NATO
“Russia's military invasion into Ukraine on February 24, 2022, is unjustified and in gross violation of international law. Noam Chomsky ranks the Russian invasion of Ukraine alongside the U.S. invasion of Iraq and the Hitler-Stalin invasion of Poland.” (Polychoniou, 2022) “NATO branded Russia "a direct threat" to its members' peace and security.” (Polychoniou, 2022) “West v East (great power struggle, fight for control over Ukraine)” (Sheliazhenko, 2022, p. 8) “West v East (colonialism, cold war, “liberal” hegemony)” (Sheliazhenko, 2022) “instead of trying to calm the waters and repair the disruptions, Biden escalated the U.S. conflicts with both Russia and China.” (Sachs, 2022) “United States: leadership in the international order established by military alliance of Western democracies; support of Ukraine and her Western choice; accountability of Russia for attacks on Ukraine and	“Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Thursday urged his Western partners to deliver Ukraine "the vaccine against Russian tyranny" — more sophisticated weapons, particularly longer-range missiles.” (Lawler & Riedlinger, 2023) “Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky used an address to the Ukraine Defense Contact Group on January 20 to ask for the delivery of long-missiles and tanks.... He asked the audience to be open to sending tanks, F-16s, and long-range missiles to Ukraine. Credit: Department of Defense.” (Yahoo! News, 2023) “In the wake of a deadly missile strike on an apartment block in Dnipro on Saturday, January 14, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky called on countries to provide more weapons to Ukraine... He said that Russia could only be defeated on the battlefield... Zelensky also welcomed the British government's announcement that it would provide Ukraine with 14 Challenger 2 tanks, making the United Kingdom the first country to send modern Western battle tanks to Ukraine. Credit: President of Ukraine.” (Yahoo! News, 2023)	“For years, the political scientist has claimed that Putin's aggression toward Ukraine is caused by Western intervention.” (Chotiner, 2022) “Yet, no one can overlook the fact that Russian leaders had been warning the west for decades about NATO's expansion eastward. No one can honestly say that the US was not in fact deliberately provoking the Russian bear throughout the post-Cold War era. As John Mearsheimer has pointed out in connection with the current invasion of Ukraine, the trouble actually started at the NATO Summit in Bucharest in April 2008. Yet, none of this seems to matter to NATO and U.S. leaders. On the contrary, they are determined to double down on provocation and aggression.” (Polychoniou, 2022) “Russia: multipolarity; security concerns in post-Soviet region; demilitarization and denazification of Ukraine, including non-alignment with military alliances, absence of nuclear weapons, recognition of Russian sovereignty over Crimea and independence of Donetsk and

other challenges to international order.” (Sheliazhenko, 2022, p. 9) “Biden attacked Republican House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy for expressing doubts on another large financial package Ukraine, declaring: “They [House Republicans] said that if they win, they're not likely to fund--to help--continue to fund Ukraine, the Ukrainian war against the Russians. These guys don't get it. It's a lot bigger than Ukraine--it's Eastern Europe. It's NATO. It's real, serious, serious consequential outcomes. They have no sense of American foreign policy.” Similarly, when a group of progressive congressional Democrats urged negotiations to end the Ukraine War, they were excoriated by Democrats following the White House line and forced to recant their call for diplomacy... Biden believes that American credibility depends on NATO expanding to Ukraine, and if necessary, defeating Russia in the Ukraine war to accomplish that. Biden has repeatedly refused to engage in diplomacy with Russia on the NATO enlargement issue. This has been a grave mistake. It stoked a proxy war between the U.S. and Russia in which Ukraine is being devastated, ironically in the name of saving Ukraine.” (Sachs, 2022)	“Russia v Ukraine (fight between archaic nationalism and imperialism)” (Sheliazhenko, 2022, p. 8) “Russia v Ukraine (Kyivan Rus', Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Hetmanate, Ukrainian People's Republic, Soviet Union)” (Sheliazhenko, 2022) “Ukraine: Euro-Atlantic choice of Ukraine, her sovereignty over Donbass and Crimea, cessation of ties with Russia and her following punishment for imperialism and war crimes.” (Sheliazhenko, 2022, p. 9) “Zelensky's Impassioned Appeal for Tanks, Artillery: 'The Kremlin Must Lose'” (Van Brugen, 2023) “Apart from Leopard tanks, Ukraine is getting lots of weapons” (The Economist, 2023) “Making a dramatic, risky wartime visit to Washington on Wednesday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky strategized privately with President Biden at the White House and then, to repeated standing ovations, delivered an impassioned plea to Congress for sustained U.S. military aid.” (L. A. Times, 2022)	Luhansk People's Republics, as well as non-discrimination of Russian people and culture in Ukraine and punishment of anti-Russian far-righters.” (Sheliazhenko, 2022, p. 9) “Russian President Vladimir Putin has warned the U.S. repeatedly since 2008 to keep NATO out of Ukraine, a region of vital security interests for Russia. Biden has equally resolutely insisted on NATO enlargement. Putin made one last diplomatic try at the end of 2021 to stop NATO enlargement. Biden completely rebuffed him. This was dangerous foreign policy. As much as many American politicians don't want to hear it, Putin's warning about NATO enlargement was both real and apt. Russia doesn't want a heavily armed NATO military on its border, just as the U.S. would not accept a Chinese-backed heavily armed Mexican military on the U.S.-Mexico border. The last thing the U.S. and Europe need is a long war with Russia. Yet that's just where Biden's insistence on NATO enlargement to Ukraine has brought about.” (Sachs, 2022)
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As of this writing, the response to war of each side to the hostilities is more war. Peace scholars and peace activists do not take sides to the conflict but call for an end to the armed clashes. In fact, they point at both NATO and Russia as having caused the initiation and intensification of the armed conflict in Ukraine. While both NATO and Russia are escalating their war efforts, peace scholars and peace activists call for the cessation of all armed hostilities on all side, for a just settlement of the conflict that ensures the security of all parties, not just of one side or the other. See Figure 8 below.

Figure 8

War Journalism and Peace Journalism

War and Peace in Journalism

1. War Journalism: NATO, Ukraine, Russia
2. Peace Journalism: Peace Scholars, Peace Activists

Peace Making, Peace Keeping, Conflict Transformation and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding. The way forward in order to stop the armed fighting, which already caused so much human suffering and death, an immediate ceasefire for a negotiated solution to the armed hostilities in Ukraine through sincere peace talks. Shift resources from waging war to waging peace that benefit the civilian population, especially survivors of the conflict. There needs to be a renewed and vigorous effort to support the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, a universal ban on the use of nuclear weapons, and the prosecution of all war crimes over the years and decades that all parties to all conflicts have perpetrated.

Peace Making and Peace Keeping. Instead of beating the drums of war, we must call for an immediate ceasefire immediately now on all sides, lest we face the existential threat of a nuclear war and holocaust, which will end life as we know it on Earth. High-level representatives of both Ukraine and Russia can meet directly for negotiations to reach a peace settlement. Alternatively, a third party might be necessary for the meeting, such as a high-level representative of good offices or an international governmental organization (IGO), the likes of which include the Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN) or high-level representatives of another country, such as China, Indonesia, Turkey, or Mexico, all of which offered to be mediators in the conflict. To ensure that all parties to the conflict do not resort to the use of armed attacks, mutually acceptable peace-keeping forces must be put in place.

Conflict Transformation. Conflict transformation involves changes in attitudes, behaviors, and contradictions. Stop war now. Start peace talks now. Instead of confrontation, there needs to be dialogue. Instead of

war, there needs to be diplomacy, not more war as a response to war, as it is happening now. Instead of aggressive war, there needs to be aggressive diplomacy to end the war. Instead of confrontation, there needs to be collaboration. Instead of suspicion of each other, there needs to be trust and confidence-building measures. Instead of hardline, there needs to be compromise as the only way out of this quagmire.

Post-Conflict Peacebuilding. After the armed conflict stops and peace talks will be concluded, several matters must be addressed as components of peacebuilding measures: burning issues, complex context, structures, relationships among the conflicting parties, and actions transforming from negative to positive.

In post-conflict peacebuilding, physical violence or armed hostilities must cease or at least drastically reduce. Parties to the conflict need to reconcile as well as discuss matters related to justice, after which relations must be normalized. Combatants must be disarmed, demobilized, and reintegrated into civilian society. The question of financial payments must be addressed. The whole society needs rehabilitation as well as expend resources and energy in development. We can learn lessons from history. See Figure 9 below:

Figure 9

Process for the End and a Just Settlement of the Armed Conflict in Ukraine



DISCUSSION

The first casualty of war is the truth. All sides are engaged in disseminating post-truth fake news and videos. In addition, NATO bans Russian news. Russia bans NATO news. Ukraine bans all political parties and media, except the state-approved ones: so much for democracy.

To begin with, the Ukraine crisis clearly has directly impacted both Ukraine and Russia negatively. On the macro-level, there are in fact two different conflicts: The first is the direct armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine since February 2022. The second is the indirect conflict between NATO and Russia: it is a proxy war between Russia and NATO. See Figure 10 below:

Figure 10*Conflict Analysis*

Ukraine sits in the middle. Two strong forces are engaged in a tug of war to have Ukraine in its sphere of influence, if not control. NATO is on its West. Russia is on its East. Ukraine is veritably situated between a rock and a hard place. See Figure 11 below:

Figure 11*Sandwiched between Great Powers*

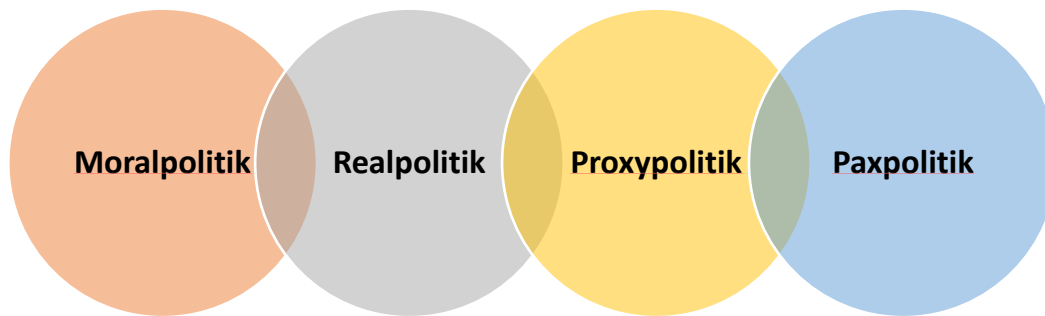
Foreign students and foreign students had to flee Ukraine, leaving their dreams and plans behind, at times facing discrimination and racism on the basis of their color and countries of origin. Ukrainian women and children formed an exodus moving out of Ukraine westward through Poland, Moldova, Romania, and elsewhere. Russian forces have demolished many cities in the east and south of Ukraine to smithereens. Countless Russian and Ukrainian troops and civilians have lost their lives, especially in the Donbass region. Instead of trumpeting the calls to war, we must invigorate efforts to call for peace.

There are competing truths about the Ukraine crisis with different ways by which it could be explained: moralpolitik, realpolitik, proxypolitik, and paxpolitik. From the point of view of moralpolitik, Ukraine has every right in the world for self-determination. Ukraine can decide to join whatever alliance and whatever economic union it wants to. From the perspective of realpolitik, Ukraine should better stay neutral, as it is sandwiched between two great political and military powers, namely NATO and Russia. By being neutral, Ukraine could benefit from having relations with both sides, rather than befriend one side and antagonize the other side, which leads to armed conflict, as in today. Think of Switzerland. From the viewpoint of proxypolitik, Ukraine is in an unfortunate geographic space for which both NATO and Russia are vying for influence or control; thus, it is a territory in which NATO and Russia wage proxy wars. From the standpoint

of paxpolitik, the armed conflict must stop now, as the Ukrainians are the primary victims and survivors of the conflict and as the menace of nuclear annihilation looms large in current history. See Figure 12 below:

Figure 12

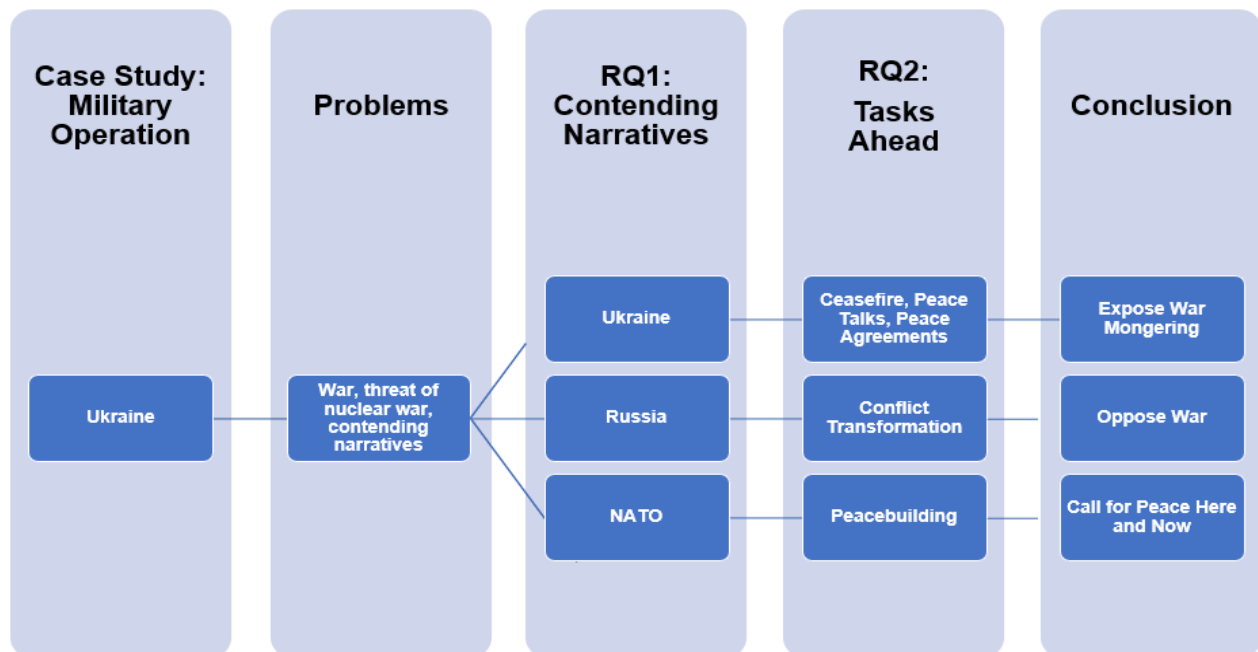
Competing Arguments



Based on the inductively derived research findings, this article yielded a grounded theory of the Ukraine crisis. See Figure 13 below:

Figure 13

Grounded Theory of Conflict, Conflict Transformation, and Peacebuilding of the Ukraine Crisis



CONCLUSION

Summary

Response to Research Question 1. Research question 1 inquired about the divergent narratives regarding the Ukraine conflict. The findings revealed that there are at least three contending narratives. Both Ukraine and NATO consider themselves as the protagonists in the conflict, while they treat Russia as the antagonist which engaged in unprovoked armed hostilities in Ukraine. Russia, on the other hand, considers itself as the protagonist to the conflict, while it considers Ukraine and NATO as the antagonists, as Russia was provoked when NATO moved continually eastward until it reached the borders of Russia in eastern Ukraine with Ukraine consenting to join NATO.

Response to Research Question 2. Research question 2 inquired about the actions needed to stop the war. The response is two-fold. All parties to the conflict must stop the war now by way of peace talks that lead to a peace settlement, engaging hereafter in 1) conflict transformation efforts and 2) post-conflict peace-building thereafter.

We must expose and reject the warmongering narratives being disseminated by politicians, NATO governments, their military establishments, the military-industrial complex, and mainstream media that serve as their mouthpieces, all of whom profit from the sale of weapons. Warmongering is playing with fire and nuclear madness.

Recommendations

From the point of view of peace studies, warmongering as a response to the special military operation of Russia in Ukraine is not a solution to end the war. Warmongering adds fuel to the fire. The carnage continues with warmongering. The people who suffer most are the civilian populations in Ukraine as well as the needless suffering and killing of Ukrainian and Russian troops. An eye-for-an-eye retribution leads to more suffering and death.

Ending the armed hostilities does not mean that there is only one dominant position that must emerge victorious. Rather, when a truce without preconditions is called, which leads to a ceasefire agreement and peace talks, each side can air their grievances as well as put on the table their demands for a just and durable resolution of the root causes and immediate causes of the armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

We must not only heed but amplify the calls of peace scholars and peace activists to stop the war. We call on all peace-loving people on Earth to call upon their governments to stop the war and push for a just peace settlement between Ukraine and Russia. People in grassroots community organizations, civil society, and social movements must call on governments in all countries to end further escalating the armed fighting by ceasing all kinds of support for the war efforts on all sides. Citizens could respectfully and practically engage their governments to seek the peaceful settlement of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Acting as interest groups, pressure groups, or members of civil society, they could do several actions to increase awareness through public opinion (Caramani, 2020). These actions include the following: write letters to their representatives; sign petitions; give oral interventions in the halls of parliament; give talks on television and radio; as well as vote for peace-loving politicians. By doing so, they are engaged in civic participation and political participation which could have a positive impact on both domestic and foreign policy (Patterson, 2021) that promotes the peaceful resolution of the armed rifts between Russia and Ukraine.

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