

**Sharing Stories and Envisioning Peace with Young People in Ukraine: A PAR Project in
Lviv, Ukraine
(Обмінювання Розповідями та Творення Миру Молоддю в Україні: Проект
Дослідження Шляхом Учасності у м. Львові, Україна)**

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Abstract – Бґґґґ

Although much research has been conducted on Ukraine, the impact of the war in Eastern Ukraine since 2014 on young people remains under researched. The impact of the war in Eastern Ukraine since 2014 affects all Ukrainians, regardless of where they live within Ukraine. Young people in Ukraine are highly educated, active in civil society, and well-connected to the rest of the world. As the next generation of leaders in Ukraine, it is imperative that their stories and voices be heard and acknowledged. Their lived experiences, coupled with their knowledge, strengths, and abilities are the catalyst and impetus for peacebuilding that comes from within Ukraine, beginning at the local or grassroots level.

This study explores the lived experiences of six young people (university students aged 18-22), who were born and raised in Ukraine, and are living in Lviv through individual, semi-structured interviews and a peacemaking circle. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, this study was conducted virtually from Winnipeg, Canada with participants in Ukraine in Fall 2021. This study contributes to the literature on facilitating cross-cultural research with an interpreter who is a member of the same community as the study participants and to the literature on volunteering and peacebuilding in Ukraine.

Through the interviews and peacemaking circle, participants shared their experiences growing up in an independent Ukraine and identified how the ongoing war in Eastern Ukraine since 2014 has impacted their lives. Second, participants' volunteer experiences, as a way of engaging in civil society, emerged as examples of the 'everyday peace' and peacebuilding at work in Ukraine. Finally, their hopes, dreams, and visions for Ukraine's future identified what they believe must change to move Ukraine and its people forward into a peaceful future. The findings show that young people in Ukraine are resilient and dedicated to Ukraine's future; they

are the catalyst, or ‘critical yeast’ that will help build positive, lasting peace from within Ukraine as the next generation.

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Finally, I would like to dedicate this thesis to the people of Ukraine. Despite the shock, horror, and devastation of the past 40 days, you continue to show the world what it means to be resilient and continue to fight for your freedom and your future. I know that Ukraine will emerge victorious, as we have before, as an even stronger and more united nation. Слава Україні! Glory to Ukraine! Героям Слава! Glory to our Heroes!

**Oy u luzi chervona kalyna – Ой у лузі червона калина
(Oh, the red viburnum (kalyna) in the meadow)**

This song is a Ukrainian patriotic march written by Stepan Charnetskii in 1914, in honour of the Sich Riflemen.¹ It was one of my Dido Sam's favourite songs. Since February 24, 2022, the song has been sung and played around the world by Ukrainians in Ukraine, Ukrainians in the global diaspora, and on social media to unite Ukrainians, show our support for Ukraine, and demonstrate our strong roots, language, and independence as a nation.

Ой у лузі червона калина похилилася,
Чогось наша славна Україна зажурилася.
А ми тую червону калину підіймемо,
А ми нашу славу Україну, гей, гей, розвеселимо!

Гей, у полі ярої пшениці золотистий лан,
Розпочали стрільці українські з ворогами тан!
А ми тую яру пшеницю ізберемо,
А ми нашу славу Україну, гей, гей, розвеселимо!

Як повіє буйнесенький вітер з широких степів,
Та й прославить по всій Україні січових стрільців.
А ми тую стрілецьку славу збережемо,
А ми нашу славу Україну, гей, гей, розвеселимо!

1. While information about the song can be difficult to find online in English, information about the Sich Riflemen can be found on Wikipedia and here on the Istorychna Pravda (Історична Правда) website: <https://www.istpravda.com.ua/articles/2012/04/6/80009/>. I would encourage readers to find and listen to the song – there are many beautiful and powerful versions online.

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Chapter One: Introduction Перший Розділ: Вступ

Introduction

Ukraine is a nation that has been controlled for centuries through direct and indirect control and colonization by various global powers throughout history, “Western Ukraine has been in turn the property of Austria, Poland, Lithuania, Romania, and Russia. Ukraine lying east of the Dnieper River, for the most part remained under the rule of Russia with Kyiv, Ukraine’s present capital, once bearing the auspicious title of ‘mother’ for Russia.”¹ Ukraine gained independence from the Soviet Union in August 1991, “however, unlike several other republics, this happened quietly, without many rallies and protest by the populace.”² Of all the global powers that have controlled and colonized Ukraine, there is a long and complex history of tension and conflict between Ukraine and Russia. Relations between both states remain turbulent to this day, with Ukraine once again trapped between the appeal and freedom of the European Union and Russia’s ongoing threats through President Vladimir Putin’s sphere of control and influence. Ukraine’s passive acceptance of independence in 1991 is unlike the turbulent events of the past 18 years filled with protests, frustration, and outrage at ongoing corruption within the government and economy, societal depression, and Russia’s omnipresence and persistent attempts at undermining Ukraine’s sovereignty. Ukraine’s desire to move towards a thriving democratic state allied with the European Union (EU) and the West has yet to be realized.

Within the borders of Ukraine, there have always been diverse ethnic and linguistic communities. This connects to ideas and conceptualizations of identity(ies) in Ukraine. In much

1. Maureen Flaherty, *Peacebuilding with Women in Ukraine: Using Narrative to Envision a Common Future*. (Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books, 2012), 2.

2. Flaherty, *Peacebuilding with Women*, 3.

of the literature and media, the relationship between Ukraine and Russia has often been reduced to a simplistic duality, where competing nationalisms and identities have divided Ukraine into a pro-European, Ukrainian-speaking west, and a pro-Russian, Russian-speaking east. As noted by Peter Dickinson, “one of the most commonly encountered myths about today’s Ukraine is the notion that it is an artificially engineered and irrevocably divided state. For obvious reasons, this has long been a theme of Kremlin propaganda, with Russian President Vladimir Putin a particularly prominent proponent.”³ The continued prominence of these ideas in Russian propaganda, mainstream media, and as shared by scholars in the literature continue to undermine Ukraine’s sovereignty and unique identity, culture, language, and traditions. Furthermore, it reduces the complex history of Ukraine and its people to a simplistic narrative. Understanding the role of the different identities and narratives that are part of Ukraine’s history and existence as a sovereign nation is essential to understanding the context of the war that began in Eastern Ukraine in 2014. Furthermore, learning about Ukraine’s history and diversity is imperative to understanding the escalation of Russia’s war against Ukraine as of February 24, 2022.

In late 2013, peaceful demonstrations began in Ukraine. These protests stemmed from President Victor Yanukovich’s refusal to sign the Ukraine-European Union Association Agreement and move Ukraine closer to Europe and the West. These demonstrations developed into nation-wide protests and demonstrations, known as Euromaidan.⁴ A violent confrontation ensued between peaceful protestors and the Ukrainian government that further fractured the

3. Peter Dickinson, “Debunking the Myth of a Divided Ukraine,” *Atlantic Council* (blog), December 29, 2021, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/debunking-the-myth-of-a-divided-ukraine/>.

4. Nataliya Drozd, “Community Development in Ukraine,” *Community Development Journal* 52, no. 4 (October 2017): 721, <https://doi.org/10.1093/cdj/bsx038>.

Ukrainian nation into west and east, exacerbating perceived differences between those who identify as being ethnically Ukrainian, Russian, or both. After Euromaidan, Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea with its "little green men"⁵ occurred in March 2014. Shortly thereafter, pro-Russian separatist groups in Ukraine's eastern oblasts (provinces) of Donetsk and Luhansk (also known as the Donbas region), backed and armed by Russian militia and forces,⁶ claimed their desire for independence from Ukraine, sparking a war⁷ between separatist groups, Russia, and Ukraine. Serhii Plokhy aptly states that it was at this point, that "...with Russia refusing to let Ukraine leave its sphere of influence, and with the West concerned about the threat to international order but divided over the best strategy to check growing Russian ambitions, the war in Eastern Ukraine turned into a prolonged conflict with no end in sight."⁸ He was absolutely right – the war has continued with no end in sight.

In May 2019, despite some renewed optimism within Ukraine with the election of a new president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy and the renewal of ceasefires at the end of 2019, the war continued into 2020. Since the Covid-19 pandemic began in 2020, it has had a devastating impact within Ukraine on the Ukrainian people (particularly women, children, the elderly, and

5. Daniel Baer, "Biden Might Be Outplaying Putting in One Critical Way," *The Washington Post*, February 9, 2022, 10:05 p.m. EST, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2022/02/09/biden-putin-hybrid-warfare/>.

6. Taras Kuzio, "Competing Nationalisms, Euromaidan, and the Ukrainian-Russian Conflict," *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 15, no.1, (2015): 163, <https://doi.org/10.1111/sena.12137>.

7. A brief discussion of the use of the word "war" in this thesis to describe what has occurred in Eastern Ukraine since 2014 is included in the next section of this chapter.

8. Serhii Plokhy, *The Gates of Europe: A History of Ukraine* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2015), 344.

persons with disabilities)⁹ the healthcare system, and the economy.¹⁰ As of the end of 2021, as the war enters its eighth year, 1.5 million civilians have been internally displaced from Crimea and the Donbas region¹¹ and more than 14,000 people have been killed.¹² The internal displacement of civilians has had repercussions across Ukraine as people have been not only been forced to leave their homes, but have settled and attempted to rebuild their lives in different cities and provinces, which has also affected local people living in these areas. Karina V. Korostelina writes that “since Russia’s invasion of Crimea in 2014, Ukraine has been in a state of permanent armed conflict (International Criminal Court, 2017). While the intensity of the violence differs through this period, pressures on the society, including civilian devastation, military causality, and protracted displacement, continue to impact the life of Ukrainian citizens.”¹³

Throughout 2021, the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and the war in Eastern Ukraine combined with the continued expansion and build-up of Russian military forces along Ukraine’s eastern border sparked local, national, and international fears of further Russian invasion of

9. “Ukraine: Events of 2020,” Human Rights Watch, 2021, accessed December 28, 2021, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/ukraine>.

10. “Ukraine: Events of 2020.”

11. “Global Conflict Tracker: Conflict in Ukraine,” Council of Foreign Relations, last modified April 5, 2022, accessed March 2, 2022, <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/conflict-ukraine>.

12. United Nations, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Conflict-related Civilian Casualties in Ukraine*, (Kyiv, UA: United Nations, 2022), 3, https://ukraine.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/Conflict-related%20civilian%20casualties%20as%20of%2031%20December%202021%20%28rev%2027%20January%202022%29%20corr%20EN_0.pdf.

13. Karina V. Korostelina, “National Resilience to Protracted Violence in Ukraine,” *Peace and Conflict Studies* 27, no. 2 (2020): 1, <https://doi.org/10.46743/1082-7307/2020.1689>.

Ukraine. Now, in early 2022, the threat of further Russian invasion looms over Ukraine as ongoing diplomatic ‘talks’ about Russia’s increasing aggression toward Ukraine and how it should be resolved continue amongst global powers. While some members of the international community have pledged to retaliate against Russia should it invade Ukraine through harsh sanctions and other various measures, the situation continues to unfold and change daily.

While some nations have offered to assist Ukraine, it is unclear if anyone in the international community would come forward to help Ukraine should Russia decide to invade.¹⁴ The situation is precarious, with tensions higher than ever as more than 100,000 Russian troops¹⁵ surround Ukraine’s borders as Ukraine, its people, and the international community await Putin’s next move. However, despite the ongoing war and recent events in Ukraine, now is as good of a time as any to explore opportunities for peacebuilding at the local level that will spark renewed hope for Ukraine’s future as a peaceful, united nation.¹⁶

Though much research has been conducted on Ukraine, the impact of the war on young people remains under researched. This study uses a Participatory Action Research (PAR) methodology and research tools¹⁷, also known as Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) when working with young people. This study utilized two different PAR/YPAR tools: individual,

14. Paul Kirby, “Why Has Russia Invaded Ukraine and What Does Putin Want? *BBC News*, March 8, 2022, 10:38 p.m. GMT, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-56720589>.

15. Kirby, “Why Has Russia.”

16. It should be noted that the majority of this thesis, including this paragraph and the context section in Chapter Two were written between 2020 and early February 2022, prior to Russia’s further invasion of Ukraine and full-scale war that began on February 24, 2022. Thus, the context of this thesis was “frozen in time” on or around February 15th, 2022, as the final draft of this thesis was written. In the final chapter, I provide a brief update with regards to how the situation has changed in Ukraine as of February 24, 2022, and where it stands as of the end of March 2022 as this thesis was finalized.

17. See Alice McIntyre, *Participatory Action Research* (Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 2008).

semi-structured interviews (narrative interviews) (hereafter referred to as “interviews”) and a peacemaking (or talking) circle. This study explored the life stories and lived experiences of young people living in Lviv, Ukraine to learn what it was like to grow up in an independent Ukraine, to understand how the war in Eastern Ukraine since 2014 has impacted their lives, and to create a safe space for them to share their hopes and dreams for Ukraine’s future with one another. This study took place virtually in October and November 2021 involving six young people (aged 18-22) who were born and raised in Ukraine and are currently attending university while living in Lviv.

Calling It What It Is: A War – My Perspective

It should be noted that during my initial research on this topic when writing my thesis proposal, I referred to what has been happening in Eastern Ukraine since 2014 as a “conflict.” Upon completion of my thesis proposal and in discussion with my advisor and committee, I made the decision to change the language I used to describe the situation as “Russian aggression,” as Russia was and remains the aggressor nation. The term, “Russian aggression,” was used in my research questions that were approved and used in this study.

However, during the facilitation of this study, some participants referred to the situation as a “war” when asked about the impact of Russian aggression in Eastern Ukraine since 2014 on their lives.¹⁸ Based on further research during the writing process, I noticed that several terms and definitions were used in the literature and media describing the situation in various ways. These terms included, but are not limited to “conflict,” “Russian aggression (with or without ‘against Ukraine’),” “war,” “Russo-Ukrainian war,” and “hybrid war.” In a 2018 article, Valeria

18. This is further explored in Chapter Six of this thesis.

Lazarenko wrote about the multiplicity of narratives that exist about the war in Ukraine. She writes that

academics coming from different perspectives define the situation as a ‘conflict,’ ‘armed conflict,’ ‘war,’ ‘civil war,’ ‘insurgency,’ or ‘anti-terroristic operation.’ The latter is what Ukrainian authorities officially named it up to 22 February 2018, when Ukraine adopted a new law and re-labelled the Anti-Terroristic Operation [ATO] as the Operation of Joint Forces.¹⁹

This legislation “...declares Russia as an aggressor state that occupies parts of Ukraine and governs them with its own authorities.”²⁰ Lazarenko notes that this was important as re-labelling the conflict had implications for discourse in Ukraine, “it also adds even more complexity to the multiplicity of strategic narratives that form the discourses within which Ukrainians live today.”²¹ This speaks to the importance of defining what is happening in Ukraine from the perspective of Ukrainians, rather than focusing on strategic and geopolitical narratives in the media and/or academia.²²

As a Ukrainian Canadian, it was important to me that I “label” or define what had been happening in Eastern Ukraine since 2014 as accurately as possible, ensuring the word I used reflected Ukrainian perspectives and what was happening on the ground, rather than focusing on the most prevalent term in the literature and media. As Corinne Seals writes, “word choice, and even choice of language, matters in all contexts because of the meaning words carry. When we call the current events in Ukraine a ‘crisis,’ ‘conflict,’ or ‘war,’ each word carries with it a

19. Valeria Lazarenko, “Conflict in Ukraine: Multiplicity of Narratives About the War and Displacement,” *European Politics and Society* 20, no. 5 (2019): 550-551, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23745118.2018.1552108>.

20. Lazarenko, “Conflict in Ukraine,” 551.

21. Lazarenko, “Conflict in Ukraine,” 551.

22. Lazarenko, “Conflict in Ukraine,” 561.

particular meaning.”²³ Therefore, in this thesis, based on my own analysis, participants’ perspectives, Ukrainian sources, and an exploration of the literature and media, I have chosen to use the word “war” to refer to what has been taking place in Eastern Ukraine since 2014. However, I want to be clear that it is a war that is the direct result of Russia’s aggression and invasion of Eastern Ukraine, which violates Ukraine’s sovereignty. Ukraine did not start or provoke this war. The word “war” also accurately describes the current situation in Ukraine as of February 24, 2022, when Russia’s further invasion of Ukraine escalated, and a full-scale war began and continues as this thesis was finalized in March 2022.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

There were three main purposes of this study. The first was to explore the lived experiences and life stories of young people (aged 18-35) living in Lviv, Ukraine through interviews. Hearing the lived experiences of others and sharing stories helps to build trust and rapport between groups of people and between researchers and their participants. The second purpose of this study was to explore the impact of the ongoing war in Eastern Ukraine since 2014 on young people in Ukraine as this topic remains under researched in the literature. Third, as the war continues, it is imperative that the stories and voices of young people are heard. Through the interviews and peacemaking circle, participants shared their hopes and dreams for their own future, their families, their communities, and for Ukraine’s future. Their visions for a peaceful Ukraine helped bring them together and identified how they (and all Ukrainians) can continue to contribute to building peace in Ukraine.

23. Corinne Seals, “War Against Ukraine, Not Conflict in the Ukraine: Why the Language We Use Matters,” *The Spinoff*, March 3, 2022, <https://thespinoff.co.nz/society/03-03-2022/war-against-ukraine-not-conflict-in-the-ukraine-why-the-language-we-use-matters>.

The main research questions of this study were: first, what are the lived experiences of young people living in Lviv, Ukraine? What was it like to grow up in Ukraine? Second, what changes and/or challenges are young people facing in their communities considering the ongoing war in Eastern Ukraine since 2014? Third, where do they turn for support when times are difficult? What gets them through hard times? Fourth, how can they build connection and a sense of community with other young people? Finally, what are their visions for their own futures and the future of Ukraine? How can they begin to build peace in Ukraine as the next generation?

My Positionality as the Researcher

Self-reflection, or “reflexivity”²⁴ on “who we are, and who we are in relation to those we study”²⁵ is a key tenet of feminist research. Feminists question the possibility of remaining neutral or value-free in research and researchers should “...acknowledge her situated perspective, to reflect on and share how her life experiences might have influenced her choice of topics and questions.”²⁶ However, this is not necessarily a barrier to conducting research as “not only do we all and always have some relation to the subject under study, but a connection to or experience with the phenomena may actually be an asset.”²⁷ While we cannot remove the personal connections or relationships to what we study, it is important that they be revealed to be

24. Maureen McHugh, “Feminist Qualitative Research: Toward Transformation of Science and Society,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research*, ed. Patricia Leavy (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2014), 145.

25. Shulamit Reinharz, *Feminist Methods in Social Research* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1992), 15, quoted in McHugh, “Feminist Qualitative Research,” 145.

26. McHugh, “Feminist Qualitative Research,” 145.

27. McHugh, “Feminist Qualitative Research,” 145.

as transparent as possible in the conduct and publication of research. Thus, it is important to situate myself in the context of this study.

The initial idea for this study came from coursework completed in 2017 in the PACS program in the Participatory Action Research (PAR) course. As a young, Ukrainian Canadian woman, I have been immersed in Ukrainian language and culture since birth and this research is of personal significance to me. My parents and my mother's parents were born and raised in Canada. My mother's grandparents (my great-grandparents) came to Canada in the late 1920s. My father's parents came to Canada after World War II (WWII). My paternal grandfather was a member of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (Українська Повстанська Армія (УПА)) and fought for Ukraine's freedom during WWII. I have been involved in the Ukrainian community in Winnipeg since I was a young child and continue to be involved today. I am from a middle-class background. I identify as a feminist and my research is grounded in a feminist perspective.

I am a settler in Canada, living, working, and studying on traditional Indigenous land and on Treaty One territory in Winnipeg. My relatives came to Canada during various waves of immigration, fleeing war and persecution in Ukraine. The opportunity to come to Canada offered a chance for survival. I am fortunate that my family settled where they did and that I have never known hardship, war, or violence that they had experienced. I am forever grateful to members of the Ukrainian Canadian community (including my great-grandparents, grandparents, and other relatives and friends) who worked hard to establish cultural institutions and organizations in Canada so that our community continues to thrive today and will into the future. I know that I have been privileged to not only have grown up in Canada, but I have been privileged to have the opportunity to grow up knowing, learning, and experiencing my Ukrainian culture, language, and traditions. To this day, Indigenous peoples in Canada have not been afforded the same rights and

privileges to preserve, maintain, and practice their languages, cultures, and traditions as I have been given. This must change.

My position as an “insider-outsider” – a Ukrainian Canadian who does not live in Ukraine may offer some unique perspective in the context of this study. I do not believe that because I am close to the subject and topics of this study that my role as an “insider-outsider” was detrimental in any way. In fact, I believe my Ukrainian Canadian heritage and knowledge of the language and culture was an asset to this study. I was able to build trust and rapport with the participants in a more meaningful way than I would have been able to had I been purely an “outsider.” As participants shared their stories with me, I saw many commonalities with my own life and upbringing in the Ukrainian community in Winnipeg and it brought joy, curiosity, and excitement to my heart and soul. A piece of me is inevitably part of this study. I, too, shared stories and perspectives from my own life with the participants. I very much enjoyed discussing new vocabulary and nuances in language with the interpreter, Mariana and the participants. Ensuring things were not “lost in translation” and that we always found the “right” word added a unique element to the interviews and peacemaking circle (more about this topic in Chapter Five of this thesis). Stories, emotions, and empathy are not always shared in research, but they were a key part of this study, adding a depth and richness that is difficult to describe.

While I have always been aware of Ukraine’s history and current events in the country, I have not yet had the opportunity to travel to Ukraine. I had hoped to travel to Lviv to complete this study in person, but the Covid-19 pandemic disrupted travel plans and I was unable to go to Ukraine. I have been fortunate not to personally witness or experience war or violence in my home city, province, or country. But I am Ukrainian Canadian, and the ongoing war has had and

continues to have an impact on me, my family, and my Ukrainian friends and colleagues in Canada and in Ukraine.

Significance of this Study

This study has the potential to contribute to PACS in several ways. First, the impact of the war on young people in Ukraine remains under-researched and this study contributes to the dearth of literature on this topic in PACS and may inspire future work in this subject area.

Through this study, I have drawn attention to the voices of the participants in Lviv and I hope it will inspire other researchers to engage meaningfully with young people in Ukraine to further understand their lived experiences during the war and how they see Ukraine's future and their role in it unfolding.

Second, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, I was forced to move this study from facilitating in-person in Lviv to online from my home in Winnipeg, Manitoba with the participants at their homes in Ukraine. While the use of interviews and peacemaking circles is not a new phenomenon in PAR, facilitating this type of research that focuses on building trust, rapport, and personal relationships in an online environment required additional planning and considerations to ensure a virtual safe space was created for participants where they would feel comfortable sharing their stories with me, Mariana, and other participants online. My hope is that this study contributes to understanding how PAR can be facilitated virtually in a meaningful way when in-person research is not an option.

Finally, as a Ukrainian Canadian woman, this study was close to my heart. I am closely connected with my Ukrainian heritage, with the language and culture, and continue to be involved in the Ukrainian community in Winnipeg. While my first language is Ukrainian, I could not have facilitated this study effectively without Mariana, a graduate student who lives in

Ukraine: my colleague, my friend, and interpreter. Mariana ensured that my conversations with participants were accurately translated into Ukrainian and English and her dedication and professionalism contributed greatly to the experience of facilitating this study and its success. This study will contribute to understanding how PAR can be done as an “insider-outsider” (how I have termed being Ukrainian but not living in Ukraine) with an interpreter who is a member of the same community as the participants. I hope that this study will shed light on how the nuances of language and dialogue in translation can lead to a deeper understanding of participants and their lives. I hope that those who participated in this study continue to be engaged in civil society and will further realize their potential as peacebuilders in their communities and in Ukraine.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study are varied. Three key limitations are explained in this section. First, the age range for participation in this study was 18-35. Once recruitment was completed, all participants were between the ages of 18-22. This was on the younger end of the age range, and this meant that all of them were teenagers when the war began and they reflected upon their lived experiences at that time in their lives. Having a broader age range of participants as young people at different stages of their lives could have perhaps offered a different perspective and further enriched the data.

Second, this study was focused on young people living in Lviv who were university students. Five out of six participants attended the same university (Lviv Polytechnic National University (LPNU)) and four were students in the Social Work or Social Welfare programs. Mariana, the interpreter is also a PhD candidate in the Social Work department at LPNU. It became evident in my peacemaking circle that some of the participants were known to each other and had shared my recruitment poster with colleagues and friends. Engaging with participants

who were not university students (or from different post-secondary institutions in Lviv) and who lived in different parts of Ukraine could have further enriched the data by allowing for greater comparison across cities and oblasts in Ukraine. If I had been able to travel to Ukraine, perhaps my recruitment would have looked different, and I would have been able to share my recruitment poster more widely in Lviv with other post-secondary institutions.

The Covid-19 pandemic was the greatest limitation of this study and impacted this study in several ways. First, when I began my studies in the PACS program, it was always my dream and intention to travel to Lviv to facilitate my thesis research. I had hoped to go to Lviv as early as Summer 2020 to facilitate this study. However, due to the onset of the pandemic and international travel restrictions, I decided to postpone my trip to Lviv until it was safe to do so. That time did not come, unfortunately, as the pandemic continued to hinder international travel plans until later in 2021. By Spring 2021, I was unable to wait any longer and made the difficult and heartbreaking decision to transition this study to a virtual study, where I would facilitate the research from my home in Winnipeg with participants in Lviv.

Finally, the eight-hour time difference proved to be a challenge in scheduling the interviews and peacemaking circle. In the end, only four of my six participants were able to attend the peacemaking circle. I was grateful that participants were accommodating, and some interviews were scheduled later in the evening to accommodate our competing schedules. Lastly, as I was unable to facilitate this research in-person in Lviv, I could not use all the research tools I had initially planned to use in an online environment. A third component of this study would have been to have participants take part in the Tree of Life exercise.²⁸ I was able to build trust

28. See “The Tree of Life,” The Dulwich Centre, <https://dulwichcentre.com.au/the-tree-of-life/> and/or <https://dulwichcentre.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/tree-of-life-community-context.pdf>.

and rapport effectively with the participants online and I have no doubt that being an “insider-outsider” had a positive impact on participants’ comfort level with me as the researcher in this study.

Outline of the Study

The first chapter of this thesis introduced readers to the topic, context, and purposes of the study. It outlined my positionality as a researcher as well as the significance and limitations of the study. The second chapter provides a timeline of key events in Ukraine’s history from late 2013 to the present (mid-February 2022)²⁹ and offers an analysis of the role of young people in Ukraine and civil society as well as a discussion of the concept of empowerment. The third chapter of this thesis focuses on the theoretical background of this study which is based on Johan Galtung’s human needs theory, Paolo Freire’s concept of critical consciousness, and John Paul Lederach’s theory of the critical yeast. These theoretical approaches are well-suited to PAR and narrative research and ground this study and findings in the appropriate theoretical context. The fourth chapter outlines the research methodology including a section on feminism and feminist research, the rationale for selecting specific research methods and tools, and research design. It also outlines the role and significance of the interpreter and ethical considerations of this study.

The following four chapters form the empirical basis of this study. Chapter Five examines the importance of sharing stories in PAR through an exploration of participants’ life stories and lived experiences as told through their interviews. Chapter Six discusses the impact of the war in Eastern Ukraine since 2014 on participants’ lives and offers an analysis of the various terms used to describe the war in Ukraine: conflict, Russian aggression, and war. Describing the situation accurately, as a war, was and is important to not only understanding the

29. See footnote 16.

full impact and severity of the situation, but also to validate and respect the lived experiences of Ukrainians.

Chapter Seven is an examination of the current literature on volunteering in Ukraine. Roger Mac Ginty's conceptualization of the everyday peace is tied to participants' volunteer experiences. Many participants were or are involved in volunteering in Ukraine. Much of their volunteerism was focused on peacebuilding through bringing people from different parts of Ukraine together to work on community projects and get to know one another. I highlight a few of the participants' experiences volunteering with two local organizations: Youth of West and East Together and Building Ukraine Together (BUR) (Будуємо Україну Разом (БУР)). The literature on volunteering and peacebuilding in Ukraine is limited and I hope that this study may contribute to this literature. Chapter Eight shares participants' visions, hopes, and dreams for Ukraine's future from their individual interviews and the peacemaking circle. This chapter is grounded in John Paul Lederach's work on the critical yeast and demonstrates how participants' visions for their futures and a peaceful Ukraine are the "critical yeast" that will be the catalyst for positive peace in Ukraine. The final chapter of this thesis includes a summary of the findings of this study, the personal significance of this study and my reflections on this study four months later – one month after Russia's further invasion of Ukraine and full-scale war began.

Conclusion

The first chapter of this thesis introduced readers to the subject and purposes of this study. It included a discussion of my positionality as a researcher, the significance of the study, and outlined its limitations. It concluded with an overview and outline of the chapters in this thesis. The following chapter provides an overview of Ukraine's recent history, including context for the development of civil society in Ukraine. A discussion of the role and impact of young

people in Ukraine and civil society situated in the context of Edward Schwerin's work on empowerment will situate this thesis and study in the appropriate context.

Chapter Two: Context Другий Розділ: Контекст

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of Ukraine's recent history from late 2013 to the present (mid-February 2022), including a summary of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in Ukraine. While the pandemic was not a topic of this study, it has impacted the participants' lives and it is important to provide this context. Then, a brief overview of the development of civil society in Ukraine is provided. Finally, young peoples' political participation and engagement in civil society in Ukraine is analyzed in the context of Schwerin's work on empowerment. The context and analysis in this chapter will situate this thesis and study in the appropriate context.

A Recent History of Ukraine (Late 2013-2019)

This study takes place in Ukraine, a country with a rich and diverse history. As a nation, Ukraine has been controlled and colonized by many global powers throughout its history, which has shaped its history and development throughout centuries of oppression. As Maureen Flaherty states, "different regional occupation experiences are visible to this day in the architecture, language, and religions of eastern, southern, and western Ukraine. Differences are also evident in the ways people think about Independence, the ways they vote, and the ways they treat symbols of previous regimes."¹ Since Ukraine gained independence in 1991, "...the Ukrainian population has been primarily split into three socio-cultural regions: a Ukrainian-speaking west, a Russian-speaking south and east, and a central region in which the two languages are mixed."²

1. Flaherty, *Peacebuilding with Women*, 1.

2. Katherine Tremont, "Rebuilding Houses, Rebuilding Ukraine: Peacebuilding through Youth Service-Learning," (Capstone paper submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a Master of Arts in Peacebuilding and Conflict Transformation, School for International Training (SIT) Graduate

Ethnic Ukrainians comprise 78% of the population and ethnic Russians comprise 17%.³

However, despite Ukraine's regional diversity, "...it had succeeded in peacefully managing inter-ethnic and linguistic tension between competing nationalisms and identities."⁴

As stated in Chapter One, the prominent conceptualization of Ukraine as a divided state between East and West and between Ukrainian and Russian as accepted and promoted by Russia, the media, and many scholars perpetuates a simplistic myth and does not reflect the complexities and diversity of identities in modern Ukraine.⁵ Ukrainians see their identity(ies) in different ways, largely depending on the region they are from, and contrary to this myth,

...analyses of historical data suggest that the regional cleavage, rather than being interpreted as a perverse divisive element, should be regarded as a gradient. All Ukrainians seem to be heading in the same direction, though from different starting points and at different speeds. Moreover, recent events have demonstrated that virtually all Ukrainians share the wish to remain united, belonging to the same national community, regardless of spoken language, religious affiliation or ethnic nationality.⁶

Understanding the complexity of Ukraine's history and the diversity of ethnic, linguistic, and cultural groups within it is crucial to gain a clear understanding of the current war.

In this thesis, the history of Ukraine will be limited to covering the period from late 2013 to the present (early 2022). Tensions between Western and Eastern Ukraine began to re-escalate in 2010 after the election of pro-Russian businessman Victor Yanukovich, "the divide between a

Institute in Brattleboro, Vermont, December 2015), 1, <http://digitalcollections.sit.edu/capstones/2833>.

3. Anders Åslund, *Ukraine: What Went Wrong and How to Fix It* (Washington, DC: Pearson Institute for International Economics, 2015), 2.

4. Kuzio, "Competing Nationalisms, Euromaidan," 157.

5. Dickinson, "Debunking the Myth."

6. Evgenii Golovakha et al., "Conclusions: Institutional Reform and Changes of Values for the Successful Transformation of Ukrainian Society," in *Ukraine in Transformation: From Soviet Republic to European Society*, ed. Alberto Veira-Ramos, Tetiana Liubyva, and Evgenii Golovakha (Cham, CH: Springer International Publishing AG, 2020), 273-274, eBook, <https://doi.org.10.1007/978-3-030-24978-6>.

largely pro-European west and a pro-Russian (generally more prosperous) east seemed to widen.”⁷ Unlike his predecessor, Victor Yushchenko, Yanukovych increased inter-regional and civil society tensions through many of his actions including the imprisonment of opposition leaders, attacking the ethnic Ukrainian identity and language, by agreeing to many Russian demands, among other issues.⁸ Ukrainians became increasingly cynical about possibilities for Ukraine’s democratic future.

The most recent conflict in Ukraine began in late 2013 when Ukraine was set to sign the Ukrainian-European Union Association Agreement and was what Ukrainians expected until President Yanukovych decided to cave to Russian pressure to join their Eurasian Customs Union instead.⁹ This sparked a strong protest in Independence Square in Kyiv that came to be known as Euromaidan, or the Revolution of Dignity.¹⁰ Despite increasingly violent attempts by Yanukovych’s government to suppress the protests, they grew larger and larger, as thousands of Ukrainians came to Kyiv from all over Ukraine and stayed in the tent city that arose in Kyiv’s downtown. After months of protests in the bitter cold, one hundred Ukrainian protestors were killed by heavily armed government police forces known as the Berkut.¹¹

Yanukovych fled to Russia in February 2014, leaving a political vacuum in eastern and southern Ukraine that was filled by pro-Russian nationalist and separatist groups.¹² On February

7. Maureen Flaherty, *Peacebuilding with Women*, xiii.

8. Kuzio, “Competing Nationalisms, Euromaidan,” 160.

9. Tremont, “Rebuilding Houses, Rebuilding Ukraine,” 2.

10. Drozd, “Community Development in Ukraine,” 721.

11. Tremont, “Rebuilding Houses, Rebuilding Ukraine,” 2.

12. Kuzio, “Competing Nationalisms, Euromaidan,” 163.

27, 2014, Russia invaded the autonomous region of Crimea and a referendum was held on March 16, 2014 where “...with the alleged support of 97 percent of voters, Crimea voted to secede from Ukraine and join the Russian Federation.”¹³ The legitimacy of this vote is still under question today. However, the annexation of Crimea enabled armed groups in Ukraine’s Donetsk and Luhansk regions (known as the Donbas) to seize weapons and municipal buildings with financial assistance and additional weapons from Russia.¹⁴ This marked the beginning of a war between armed pro-Russian separatist groups and Ukraine’s military forces. New elections in May 2014 resulted in the election of Petro Poroshenko, a prominent Ukrainian businessman who ran on a pro-Western platform.¹⁵

However, since Summer 2014, fighting between various parties including pro-Russian separatists that identify as the Donetsk and Luhansk People’s Republics and government forces was widespread in Eastern Ukraine.¹⁶ Throughout the summer of 2014, the Ukrainian government’s Anti-Terrorist Operation (ATO) against the separatists was successful and Ukraine’s military was able to take over separatist territory and regain control of some areas.¹⁷ However, the war “began” on August 24, 2014, when “...Russia abandoned an effort to mix in conventional weaponry, such as tanks and air defense, in support of the separatist forces. Instead,

13. Elizabeth Ferris et al., *Off to a Shaky Start: Ukrainian Government Responses to Internally Displaced Persons*, (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, May 2015), 6, <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Ukrainian-Govt-Responses-to-Internal-Displacement-May-2015.pdf>.

14. Kuzio, “Competing Nationalisms, Euromaidan,” 163.

15. “Ukraine Profile – Timeline,” *BBC News*, March 5, 2020, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-18010123>.

16. Ferris, et.al, *Off to a Shaky Start*, 7.

17. Michael Kofman, et al., *Lessons from Russia’s Operations in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 2017), 44, https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR1400/RR1498/RAND_RR1498.pdf.

it switched to conventional operations, invaded with perhaps 4,000 regular troops and defeating Ukraine's military at the battle of Ilovaisk."¹⁸ Fighting continued throughout 2014 and into the new year.

In 2015, France, Germany, Russia, and Ukraine attempted to broker peace through the Minsk Accords (Minsk I and II) which included "...provisions [for] a cease-fire, withdrawal of heavy weaponry, full Ukrainian control of the conflict zone and border, and greater autonomy for Donetsk and Luhansk vis a vis amending the Ukrainian constitution."¹⁹ Despite numerous ceasefires, the fighting continued on either side, destroying property, livelihoods, communities, and peoples' lives on both sides of the contact line.²⁰

Notwithstanding some important reforms during Poroshenko's presidency, Ukrainians became further disillusioned with politics due to continued corruption, the ongoing influence of powerful oligarchs, and the enduring war in Eastern Ukraine, "after five years...few Ukrainians feel like they live in the new way they were promised."²¹ In April 2019, Ukrainians elected a new president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy.²² Despite having no prior political experience and as a former comedian, he won an absolute majority amid anger over corruption and the ongoing

18. Kofman, et al., *Lessons from Russia's*, 44.

19. Nick Anderson et.al, *2019 Conflict Risk Diagnostic: Ukraine*, (Ottawa, CA: Norman Patterson School of International Affairs, Carleton University, March 17, 2019), 3, <https://carleton.ca/cifp/wp-content/uploads/2019-Ukraine-Conflict-Diagnostic.pdf>.

20. "Ukraine's Back to School 'Ceasefire,'" *Medium Corporation Digital Forensic Research Lab*, August 29, 2017, <https://medium.com/dfirlab/ukraines-back-to-school-ceasefire-b43906954ed6>.

21. Shaun Walker, "A Referendum on Poroshenko but Also a Very Ukrainian Election," *The Guardian*, April 19, 2019, 13:29 BST, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/apr/19/a-referendum-on-poroshenko-very-ukrainian-election>.

22. Andrew Roth, "Ukraine's Leader Takes Office and Calls Snap Election," *The Guardian*, May 20, 2019, 9:40 a.m. BST, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/may/20/ukraine-volodymyr-zelenskiy-takes-office-calls-snap-election>.

war.²³ After dissolving parliament shortly after his election, Zelenskyy's party, Servant of the People, won a majority of seats in the Verkhovna Rada (Ukraine's parliament), marking the first time this has happened in Ukraine's history as an independent nation.²⁴ Zelenskyy has pledged "to end the war, return our prisoners, and defeat the corruption that persists in Ukraine."²⁵

In December 2019, Zelenskyy met with Vladimir Putin, Angela Merkel, and Emmanuel Macron in Paris to discuss steps toward ending the war in Eastern Ukraine. Prior to the summit, Zelenskyy had to accept a 2016 deal known as the "Steinmeier formula," where free and fair elections would take place in Donbas, requiring verification by the OSCE international security organization, which would then grant self-governing status to Donetsk and Luhansk.²⁶ Zelenskyy also had to agree to the withdrawal of troops from three areas on the front line.²⁷ Zelenskyy's agreement to implement these initiatives has sparked concern and anger among Ukrainians as granting special status to these two regions without Ukraine regaining control of its eastern border and without Russia's commitment to withdrawing troops not only shows concession to Russia, but also puts Ukraine at Russia's mercy (again) to uphold its end of the deal.²⁸

23. Shawn Walker, "Ukraine Election: Early Results Indicate Big Win for President's Party," *The Guardian*, July 22, 2019, 9:39 BST, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jul/22/ukraine-election-early-results-indicate-big-win-president-party>.

24. Nicolai N. Petro, "Volodymyr Zelensky's Landslide Victory in Ukraine May Become a Slippery Slope," *The Nation*, July 25, 2019, <https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/vladimir-zelensky-ukraine-election/>.

25. Walker, "Ukraine Election: Early Results."

26. "Ukraine Conflict: Anger as Zelensky Agrees Vote Deal in East," *BBC News*, October 2, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-49903996>.

27. Jonah Fisher, "Ukraine: Paris Talks with Russia Aim to End Eastern Conflict," *BBC News*, December 9, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-50672006>.

28. Fisher, "Ukraine: Paris Talks with Russia."

The Paris summit resulted in a commitment from both sides to a ceasefire and the exchange of all conflict-related detainees by the end of 2019.²⁹ Both sides also pledged to disengage military forces in three additional regions by the end of March 2020 and attend follow-up talks in four months to evaluate the ceasefire's progress.³⁰ However, despite the promising appearance of these renewed discussions, "...only small progress was made in addressing geopolitical ruptures affecting Ukraine's East, and no real political advances were achieved. President Zelenskyy's campaign promises to end the war 'at any cost' have left many uneasy that the cost may amount to ceding Ukraine's tenuous grip on the conflict zone."³¹ It would remain to be seen if the Paris summit would help bring about the end of the war.

The Current Context in Ukraine: 2020-Present

In addition to the ongoing war in Eastern Ukraine, there were key national, international, and global events that impacted the lives of all Ukrainians in 2020. On January 8th, 2020, Ukrainian International Airlines Flight 752 crashed shortly after takeoff from Tehran's airport after being struck by two, Iranian anti-aircraft missiles.³² 176 people died in the crash including Ukrainians, Canadians, Iranians, and citizens of several other nations.³³ While rumblings of the

29. "Overall Agreed Conclusions of the Paris Summit in the Normandy Format of December 9, 2019," Official Website of the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, December 10, 2019, 00:50 UTC+2, <https://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/zagalni-uzgodzheni-visnovki-parizkogo-samitu-v-normandskomu-58797>.

30. "Ukraine and Russia Agree to Implement Ceasefire," *BBC News*, December 10, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-50713647>.

31. Andrian Prokip, "Ukraine Quarterly Digest: October–December 2019," *Wilson Center* (blog), January 15, 2020, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/ukraine-quarterly-digest-october-december-2019>.

32. Bernd Debusmann Jr., "Families Seek Justice for Iran Plane Crash Victims," *BBC News*, January 8, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-59833120>.

Covid-19 pandemic began in early 2020, things accelerated quickly as Covid-19 spread across the world and became a global pandemic. Ukraine's first Covid-19 cases were detected in early March 2020 and it quickly spread throughout the country.³⁴ Covid-19 continued to have devastating impacts on the Ukrainian people, the healthcare system, and the economy throughout 2020, "the Covid-19 pandemic is pushing the country towards its worst recession in decades – possibly a depression, with terrible consequences for the most vulnerable."³⁵ With regards to the economy, Ukraine's GDP shrank by 4% in 2020³⁶, with the World Bank noting that "due to the Covid-19 epidemic, poverty in Ukraine could increase by 4 percent, reaching around 23 percent by the end of 2020."³⁷ By the end of 2020, Ukraine had over 1 million cases of Covid-19 and over 19,000 deaths.³⁸

In October 2020, local elections were held and "the vote was important as an indication of the political climate in the country just over a year since President Zelenskyy acquired

33. "Iran Plane Crash: The Victims of Ukraine Flight PS752," *BBC News*, January 16, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-51032823>.

34. Andrian Prokip, "Ukraine Quarterly Digest: January-March 2020," *Wilson Center* (blog), April 9, 2020, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/ukraine-quarterly-digest-january-march-2020>.

35. United Nations Development Program (Ukraine), "Comprehensive Assessment Confirms Devastating Impact of COVID-19 in Ukraine," press release, September 18, 2020, <https://www.ua.undp.org/content/ukraine/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2020/assessment-confirms-devastating-impact-of-COVID-19-in-Ukraine.html>.

36. "The World Bank in Ukraine," The World Bank (website), March 5, 2022, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/ukraine/overview#3>.

37. The World Bank, "World Bank Scales-Up Support to Ukraine to Help Protect Low-Income Families," press release, December 11, 2020, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/12/11/world-bank-scales-up-support-to-ukraine-to-help-protect-low-income-families>.

38. Hannah Ritchie et al., "Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID-19)," *Our World in Data* (website), last updated April 5, 2022, accessed March 8, 2022, <https://ourworldindata.org/coronavirus/country/ukraine#citation>.

unprecedented power via landslide victories in Ukraine's presidential and parliamentary elections."³⁹ The elections "were particularly important following recent decentralization reforms that devolved significant powers and resources to local governments."⁴⁰ The Election Observation Mission of the Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE) noted the election was administered professionally and efficiently even though there were challenges due to Covid-19.⁴¹ For President Zelenskyy, the election did not result in landslide victories as he experienced in 2019, and based on the election results, "...Zelenskyy's ballot box magic appears to have worn off."⁴² Based on polls conducted in December 2020, Zelenskyy and members of the Servant of the People party were continuing to lose popularity due to the increasing impacts of the pandemic and the recession in the economy.⁴³

Unfortunately, despite the ceasefire reached in December 2019, things did not improve with regards to the war in Eastern Ukraine throughout 2020 as incidents of shootings, ceasefire violations, and casualties continued.⁴⁴ However, in July 2020, the Trilateral Contact Group

39. Anders Åslund, "Ukrainian Local Elections: Zelenskyy's Fairytale is Over," *Atlantic Council* (blog), October 25, 2020, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/ukrainian-local-elections-zelenskyy-fairytale-is-over/>.

40. ODIHR Limited Election Observation Mission Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions, quoted in Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE), Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, *Ukraine – Local Elections – ODIHR Limited Election Observation Mission Final Report*, (Warsaw, PL: Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE), October 25, 2020), 3, https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/3/e/476974_1.pdf.

41. Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE), Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, "Ukraine – Local Elections," 3.

42. Brian Mefford, "Winners and Losers of Ukraine's Local Elections," *Atlantic Council* (blog), November 2, 2020, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/winners-and-losers-of-ukraines-local-elections/>.

43. Andrian Prokip, "Ukraine Quarterly Digest: October-December 2020," *Wilson Center* (blog), January 7, 2021, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/ukraine-quarterly-digest-october-december-2020>.

(TCG) that includes representatives from Ukraine, Russia, and the OSCE held a meeting and agreed to establish a full ceasefire beginning on July 27th.⁴⁵ According to the OSCE, there was a 55% decrease in ceasefire violations in 2020 as compared to 2019 and a sharp decrease was noted after the ceasefire was signed on July 27th.⁴⁶ Despite the decrease in ceasefire violations, military and civilian casualties were reported in 2020 with 50 service member deaths and 336 injuries, and 24 civilian casualties and 105 injuries.⁴⁷ The ongoing war combined with the Covid-19 pandemic had a devastating impact on the lives of Ukrainians in 2020.

The year 2021 began with some hope for the end of the Covid-19 pandemic as vaccinations to help fight Covid-19 began to be administered around the world. However, even though Ukraine began its vaccination campaign near the end of February 2021, interest and uptake in the vaccine remained low.⁴⁸ Vaccination in Ukraine in 2021 has been hindered by many challenges including misinformation spread through media outlets and social media

44. Andrian Prokip, "Ukraine Quarterly Digest: October-December 2020."

45. Official Website of the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, "Breakthrough in the Minsk Process: TCG Agreed on a Complete and Comprehensive Ceasefire on the Line of Delimitation from July 27," July 22, 2020, 22:11 UTC+2, <https://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/proriv-u-minskomu-procesi-v-tkg-dijshli-zgodi-shodo-povnogo-62389>.

46. "2020 Trends and Observations," Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE), Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, 2020, <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/e/8/476809.pdf>.

47. Illia Ponomarenko, "OSCE in Donbas Reports 55% Less Ceasefire Violations in 2020," *Kyiv Post*, February 15, 2021, <https://www.kyivpost.com/ukraine-politics/osce-in-donbas-reports-55-less-ceasefire-violations-in-2020.html>.

48. Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), *The Covid-19 Crisis in Ukraine* (n.p., Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), February 25, 2022), 2, <https://www.oecd.org/eurasia/competitiveness-programme/eastern-partners/COVID-19-CRISIS-IN-UKRAINE.pdf>.

(including Russian media), fake vaccination certificates⁴⁹, as well as a high level of distrust of available vaccines among Ukrainians.⁵⁰ Throughout 2021, vaccination numbers continued to lag behind other European nations, and even by December 2021, only 32% of the population had been vaccinated⁵¹, with almost 100,000 deaths.⁵² The situation for those living in Donbas during 2021 did not improve, however. As noted by Human Rights Watch, the ongoing war in Eastern Ukraine coupled with the ongoing pandemic continued to have a devastating impact on civilian safety and access to food, housing, and schools for those living in the Donbas area, “Covid-19 pandemic-related travel restrictions, introduced by Russian-backed armed groups and the government, blocked access to healthcare and pensions and worsened hardships for the already impoverished population of the conflict-affected Donbas.”⁵³

The ongoing war in Eastern Ukraine worsened in 2021, with a significant escalation of tensions in April 2021 as Russia increased its concentration of troops and weaponry on the eastern border.⁵⁴ Russia denied that it intended to invade Ukraine and argued that “...its troop build-up is a three-week snap military drill to combat readiness in response to what it calls

49. Maria Varenikova, “Covid Deaths Soar in Ukraine as the Country Struggles with Fake Vaccine Certificates,” *The New York Times*, October 19, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/19/world/europe/ukraine-covid-deaths.html>.

50. Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), *The Covid-19 Crisis in Ukraine*.

51. “Ukraine,” Reuters Covid-19 Tracker (website), March 9, 2022 10:16 p.m. CST, <https://graphics.reuters.com/world-coronavirus-tracker-and-maps/countries-and-territories/ukraine/>.

52. Hannah Ritchie et al., “Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID-19).”

53. “Ukraine: Events of 2021,” Human Rights Watch, 2022, accessed February 9, 2022, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2022/country-chapters/ukraine>.

54. Mykola Bielieskov, *The Russian and Ukrainian Spring 2021 War Scare* (n.p.: Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), September 21, 2021), 2, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/russian-and-ukrainian-spring-2021-war-scare>.

threatening behaviour from NATO.”⁵⁵ Russia briefly scaled back the number of troops that were stationed along the border, but this did nothing to stop the increase of ceasefire violations and increase in civilian casualties, where civilian casualties saw a 51% increase compared with the previous six months.⁵⁶

In August 2021, Ukraine celebrated 30 years of independence where Zelenskyy vowed to reclaim territories in Donbas and Crimea.⁵⁷ Later that month, Zelenskyy visited the United States (US) to meet with President Joe Biden where the US re-stated its commitment to supporting “...Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity in the face of continued Russian aggression.”⁵⁸ “The Joint Statement on the U.S.-Ukraine Strategic Partnership” issued by the White House also re-stated that the US and its allies support Ukraine’s aspirations to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), “...free from outside interference.”⁵⁹ It quickly became evident in the final months of 2021 that this affirmation of support (among other Russian grievances) for Ukraine’s desire to join NATO would not only aggravate Russia, but would result in a severe escalation of tensions between Ukraine, the US and its allies, and Russia.

55. Matthias Williams and Robin Emmott, “Ukraine Says Russia Will Soon Have Over 120,000 Troops on its Borders” *Reuters*, April 20, 2021, 7:26 a.m. CDT, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russia-reach-over-120000-troops-ukraines-border-week-ukraine-says-2021-04-20/>.

56. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Report on the Human Rights Situation in Ukraine 1 February – 31 July 2021* (Ukraine, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, September 23, 2021), 1, <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/UA/32ndReportUkraine-en.pdf>.

57. “Ukraine Marks Independence Day Vowing to Reclaim Annexed Territory,” *Reuters*, August 24, 2021, 4:25 a.m. CDT, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/ukraine-marks-independence-day-vowing-reclaim-annexed-territory-2021-08-24/>.

58. The White House, “Joint Statement on the U.S.-Ukraine Strategic Partnership,” media release, September 1, 2021, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/09/01/joint-statement-on-the-u-s-ukraine-strategic-partnership/>.

59. The White House, “Joint Statement.”

In October and November 2021, satellite imagery showed a build-up of Russian troops on Ukraine's borders, raising fears in Ukraine and in the international community about the possibility of further Russian invasion into Ukraine.⁶⁰ Russia continued to deny any intention to invade, claiming that Ukraine and its allies were overreacting, "'This hysteria is created artificially,' Kremlin spokesman Dmitri Peskov told reporters on November 21. 'This is not very logical and not very decent.'"⁶¹ Tensions continued to rise and in December, Russia issued a set of demands to the US and NATO allies that included a ban on Ukraine joining NATO and a reduction of NATO troops and equipment in Eastern Europe.⁶² Russia's demands were rejected and has been told on many occasions that NATO allies and Ukraine would decide on Ukraine's membership, not Russia. It was at this time that Putin stated that Russia would "...consider different options if the West failed to meet the Kremlin's push for security guarantees that would preclude NATO's expansion to Ukraine."⁶³ Despite his ongoing denial of any intention to invade Ukraine, Putin's statement seemed to indicate that further invasion into Ukraine was imminent, and possible as early as January 2022, sparking the need for diplomatic discussions and further attempts by Ukraine and its allies to de-escalate the situation in the new year.

60. Tom Yun, "A Timeline of Major Events Leading Up to Russia's Invasion of Ukraine," *CTV News*, February 25, 2022, 12:45 p.m. EST, <https://www.ctvnews.ca/world/a-timeline-of-major-events-leading-up-to-the-current-russia-ukraine-crisis-1.5751379>.

61. Mansur Mirovalev, "How Real is the Threat of a Russian Invasion of Ukraine?" *Al Jazeera*, December 3, 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/12/3/how-real-is-the-threat-of-a-russian-invasion-of-ukraine>.

62. "Global Conflict Tracker: Conflict in Ukraine."

63. Andrian Prokip, "Ukraine Quarterly Digest: October-December 2021," *Wilson Center* (blog), January 10, 2022, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/ukraine-quarterly-digest-october-december-2021>.

Beginning in early January, Ukraine, Russia, the U.S., and its European allies began holding diplomatic talks in Ukraine and Russia with their respective leaders.⁶⁴ Biden spoke with Zelenskyy in early January 2022 and promised him that the US and allies will act “decisively” if Russia further invades Ukraine.⁶⁵ This “decisive” action would involve sanctions, increased military aid and weapons to Ukraine, as well as preventing the opening of Russia’s Nord Stream 2 pipeline in Germany.⁶⁶ However, even though the U.S. has sent additional troops to areas around Ukraine, “Biden and other U.S. officials have said that no U.S. soldiers will take part in combat in Ukraine.”⁶⁷ Should Russia choose to invade, it is not clear if and how Ukraine’s allies will respond and come to its aid. At the time of writing (mid-February 2022)⁶⁸, over 130,000 Russian troops surround Ukraine⁶⁹, Russia and Belarus have begun military exercises along Ukraine’s northern border,⁷⁰ and a dozen countries have urged their citizens to leave Ukraine.⁷¹

64. Becky Sullivan, “Russia’s at War with Ukraine. Here’s How We Got Here,” *National Public Radio (NPR)*, February 24, 2022, 9:27 a.m. EST, <https://www.npr.org/2022/02/12/1080205477/history-ukraine-russia>.

65. Aamar Madhani (The Associated Press), “Biden Vows to Act Decisively If Russia Invades Ukraine,” *CTV News*, January 2, 2022, 8:03 p.m. EST, <https://www.ctvnews.ca/world/biden-vows-u-s-to-act-decisively-if-russia-invades-ukraine-1.5725884>.

66. Kirby, “Why Has Russia.”

67. Becky Sullivan, “Newly Deployed U.S. Troops Arrive in Europe as Russia Bolsters Its Own Forces,” *National Public Radio (NPR)*, February 5, 2022, 2:55 EST, <https://www.npr.org/2022/02/05/1078499097/ukraine-russia-us-troops-arrive>.

68. As noted in Chapter One, under footnote 16, the context section of this chapter is “frozen in time” as of mid-February, approximately 10 days prior to Russia’s further invasion of Ukraine and full-scale war that began on February 24th, 2022.

69. Vladimir Isachenkov, Yuras Karmanau and Aamar Madhani (The Associated Press Staff), “U.S. Hasn’t Verified Russian Pullback of Troops Near Ukraine,” *CTV News*, February 15, 2022, 9:24 p.m. EST, <https://www.ctvnews.ca/world/u-s-hasn-t-verified-russian-pullback-of-troops-near-ukraine-1.5781631>.

70. Kirby, “Why Has Russia.”

The situation remains precarious and depends on Putin's future course of action. Support for resistance to a potential Russian invasion remain high among Ukrainians of all age groups.

Civil Society in Ukraine

An overview of the development of civil society in Ukraine is important context to understanding the role of young people in politics and civil society. In Ukraine, civil society is defined as “a domain/area of social/civil relations beyond the family/household, state and business where people get together to satisfy and/or promote joint interests and to defend common values.”⁷² Civil society has undergone significant transformation in Ukraine since its independence 30 years ago. During Soviet rule, citizens' participation in social and political organizations was strictly controlled and regulated by the state, “the state-controlled associational life during Soviet times created very limited incentives to develop civil society organization and fostered a strong level of avoidance and a low level of trust of any type of civil organization among citizens.”⁷³

In the 1990s, Ukraine faced significant challenges in developing its civil society. One of these challenges was the adversarial relationship between civil society and the state, “the state was trying to impede civil society's development and subvert its ‘watchdog’ function through

71. “Ukraine Tensions: A Dozen Nations Tell Citizens to Leave Ukraine,” *BBC News*, February 12, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60361983>.

72. L. Palyvoda, O. Vinnikov, V. Kupriy in *Defining Civil Society for Ukraine – Research Report* (Kyiv, 2016), 12, <http://dhrp.org.ua/en/>, quoted in Tatiana Kyselova, *Mapping Civil Society and Peacebuilding in Ukraine: Peacebuilding by Any Other Name* (Geneva, CH-Kyiv, UA, 2019), 9, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3521515>.

73. Oksana Udovyk, “Beyond the Conflict and Weak Civil Society; Stories from Ukraine: Cases of Grassroots Initiatives for Sustainable Development,” *East/West: Journal of Ukrainian Studies* 4, no. 2 (2017): 191, <https://doi.org/10.21226/T27W6R>.

creating state-controlled CSOs or the incorporation of representatives of independent organizations in informal, ‘mutually beneficial’ relations. This politics undermined trust in CSOs.”⁷⁴ Second, Ukraine’s economic struggles during the 1990s where high poverty rates, economic instability, and general conditions of uncertainty discouraged people from participating in civil society.⁷⁵ While things improved slightly near the end of the 1990s, it was not until the Orange Revolution in 2004 that people saw an opportunity for the solidification and growth of civil society within Ukraine.

The protests of the Orange Revolution resulted in a runoff election that resulted in Yushchenko’s election. Initially, this was believed to be the birth of true civil society in Ukraine as civil society organizations (CSOs), along with new grassroots initiatives attempted to contribute to the improvement of governance at the national and local level.⁷⁶ However, this momentum was not sustained, and civil society did not flourish as anticipated. Furthermore, with Yanukovich’s election in 2010, there was a reversion to aspects of authoritarianism, “...many CSOs faced increasing administrative obstacles and other difficulties caused by the actions of public authorities.”⁷⁷ It was only a few years later that renewed hope for civil society in Ukraine emerged during Euromaidan.

74. Maxim Gatskov and Kseniia Gatskova, “Civil Society in Ukraine,” in *Ukraine in Transformation: From Soviet Republic to European Society*, ed. Alberto Veira-Ramos, Tetiana Liubyva, and Evgenii Golovakha (Cham, CH: Springer International Publishing AG, 2020), 127, eBook, <https://doi.org.10.1007/978-3-030-24978-6>.

75. Gatskov and Gatskova, “Civil Society in Ukraine,” 128.

76. Gatskov and Gatskova, “Civil Society in Ukraine,” 130.

77. Gatskov and Gatskova, “Civil Society in Ukraine,” 131.

Many authors noted that Euromaidan was a pivotal moment in the revolution of civil society in Ukraine.⁷⁸ Natalia Shapovalova and Olga Burlyuk note that “the protests created a new civic activism and participation based on the values of individual freedom, responsibility and dignity. They led to creation of a wide network of civic activists and initiatives...they also led to civic awakening and national revival.”⁷⁹ After Euromaidan, Yanukovych fled Ukraine shortly before the annexation of Crimea and war in Donbas began in early 2014. Shapovalova and Burlyuk note that “in the aftermath of the protests, civil society mobilized to promote reforms, drafting and advocating for legislative proposals and monitoring reform implementation. Activists organized themselves to deal with the humanitarian crisis spurred by the armed conflict in the east of Ukraine, helping displaced and affected populations.”⁸⁰ Civil society gained the trust and support of Ukrainians as it was able to support people in times of need when the state was not able to do so. And, at the time, “...trust in volunteer initiatives was at a level comparable to the support of the church (traditionally the most trusted institution) and the armed forces and much exceeded the level of support for president, government, and parliament of the country.”⁸¹

Moving forward, it is worth noting that “according to various sources the number of registered CSOS⁸² in Ukraine is around 250,000 whereas NGOs make up the largest share of

78. See Gatskov and Gatskova, Tatiana Kyselova, and Natalia Shapovalova and Olga Burlyuk as referenced in Bibliography.

79. Natalia Shapovalova and Olga Burlyuk, “Civil Society and Change in Ukraine Post-Euromaidan: An Introduction,” in *Civil Society in Post-Euromaidan Ukraine: From Revolution to Consolidation*, eds. Natalia Shapovalova and Olga Burlyuk (Stuttgart, DE: Ibidem Press, 2018), 11, eBook.

80. Shapovalova and Burlyuk, “Civil Society and Change,” 11-12.

81. Gatskov and Gatskova, “Civil Society in Ukraine,” 133.

82. Tatiana Kyselova notes that in her report, all organizational forms of formalized Ukrainian society are referred to as Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and public organizations (hromadski

CSOs – more than 80,000 organizations. Active CSOs are estimated to comprise around 20,000 organizations.”⁸³ While the number of CSOs has increased significantly since Euromaidan, and more people are engaged in civil society, the overall engagement of Ukrainian people into civil society remains low, “a DIF survey found that 83% of respondents have never belonged to a CSO, only 2.2% were members of a CSO, and 6.6% were engaged in a CSO’s work.”⁸⁴ Despite this mixed record, young people have been and continue to be important actors in civil society in Ukraine through engagement in political life and civil society. This is explored in the following section.

Young People in Ukraine: Politics and Civil Society

It is important to provide some context regarding young people in Ukraine and their involvement in politics and civil society to show how they have been and will continue to be important catalysts for positive peacebuilding for Ukraine’s future. According to the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, “...about 6.2 million people aged 10-24 lived in Ukraine as of January 1, 2018, not including persons living in the occupied territories of AR Crimea and Sevastopol (an additional 350,000 according to data from January 1, 2014) and youth from stateless minorities including Romas, [refugees], and asylum-seekers.”⁸⁵ Recent numbers of

organizatsiyi) as NGOs. Tatiana Kyselova, *Mapping Civil Society and Peacebuilding in Ukraine: Peacebuilding by Any Other Name* (Geneva, CH-Kyiv, UA, 2019), 9, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3521515>.

83. Kyselova, *Mapping Civil Society*, 9.

84. Kyselova, *Mapping Civil Society*, 9.

85. Cordelia Ongerth, Inna Volosevych, and Sarah Pagano, ed., *The State of Youth in Ukraine* (Kyiv, UA: UN Working Group on Youth, 2019), 7, <https://ukraine.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/THE%20STATE%20OF%20YOUTH%20IN%20UKRAINE%20report.pdf>.

young people living in Donbas are not available, but statistics from January 1, 2014 indicate about 917,000 people aged 10-24 resided in this region.⁸⁶

Older statistics (from 2015) using a broader age range for young people (aged 14-35) state that the number of young people aged 14-35 in Ukraine amounted to nearly 32% of the population (approximately 12.8 million people), where the largest age group were those aged 30-34 and 25-29 (3.5 million people in each group), followed by persons aged 20-24 (2.7 million), and 2 million persons aged 14-19.⁸⁷ It is worth noting that almost a quarter of Ukraine's young people are concentrated in five oblasts: Lviv, Odesa, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia, and Kyiv, where the number of young people in each oblast exceeds half a million.⁸⁸ Young people in Ukraine make up a considerable amount of the population in Ukraine; therefore, the history of their participation in political life and civil society is key to recognizing the significance of their potential as peacebuilders in Ukraine's future.⁸⁹

Young people in Ukraine (typically defined as 18-35 in the literature) have been active in Ukraine's politics and civil society since Ukraine's fight for independence in 1990.⁹⁰ In the past three decades, youth protest in Ukraine has made a significant impact on society and politics, where "after all, the attitude of the young to the deep transformational processes in contemporary

86. Ongerth, Volosevych, and Pagano, *The State of Youth in Ukraine*, 7.

87. Anna Ostrikova, *Country Sheet on Youth Policy in Ukraine*, (Partnership between European Commission and Council of Europe, March 10, 2016), 9, https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/47262259/Ukraine_Country_sheet_2016.pdf/492169a9-0ba0-44ab-ae00-3d0a076d5864.

88. Ostrikova, *Country Sheet on Youth Policy*, 11.

89. The engagement of young people in Ukraine in political life and civil society will be further explored in connection to the experiences shared by participants in this study in Chapter Seven as they connect to volunteerism and peacebuilding in Ukraine.

90. Ana Mangas, "Youth in Ukraine: The Motor of Change?" *Eurozine*, September 29, 2016, <http://www.eurozine.com/youth-in-ukraine-the-motor-of-change-2/>.

Ukraine is evidently very demanding, and they react to incompetence and dishonesty of the representatives of the power and disrespect of freedom and justice with considerable sharpness.”⁹¹ In 2004, their organization and resourceful actions helped maintain momentum during the Orange Revolution in 2004.⁹² Even though many of the promises and ideals of the Orange Revolution did not become reality, young people continued to mobilize in Ukraine. In 2013, young people were once again engaged in political activity in Euromaidan and came out in droves during Euromaidan. Young people in Ukraine believed that the signing of the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU would help change their lives for the better:

in general, participants of the Euro-Maidan were mainly young people, students first of all, who realized they had no alternative, except the EU...The young wanted social, economic, and political changes, the European standards of life, but the authorities could not give that, as it would demand a radical transformation of the society’s political system. So it was the youth who – by its participation in the revolutionary events – generated a critical weight of protest movement at its initial stages (which is very important).⁹³

Mariia Lysenko, a 23-year old, stated “for me it was very important to join Euromaidan SOS [an initiative created by young people that began as a response to police repression of the protests], at the time I was just a student, and I thought if it isn’t me who does something, who will?”⁹⁴ Since Euromaidan, with the annexation of Crimea and conflict in Eastern Ukraine, there has been an increase in activism in Ukrainian society. According to a 2015 study, some 54% of

91. Yaroslav Komarnytskyi and Nazarii Yurchyshyn, “Transformation of Forms of Political Participation of Youth in Present-Day,” *Zeszyty Naukowe Państwowej Wyższej Szkoły Zawodowej im. Witelona w Legnicy*, 32, no.3 (2019): 145-6, <http://cejsh.icm.edu.pl/cejsh/element/bwmeta1.element.desklight-8ddecad9-cfa9-4621-ba71-f4f1e7c024a4>.

92. Nadia M. Diuk, *The Next Generation in Russia, Ukraine, and Azerbaijan: Youth, Politics, Identity, and Change*, (Plymouth, UK: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2012), 34, eBook, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/umanitoba/detail.action?docID=911846>.

93. Ye. Holovakha, quoted in Komarnytskyi and Yurchyshyn, “Transformation of Forms,” 148.

94. Mangas, “Youth in Ukraine,” 2.

young people had been involved in a civic activity initiative in the previous 12 months, and 36% had worked at some point as volunteers.⁹⁵

Furthermore, political parties that have recently emerged from within civil society groups have created instruments through which young people can have an influence at the state level, “so that a young person will not just be a consumer of politics but also a creator...an active participant.”⁹⁶ However, given the current structure of the Ukrainian political system, it is not easy for young people in Ukraine to gain access to politics, as the system tends to resist and prevent changes that threaten the status quo. With the ongoing war in Eastern Ukraine, “until the Ukrainian government and state structures open up to include and represent the wishes and desires of the people and particularly the younger generation, who have expressed most coherently the desire for a different society, the paradoxes in Ukraine’s development appear set to continue.”⁹⁷ If young people in Ukraine feel powerless at the state level, the local, grassroots level seems like the ideal place to begin peacebuilding. It would appear that this moment in time is crucial and could be a window of opportunity for young people to collaborate with one another and take ownership of peacebuilding.

The Empowerment of Young People in Ukraine

The engagement of young people in politics and civil society throughout Ukraine’s recent history is also connected to Schwerin’s work on empowerment. Schwerin outlines eight components of empowerment: self-esteem, self-efficacy, knowledge and skills, political

95. Mangas, “Youth in Ukraine,” 2.

96. Sergiy Mytrofanskyi, former Deputy Minister of Youth and Sport, quoted in Mangas, “Youth in Ukraine,” 3.

97. Diuk, *The Next Generation in Russia*, 65.

awareness, social participation, political participation, rights and responsibilities, and access to psychological, social, and material resources.⁹⁸ He writes that “the empowerment process links individual *attitudes* (i.e. self-esteem and self-efficacy) and *capabilities* (i.e. knowledge and skills and political awareness) to enable efficacious *individual and collaborative* actions (i.e. social and political participation) in order to attain personal and collective sociopolitical *goals* (i.e. political rights, responsibilities, and resources).”⁹⁹ In the context of this chapter and the context of this study, it is evident that young people in Ukraine and those who participated in this study already possess all of the components of empowerment and are well-equipped to lead Ukraine into the future.

First, with regards to self-esteem and self-efficacy, young people in Ukraine know they want Ukraine to be aligned with the EU and are not afraid to participate in civil society to show that they deserve the future they want and are capable of being the next generation of leaders in Ukraine, “self-esteem and self-efficacy are based on attitudes and beliefs about the self and one’s capabilities in her or his environment.”¹⁰⁰ Then, in terms of knowledge and skills and political awareness, young people in Ukraine know how they are connected to the world and think critically about their relationship to political structures and authorities.¹⁰¹ The idea of political awareness relates to the theory of critical consciousness, “...a special type of empowering

98. Edward W. Schwerin, *Mediation, Citizen Empowerment, and Transformational Politics*, (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1995), 10.

99. Schwerin, *Mediation, Citizen Empowerment, and Transformational Politics*, 81.

100. Flaherty, *Peacebuilding with Women*, 29.

101. Flaherty, *Peacebuilding with Women*, 29.

knowledge that enables people to develop their own concepts of social justice and provides conceptual tools to realize those goals.”¹⁰²

Social and political participation are examples of both individual and collective behaviours that can transform individuals and societies.¹⁰³ As young people in Ukraine engage with civil society through community organizations and events, they not only become empowered individually, but help to spur collective empowerment, “arguably, the process of individual empowerment facilitates community empowerment (Bishop, 1994/2002) developed through collective, collaborative involvement in participatory endeavours that increase community capacity and efficacy (Barsky, 2009).”¹⁰⁴ Schwerin also writes that “...most of the empirical studies have demonstrated a positive correlation between community participation and citizen empowerment.”¹⁰⁵

This helps people realize how critical and important their participation is in facilitating change in the society in which they live. They can then continue to exercise their political rights and take responsibility for their role in civil society to increase access to essential resources, ensuring the last two components of empowerment are met for themselves and others, helping to meet the basic human needs of more people in the communities they live in.

In my review of the literature for this thesis, I have determined that young people in Ukraine are active participants in politics and civil society; they are highly educated, engaged in civil society, and are well-connected to the rest of the world. As such, the focus on young people

102. Schwerin, *Mediation, Citizen Empowerment, and Transformational Politics*, 63.

103. Schwerin, *Mediation, Citizen Empowerment, and Transformational Politics*, 65.

104. Flaherty, *Peacebuilding with Women*, 29-30.

105. Schwerin, *Mediation, Citizen Empowerment, and Transformational Politics*, 66.

in this study is not only relevant, but also significant. As the next generation of leaders, it is imperative that their voices be heard and acknowledged. It is evident that young people in Ukraine already possess all the components of empowerment, and therefore, collaboration at the grassroots level can further empower and motivate young people to use their lived experiences, knowledge, strengths, and abilities as an impetus for peacebuilding that comes from within Ukraine.

Conclusion

This chapter outlined key events in Ukraine's history from late 2013 to the present (February 2022). It included an overview of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in Ukraine as the pandemic was mentioned by study participants in their interviews and in the peacemaking circle and providing this context is important for later chapters in this thesis. Then, an explanation of the significance of young people and their role in civil society in Ukraine helped situate this thesis in the appropriate context. Finally, connections between young peoples' political participation and engagement in civil society was connected to Schwerin's work on empowerment. Further exploration of civil society, volunteering and, peacebuilding in Ukraine as it relates to participants' experiences in this study are explored in Chapter Seven. The following chapter is a review of the three theoretical frameworks used in this study.

Chapter Three: Theoretical Background **Третій Розділ: Теоретичні Основи**

Introduction

There are three theoretical frameworks that comprise this study: human needs theory, critical consciousness, and the theory of the critical yeast. This chapter provides a brief overview of each theory and their connection to Ukraine and this study. These theories will be referenced in subsequent chapters of this thesis.

Human Needs Theory

Abraham Maslow, John Burton, and Johan Galtung are three prominent human needs theorists. Some context regarding human needs theory will be provided in this section, with an emphasis on Galtung's work as it relates to this study and Ukraine. Abraham Maslow conceptualized the development of human needs as a hierarchical pyramid and grouped them under five headings: physiological (food, water, shelter), safety, belongingness/love, esteem, and self-actualization.¹ As everyone has needs, they signify "...something that has to be satisfied at least to some extent in order for the need-subject to function as a human being."² Concerning conflict theory and conflict resolution, theorists such as Burton and Galtung argued that these needs do not necessarily emerge in a particular order and that all are essential to human development. Needs are interconnected and those such as food, water, and shelter are linked to

1. Sandra Marker, "Unmet Human Needs," Beyond Intractability (website), August 2003, https://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/human_needs.

2. Johan Galtung, "The Basic Needs Approach," Paper Presented for the Workshop on Needs (Berlin, DE: May 27-29, 1978): 7, <https://www.transcend.org/galtung/papers/The%20Basic%20Needs%20Approach.pdf>.

other emotional and social needs such as security, self-identity, self-esteem, and happiness.³ Furthermore, as we find our identities in relation to and in connection with others, social needs must also be met and are key to human development. Satisfying social needs requires autonomy, participation in community life, and interaction with others where “certain social and economic conditions are essential to the fulfilment of human needs.”⁴ Human needs theorists propose that when peoples’ physiological and psychological needs are unmet, ignored, or denied, social disintegration occurs and conflict arises at the individual, group, and societal level.⁵ As needs remain unfulfilled and groups do not see any other way to meet their needs, violence occurs and conflicts become intractable and protracted.⁶

Galtung identified four main categories of human needs (that are either material or non-material, dependent on actors and/or structures): security needs, welfare needs, identity needs, and freedom needs.⁷

A Typology of Basic Human Needs		
	Dependent on Actors	Dependent on Structures
Material	Security needs (violence)	Welfare needs (misery)
Non-material	Freedom needs (repression)	Identity needs (alienation) ⁸

3. Ho-Won Jeong, *Peace and Conflict Studies: An Introduction*, (New York, NY: Ashgate Publishing, 2000), 70.

4. Jeong, *Peace and Conflict Studies: An Introduction*, 70-71.

5. Jeong, *Peace and Conflict Studies: An Introduction*, 70-71.

6. Havva Kök, “Reducing Violence: Applying the Human Needs Theory to the Conflict in Chechnya,” *Review of International Law and Politics* 3, no. 11 (2007): 91, <https://heinonline.org/HOL/P?h=hein.journals/rinlp3&i=601&a=dW1hbml0b2JhLmNh>.

7. Galtung, “The Basic Needs Approach,” 12.

8. Galtung, “The Basic Needs Approach,” 12.

Katherine Tremont used Galtung's theory of basic human needs in her analysis of service-learning opportunities with youth in Ukraine. She argues that "from these broad categories, the individual needs that are most critical in Ukraine can be isolated, as Galtung also warns of making Western assumptions when assessing human needs, and each cultural context can have a different set of factors that play into conflict. Any intervention in Ukraine must address at least some of the basic human needs of the population."⁹ In the following paragraphs, connections between each of the four categories of human needs and young people in Ukraine will be established to emphasize the relevance of this theory to this study.

With regards to security needs, people must be protected against both collective violence (which Galtung identifies as both internal and external wars) and individual violence (assault, discrimination).¹⁰ At the time that the field work for this study was completed, most Ukrainians were fortunate in that the majority have been geographically isolated from the violence as the active fighting is limited to two oblasts in Ukraine, but the war has had repercussions across Ukraine, including in Lviv, one of the major cities in Western Ukraine. Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine that began on February 24, 2022, has impacted the security needs of all Ukrainians and this continues at the time this thesis was finalized in March 2022.

According to Galtung, welfare needs are sufficiency needs that need to be met to avoid human misery including food, water, shelter, healthcare, and education.¹¹ As stated by Tremont, the most important welfare needs in Ukraine relate to shelter, food, healthcare, and education,

9. Tremont, "Rebuilding Houses, Rebuilding Ukraine," 13.

10. Galtung, "The Basic Needs Approach," 14.

11. Galtung, "The Basic Needs Approach," 14.

and these needs struggle to be met by both those in the conflict zone and in the rest of Ukraine.¹² As the war continues into its eighth year, resources have become scarcer over time, especially with ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic where people in Ukraine have felt the burden of increased prices and costs of living as Ukraine's economy continues to struggle. Conflict-related displacement has impacted Ukrainians outside of Donbas, where the situations of both locals and internally displaced persons (IDPs) are mutually dependent, "shared challenges faced by host communities and displaced persons such as lack of employment and inadequate housing opportunities have been identified as major potential triggers for strained relations."¹³ Thus, it is even more important that young people involved in this study see themselves as equal in opportunity and having equal claim to the welfare needs in Lviv and should have a say in how to ensure these needs can be met for all Ukrainians.

Identity needs are those that must be met to avoid alienation in each community including jobs, political activity, religion, participation in community initiatives, and opportunities for recreation and leisure.¹⁴ There is a link between the hardening of ethnic, linguistic, and national identity and the aggravation of conflict.¹⁵ There is a concern amongst scholars that identity cleavages will continue to polarize the population, shaping behaviour into the future, further threatening the possibility for the creation of a long-lasting, peaceful resolution to the war.¹⁶

12. Tremont, "Rebuilding Houses, Rebuilding Ukraine," 25.

13. Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE), Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, *Thematic Report: Conflict-related Displacement in Ukraine: Increased Vulnerabilities of Affected Populations and Triggers of Tension within Communities*, (n.p. Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE), August 2016), 4, <https://www.osce.org/ukraine-smm/261176>.

14. Galtung, "The Basic Needs Approach," 14.

15. Olga Onuch, Henry E. Hale, and Gwendolyn Sasse, "Studying Identity in Ukraine," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 34, no. 2-3 (2018): 80, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1060586X.2018.1451241>.

16. Onuch, Hale, and Sasse, "Studying Identity in Ukraine," 80.

Tremont identified that Ukrainians construct their identities through five major areas of life: family and community, religion, nature and travel, purpose, and work.¹⁷ Family is very important to Ukrainians, “family is probably the most important cornerstone to Ukrainian life, and Ukrainians are very close with their extended families...Family is an important way that Ukrainians construct their identities and relate to one another.”¹⁸ In her study with women in Ukraine, Flaherty also notes the centrality of family and family supports in participants’ lives.¹⁹ A sense of community is also important to Ukrainians where there are close ties among those who live in the same villages, towns, and cities. During the war, many people in Ukraine, especially those living in Eastern Ukraine have had their identity needs disrupted, “families have been torn apart by the violence, children have been orphaned, opportunities to travel are severely limited, and unemployment is even higher from all of the chaos occurring in the conflict zones.”²⁰ Tremont completed her study in 2015 when the war was in its early years and prior to the pandemic. However, the quote rings true in 2022, especially as Russia has escalated its war in Ukraine, where identity needs have been disrupted for all Ukrainians in Ukraine, regardless of their geographical location within the country.

Finally, with regards to freedom needs, Galtung identifies aspects of people’s lives that encourage choice and freedom from repression such as expressing oneself, voicing opinions, freedom of movement, and choosing a way of life.²¹ Ukrainians have demanded politics free of

17. Tremont, “Rebuilding Houses, Rebuilding Ukraine,” 25.

18. Tremont, “Rebuilding Houses, Rebuilding Ukraine,” 25.

19. Flaherty, *Peacebuilding with Women*, 154.

20. Tremont, “Rebuilding Houses, Rebuilding Ukraine,” 26.

21. Galtung, “The Basic Needs Approach,” 14.

corruption, freedom of speech, independent media, and freedom of movement for decades. However, since the outbreak of the war, it has been difficult for Ukrainians to meet these needs and freedom needs are the least fulfilled across the country.²² Nataliia Stukalo and Anastasiia Simakhova examined the social effects of the war in Ukraine. Through their analysis, they determined that the major social challenges in Ukraine are social security, unemployment, crime, and low wages compared to the rest of Europe, "...in Ukraine, the average annual wages are almost 10 times lower than in European countries...Today, cause of the war conflict in Ukraine, there is no possibility for high economic development and raising the standard of living for the Ukrainian population."²³ Challenges that Ukrainians have faced prior to the war have been compounded or exacerbated in the past eight years and this has meant that needs continue to be unmet in many areas of life.

Critical Consciousness

Critical consciousness, a concept originally introduced by Paulo Freire, is a process of critical thinking, reflecting on social injustices, and taking action to address those injustices.²⁴ Freire defined conscientização (conscientization) as "...learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality."²⁵

22. Tremont, "Rebuilding Houses, Rebuilding Ukraine," 27.

23. Anastasiia Simakhova and Nataliia Stukalo, "Social and Economic Effects of the War Conflict in Ukraine for Europe," *Geopolitics Under Globalization* 2, no. 1 (2018): 13, [https://doi.org/10.21511/gg.02\(1\).2018.02](https://doi.org/10.21511/gg.02(1).2018.02).

24. Mazna Patka et.al., "Exploring Sense of Community as a Predictor of Critical Consciousness Among Youth in Ukraine," *Global Journal of Community Psychology Practice*, 9, no.1 (June 2018): 2, <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Exploring-Sense-of-Community-as-a-Predictor-of-in-Patka-Wallin-Ruschman/900c76ee0b5c437f02e60d2b0331ae060891576c>.

25. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 30th anniversary ed. (New York, NY: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2000), 35.

Developing a sense of relationality and interconnectedness with others drives the development of critical consciousness.²⁶ The process of critical consciousness is dynamic and continuous, where conscientization is “...the complex and liberating ‘mobilization of consciousness aiming to produce critical historical knowledge about oneself, and about the groups to which one belongs, thereby producing a new understanding and giving sense to one’s temporal and spatial place in society, from one’s specific lifeworld.’”²⁷ When young people feel part of a community, understand their connection to societal problems, feel equipped to challenge systems that sustain conflict and injustice, critical consciousness grows and opportunities to generate peace are realized.²⁸

In research, critical consciousness is seen as a way to transform everyday life situations and the specific problems that are present in them, especially during war. This creates liberation in the sense that participants can mobilize action to address the underlying causes of oppression and violence in a given context. Maritza Montero writes that PAR is often utilized in projects where social transformation a key goal as participation is a basic requirement for liberation.²⁹ She argues that when people participate in PAR projects, “...its emancipative character is evidenced in its capacity to empower participants, strengthening their resources and developing their ability to acquire new resources and redefine themselves as able citizens with rights and

26. Patka et al., “Exploring Sense of Community,” 3.

27. Maritza Montero, “Conscientization,” in *Encyclopedia of Critical Psychology*, ed. Thomas Teo (New York, NY: Springer, 2014), 296, eBook, <https://doi-org.uml.idm.oclc.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-5583-7>.

28. Patka et.al., “Exploring Sense of Community,” 2-3.

29. Maritza Montero, “Methods for Liberation: Critical Consciousness in Action,” in *Psychology of Liberation*, eds. Christopher Sonn and Maritza Montero (New York, NY: Springer, 2009), 76, eBook, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-85784-8_4.

duties, and the capacity to defend their achievements and demand what is due to them.”³⁰ This type of collective action and reflection also strengthens civil society.

Patka et.al examined the relationship between sense of community and critical consciousness among youth in Ukraine, “we believe that assessing [critical consciousness] among Ukrainian youth is of particular importance given the current conflict between Ukraine and Russia. Amidst the conflict, there is increasing consciousness about Ukraine’s sociopolitical context and both nationalist and pro-Russian activism.”³¹ This study contributes to the literature on critical consciousness in Ukraine and will be discussed in Chapter Eight. As Flaherty writes in her study on peacebuilding with men in Ukraine, “...lasting changes in societies, particularly those that have lived in oppression, cannot be built without the vision and work of those who have been oppressed (Freire 1970).”³² Learning about participants’ lived experiences helps us find out what must change in order to build peace – both phases of this study included opportunities for de-brief, reflection, and making connections that can lead to action on the part of participants in the future. This leads to critical consciousness which can, in turn, lead to social change and peacebuilding.

The Theory of the Critical Yeast

Lederach’s concept of the “moral imagination” involves the practice and engagement with four disciplines in order to expand how peacebuilders envision their practice: the centrality

30. Maritza Montero, “Methods for Liberation,” 76.

31. Patka et.al., “Exploring Sense of Community,” 5.

32. Maureen Flaherty, “It Takes a Vision to Raise a Nation: Peacebuilding with Men in Ukraine,” in *Society Under Construction: Opportunities and Risks*, eds. Patrycja Bąldys and Katarzyna Piątek (Bilesko-Baiala, Poland: Technical Humanitarian Academy, 2016), 42, https://www.academia.edu/32908630/SOCIETY_UNDER_CONSTRUCTION_OPPORTUNITIES_AND_RISKS.

of relationships, practicing paradoxical curiosity, using creativity, and a willingness to take risks.³³ Lederach's theory of the critical yeast, as explained in *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace*, is connected to young people in Ukraine's involvement in civil society and politics throughout Ukraine's history as framed in Chapter Two of this thesis. In Chapter Eight, this theory is connected to participants' hopes, dreams, and visions for Ukraine's future and how participants in this study exemplify the qualities and characteristics of the critical yeast as outlined by Lederach. The following section provides an overview of Lederach's theory as a grounding and basis for further analysis in Chapter Eight.

When we think of movements for social change, we often focus on numbers – that is, how many people support our cause, how many people are willing to move away from conflict, fear, and violence towards building peace. Lederach writes that "...social change advocates often understand their goal as creating the numbers that count, what in everyday coinage has come to be called 'arriving at the critical mass.'"³⁴ While reaching a "critical mass" is important, it does not always create the momentum that is necessary for change to be successful in the long-term. While there is truth to gathering large numbers of people to support an idea or cause to create social change, there is, as Lederach counters, "in social change, it is not necessarily the amount of participation that authenticates a social shift. It is the quality of the platform that sustains the

33. John Paul Lederach, *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2005), 5.

34. Lederach, *The Moral Imagination*, 88.

shifting process that matters. Ironically, the focus on numbers has created a misunderstanding and misapplication of the concept of critical mass.”³⁵³⁶

Using his experience from working in situations of protracted violence and conflict, specifically in Djibouti, he arrived at the concept of the critical yeast, “it seems to me that the key to changing this thing is getting a small set of the right people involved at the right places. What’s missing is not the critical mass. The missing ingredient is the *critical yeast*.”³⁷ In thinking about the critical yeast in the context of building peace, it is important to think about all the different people, processes, and spaces needed to make change. Lederach writes that “[the critical yeast]...is a metaphor that asks the ‘who’ rather than the ‘how many’ question: Who, though not like-minded or like-situated in this context of conflict, would have a capacity, if they were mixed and held together, to make other things grow exponentially, beyond their numbers?”³⁸ This idea of the critical yeast is connected to the analysis in the previous chapter about the role of young people in Ukraine in civil society and politics.

Young people in Ukraine who have been catalysts for change are an example of the critical yeast that helped lead to a critical mass in revolutions and protests in Ukraine’s recent history. As noted by Komarnytskyi and Yurchyshyn, with regards to the impact of young people in Euromaidan, “So it was the youth who – by its participation in the revolutionary events – generated a critical weight of protest movement at its initial stages (which is very important).”³⁹

35. Lederach, *The Moral Imagination*, 89.

36. Lederach conceptualizes “critical mass” as “the point at which enough people believe it and the social ethos change is the point of critical mass.” Lederach, *The Moral Imagination*, 90.

37. Lederach, *The Moral Imagination*, 91.

38. Lederach, *The Moral Imagination*, 91.

39. Komarnytskyi and Yurchyshyn, “Transformation of Forms,” 149.

Lederach then connects the process and traditions of bread and breadmaking to the theory of critical yeast and peacebuilding. He argues that while there may be differences in how bread is baked in different cultural contexts, there are common understandings that can be articulated in five principles. These five principles are outlined in the paragraphs that follow.

Lederach's first principle is the principle of yeast. Yeast is the smallest ingredient used in making bread. However, it is the only one that makes the rest grow. What is important to remember is that the size of yeast has nothing to do with its potential for change.⁴⁰ He states that the principle of yeast in the context of social change is this: "a few strategically connected people have greater potential for creating the social growth of an idea or process rather than large numbers of people who think alike."⁴¹ The second principle states that in order for yeast to grow, it must first be activated in a process of its own growth, and then integrated into a wider mass (the flour and other ingredients).⁴² If we leave the yeast to sit unused, it does not have the capacity to grow, but Lederach cautions against mixing the yeast in too quickly, as this will cause the yeast to die and the bread to fail.

The third principle states that the initial growth of the yeast must be done slowly and carefully. Yeast needs moisture, warmth, and time to grow after it is activated. Lederach states that

following the same principles, social change requires careful attention to the way that people in their environment mix in relational spaces that provide a warm, initially somewhat separate, and therefore safe space to bring together what has not usually been brought together with enough sweetness to make the space conducive for the growth of those merged.⁴³

40. Lederach, *The Moral Imagination*, 91-92.

41. Lederach, *The Moral Imagination*, 92.

42. Lederach, *The Moral Imagination*, 92.

43. Lederach, *The Moral Imagination*, 92.

Then, once the yeast is ready, it can be mixed into the mass through kneading what becomes the dough. Kneading requires strength and persistence. As the dough is kneaded, it rises over and over, in spite of everything that pushes it down.⁴⁴ Therefore, yeast must be resilient once it is mixed into the mass, “in social change, the critical yeast must find a way to sustain the purpose of whom they are as yeast yet be mixed back into the full mass such that in spite of ups and downs, they are characterized as displaying the capacity to generate growth.”⁴⁵

Finally, there is multi-tasking involved when we are ready to bake the bread. The oven must be pre-heated, and while one thing is in motion in one place (in the oven), the other is happening at the same time (within the bread being baked).⁴⁶ Lederach writes that we have to pay attention to what will need to be done in the future, but that this might not happen in a linear way, instead, “...as a simultaneous understanding of interdependent though different processes...based on relational spaces, critical yeast constantly moves across a range of different processes and connections.”⁴⁷ In connection to peacebuilding, when the yeast (a group of engaged and connected young people, for example) has been activated and cultivated in a suitable environment, creating the quality needed for the growth of their movement, they can better engage larger and larger groups of people to reach and sustain the critical mass needed to create social change and build lasting, positive peace in their communities and nations.

44. Lederach, *The Moral Imagination*, 92.

45. Lederach, *The Moral Imagination*, 92.

46. Lederach, *The Moral Imagination*, 92.

47. Lederach, *The Moral Imagination*, 92-93.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of the three theoretical frameworks that this study is grounded in: human needs theory, critical consciousness, and the theory of the critical yeast. Where possible, connections to the Ukrainian context and these theories have been established. References to these theories will be made in subsequent chapters to further illustrate the relevance of these theories to participants' lived experiences and stories in this study. The following chapter provides an explanation of the research methodology, including feminism and feminist research, study design, recruitment, ethical considerations of this study, and role of Mariana, the interpreter.

Chapter Four: Methodology **Четвертий Розділ: Методологія**

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of PAR/YPAR methodologies, feminism and feminist research, study design, including an overview of both phases of this study, recruitment, data analysis, and ethical considerations of this study. This section concludes with a brief description of the role of Mariana, the interpreter in this study.

Participatory Action Research (PAR)/Youth PAR

Qualitative research involving top-down, positivist approaches that emphasize a sharp dichotomy between the researcher and their “subjects” is well-established. Research in the field of conflict resolution and peacebuilding has been standardized and professionalized through what Mac Ginty refers to as “best practices” and “lessons learned.”¹ While this research has had positive outcomes, it reinforces prescriptive notions that “expertise” comes from the researcher (from outside the context of the conflict), peacebuilding models can be universalized (transferred from one context to another without adaptation), and that people at the local level are passive victims who lack agency and the ability to solve their own conflicts and build peace from within. These prescriptive tendencies stand in contrast to what John Paul Lederach proposes as an elicitive approach to peacebuilding. Lederach posits that as human experiences, interactions, and social realities are socially constructed, we need multidisciplinary approaches to resolving

1. Roger Mac Ginty, “Everyday Peace: Bottom-Up and Local Agency in Conflict-Affected Societies,” *Security Dialogue* 45, no. 6 (2014): 551, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010614550899>.

conflict that take culture and context into account.² Elicitive peacebuilding includes five key ideas:

1. In a given context or conflict situation, people should be considered as key resources, not as recipients;
2. Local knowledge is a conduit to discovery, meaning, and appropriate action;
3. Local people must be active participants in the process;
4. Including local resources helps foster self-sufficiency and sustainability; and
5. People are empowered when they are active participants in discovering appropriate responses to conflict and issues that affect their lives.³

With this in mind, to avoid prescriptive methods, participatory action research (PAR) was selected as the research method for this study. The research tools that were used in this study come from PAR. The participation of young people in Lviv in this study, along with their knowledge and lived experiences, served as a catalyst for generating ideas and actions that will contribute to building and sustaining peace in Ukraine.

Participatory Action Research (PAR) emerged in the 1970's as an alternative means to carry out research *with* others, not *on behalf of* or *for* others as was the case with more conventional quantitative and qualitative research methods focused on objectivity and value-neutrality. PAR emphasizes that those who are directly affected by a conflict, problem, or issue are in the best position to understand and suggest solutions to the issues that affect their daily lives and prospects for a peaceful future. According to Alice McIntyre, there are three

2. John Paul Lederach, *Preparing for Peace: Conflict Transformation Across Cultures* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press: 1996), 8.

3. See John Paul Lederach, *Preparing for Peace* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1996). See also Michelle Maiese, "Elicitive Training," *Beyond Intractability* (website), September 2004, https://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/prescriptive_elicitive_training.

characteristics of PAR: "...the active participation of researchers and participants in the co-construction of knowledge; the promotion of self- and critical awareness that leads to individual, collective, and/or social change; and the building of alliances between researchers and participants in the planning, implementation, and dissemination of the research process."⁴ Each project is tailored to the context at hand and there is no fixed formula; the process is open, leaving the design, practice, and implementation of a given project in the hands of the participants themselves. Taking action at the local level to generate constructive social change is the ultimate goal of PAR.

Furthermore, PAR is connected to feminist research, as both share similar theoretical assumptions and principles that include the insider-outsider dichotomy, reflexivity, voice, and relationality through a process of action and reflection.⁵ First, feminist-infused PAR challenges mainstream definitions of concepts such as "researcher" and "participants" and focuses on ways that of knowing that are often left out of mainstream approaches to research.⁶ Second, reflexivity is "...the ways in which researchers use themselves and their critical reflection about themselves to generate knowledge and collective action."⁷ Third, both PAR and feminist research seek to break silence of marginalized or oppressed groups, engage diverse voices, and create opportunities to hear and share stories.⁸ Finally, PAR and feminism are both built on the creation

4. Alice McIntyre, *Participatory Action Research* (Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 2008), ix.

5. M. Brinton Lykes and Rachel M. Hershberg, "Chapter 16: Participatory Action Research and Feminisms: Social Inequalities and Transformative Practice," in *Handbook of Feminist Research: Theory and Praxis*, eds. Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber, 2nd ed., (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2012), 26, <https://dx-doi-org.uml.idm.oclc.org/10.4135/9781483384740.n16>.

6. Brinton Lykes and Hershberg, "Chapter 16: Participatory Action Research," 27.

7. Brinton Lykes and Hershberg, "Chapter 16: Participatory Action Research," 28.

8. Brinton Lykes and Hershberg, "Chapter 16: Participatory Action Research," 29.

of relationships and it is through these relationships that people undergo important personal and collective changes that lead to constructive social change.⁹

The roots of PAR are also connected to Freire's work on critical consciousness, as he believed that reflection and action were critical for personal and social change, where developing critical consciousness requires taking action to change the oppressive elements of one's reality.¹⁰ As such, PAR projects should be empowering, liberating, and consciousness-raising for participants, providing an opportunity to critically reflect on social issues, conflicts, and problems in a given context.¹¹ PAR is frequently referred to as "a braided process of exploration, reflection, and action."¹² Questioning, reflection, dialogue, and decision-making processes were part of this study and helped ensure that the research process was positive and met the needs of the participants.

YPAR projects demonstrate the resilience, competency, and agency of young people by including them directly in research projects that directly affect their lived experiences and futures. As described by Julio Cammarota and Michelle Fine, "...youth participatory action research (YPAR) – provides young people with opportunities to study social problems affecting their lives and then determine actions to rectify these problems."¹³ Learning to act upon and

9. Brinton Lykes and Hershberg, "Chapter 16: Participatory Action Research," 30.

10. Cathy MacDonald, "Understanding Participatory Action Research: A Qualitative Research Methodology Option," *Canadian Journal of Action Research* 13, no.2 (2012): 37, <https://doi.org/10.33524/cjar.v13i2.37>.

11. MacDonald, "Understanding Participatory," 39.

12. McIntyre, *Participatory Action Research*, 5.

13. Julio Cammarota and Michelle Fine, "Youth Participatory Action Research: A Pedagogy for Transformational Resistance," in *Revolutionizing Education: Youth Participatory Action Research in Motion*, ed. Julio Cammarota and Michelle Fine (New York, NY: Routledge, 2008), 2, <https://search-ebscohost-com.uml.idm.oclc.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e000xna&AN=216073&site=ehost-live>.

address oppressive social conditions leads to the acknowledgement of one's ability to re-shape the context of one's life, "the intended consequence of YPAR is praxis and thus changes of consciousness that allow the young person to perceive him/herself as capable of struggling for and promoting social justice within his/her community."¹⁴

The young people in Lviv who participated in this study had the opportunity to speak freely, express themselves through both phases of the study, and create relationships, all of which are key aspects of PAR. Participants felt comfortable expressing their opinions with others by sharing their lived experiences, needs, and aspirations in a relaxed and unpressured space. By connecting with other young people in Lviv who possess diverse knowledge, skills, and expertise, I hope that participants have realized their own potential to build peace, helping them take "...an imaginative leap from a world of 'as it is' to a glimpse of the world 'as it could be.'"¹⁵ It is imperative that the projects that stem from YPAR reflect young peoples' attitudes towards conflict and peace from a Ukrainian perspective to ensure that local knowledge forms the basis of peacebuilding in Ukraine. The following section provides an analysis of feminism and feminist research methodologies as they relate to this study. The remaining sections of this chapter identify the design of the study, recruitment, research questions, ethical considerations, and the role of the interpreter.

14. Cammarota and Fine, "Youth Participatory Action Research," 10.

15. Yoland Wadsworth, "What Is Participatory Action Research?" *Action Research International*, Paper 2, www.scu.edu.au/schols/gcm/ar/ari/p-ywadsworth98.html, 4, quoted in McIntyre, *Participatory Action Research*, 13.

Research Guided by Feminist Principles

Feminist research is defined by principles about the nature of knowledge (epistemology) and the process by which research is created (methodology).¹⁶ Epistemologies are theories of knowing and every epistemology involves assumptions about three things: the knower, the known, and the process of knowing.¹⁷ Feminist research uses the same elements but focuses on how these three are connected. From this perspective, epistemologies are accounts of the knowing subject, the object of study, and the relationship between them.¹⁸ Feminist scholars question the assumptions underlying conventional research practices as ideas about what knowledge is and how it is produced emerge from relationships of domination.¹⁹

A feminist approach seeks to respect, understand, and empower women, embodying an ethic of caring through the process of sharing stories.²⁰ This was applied to the broader context of this study, where a feminist lens helped to legitimate participants' lived experiences (regardless of gender) as sources of knowledge. Feminist research connects emotion and knowledge where personal experiences and emotions are acknowledged throughout the research process.²¹ Feminist research is transformative and it can and should be a setting for

16. Rebecca Campbell and Sharon M. Wasco, "Feminist Approaches to Social Science: Epistemological and Methodological Tenets," *American Journal of Community Psychology* 28, no. 6 (2000): 778, <https://doi-org.uml.idm.oclc.org/10.1023/A:1005159716099>.

17. Joey Sprague, *Feminist Methodologies for Critical Researchers: Bridging Differences* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2005), 32.

18. Sprague, *Feminist Methodologies*, 31-32.

19. Sprague, *Feminist Methodologies*, 31.

20. Campbell and Wasco, "Feminist Approaches," 778.

21. Campbell and Wasco, "Feminist Approaches," 786.

consciousness-raising and social change.²² Within feminist epistemology, standpoint feminist theory is based on the assumption that there is no single objective truth, where a person's understanding of reality is socially constructed and knowing is partial, local, and historically specific.²³ This is especially important in the context of this study as the participants – young people living in Lviv – are the experts in their own lives and know best what they need to live their best lives now and in the future.

As stated by Flaherty, feminist and Indigenous approaches provide opportunities to create research that creates opportunity for reciprocal learning through the following principles:

1. Naming the relationship the researcher/inquirer has to the research focus;
2. Understanding the importance of acknowledging the power dynamics in both the research situation and the relationship;
3. Understanding the importance of respectful inquiry;
4. Understanding that the purpose of research is further emancipation/empowerment of the people involved;
5. Using consciousness-raising to appreciate reactions to both internal and external oppression;
6. Appreciating oral history;
7. Using narrative to find voices and history previously bound away;
8. Knowing the importance of attention to language in both conveying and understanding narratives and in documenting and otherwise sharing the process of the research; and
9. Realizing the importance of reflexivity in sharing findings and conclusions with all involved in the research.²⁴

Furthermore, understanding peace from a feminist perspective is important to the context of this study. Both PACS and feminism look at power relations and conflicts, focusing on identity, human needs, relationships, and the importance of history and culture.²⁵ Moreover, a

22. Campbell and Wasco, "Feminist Approaches," 788.

23. Sprague, *Feminist Methodologies*, 41.

24. Flaherty, *Peacebuilding with Women*, 40-41.

25. Lisa McLean and María Lucía Zapata, "Peace Studies and Feminism: Debates, Linkages, and Intersections," in *Gender and Peacebuilding: All Hands Required*, eds. Maureen P. Flaherty, Thomas G. Matyók, Sean Byrne, and Hamdesa Tuso (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2015), 285-286.

feminist vision of peace should be focused on all people, “feminists are rarely, if ever, concerned about the liberation of women only. Rather, their emancipatory project tends to involve an understanding of how the international system works to create, support, and perpetuate all forms of domination.”²⁶ Therefore, “peace is thus not just the absence of war. For feminists, it includes the economic and social empowerment of women and other marginalized groups: freedom from want as well as freedom from fear.”²⁷

Claire Duncanson writes that a feminist approach to peacebuilding needs to be agency-oriented, people-centred, and come from the bottom-up with a commitment to addressing the root causes of conflict.²⁸ According to Flaherty, when peace and conflict is examined through a gendered or feminist, we have the opportunity to ask different types of questions, which helps us learn about the how gender dynamics have an impact before, during, and, after war and conflict.²⁹ She writes that this type of analysis helps us understand the gendered impact of conflict and uncover examples of agency and strength that exist within the communities we study.³⁰

Feminist research theory and the principles outlined above to guided both phases of this study. As part of this study, I used different research tools to create a respectful, safe, and non-hierarchical virtual space using two techniques: individual, semi-structured interviews and a

26. Claire Duncanson, *Gender and Peacebuilding* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2016), 59.

27. Duncanson, *Gender and Peacebuilding*, 63.

28. Duncanson, *Gender and Peacebuilding*, 63.

29. McLean and Zapata, “Peace Studies,” 285.

30. McLean and Zapata, “Peace Studies,” 285.

peacemaking circle.³¹ I was able to establish rapport and trust with participants by reducing the power differential, acknowledging my personal connections to this study. I recognized that I came to this study with my own subjectivities that could impact the research, what I learned from the participants, and what I learned from facilitating this study.

Study Design

This study had two phases: interviews and a peacemaking circle. The selection of the research tools used in this study were intentional. From a PAR perspective, participants must be actively engaged throughout the research process, so that the research reflects their own experiences, needs, and aspirations towards the issues that are identified. The voices of future generations must be heard and included in peacebuilding for the resolution of the conflict to bring a long-lasting, positive peace to all of Ukraine. The tools used in this study offered participants the opportunity to share their stories of growing up and living in Ukraine individually as well as share their hopes and dreams for a peaceful Ukraine with other young people living in Ukraine during the peacemaking circle. By sharing their hopes and dreams for a peaceful Ukraine with others, I hope that those who participated in this study are inspired and motivated to continue their work in the community and perhaps even collaborate on projects in the future. As I was unable to travel to Lviv to facilitate this study in person due to the Covid-19 pandemic, both phases of this study were facilitated virtually via a licensed version of Zoom. The details of the research process are shared below.

31. Campbell and Wasco, "Feminist Approaches," 787.

Phase One: Getting to Know You – Individual, Semi-Structured Interviews

In the first phase of this study, participants were invited to share their life stories and lived experiences in interviews. While the interviews in this study were semi-structured, in the way that the questions were asked and responses were given by the participants, the interviews became narrative as stories were shared between the participants, interpreter, and me. Despite asking the same questions in each interview, each participant shared their stories in their own way and each interview followed its own path, which enriched the experience. The follow-up and clarification questions I asked were never quite the same and varied based on the stories shared and how the interview unfolded. Additional information about the use of narrative interviews is provided in the paragraphs below.

Interviews are used by researchers from a variety of disciplines and encompass a variety of research approaches including action research and feminism.³² Interviews enable researchers to obtain stories and information about peoples' lived experiences, "interviewing offers researchers access to people's ideas, thoughts, and memories in their own words, rather than the words of the researcher."³³ Stories have always shaped the way that people understand the world, where "narratives are mostly aimed at providing the Self with knowledge about its place 'in the world,' specifically to situate the Self and delineate its existence in time and space, and provide a necessary sense of orientation in past, present, and future."³⁴ During narrative interviews, participants are invited to describe in detail – tell the story of – a particular event, a specific

32. Ruthellen Josselson, "Narrative Research," in *Encyclopedia of Research Design*, ed. Neil J. Salkind (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2010), 2, <https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412961288>.

33. Shulamit Reinharz, *Feminist Methods in Social Research* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1992), 19, quoted in MacDonald, "Understanding Participatory Action Research," 42.

34. Valeria Lazarenko, "Conflict in Ukraine," 552.

turning point in their life, or narrate their life story.³⁵ There are three specific qualities of narrative research that are particularly important in the context of this study:

1. Narrative research aims to describe and understand, rather than measure and predict.
2. It is holistic, particular, considers cultural context, and gives precedence to subjectivity rather than trying to remain objective.
3. It orients itself towards understanding human complexity, especially where variables that contribute to human life cannot be controlled (as is the case during conflict).³⁶

Using narrative can further possibilities for empowerment, especially if people have been silenced, marginalized, or oppressed, as voicing their story(ies) can be a transformative experience.³⁷

Each interview was approximately two hours in length and took place during October and November 2021. The interviews took place via Zoom and were audio-recorded. Participants had consented to the audio-recording of the interviews when they signed the Consent Form, but I re-confirmed that they were still comfortable with this prior to beginning the recording. The individual interviews helped Mariana and I to develop trust and rapport with the participants so that I could learn about their life stories, their experiences growing up in Ukraine, how their lives have changed since the war began in Eastern Ukraine in 2014, and their hopes and dreams for their futures and Ukraine's future (See Appendix A for Interview Guide).

35. Josselson, "Narrative Research," 4-5.

36. Josselson, "Narrative Research," 2-3.

37. Maureen Flaherty and Sonya Starkova, "Conversation with an Interpreter: Considerations for Cross-Language, Cross-Cultural Peacebuilding Research," *Peace and Conflict Studies* 19, no. 2 (2012): 238, <https://doi.org/10.46743/1082-7307/2012.1140>.

The questions used in the interviews were largely open-ended questions to invite participants to share their stories and lived experiences. As each question was asked, time was provided for participants to elaborate on their stories (if they desired) and this enabled me to ask follow-up questions, “follow-up questions provide a means for the participant to elaborate on their narrative by asking for additional examples, explanations, extensions, clarifications, and descriptions.”³⁸ After the individual interviews were completed, participants were asked a series of de-brief questions (unrecorded) as a means to check-in with the participants and see how they were feeling after their interviews.

Phase Two: Envisioning a Peaceful Ukraine – The Peacemaking Circle

Peacemaking circles are intended to provide a safe, non-judgemental space to engage in the sharing of ideas, reflections, and feelings in response to specific questions.³⁹ Peacemaking circles are rooted in restorative justice practices of Indigenous people of North America.⁴⁰ A description of the peacemaking circle process can be found in Appendix B.

Using dialogue helps create a space for gaining understanding where the conversation enriches everyone as a “...conversation with a center, not sides...This center, what’s held in focus, involves an expanded appreciation of ourselves and others, of each other’s interest, and of

38. Falon Kartch, “Narrative Interviewing,” in *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Communication Research Methods*, ed. Mike Allen (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2018), 1073, <https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781483381411.n369>.

39. Mark Umbreit, “Peacemaking Circles,” Center for Restorative Justice and Peacemaking, University of Minnesota, 2008, 1, https://www.cehd.umn.edu/ssw/.../Peacemaking...Circles/Peacemaking_Circles_08.pdf

40. Maureen Flaherty and Sonya Starkova, “Instructor’s Manual,” Course Manual developed for Participatory Action Research in Social Work,” 20.

our connectedness.”⁴¹ Circles help eliminate power differentials between the researcher and participants as well as between participants, “circles...engage ‘power with’ – the power of people and communities to connect positively, to confront harms, to address deeper causes, and to seek transformation.”⁴² When people feel safe, heard, and respected, they can take an active role in dialogue about peacebuilding. They are then more likely to support the outcome or ideas generated from the circle, and the diverse contributions from each member increase the changes of creating tangible solutions and forming lasting connections.⁴³

Building relationships is the most important outcome of peacemaking circles so that long-term personal, relational, community, system, and cultural transformation can occur through the increased capacity to work together and come up with innovative solutions to address needs in their community.⁴⁴ As aptly stated by Kay Pranis, Barry Stuart, and Mark Wedge, “Circles are a gentle, peaceful, yet persistent and powerful force for social change, because they instill in participants the conviction that communities are what we make them and that our power and options for shaping them are vastly greater than we imagined – if we practice coming together in a good way.”⁴⁵

For the peacemaking circle, four of the six participants in this study met virtually via Zoom for two hours on November 26, 2021. While I had hoped for five participants, one participant did not have a good internet connection and was not able to remain online. The

41. Kay Pranis, Barry Stuart, and Mark Wedge, *Peacemaking Circles: From Crime to Community* (St. Paul, MN: Living Justice Press, 2003), xvi.

42. Pranis, Stuart, and Wedge, *Peacemaking Circles*, 11.

43. Pranis, Stuart, and Wedge, *Peacemaking Circles*, 17.

44. Pranis, Stuart, and Wedge, *Peacemaking Circles*, 209-210.

45. Pranis, Stuart, and Wedge, *Peacemaking Circles*, 225.

peacemaking circle was audio-recorded. Prior to the beginning of the recording, I asked participants how they were feeling as part of a check-in exercise. As the peacemaking circle began at 7:00 p.m. in Ukraine, participants shared that they had busy days, and some were tired but in general, they were ready to participate. I had forgotten to email participants ahead of the peacemaking circle to ask that they bring an object with them that they could use as a talking piece.⁴⁶ This was unfortunate as the object is intended to be of personal significance to them. Instead, and in the moment, I asked participants to take a minute or two and find an object that they could use as a talking piece during the session, something from their home or immediate environment they could use. Some interesting objects were used including a scarf, an egg, a water bottle, and tennis ball. As the circle was facilitated online, participants would hold up their object prior to speaking to indicate that they wanted to speak. This helped keep the circle flowing naturally.

We reviewed how the peacemaking circle would take place (based on Appendix B) and I checked if there were any questions before I started the recording. A fourth participant joined a few minutes after the circle had begun. After a participant finished speaking, I stopped the recording so that he could introduce himself and we did a quick review of the process. I then restarted the recording and the circle continued for two hours. After the circle was finished and I had stopped the recording, we did a check-out and de-brief about how they were feeling now. I then thanked them for participating in this study before ending the circle.

46. In peacemaking circles, a talking piece is used to ensure that participants speak only when they have the talking piece. The talking piece creates and sustains an inclusive dialogue. Those who are more talkative may only speak when it is their turn, ensuring that they are actively listening. Those who are quieter can also have an opportunity to speak or pass the piece in silence to move on to the next person. Pranis, Stewart, Wedge, *Peacemaking Circles*, 93.

Including a peacemaking circle as part of this study was important as recent research shows that people who live in Ukraine still have much in common despite the ongoing war and that Ukrainians seek negative peace and have aspirations for reconciliation and the development of an integrated and peaceful society in the future.⁴⁷ Therefore, participants in this study learned more about one another through the peacemaking circle, where I hope they realized that they share common ground and could work together towards peace in Ukraine. This phase of the study provided participants with an opportunity to envision their ideas for a peaceful Ukraine.

Recruitment

Prior to beginning this study, ethics approval was obtained from the University of Manitoba's Research Ethics Board 2 (REB 2). As I was unable to travel to Lviv, I had to rely on my colleagues' distribution of my recruitment poster (See Appendix E) and a social media post (See Appendix F) around the Lviv Polytechnic National University (LPNU) campus to recruit participants. The poster, along with referrals that came through my colleagues at LPNU aided in the recruitment of the participants. The criteria for my study were that participants were between 18-35 years of age, were university students who were born in Ukraine, and who lived in the city of Lviv at the time. My goal was to have 6-8 participants take part in my study. In the end, I conducted six interviews and four of my six participants were able to join the peacemaking circle which provided the opportunity for rich discussion. The individual interviews took place in October and November 2021. The peacemaking circle was held at the end of November 2021.

47. Lazarenko, "Conflict in Ukraine," 561.

Initial Meetings

All email communication to participants was written by me and sent to them in both Ukrainian and English. It was important to me that I communicate in Ukrainian with the participants as a means to establish those initial connections and ensure that I was welcoming and approachable to participants. Prior to each interview, participants met with me and the interpreter, Mariana, via Zoom to discuss the parameters and intentions of this study, to confirm that they met all the requirements to take part in the study, review the Confidentiality Agreement (See Appendix C) and Consent Form (See Appendix D), and to answer any questions they may have had. This initial also served as a way for me to “meet” the participants for the first time and begin to establish a relationship with them prior to beginning the interviews.

The initial meetings were approximately a half an hour in length, and Mariana graciously verbally read out both forms so participants would have a clear understanding of the study. After this initial meeting, the participants were sent written copies of the Consent Form and Confidentiality Agreement via email to review on their own knowing that they could contact me with any questions. Once the forms were reviewed, signed, and sent back to me electronically, the interviews were scheduled based on participants’ availability.

Research Questions

Individual, Semi-Structured Interviews

The individual interviews were guided by the following questions:

1. Do I have your permission to begin audio-recording the interview?
2. Could you please tell me about your life, beginning with where you were born, the circumstances of your family at that time, your place in the family, etc.?
3. Please tell me about your childhood and adolescence, your school years, family, friends, and interests.
 - What was life like where you grew up?
 - What was of interest to you?

- What did you want to do when you grew up?
- 4. What were things like as you came into adulthood?
 - Did you go to university/college (if applicable)?
 - What type of work did/do you do?
 - What were/are your interests?
 - What was/is important to you?
- 5. What has life been like since Russian aggression began in Eastern Ukraine in 2014? How has it impacted you?
- 6. Could you describe your life now? Who and what are important to you? What does a day in your life look like?
- 7. What do you do for fun, to relax?
- 8. How do you cope when you face hardships? What kinds of things do you do? What gets you through hard times? Who (if anyone) do you turn to?
- 9. What hopes and dreams do you have for yourself, your family, your community, and for Ukraine's future?

The de-brief questions post-interview were as follows:

- How did participating in this interview make you feel?
- How are you feeling now?

Peacemaking Circle

For the peacemaking circle, as participants had already been asked about their hopes and dreams for Ukraine's future in their individual interviews, the following question guided the discussion for the peacemaking circle:

1. What is your vision for a peaceful Ukraine?

Question #8 listed above in the interview questions was asked at the end of the peacemaking circle as there was limited time during the interviews and questions were prioritized based on time. Most participants expressed that they had had a long day by the time the peacemaking circle convened later in the evening in Lviv and asking this question at the end of the peacemaking circle served as a perfect way to end our peacemaking circle. At the end of the peacemaking circle, as part of the de-brief, participants were asked to share no more than three words about how they were feeling at that moment.

Analysis

In the initial meeting and on the Consent Form, each participant was asked what their preferred name was for the study as well as for the dissemination of research results. While no participants indicated they wished to remain anonymous, all participants' identities were coded once they had agreed to participate in the study and had signed the Consent Form and Confidentiality Agreement. Each participant was assigned a letter and a number for their code. This was assigned arbitrarily.

Upon completion of the interviews, I transcribed the audio-recordings and send them to each participant to review and for them to have the opportunity to provide any edits or revisions. No requests for revisions were received. The interviews were analyzed extensively by searching for common themes. The peacemaking circle was not transcribed, but the audio recording was also analyzed for common themes. The themes from the interviews and peacemaking circle formed the basis for Chapters Five through Eight of this study.

Ethical Considerations of this Study

Ethical approval was obtained through the University of Manitoba Research Ethics Board 2(REB 2) (See Appendix H). After approval was obtained in September 2021, the individual interviews commenced in October 2021. Considerations for ethical approval for this study included the following areas:

Informed Consent

All participants attended an initial, virtual meeting with me and the Interpreter to review the Consent Form and Confidentiality Agreement in Ukrainian and were encouraged to ask questions during this meeting. It was emphasized that their participation was completely

voluntary, and they were free to withdraw from the study at any time. After the initial meeting, the Consent Form and Confidentiality Agreements were sent to participants to review again on their own before signing the form and sending it back to me. Participants were encouraged to ask questions at any time if clarification was needed or if questions arose during the study.

Confidentiality

Participants took part in individual interviews and a peacemaking circle. During the initial meeting, the Confidentiality Agreement and Consent Form were reviewed verbally in Ukrainian. In signing the Consent Form and Confidentiality Agreements, both Mariana and I agreed to keep what was shared in the interviews confidential and keep participants' identity private. Despite all participants waiving anonymity in their Consent Forms, only participants' coded identities are used in this study. Participants agreed to respect and keep confidential all information shared by other participants in the peacemaking circle. Mariana also signed a separate Oath of Confidentiality as required by the University of Manitoba prior to beginning participant recruitment (See Appendix G).

Compensation

No compensation was provided to the participants. This statement was included in the Consent Form for this study.

Deception

No deception was used in any part of this study.

Feedback/Debriefing

Participants had the opportunity for de-briefing at the end of their individual interview as well as at the end of the peacemaking circle. This ensured that participants had opportunities to reflect upon their feelings and experiences after participating in this study.

Potential Risks and Benefits

There were no risks to the participants in this study, even though sharing their stories and any challenges they are facing may have brought up strong emotions. Although the war is ongoing in Ukraine, participants were safe during all parts of the study. Participants were asked to share only their personal stories and not that of any third party. The open nature of both phases of this study meant that each participant could share and take part in each phase as much or as little as they felt comfortable.

While there were no immediate benefits to participants, I hope that by participating in this study, participants were able to meet other young people living in Lviv. Hearing the stories and ideas of others, especially during this tumultuous time in Ukraine may help them appreciate the perspectives and stories of others and recognize commonalities that may inspire them to continue their work in the community or even collaborate on projects together in the future as almost all participants attend the same university, and all of them live in the same city.

Mariana's Role as Interpreter

Even though I am a native speaker of Ukrainian, I was immensely grateful and appreciative to have an interpreter, Mariana, work with me throughout the research process of this study. The role of the interpreter in cross-language research is crucial as they are the ones

who can communicate openly with both researchers and their participants.⁴⁸ In cross-language research, the interpreter works within a dynamic environment to convey information and meaning between researchers and participants.⁴⁹ They must receive information in the source language, conceptualize the meaning of the information, and then re-express the meaning within the cultural context of the target language.⁵⁰ Furthermore, interpreters take on various roles during cross-language research as co-participants, co-researchers, and collaborators that enrich the research.^{51,52}

As stated by Maureen Flaherty and Sonya Stavkova, “in cross-language research the interpreter becomes the conduit for all interaction.”⁵³ Mariana developed a relationship of trust with me as the researcher and developed trust and rapport with the participants. However, the circumstances were unique in this study. While Mariana was the conduit for translating the dialogue and conversations during the interviews and peacemaking circle, because I understood almost everything that the participants said in Ukrainian, there were instances where no translation was needed when Mariana verified that I had understood what the participant had said.

48. Flaherty and Starkova, “Conversation with an Interpreter,” 245.

49. Bergen, Nicole. “Narrative Depictions of Working With Language Interpreters in Cross-Language Qualitative Research,” *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 17 (2018): 1-2, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406918812301>.

50. Bergen, “Narrative Depictions,” 1.

51. Bergen, “Narrative Depictions,” 2.

52. Flaherty and Starkova, “Conversation with an Interpreter,” 245.

53. Flaherty and Starkova, “Conversation with an Interpreter,” 239.

Mariana played an active role in this study both prior to and during the research process.⁵⁴ She helped to ensure that my appendices, forms, and research questions were accurately translated into Ukrainian. She was an integral part of this study and in many ways, she became a co-researcher in this study through her translation and insights during both phases of this study. Having Mariana work with me in each phase of the study was instrumental to the success of the interviews and peacemaking circle. Her dedication and extensive contributions made my experience of facilitating this study more personal as I knew, and the participants knew, that what was being said in our conversations was accurately translated in either Ukrainian or English. Mariana always made sure to check that what was translated was verified by the participants and always created space and opportunities for participants to clarify and/or elaborate.

Finally, it is important to remember that when an interpreter is part of cross-language research, they could be doubly impacted by the work, especially when the cultural context is their own, “therefore, it is vital that steps are taken to de-brief with her and pace the work such that she has time to recover not only physically and intellectually, but also emotionally.”⁵⁵ After each interview and the peacemaking circle, Mariana and I always made time to stay online to connect virtually and de-brief with one another about the interviews and discuss things we noticed and talk about our lives in general. Even though I have met Mariana in-person in Winnipeg prior to her agreement to act as the interpreter in this study, we became friends during this study and knowing that she was there by my side made facilitating this study an enjoyable experience.

54. As stated, Mariana signed an Oath of Confidentiality prior to the beginning of the study.

55. Flaherty and Starkova, “Conversation with an Interpreter,” 256.

Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of PAR/YPAR methodologies, feminism and feminist research, study design, including a description of the interviews and peacemaking circle. An explanation of the recruitment process, data analysis, and ethical considerations of this study was included in this chapter. This section concluded with a brief description of the role of Mariana, the interpreter in this study. The following chapter delves into the participants' interviews and the experience of facilitating the interviews with 7,591 km between me and the participants in Lviv.

Chapter Five: Sharing Stories from 7,591 Kilometres Away **Пятий Розділ: Обмінювання Розповідями на Відстані 7,591 Километр**

Introduction

This chapter outlines the stories and lived experiences shared by the six participants who took part in this study. Six interviews were conducted in October and November 2021 via Zoom. As discussed in Chapter Four, narrative qualitative interviews provided an opportunity for participants to share their stories with me, the researcher, and they also shared their stories with Mariana, the interpreter. In this chapter, there is a shift toward a first-person perspective where I reflect on my experiences and share what I learned from the participants in the process. This fluidity between formal and informal language will be evident throughout the remaining chapters. This chapter begins with an analysis of the importance of storytelling in PACS to provide context for the interviews. I have chosen to highlight different aspects of participants' life experiences and stories in four separate chapters.

This chapter is divided into sections based on commonalities and themes that arose from the life stories that were shared by participants in their interviews including what it was like to grow up in Ukraine including family life, the important role of grandparents, school years, hobbies, and their transition to university life. Participants' stories move back and forth through time, sometimes focusing on one period in their lives, and sometimes on another. A discussion of the impact of nuances in language in cross-language research concludes this chapter, as finding the “right” word when translating dialogue into Ukrainian and English became a unique aspect of the interviews during this study.

No participants asked to remain anonymous in this study and are referred to in the following sections and subsequent chapters by their preferred first names.¹

Storytelling in PACS

Jessica Senehi writes, “Storytelling is telling someone else that something happened.”² Storytelling is an important part of PACS and narrative research. Storytelling has emerged as a methodological approach to peace research in PACS, and “this is a somewhat political act because it resituates the research participant from being an object of study, to a humanizing role as a subject in a knowledge-making process – as storyteller.”³ Flaherty writes that “we hear stories of our birth, of family, of our people, our cultures, and our nations. From these stories we construct other stories we tell ourselves about ourselves and the world around us.”⁴

In this study, participants were asked to tell their own stories and lived experiences in their own words and in their language, sharing their narrative with Mariana and me. Participants were open, honest, and vulnerable and shared personal stories filled with emotions, “those involved in storytelling laugh together, share tears together, unconsciously hold their breath together when they want to hear more, creating the silence that happens when people are

1. In this thesis, participants’ names are written in Ukrainian with the English translation of their name in brackets the first instance they are mentioned. After this point, participants are referred to by the English translation of their name. While readers will not necessarily be familiar with the Ukrainian alphabet, it was important to me that their Ukrainian names be included in this thesis to emphasize their Ukrainian identities.

2. Jessica Senehi, “Building Peace: Storytelling to Transform Conflicts Constructively,” in *Handbook of Conflict Analysis and Resolution*, eds. Dennis J. D. Sandole, Sean Byrne, Ingrid Sandole-Staroste, and Jessica Senehi (London, UK: Routledge, 2009), 202.

3. Jessica Senehi, “Theory-Building in Peace and Conflict Studies: The Storytelling Methodology,” in *Routledge Companion to Peace and Conflict Studies*, eds. Sean Byrne, Thomas Matyók, Imani Michelle Scott, and Jessica Senehi (London, UK: Routledge, 2020), 46, eBook.

4. Flaherty, *Peacebuilding with Women*, 52.

listening closely.”⁵ The stories that were shared in this study encompassed all these elements. This made facilitating this study, a truly humbling and human experience that I was grateful to be part of.

“Hi ____, Here is the Link to the Zoom Invitation. See You Soon!”

Each interview took place virtually via Zoom. As there was an eight-hour time difference, this meant that interviews took place in the morning for me (Winnipeg time) and in the evening for Mariana and the participants in Ukraine. It was interesting to have conversations with them while I was eating breakfast, starting my day, knowing that they were near the end of the day and ending their studies and other activities. We were sharing stories from 7,591 kilometres away. As I was unable to travel to Lviv due to the Covid-19 pandemic, I was not sure how the participants would respond to virtual interviews and if they would feel comfortable sharing their stories this way. It is often more challenging to build trust and rapport virtually as opposed to in-person when you are sitting across from someone and sharing the same physical space.

However, I was pleasantly surprised as all the participants were willing to share their stories and did not mind when I asked follow-up questions, asked for clarification, or wanted to know more about a particular aspect of their lives. I gave each participant the opportunity to ask me questions about my own life and, in turn, I was able to share some stories about my life growing up as a Ukrainian Canadian in Winnipeg. Throughout the interviews, I noted several similarities between my own life and the participants’ lives, which allowed me to build rapport and connections with them. These are noted in the sections below where applicable.

5. Senehi, “Building Peace,” 210.

What Was Life Like Growing Up in Ukraine?

The participants were asked to start sharing their stories from the beginning of their lives: where they were born, the circumstances of their family at the time, and their place in the family. They were then asked to share about their childhood and adolescence, school years, family, friends, and interests. Then, they shared what things were like as they came into adulthood: their interests, post-secondary education, and what their life is like now. Some of the participants' stories are chronicled in this section to provide context for what it was like to grow up in an independent Ukraine.

While all the participants were living in Lviv at the time of this study, only one participant was born and raised in Lviv. The rest were born in other oblasts and regions of Ukraine. Three participants were from Zakarpattia oblast: two were from Mukachevo and one was from Uzhhorod; one participant was from Vinnytsia oblast, from a village named Balanivka; and one participant was born in Luhansk oblast but moved to Kyiv briefly and then to Lviv at the age of nine after the war began.

Family Life

As part of the questions I asked in the interviews, I wanted to learn about participants' lives growing up in an independent Ukraine, which included learning about their families. My family (immediate, extended, and family friends who are like family) was and remains one of, if not the most important aspect of my life throughout my childhood, adolescence, and now as an adult as a Ukrainian Canadian. As explained in Chapter Three, family is an important way through which Ukrainians construct their identities.⁶ Therefore, I was interested and curious to

6. Refer to Chapter Three, pages 43-44 of this thesis for additional context about the importance of family and Ukrainian identity.

learn about participants' families and the impact they had on their lives growing up. When asked to share their stories about their families and childhood, participants spoke openly about their lives. Анжеліка (Angelika) said that

I was born in Vinnytsia oblast, Vershatsky raion, and the village is called Balanivka...I was born in a full family. My parents at that time did not have stable jobs, so dad had some jobs from time to time and my mom was a housewife. At the beginning we used to live with our aunt and then we moved into our own house. It was a happy childhood.

When asked if she was close with other family growing up, she added that

My dad passed away when I was in the 10th grade. And I'm not in touch with my mom now. So, when I go home, I am with my sister and I go to my grandma's.

Later in the interview, she added

I've got a good relationship with my sister. I helped my parents a lot to babysit her.

When asked about her family, Даша (Dasha) shared that

I am an only child. I don't even have any cousins, maybe third cousins, but I don't really communicate with them. I really am an only child. I came to Lviv in 2014 [before the beginning of 5th grade]. I was born in Luhansk region and after the actions started in that region, I came to Lviv. Coming to Lviv, relations are not really good with my family [in Luhansk] because all the family used to live there and some of the relatives are still there. But, because of moving from Luhansk region, we are...considered...it's a betrayal or something like that. Therefore, the connections between family are not really good right now. I came to Lviv with my parents and grandparents. My mom's parents.

When asked if she could tell me more about her life growing up in Luhansk, Dasha said that

I am not really good at remembering that period of time in my life, maybe because I was quite young, but I used to go to Kindergarten and to school and do dance.

Валерія (Valeriia) provided additional context about her family and their connection to the Slovakian community and dialect spoken there as the village she grew up in was close to the Slovakian border. This was fascinating to me as I was not familiar with the Zakarpattia oblast, its proximity to Slovakia and Hungary, and Slovensko, its regional dialect:

I was born in Uzhhorod. It's in Transcarpathia. I am 18 years old and I have a sister. We lived in a village near Uzhhorod, not in Uzhhorod, but I spent all of my life in Uzhhorod. I have a father and mother. We lived with our grandparent's, my father's parents. And I

was born in a village where my mother's family and father's family lived together in one village. And this village is one of the Slovakian communities. We have our special language. In our family, we communicate in four languages: Ukrainian, Russian, Slovensko...I don't know how it's called, and a little bit of English because now my sister is an English teacher. My parents have their own business and my father has higher education but my mother does not...My sister is 23 years old and lives [separately] with her boyfriend.

When asked about the dialect, Slovensko, and if it was only spoken in her village, Valeriia added that

When the Red Army came to this village, it was re-named Storozhnytsya. This means the last town on the border. We are near Slovakia and this has a very big influence on us and most of the old people who live in this village speak this dialect. This is like a Ukrainian and Slovakian mix.

Михайло (Michael) shared information about his family with me as well:

I was born in Mukachevo city. It is located in the Transcarpathian region. At the very west of Ukraine. When I was born my family moved to a new flat and since then, we have been living there. My parents are divorced. They were divorced in 2001 and I was born in 2000. So, I live with my mom, and I've got a stepbrother on my dad's side and I communicate with him.

Ангеліна (Anhelina) was also from Mukachevo and she shared information about growing up in Zakarpattia oblast:

I was born in Mukachevo city. It's in Transcarpathia and it is on the border with four more country. I lived there for 17 years and when I was 17, I moved to Lviv and I have lived here for three years already. I don't have any siblings. I grew up on my own. I have close relations with my cousins – they are brother and sister and live in Lviv and came to Mukachevo very often. I grew up with my parents and when I was five, my grandparents on my mom's side moved into the house next to us. I have kind of a complicated relationship with my mom, and it was like that throughout my childhood and now. So, I'm more comfortable communicating with my dad, with my grandpa and grandma as well.

Later in the interview, when I asked more about Mukachevo and what it looked like, Anhelina shared additional information:

My town is not really big. It's about 100,000 people. We used to live in the part of it where many Romas lived.

N6 shared the following about growing up in Lviv:

I was born in Lviv in the family of a schoolteacher and a military journalist. I have an older brother and sister, so I'm the youngest. It was a normal family. I mean, we were not rich, probably like a middle-class family. I was friendly with my brother and sister. I would say we didn't have big fights.

When I asked if all of his family was from Lviv and grew up there, N6 added that

No, they were not born in Lviv, actually. My mom came from Berdychiv and my dad is from the Khmelnytskyi region. I only know that my grandma's relatives are in Poland. I do not communicate with them and the others have passed away already.

As mentioned in Chapter Three, with regards to identity needs that are part of human needs theory, family is one of the five major aspects of life through which Ukrainians construct their identities.⁷ This was evident in the stories that participants shared – their families, whether they are closely connected to them or not, had an important impact on the development of their identities as they were growing up. Grandparents were another group of family members that played a key part in the lives of participants and participants' stories about their grandparents and their impact on their lives are shared in the next section.

Grandmothers and Grandfathers (Бабу́ці ма Дідю́ці) – The Important Role of Grandparents

Grandparents were mentioned as specific family members with whom several of the participants had (and still have) a close connection to growing up. Flaherty notes the importance of the stories we are told by our parents and elders as helping to shape our individual and social identities, “from them, we learn about relationships to others as individuals and also as members of larger groups.”⁸ I was particularly curious about how participants interacted with their grandparents and how they spent their time together. This resonated deeply with me as I too, was

7. Tremont, “Rebuilding Houses, Rebuilding Ukraine,” 25.

8. Flaherty, *Peacebuilding with Women*, 52.

fortunate enough to grow up with both sets of grandparents and spent a significant amount of time with them and other elderly family members growing up. I still visit my Baba Mia weekly at her personal care home in Winnipeg so that I may continue to cherish our special moments together. The significance of grandparents as our teachers and elders cannot be understated. Babas and Didos are special people who teach us many things about Ukrainian history, culture, language, and our family histories.

Anhelina shared that her grandfather taught her how to read and fondly recalled how he taught her how to play many games:

My grandpa taught me how to read when I was about five years old. So, starting from the first grade, I used to read very well...My grandpa is an example for me of a very creative soul, a creative person, and an example of a loving person, as well as my grandma. During my childhood, even now, but more often then because I used to live there, my grandpa taught me how to play chess, cards, some other games like...Morsky B.⁹ With my grandma, we didn't have so much fun. But we could do something together like pet and visit the dog and cat.

During this part of the interview with Anhelina, I shared my own experiences growing up with my grandparents and explained that I spend a lot of time with them, and that I learned how to cook from my father's mother, my Baba Mia. I asked Anhelina if she learned how to cook with her grandmother:

We didn't do that...My grandma is a doctor, a therapist. I do remember once at school, I had a task to fill in a table about vitamins. I went to my grandma, and we did it together.

Angelika noted that when she comes home from Lviv, she visits with her grandma and sister but that her grandma lives in another area that her family moved to later in her life. I asked her about how she spent and spends time with her grandmother. She noted that

My grandma is a really good cook. She taught me how to cook. We did some cleaning in the house. She taught me reading, reading tales. She also used to tell me tales when I was going to sleep.

9. Upon further investigation online, I found out that "Morsky B" is likely referring to the game commonly known as Battleship.

Valeriia also shared stories about spending time with her grandparents growing up:

A big part of my free time I spent with my grandpa, my grandfather and he taught me how to make wine. We have our own grape plantation. I would spend time with my grandfather and always, always with my grandparents because my parents were at work.

Later, I told Valeriia about my own closeness with my grandparents growing up and I asked if she would be willing to tell me more about this part of her life. She agreed. I asked if there was a farm where the grapes were grown. She explained that

We do not have a farm, but we have a big *podviria* [yard]. Now, we don't have animals, but when I was a young child, we had many animals. We had a cow. We had many chickens, and rabbits, and geese. And always, always we have a dog and two or three cats. But now we have only one dog and one cat.

When asked if her father's parents still live with her, she replied:

They lived with us until I was 14. After that, they said "Okay, you are grown up and we will move to a flat." They now live in a flat in town. But they left for us all our gardens and our house. My mother's parents live maybe one kilometre from us, and they have their own house and garden and part of a field where they grow sunflowers and something like that.

She shared that she also spent time with her mother's parents as well especially as she did not live with them. She shared that her grandmother has a disability and she and her sister spend lots of time with her as she is home all the time.

It was evident through participants' interviews that their relationships with their grandparents were important to them and helped them form important roots with their families and communities. Grandparents, as the elders in our families (especially in the Ukrainian context), help us (their grandchildren) learn about our cultural and linguistic identities, and help us learn about our family histories. Flaherty also noted the importance of family, of grandmothers specifically, as those who carried the history of both family and nation.¹⁰ I very much enjoyed hearing participants' recollections of the time spent with their grandparents and many of them noted how they still visit with their grandparents when they return home from

10. Flaherty, *Peacebuilding with Women*, 155.

school in Lviv. This brought back fond memories of my grandparents (on both sides of my family), who taught me to cook, read to me, taught me games, spoke Ukrainian with me, and shared stories and history of our family in Winnipeg and in Ukraine. Hearing the participants' stories helped me realize further connections between my life and their lives and that even though we were separated by a great distance, some aspects of our lives as we grew up were not so different.

School Years, Hobbies, and Interests

After learning about their childhood, stories were shared about their school years, hobbies, interests, and what their life was like growing up. It is through both formal and informal education settings that critical consciousness is studied and promoted.¹¹ All of the participants are dedicated students who achieved high grades in school and participated in various extracurricular activities and hobbies from their childhood through adolescence and into adulthood. Valeriia noted that from a young age, she enjoyed making handmade things:

I liked to make handmade stuff. I loved to find something in the forest and make something with leaves or something like that. I really wanted to play the piano, but my mom said I must be a smart girl and go into sports. I did not want to go into sports and now I study piano and do something for myself, for my soul.

When I asked about her schooling, her friends, and what life was like growing up in the village, she shared that

My school is not very far from my home. I walked from home. I studied very hard, and I always got nervous about studying and wanted to be perfect and I must be first in all of my disciplines...I have 11 honour diplomas. From school for 11 years. 11 diplomas for each year.

11. Patka et al., "Exploring Sense of Community," 1.

Valeriia elaborated about friendships at school, adding that

I did not communicate well with my classmates in school. But I made many friends outside of school when I went to student government. I found very many people and we have much volunteer work and help our volunteer organization...For eight or nine grades, I was a very quiet person. It was very hard to communicate with other people. Now I want more, more people in my life and I want to meet new people and communicate with people from different parts of Ukraine and the world.

Michael shared some information about his experiences at school, noting,

I was good at school. I was getting all A's and I was very active at school as well... At primary school, I was bullied by my classmates. But then through achievements in my studies and participating in different things, relations became better between with my classmates...So speaking about friends, I would say that actively having friends and communicating happened when I was 14. This is the time of communicating, friendships, spending time together.

When I asked about his school and what he liked to do, he added that

My school was quite close. It was five minutes walk. I studied a lot and I also liked doing Lego.

Later, he added that

For 11 years, I studied at the same school, at the same classroom even...Somewhere around 2016, I participated in the School of Leadership. There were many young people or active school students from Mukachevo, from all around Mukachevo. That's how my circle of friends, or people I communicated with has widened.

Anhelina also noted that she was bullied at school:

I had some troubles with my classmates from Grade 5 to Grade 9. So, there were miscommunications between us, misunderstandings, and bullying towards me from them. At school, I didn't like anything connected to Math. I was more into music, arts, and denied what I didn't like...I didn't like to read big books or large books for quite a long time.

She added that she also enjoyed extracurricular activities:

From probably the second grade, I really liked to do some extracurricular activities, we are calling this *hurty*. It can be dances or things...I liked doing those things that I was not forced to do. I loved the freedom of choice that I had by choosing them [these activities].

When I asked which activities she chose, she told me about her interests in wicker work and photography:

Wicker work...including baskets, bells, vases. I started doing this at age 12. In taking this kind of activity, I've realized that I really like arts, I would say. So, I decided to take a course in photography. This was kind of a very important moment in my life. When I got to know some people there at this club, the photography club, I realized that people were not so bad as I thought they were.

When I asked about her school and where it was in relation to her home, she added that

My school was ten minutes walk from my home, but I was always early because I don't like to be late.

Angelika shared some similarities with Anhelina in that they both enjoyed extracurricular activities:

I finished 11 grades. And at school, I used to go to each and every extracurricular activity like dances, drums, crafts, *sopilka* [recorder]. And I even won some prizes. So, when it comes to crafts, I went to some competitions at the oblast level, three times and won three times.

When asked about whether the extracurricular activities took place during or at school or in the community, Angelika provided further context:

The *sopilka* and the crafts were from school. Dance was free of charge, but they were from the local community. That's what we've got in villages. We have some *prosvita*.¹² Different dances, mainly Ukrainian, but there could also be some Spanish dances, even Roma dances.

She added that

I really loved to go to school. I had many friends there, so I really enjoyed it.

N6 shared stories about his childhood and school years, too:

Most of my childhood I spent in my yard. So it was playing different games like hiding and football. I walked a lot on my own. I also started rowing. I started in Grade 6 or 7 and I stopped at grade 9. So I started practicing this sport but I mostly did it when I was at school. I stopped because of my studies. I would say that most of the time I played with

12. According to the Encyclopedia of Ukraine, *Prosvita* societies (Enlightenment societies) were Ukrainian community organizations developed from the late 1860s to 1940s. They helped to preserve and develop Ukrainian culture and education in Ukraine and also in the diaspora. For more information, please visit this website: <http://www.encyclopediaofukraine.com/display.asp?linkpath=pages%5CP%5CR%5CProsvita.htm>.

boys, and they were in my company. There were also some girls. We had some fun. That's how I spent my time, my childhood.

Here, I would like to add some additional context to this section that cannot be captured in this short chapter. Throughout this section of the interviews, I shared information about the Canadian K-12 school context and asked questions about schooling, grades, national tests, and required subjects in schools in Ukraine as I was curious to find out how the two education systems differed. Mariana helped provide further context for me as well when I had additional questions. These discussions helped me attain important context for participants' transitions from grade school to university.

University Life

All the participants in this study were university students. Education was very important to all participants to be successful in their adult lives. The primary and secondary school system is different in Ukraine from in Canada, which meant that most of the participants started university between the ages of 16-18 and Mariana explained that it is most likely that students enter university at the age of 17. Five of the six participants attended LPNU and one participant attended Ivan Franko Lviv National University.

During the interviews, I learned about how participants decided upon their chosen field of study. As a university student myself, it was interesting to hear about the competitive process and testing requirements for applying to and entering university. Both Mariana and the participants helped explain how the post-secondary education system worked in Ukraine so I could better understand their context. It was evident that education, particularly higher education, is generally valued in Ukraine given its importance to the participants in this study. Education is a welfare need identified by Galtung in his typology of basic human needs; it is a need that should be met in order to avoid misery and ensures participants can express themselves and have

opportunities for dialogue.¹³ Participants' dedication to their studies and their career goals demonstrates how they are working towards having this very important welfare need met.

Finally, in the interviews and peacemaking circle, I learned about participants' experiences moving to Lviv (for most of the participants) and what it was like to start university in a different city and about moving to a dormitory or apartment. I, too, had this experience when I moved to London, Ontario from Winnipeg to complete my first master's degree at Western University. I made many friends in my cohort and years later, I still communicate with several friends from this program. It was in the peacemaking circle that I learned that some of the participants were connected as they were in the same Social Work department and/or cohort at LPNU or were friends from the same city and knew each other growing up.

As my colleagues at LPNU were based in the Social Work department, it was not surprising that four of my six participants studied Social Work or Social Welfare (Dasha, Anhelina, N6, and Angelika). One participant studied Economics and Valeriia was studying to become a veterinarian. N6 shared his experience of entering the Social Welfare program at LPNU, noting that he had initially wanted to study History:

I wanted to study at Lviv Polytechnic. I applied in different faculties, but I wanted to start in the History faculty. But it didn't work out. My result was high enough, but there was not enough time to provide my documents. So, therefore, I kind of chose the Social Welfare program. That's what I'm taking.

I was curious and asked about the difference between the Social Work and Social Welfare programs. N6 explained how the two are different at LPNU:

I would say that Social Work is more about the help, helping people and Social Welfare is more about working with money. We are those who can decide how much money and we can give to the social workers who then divide that between the needy. That's how it looks like. So it's more like economics, Social Welfare...It is impossible to have one without the other.

13. Johan Galtung, "International Development in Human Perspective" in *Conflict: Human Needs Theory*, ed. John Burton (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 309.

I explained to some of the participants that in Canada, some students do not enter university right away and take time off to work, travel, and so on. While it was possible to delay your entrance by one year into university, all participants began university as soon as they finished secondary school. Angelika, a student in Social Work at LPNU shared her experience with me:

I entered Lviv Polytechnic the same year I finished school. I was choosing between Political Science, Social Work, which I actually entered, and Preschool Education.

It was at this point that I asked how applying for university worked in Ukraine and how students selected their programs and the acceptance process. Mariana and Angelika helped provide context for me. I then asked Angelika why she chose Social Work. She said that

About choosing Social Work, maybe the answer would sound a bit weird. But it just happened the way that it did. It just happened the way it has to be.

When I asked what she meant, she elaborated:

At this point, I was very curious about learning more about people. I learned something about psychology and all that stuff...

I was trying to find out if she meant that she thought going into Social Work was something that was “meant to be” or “kismet” in a way, but it was lost in translation. Anhelina explained that in the 11th Grade, she had to choose which university to enter, which program to take, or whether to pursue informal education:

When I was in 11th Grade, I had to choose which university to enter, which program to take, and I was choosing between Political Science, Philosophy, and English Philology. I was also choosing between entering a state university or some kind of pursuit with informal education. I was thinking of joining the Ukrainian Leadership Academy.

Anhelina explained what the Leadership Academy was as I was not familiar with this program:

This is a 10-month program which is informal but there is an opportunity to learn how to start or make your own projects and take part in leadership training. There is also some civil activism as well.

She added that her parents were more traditional and wanted her to enter a state university, but they eventually agreed to let her apply to the Leadership Academy. It was interesting to me that while she was accepted, she declined and eventually choose to enter LPNU:

My parents are more...conservative, traditional, yeah. And they wanted me to choose something like a state university, but then they agreed. I persuaded them to take this 10-month course. And then I actually didn't start it. I refused after I was already chosen.

Later in the interview, Anhelina shared that it was due to participating in a volunteering opportunity through an organization called Building Ukraine Together (BUR) that she decided to enter Social Work at LPNU:

I really like to share this story because as I mentioned before, somewhere between Political Science, Philosophy, English Philology, I felt quite limited with my choice. And then, after volunteering, I realized it was not like that, it was not so limited. Very often, I came into contact with the term Social Work. So I started Googling it, and I realized, I was very surprised that there was a profession like that, and people actually study it. When I Googled what is taught within Social Work, I realized there were such interesting pillars, such as PR and communication, and I realized it would not be boring in my personal or professional life.

When asked if there was something specific (an event, etc.) in her volunteering that made her select Social Work, she added that

I like signs. So, when I heard about Social Work, I Googled it. I learned something more about it. And I decided to connect my profession and my future life to it like that.

Valeriia attended LPNU and was studying to be a veterinarian. In each interview, I asked each participant what their aspirations for profession might have been when they were children. Valeriia shared that she ended up choosing what she had aspired to do since the third grade. She was now in her second year of veterinary school at LPNU. She was passionate about returning to her hometown after completing her studies to live and work in her community:

From the third grade, I wanted to be a vet. Now I am studying to be a vet. It was my desire to choose this profession.

Finally, Michael was the only participant who attended Ivan Franko Lviv National University. He shared with me how he decided to enter his chosen field, Economics, from a young age, and eventually entered his university of choice:

In the 8th grade, I just decided that I was interested in economics. So I knew I wanted to study Economics. And my dream was to study in Lviv, namely at the Lviv National University. I do not know why, I cannot explain why, I just wanted it.

When I asked if he ended up choosing Economics as his field of study, he added that

It was very hard to choose. There were a few directions, areas of Economics that I could have studied. I really wanted to study Economics and legal regulations in Business. That was the one I wanted to take, but I couldn't get there. I lacked less than one point. That was not enough to get there. I started to study finances – banks and interest. That is the program. At the same time, I am taking some legal courses at a distance at Krok University.

In exploring participants experiences of applying to university and selecting their programs of study, I was able to learn a lot about their lived experiences and how passionate and dedicated they were to their studies, and it was inspiring to hear their stories. Their experiences with going to school as they were growing up and later with going to university helped expand their critical consciousness where they were able to learn about themselves, their likes and dislikes and their passions and this helped produce their understanding of their sense of place in society and where and what they wanted to study in university.¹⁴

The Nuances of Language – Not Lost, but Found in Translation

During the interviews, I would typically ask the questions in English. However, I did feel more comfortable after the first couple of interviews and did ask participants some questions in Ukrainian. It was interesting to note when I was transcribing how I flipped back and forth between English and Ukrainian during the interviews in asking the questions and responding to

14. Montero, "Conscientization," 296.

participants. Mariana would translate the questions I asked into Ukrainian and then translated the participants' responses into English.

One of the most interesting and unique aspects of the interviews was the live translation aspect of the interviews as everything was happening in real time. While I do not doubt that some things may have been "lost in translation," as can be the case with cross-language research, I believe that the impact of things being lost in translation was minimized because I understood almost everything that participants said in Ukrainian. This was surprising to me as I did not expect I would understand as much given that the vocabulary used in Ukraine can be quite different from the Canadian Ukrainian I speak and use daily.

There were several instances where the use of Google Translate and dictionaries were used to help with translation and comprehension. Mariana and I would go back and forth in Ukrainian and English sometimes (with help from participants) until we found the "right" word in either Ukrainian or English that most accurately represented what the participant was saying. This often made us laugh during the interview. By establishing rapport and a relationship with participants in the initial meetings, interviews, and peacemaking circle, Mariana and I were able to convey authenticity and our desire to be genuine and open with the interview and peacemaking circle process. We were genuine in our attempts to be as accurate as possible, and Mariana always took the time to ensure that any additional questions or paths of conversation were translated to me or participants to ensure no one was left out.

We both worked hard to ensure participants would feel comfortable participating in their language of choice, Ukrainian or English. Some participants communicated in English during their interviews when they felt confident and/or comfortable. This spoke to the nature of participants as global citizens who had learned English and other languages throughout their

education and as strong Ukrainians. This was interesting to me as I also wanted to communicate with them in Ukrainian, but only when I felt comfortable knowing I would likely make grammar mistakes. It took time for me to build confidence in asking questions in Ukrainian and in responding in Ukrainian when participants asked me any questions. This was what part of what made facilitating this study a unique experience. I learned many new Ukrainian words and Mariana noted that she learned a lot of English vocabulary as well during the interview process.

Conclusion

This chapter included a brief overview of the importance of storytelling in PACS. The stories that were told by participants of their experiences growing up in an independent Ukraine shaped who they are today and where they will go in the future. Participants trusted me with their stories, and as an “insider-outsider,” having familiarity with the language, culture, and history of Ukraine, I recognized my sense of responsibility to participants in facilitating this study.

When participants shared their stories with me, I was able to understand their personal contexts and it was very important to me that their individual experiences were captured and shared in this chapter (and in this thesis) respectfully, accurately, and authentically, “storytelling requires an element of trust and a desire on the part of all parties to recognize the dignity and experiences of the other.”¹⁵ As stated by Flaherty, “when individuals have been acknowledged by themselves and others they are better able to use their individual stories as part of the richness and strength that builds communities...Each and every voice is needed.”¹⁶ Each participant in this study has a story that is unique and valuable and should be heard and acknowledged. It is in

15. Laura E. Reimer et.al, *Transformative Change: An Introduction to Peace and Conflict Studies* (London, UK: Lexington Books, 2015), 151.

16. Flaherty, *Peacebuilding with Women*, 192.

sharing their stories and unique perspectives that common threads and themes are realized that can help bring young people from different cities, places, and communities together to build peace in Ukraine.

In this chapter, readers were brought into the lives of the participants of this study through an exploration of the common themes from their interviews. The excerpts from the interviews shared experiences from their childhoods, the important role of grandparents, their school years, hobbies, and interests, and their transition to adulthood and university life. Finally, this chapter shed light on the unique experiences of conducting cross-language research and shared examples of how finding the “right” word ensured that little, if anything, was lost in translation. The following chapter focuses on the impact of the war in Eastern Ukraine on participants’ lives as well as a brief overview of how participants labeled and described the current situation in Eastern Ukraine.

Chapter Six: The Impact of the War in Eastern Ukraine on Our Lives **Шостий Розділ: Вплив Війни на Сході України на Наше Життя**

Introduction

This chapter focuses on a specific question asked during that participants' interviews: "What has life been like since Russian aggression began in Eastern Ukraine in 2014? How has it impacted you?" As all the participants were between 18-22 years of age, their stories and lived experiences with the war took place during their teenage years. At the time of this study (October/November 2021), they are now young adults who can offer a unique perspective on this time in their lives. There was no doubt that the war has impacted all participants in this study in different ways. Some participants stated that the stress of war had impacted their psychological and mental health but did not go into great detail. I was grateful that they shared their experiences so openly with me during their interviews. Again, it is important to note that the field work for this study was completed in Fall 2021, prior to Russia's further invasion into Ukraine and the full-scale war that began February 24, 2022, and continues as this thesis is finalized in March 2022. This context is important as it situates this study in a particular time period (2014-2022) where the war impacted all Ukrainians, but the active fighting was limited to Eastern Ukraine.

The second section of this chapter shares insights that some participants shared during their interviews in terms of how they described, or "labeled" the situation in Eastern Ukraine since 2014. As mentioned in Chapter Five, the nuances of language were important in this study, and it was important for me as the researcher to ensure I was using the appropriate language to describe what has been happening in Eastern Ukraine since 2014. This section will focus on their perspectives, as young people living in Ukraine, rather than on the various definitions and labels

used by the media and leaders of nation-states who are currently commenting and reporting on the escalation of the situation in recent weeks.

The Impact of the War in Eastern Ukraine on Our Lives

One of the main purposes of this study was to explore the impact of the war on young people in Ukraine as this topic remains under researched in the literature. Each of the participants' lived experiences with the ongoing war in Eastern Ukraine are unique; therefore, rather than try and group their stories and perspectives by theme, I have chosen to share each of their experiences individually so that their stories are shared as equally as possible.

Valeriia

When I initially asked my research question, Valeriia shared the following story:

I was quite young when it all started, but I have a good memory of my grandma on my father's side. She was really interested in politics, so every evening there were some political programs on TV. When the Russian aggression and the annexation of Crimea happened, I asked her "how is that possible that you can take a part of another country? Like we are living in the civilized world? How can that happen?" So she took me out to the garden and she just said "look here and imagine that our neighbour would just take a part of our garden" and I remembered that very well.

I also remember having big fears at that time. I was always very connected to my family, and I was afraid of someone being...there were some fears that someone from our family will be taken from us or that we will be forced to move. Or that someone would come and make us follow some regulations and rules that we would not want to follow. That they would force us to do that.

I asked if she still felt this fear now. She added that

It probably lasted for two years, and then I think as I got to know the situation better, got more conscious about it, I started to learn what is going on, how it is happening, and probably it helped me to be more calm about that. Usually, I would imagine that I would grow up and it would be finished. But now I think about that and oh my god, seven years, it's a lot of time.

I then asked what had changed for her when she learned more about the war:

I think a few years ago it didn't matter to me. At the beginning, it did not influence my life so much. But later, after learning about the situation better, we switched to more Ukrainian language in our everyday communication. For example, my grandma, my dad's mom, speaks Russian. I asked her "why do you speak Russian when we are living in Ukraine?"

We also used to travel to Crimea, many times. And we went there a year before the annexation. And when it happened, there were questions, "why can't we go there?" and the answer was "that is controlled by another state or territory" and this made me learn more about the situation.

Dasha

Dasha lived in Luhansk, one of the two separatist and Russian-held oblasts that are part of Donbas, until she was nine years old. Her family then moved to Kyiv briefly before moving to Lviv and settling there. Dasha's parents are both doctors, and her father was a military doctor and was called to the front when the war began in 2014. She recalled in her stories how this impacted her as a child growing up. While sharing her stories about this time in her life brought strong emotions, she insisted that she wanted to continue sharing her story during the interview. She shared that her family was very close when she was growing up but that many changes happened when they came to Lviv as her father was asked to go to war:

Yes, we were very close. More changes happened when we came here to Lviv because my dad was asked to go to the war. So, things changed.

When asked what her life has been like since Russian aggression began in 2014 and how moving to Lviv has impacted her, Dasha shared the following stories:

I would say that regarding the fact that I have changed where I lived and moved, I think it is a huge change, a drastic change.

As far as I remember it, it all happened at the beginning of the summer. So, with my grandparents, my mom's parents, we moved. It was considered like a summer holiday. We went to the sea, we had some rest, so that's how it started. When the summer was coming to an end and we realized the situation was not getting better and it was unsafe or dangerous to go back, we decided to move, and the first place we moved to was Kyiv.

We lived there for half a year...I moved with my grandparents to Lviv...We waited for my mom to come because she had some trouble moving to Lviv. Also, my dad stayed for four years because he could not...to change his job was not easy. I hadn't seen my dad for four years at that time.

I asked for clarification about the timeline as it was unclear and Dasha clarified that when she left Luhansk that summer with her family, she never returned to Luhansk. Dasha continued her story and later, I asked if she would be comfortable sharing what she remembered and felt at the time she left Luhansk. She added that

I think I could understand what was happening [at the time the war started], but maybe not completely. Once I heard, we heard on TV that there will be a bombing, a big bombing on the city and we actually went to a bomb shelter...I could hear shooting and...but I could not completely understand that many people were dying and when we were moving, maybe I did not completely understand why we needed to move... It was kind of the last drop, the situation with the bombing and all of that. My grandma said, "we have to take care of her, she's a child, that's too much for her" and that's when this vacation happened, like going to the sea and all of that. So, there was no sense to go back [to Luhansk] anymore.

Angelika

Angelika moved to Lviv from Vinnytsia, an oblast in Central Ukraine, and shared an interesting perspective on the impact of the war in Eastern Ukraine focusing on the use of language:

It is a very interesting question for me. I am from Central Ukraine, and I would say that I can tell you about the big differences between Western, Eastern, and Central Ukraine. Living in Central Ukraine, I, for example, until Grade 5, I spoke Russian. I learned it. I had many people I knew or relatives in Russia. There was no negativity towards Russia before the aggression has started. And when it happened, I think everyone felt it. And people gathered together. They were helping each other. They were gathering some parcels to send there to support people.

I asked her to elaborate on the differences she noted in the language in different regions. She added that

Like the big difference it was then when communicating with youth. I realized that nobody was listening to Russian songs here. And when we did *toloka*, when they gathered, somebody put on Russian music and there was a very aggressive reaction

towards it. They asked us to stop it. And I often noticed that somehow, I was used to...or I was raised with the thought that people are people everywhere. And here it was more like Russians are just enemies.

I asked if she meant that when she came to Lviv, to Western Ukraine, that she noticed these sentiments towards Russian music and language. She said yes and that most people in her region speak *Surzhyk*. I had heard of *Surzhyk*, and I asked if she spoke *Surzhyk* at home in Central Ukraine. She noted that she changed the language she used when she moved to Lviv to focus on Ukrainian, rather than *Surzhyk*. *Surzhyk* is a hybrid language that most frequently joins elements of Ukrainian and Russian, but can also be a hybrid of Ukrainian and other languages such as Slovenian, Hungarian, or Polish (as examples):

My uncle's family, they used to speak Ukrainian and I used to speak *Surzhyk* all the time. And then I moved to Lviv and now I'm trying and I'm speaking only Ukrainian. When I'm home and my sister is speaking [*Surzhyk*], it hurts my ears, you know? Like I hear the thing I tried to get rid of...when I'm staying for a month at home, I'm starting to speak *Surzhyk* again.

Later in our conversation, I asked her how the conflict had impacted her, and she talked about how the conflict felt far away at the beginning and it didn't "touch" her directly. The war felt far away even though it was taking place within Ukraine's borders:

At the very beginning, as I was quite far away from the place it was happening, it didn't touch me so much. And I would say, mainly it touched me because it touched people I knew, or people close to me. At first, I could somehow, you know, shut myself from the bad news that was badly influencing my psychological state. However, there were some things happening at my school, like a minute of silence, and some gatherings to commemorate. So, I had the realization that something terrible is happening. That's actually how it happened to me. My uncle, my mom's brother, with whom I was connected with before...he went to the ATO. That's how it was called – "anti-terroristic operation" and he got PTSD there. He started drinking after that. His behaviour was quite uncontrolled and, that from his talking, I've realized how terrible it was. He was speaking about death and people who were killed. And then came the understanding how terrible the situation is there.

Later in the interview, Angelika also recalled that she met a girl at a summer camp when she was in the 10th or 11th grade who moved from Donetsk with her family at which point, she came to further understand the war in Eastern Ukraine:

And, I was at a summer camp, and I got acquainted with a girl. She and her family moved from Donetsk. And, at that point, I kind of realized that people are moving from that region. That it is hard to live there and war actions are taking place there.

At the end of her interview, when I asked if she wanted to add anything further on this question or share how anything has changed for her since moving to Lviv as she had previously explained that she was not as conscious about what was going on in Eastern Ukraine. She then shared a story about communicating with her aunt in Donetsk when she moved to Lviv:

Speaking of moving to Lviv, it was at that time that I started speaking with my aunt who lives in Donetsk. And, at that point, in my first year of study, I sent some parcels to her. We were communicating a lot. She used to tell about some shootings happening. So when she was not on the phone there was the worry that something bad had happened. Her dacha, summer house, was in the war action zone.

When I asked if she wanted to add any last thoughts about the impact of the war on her life, whatever she wanted to share, she added that

I just don't get it. I don't understand this conflict. This is a huge loss in resources. It has a psychological impact on, on everyone. On me as well. Because it is happening to our people. For example, I've started to communicate with a person, a guy from Luhansk. So, he moved to Lviv. He had to start everything from scratch. And I don't get it. It's not comfortable for me that there is such a thing at all between people, between countries. Yeah.

Anhelina

Anhelina explained that she was 13 years old when the war began. She recalled some events at school about the war at that time:

In 2014, I was 13 years old when it all started. I remember that at school, they were gathering some stuff like socks, warm stuff, those things [for people in Donbas]. I don't remember that period very well, but I do have some memories, which I will share. When it all started, I would say there were many things happening. Like, in my school, they were speaking about it. There were some posters around the trees and I went to the

posters and read about it. And, at that point, I probably realized that the world is much, much bigger than I was imagining it to be before. I remember in 2015, with some other schools, we did kind of a flash mob. We were holding different coloured papers, yellow and blue, to make a flag. And people were making letters to create a word “Ukraine is one and united.”

Anhelina also noted that the war in Eastern Ukraine felt far away from a geographical perspective as she lived in Zakarpattia oblast, and it was a different region with its own set of problems and issues. However, even though it was far away, she was still aware that the war was going on in Eastern Ukraine:

I’m from Transcarpathia, and it’s quite far away and it’s a different region. We have our own problems like immigration and so on. But the war was not there. And still, I did know that it was going on and it’s happening. It was happening, but it was like we couldn’t feel it because it was far away. I’ve heard it on the news, we saw some people dying. I often heard about 129th or 128th brigade, it was the one from our region. We heard “the guys are great” like some kind of support. But, from the people I know, only the dad of my classmate was there, was at the war at the East. And when he came back, we were raising some money to support him because he needed some operation, some surgery.

Before moving on to my final question, I asked if the war in Eastern Ukraine still felt far away from her now that it has been going on for quite some time. She added that while she lives in Lviv and is physically closer to the war, she hears about it often because of the volunteers and people she surrounds herself with and that it is still prevalent in the media:

I would say that physically while living in Lviv, I am closer to the area of the conflict. But, I would say mostly because of the people I’m surrounded by, especially volunteers, they are very good in politics. And there is much more information in the media, so we can hear much more. And yeah, I would say I’m surrounded by people who know more, who can share, but I would not say that I am very interested in politics myself.

Michael

Michael recalls watching the Revolution of Dignity (Euromaidan) on TV as he was sick when it began:

When the Revolution of Dignity started, I was sick at the time. I could trace all of the events on TV. And, I would say, at that point, I was in Mukachevo yet. And I would say

that most of the citizens of Mukachevo were pro-Euro integration. They were frightened of the bloody events that took place there. And I also remember my teacher who said that we lost Crimea because of our neglect or something like that because she remembers going to Crimea once with her class. And people were surprised hearing Ukrainian language. It felt like everything was...Russianized? Very, very much under Russian influence. She [the teacher] also mentioned that when she came there [to Crimea], she saw many Russians. They were often coming there. Speaking of Crimean Tatars, they didn't have one position towards Ukraine. They were kind of in between different positions or divided into different groups having different positions...But it is all from...from like what people say because for me, until 2014, I was never interested in this. And, I've never been to Crimea.

Michael then went on to share his involvement in participating in an initiative called Youth of East and West Together focused on bringing groups of young people together from West and East Ukraine.¹ However, later in the interview, I asked him what changed after 2014 to make him interested in participating in this initiative in 2016:

I think that the most important thing was, for me, the desire to communicate with people from different regions. That was my motivation for participation in this project.

Later on, when we discussed his work with this initiative, he shared more about the war's impact on him:

Speaking about the war influence, sincerely, I would say, I might say, it didn't touch me personally, because it's far away. You don't see it. I would also say that somehow you get tired all the time hearing negative news from war, about war. I would say our infospace, in general, especially TV, is very negative. And therefore, people are really tired and sometimes hopeless. But, on the other hand, I would say that this situation kind of pushed up, pushed Ukraine to some development. It is very, very hard to do it, to develop because of different circumstances, especially to develop the system. The system which exists is very hard to change and there is the lack of political will to change it.

N6

Initially, N6 told me that he was not sure that the war in Eastern Ukraine had changed his life and that he did not experience it like children in Donbas having only seen it on the news or heard of it in conversation:

1. Additional information about Michael's work with this organization will be shared in the following chapter.

I would not say that it changed my life somehow. Like I mean, I don't see it like children in Donbas. I've seen it only from news and heard about it in some talks...I've learned about it from news, actually. I saw it on the news that Russia annexed Crimea. And then in a few months attacked Donetsk region. I've heard it on the news.

At this time, I asked N6 about a school project he had mentioned earlier where he and his schoolmates worked on creating dressings for tanks for camouflage purposes and I asked how the project came about and how it was connected to the war when the initiative was undertaken in school. He added that

They proposed us to do something like that. Like a gift to our defenders for St. Nicholas Day. So we decided [to do that]. We just gathered almost all of the class, gathered together and we sewed it with our hands.

I then asked for clarification and if he noticed anything different as his own life had not changed so much. He then added that

It influenced me in the way that everybody was talking about it. So, people were shocked. It was like the brother who is attacking us. And people were scared and didn't know how much time they would need to get to Lviv, to another part of Ukraine...Very often we hear the news from war. It looks like who is killed, who was killed or wounded. When I last watched the news, I heard that Russia is taking their forces near the Ukrainian border. There is a lot about it now.

Calling It What It Is: A War – Participants' Perspectives

During some of the interviews, I noticed that while I had worded the question using “Russian aggression” to describe the situation in Eastern Ukraine since 2014, some of the participants replied in Ukrainian using the word “war” or “conflict” instead. This was something I was able to pick up while I actively listened to participants' stories because I understood the language. It was important for me, as a Ukrainian Canadian “insider-outsider,” to ask clarification about this to ensure that I was describing and referring to what they had experienced accurately and that it would be written appropriately in this thesis from a Ukrainian perspective.

As Lazarenko states, “the current situation in Ukraine, which to some extent influences the social and political climate of Europe, may be perceived entirely differently from the position of an insider compared with that of an outsider, as well as from the perspective of the researcher and an individual person.”² When this came up in some of the interviews, I explained why I asked the question and that how I was describing things may not be accurate based on what I read in academic journals and in mainstream media I accessed in Canada, and that it was important to me that I was using the appropriate word.

Silvia De Michelis ties this to Lederach’s work in *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*, where he writes “‘there are people who have a vision for peace, emerging often from their own experience of conflict and pain’ which are often unheard ‘because they do not represent official power...or because they are written off as biased.’”³ The Ukrainian participants in this study and the Ukrainian people living through the war are living through it and seeing it with their own eyes. As stated by Oksana Maksymchuk and Max Rosochinsky, “people living in the midst of war are never really abstract ‘people,’ just as the war is never an abstract ‘war’ for them.”⁴ Therefore, sharing participants’ understanding of the situation as young people living in Ukraine, defining it as a *war*, rather than from an “outsider’s” perspective was important to me in this thesis.

When asked about the proper or appropriate word that should be used, Valeriia stated that

2. Lazarenko, “Conflict in Ukraine,” abstract, 550.

3. John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace – Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997), 94, quoted in Silvia De Michelis, “Peace Journalism in Theory and Practice,” E-International Relations (website), December 23, 2018, <https://www.e-ir.info/2018/12/23/peace-journalism-in-theory-and-practice/>.

4. Oksana Maksymchuk and Max Rosochinsky, eds., *Words for War: New Poems from Ukraine* (Boston, MA: Ukrainian Research Institute, Harvard University with the Borderlines Foundation for Academic Studies and Academic Studies Press, 2018), xiii.

Regarding the name, I think that “conflict” is kind of a soft word to call it. Mainly because people are afraid to call it a war. But, if we are thinking about it, people are dying and it’s not just a conflict, it’s a real war.

In my interview with Anhelina, I noticed that when I asked the question about “Russian aggression,” she replied with “war.” I asked if “war” was the more appropriate word to use to describe what was happening:

I would call it a war, which is caused by Russian aggression. Because people are dying every day, killing each other from both sides, so what is it if not a war?

She told me that it was good and important that I have asked this question.

It was during the research and writing process that I spent time considering how I wanted to refer to the war in Eastern Ukraine in this thesis. As an “insider-outsider,” I have struggled to find an appropriate definition or term for what has been happening in Eastern Ukraine since 2014. Facilitating this study changed and challenged my own thinking about this. I felt a bit of guilt or shame initially that I had been too easily swayed by what I had read in academic journals and in the media and had not relied enough on media from Ukrainian sources or content in my daily life and in my work on this study. However, as I learned more during the writing process, I realized how important it was for me to “call it what it is” and define it as a *war* in support of Ukraine and Ukrainians and what has been happening in Eastern Ukraine since 2014.

Furthermore, given the current escalation of Russia’s war against Ukraine as of February 24th, 2022, it has become evident that defining what is happening in Ukraine as seen through the eyes of Ukrainians who are living through the war is increasingly more important and validates my decision to call it as it is, as *war*. All in all, engaging in the field work and writing for this study (since my initial idea for this project in 2017), has pushed me to learn more about Ukraine’s history, the war since 2014, and now, the war since February 24, 2022, from the perspectives of those living in Ukraine.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored participants' stories of the impact of the war in Eastern Ukraine since 2014 on their lives. Their stories were shared individually to highlight their unique, lived experiences. Second, this chapter outlined how some participants used the word "war," rather than "Russian aggression" to describe the ongoing war in Eastern Ukraine since 2014. Sharing participants' own understandings of what is happening in Ukraine speaks to their agency as the narrators of their own stories. Their stories and the language used to share their experiences also reminds outsiders, observers, and "insider-outsiders" like myself about the importance of semantics in how we label situations of violence in different contexts and how this affects how those who are directly impacted by violence are portrayed in academia and media. Language matters in war, and it matters even more to those who are living through it. The following chapter examines the connection between civil society in Ukraine, participants' volunteer experiences, and peacebuilding.

Chapter Seven: Volunteering and Peacebuilding in Ukraine **Сьомий Розділ: Волонтерство і Миротворчість на Україні**

Introduction

In this chapter, I explore participants' involvement in civil society through their volunteering experiences in Ukraine. A brief analysis of volunteerism in Ukraine and the role of young people in volunteering as peacebuilders is provided to situate this chapter in the appropriate context. This section on volunteerism connects to the analysis of civil society and young people in Ukraine in Chapter Two and relates the theory of critical consciousness as described in Chapter Three. In their interviews, some participants shared stories of their involvement and experiences in volunteering organizations connected to bringing people from different regions of Ukraine together. Their experiences demonstrate the importance of working with people to humanizing the “other” through dialogue and reconciliation as key to building peace. These experiences are examples of everyday peace at work, as conceptualized by Roger Mac Ginty. Then, I will share stories from three participants: one who volunteered with Youth of West and East Together and two who volunteered with Building Ukraine Together (BUR) (Будуємо Україну Разом (БУР)).”¹

Volunteerism in Ukraine

When Ukraine gained independence in 1991, this “...gave impetus to the beginning of transformation processes in all spheres of society...new social institutions [emerged], one of

1. It is important to note that five of my six participants were/are volunteers. Four of them volunteered with BUR. However, only two participants shared specific experiences and stories from their work with this organization. I have chosen to focus on their experiences to provide a deeper analysis of their volunteerism and its connection to peacebuilding in Ukraine.

which is volunteering.”² Even though the impetus for the development of volunteering may have come from Ukraine’s independence, as noted in “The State of Youth in Ukraine” analytical report compiled by the United Nations (UN) Working Group on Youth, “Ukrainian society has traditionally relied on social work, mutual help, neighbourly care, altruism, and various forms of charity in the religious or patriotic spirit.”³ Thus, it is fair to say that Ukrainians have always helped their families, friends, and neighbours and this benevolence has been, is, and will remain an inherent aspect of the Ukrainian spirit.

In much of the literature consulted for this chapter, many authors stated that the Euromaidan in 2013-2014 led to an increase in civil society organizations across Ukraine and ignited the volunteer movement in Ukraine, “...the participants in anti-government protests were indebted to volunteers, who had provided food, clothing and medicine, and offered medical, legal, and other kinds of help [Matijczyk 2016: 102]...In other words, during Euromaidan, many voluntary initiatives were born.”⁴ The growth of volunteering in Ukraine was also associated with the annexation of Crimea in March 2014 and subsequent Russian invasion of Donbas, “during this very difficult period, it was the volunteer movement that united the society, formed an effective structure of public organizations and groups of people who were ready to solve the most immediate and painful problems of the state.”⁵ Volunteering has become a key component

2. Oleg Tkach and Anatoly Tkach, “Volunteer Movement in Ukraine in the Situation of External Aggression,” *Ukrainian Policymaker* 4 (2019): 53, <https://doi.org/10.29202/up/4/8>.

3. Ongerth, Volosevych, and Pagano, *The State of Youth in Ukraine*, 59.

4. Liana Hurska-Kowalczyk, “Characteristics of Volunteering in Ukraine after Euromaidan,” *Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Skłodowska Sectio K (Politologia)* 25, no.2 (2018): 120, <http://dx.doi.org/10.17951/k.2018.25.2.117-125>.

5. Oleksandr Paladych, Nataliia Varenia, and Alla Lazareva, “Modern Development of the Volunteer Movement in Ukraine,” *Pedagogy and Education Management Review (PEMR)* 2, no.4 (2021): 11, <https://dx.doi.org/10.36690/2733-2039-2021-2-11>.

of civil society everywhere where people work together in order to make a difference. Young people are an important group of volunteers and their capacities to build peace through volunteering is explored in the following section.

Young People, Volunteering, and Everyday Peace

When young people volunteer, they become active agents of change.⁶ The United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace, and Security states that youth participation is necessary for the development of peace and security, and “it urges Member States to ‘facilitate an inclusive and enabling environment’ for youth actors to contribute to ‘sustainable peace in all societies.’”⁷ Furthermore, volunteering has numerous benefits for young people. It helps them gain experience, increases their self-esteem and awareness, helps them find their voice, and increases and diversifies their social networks.⁸ Subsequently, they are empowered to continue volunteering and being involved in their communities. This is connected to critical consciousness as volunteering is about taking action and helping others, so “being critically conscious means the ability to apply knowledge and critical thinking skills to examine current situations, develop a deeper understanding of reality, and generate and implement solutions to problems.”⁹ As stated in a UN Volunteers background paper on the role of youth

6. UN Volunteers, *The Role of Youth Volunteerism in Sustaining Peace and Security – Background Paper for The Secretary General’s Progress Report on Youth, Peace and Security* (n.p.: UN Volunteers, September 2017), 3, https://www.youth4peace.info/system/files/2018-04/13.%20TP_Role%20of%20Youth%20Volunteerism%20in%20Sustaining%20Peace_UNV.pdf.

7. UN Volunteers, *The Role of Youth Volunteerism*, 2.

8. UN Volunteers, *The Role of Youth Volunteerism*, 3.

9. Sandra Ogechi Ajaps and Adaobiagu Nnemdi Obiagu, “Increasing Civic Engagement Through Civic Education: A Critical Consciousness Theory Perspective,” *Journal of Culture and Values in Education* 4, no. 1 (2021): 5, <https://doi.org/10.46303/jcve.2020.2>.

volunteerism in sustaining peace and security, “there is extensive evidence to demonstrate that volunteerism generates forms of social capital that are indispensable to peacebuilding.”¹⁰

In the context of Ukraine, when young people volunteer, particularly in areas such as Eastern Ukraine, they contribute significantly to social cohesion.¹¹ Thania Paffenholz identifies social cohesion as one of the seven functions played by civil society in peace processes,¹² where “social cohesion initiatives may generate more impact when they aim at bringing people together to work for a common cause (for example, joint water management) rather than focusing only on reconciliation.”¹³ Development of social cohesion is integral to the development of everyday peace among local people and groups in Ukraine.

Everyday peace is grounded the local, bottom-up approaches that people and groups use to navigate their way through life in situations of protracted violence, conflict, or deeply divided societies.¹⁴ By looking at local actors and civilians who have direct experience living through war and conflict, “...we can confront the dominant narrative that associates peacebuilding expertise with outsiders and essentializes ‘locals’ as insular and passive.”¹⁵ Local actors and civilians have expertise in their own lives and have the agency to forge a path for their futures.¹⁶

10. UN Volunteers, *The Role of Youth Volunteerism*, 6.

11. Ongerth, Volosevych, and Pagano, *The State of Youth in Ukraine*, 13.

12. Thania Paffenholz, “Civil Society and Peacebuilding,” *Inclusive Peacebuilding: Recognised but not Realised*, no. 63 (Uppsala, SE: The Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, December 2015), 110, https://www.daghammarskjold.se/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/DD63_DHF_final_web.pdf.

13. Paffenholz, “Civil Society and Peacebuilding,” 112.

14. Roger Mac Ginty, “Everyday Peace: Bottom-Up and Local Agency in Conflict-Affected Societies,” *Security Dialogue* 45, no.6 (2014): 549, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010614550899>.

15. Mac Ginty, “Everyday Peace,” 551.

16. Mac Ginty, “Everyday Peace,” 551.

A relevant example from the literature connects the idea of everyday peace to volunteerism in Ukraine.

As stated in the United Nations Working Group on Youth's report on the state of youth in Ukraine, there have been a number of volunteer initiatives in Ukraine whose goals are to unite young people from different parts of Ukraine.¹⁷ Participants in this study took part in volunteering at the local level in different parts of Ukraine that brought people together to work on projects in their communities, furthering opportunities for social cohesion, breaking down barriers and stereotypes of the "other" through dialogue and reconciliation. These are examples of everyday peace at work in Ukraine, "...phenomena hidden in plain view; events that are apparently ordinary but, given the conflict-affected context, are extraordinary...the everyday and familiar social practices that constitute life."¹⁸ The following section outlines a participants' experiences with Youth of West and East Together and two who volunteered with Building Ukraine Together (BUR) (Будуємо Україну Разом (БУР)).

Building Peace Through Volunteering – Our Experiences

Participants spoke briefly about many different volunteer experiences including leadership schools, initiatives at school to make camouflage covers for tanks, volunteering with IDPs in Lviv, and ecological volunteering in their communities through a recycling initiative. I have chosen to highlight these particular experiences because they connect to peacebuilding and the development of social cohesion among different groups of people in Ukraine and also because of the amount of information shared by participants related to these specific initiatives.

17. Ongerth, Volosevych, and Pagano, *The State of Youth in Ukraine*, 13.

18. Mac Ginty, "Everyday Peace," 552.

Youth of West and East Together

Michael shared his experience participating in an initiative called “Youth of West and East Together” in 2016 and explained what he learned from this experience. This initiative was not specifically focused on the war, but on bringing people together from three different regions in Ukraine:

In 2016, I participated in the initiative of Youth of West and East Together. There were young people from Donetsk region there as well. And I was surprised by many things. I got to know people and I’ve learned that they are pro-Ukrainian. There were pro-Russian people there, but there are also many pro-Ukrainian people there as well. This was an initiative of three NGOs: one from Donetsk/Luhansk region, one from Kyiv and one from Transcarpathian region. They wrote a grant and they got finances from USAID. It was a project, three days, to connect young people from different parts of Ukraine. These were intensive days with some studies as well. It happened three times in three different parts of Ukraine. First, Lysychans’k, Luhansk region. The second one was in the town of Skvyra in Kyiv region. And the last one was in the village Polyana in Transcarpathia.

I was curious and asked how he found out about this organization and the opportunity to volunteer as well as the age of the participants:

The Director of the Leadership school shared the information with us, and all of us, all of the participants could apply. From my region, we were about 14, 16 years old and probably the same age from Kyiv region. But from Eastern Ukraine, they were actually adults. More than 18 years old. Maybe 21, 22 even. They were students.

When I asked about the focus of the initiative and his interest in it, Michael shared the following:

I would say that it was to get people together from different regions and to help them get to know each other. Because there was actually that problem that people from Western Ukraine would not so often travel to Eastern Ukraine and vice versa. The conflict was the drive for it. It was also conducted to start some inter-regional connections, to establish those connections.

His experience with this initiative demonstrates that young people in Ukraine are actively engaged in generating positive social change by working together to establish connections between young people from different parts of Ukraine, showing that the everyday peace can be built and achieved through volunteering. The following section focuses on two participants’ experiences volunteering with BUR.

Building Ukraine Together (BUR) (Будуємо Україну Разом (БУР))

Valeriia

I started [volunteering] when I was 15 years old...Now I am volunteering in BUR (Building Ukraine Together). This organization is much bigger than Korzo...¹⁹ It's not regional, it's more like national. Non-governmental. The organization started when the war began in East Ukraine. A few people from Lviv drove to the East to build houses which were destroyed. We are helping the people who need it, the people who need our help. Now it's not only in East of Ukraine, it's throughout Ukraine. There are different camps. This organization holds camps for meeting people from different parts of Ukraine, and they want to get different people in one organization, in one community. To connect people.

I asked Valeriia about the age of the participants and where the camps were located in Ukraine:

The camps are for young people from 16 and older...young people from 16 to maybe 35 years old. These camps were in different parts of Ukraine and these camps are from May to October, but the small community in my region can do short camps for one to two days in the region. I volunteered in one of these communities in Transcarpathia and we do little projects to help build or repair the home for the family who needs it. And for shelters for dogs and cats.

In her interview with BUR co-founder Yurko Didula, Tremont shares a similar description of the camps. She states that “the theory behind these camps was that volunteers from the east and the west would come together with a physical task, rebuilding homes, while also building connections with one another, forming friendships, and ultimately breaking down stereotypes.”²⁰ When we discussed the impact of the war on her life, Valeriia offered more information about her volunteer work. I asked if her work with BUR now is still connected to supporting people in Eastern Ukraine. She elaborated that

Yes, BUR has camps in Eastern Ukraine and Western Ukraine and middle of Ukraine. I think it is very good to talk with people from Ukraine, young people. They say how it is to live there and how they grow up there. The young people like me, 18, 19 years old, learning how they grow up in Eastern Ukraine is very interesting to hear about, how it is, how it was. By the way, we have not only a build part of the camps, we have a part when

19. Korzo was another, smaller organization Valeriia had previously volunteered with.

20. Tremont, “Rebuilding Houses, Rebuilding Ukraine,” 18.

we talk, when we have many activities to understand other people. We have many activities to know more about people have free time when we can talk and learn something interesting about these people.

Valeriia then provided some additional context later in her interview related to what she learned about working with other young people from different parts of Ukraine and its connection to the idea of volunteering as a way to build peace between different groups in Ukraine:

There was the kind of image of people from different parts of Ukraine. There were people from Eastern Ukraine were thinking that those from the West are weird and vice versa. Therefore, the BUR organization took one of the directions to get together people from all parts of Ukraine and show that we are not so different here. Therefore, we have the building part of the camp and the informal part, which is mainly devoted to communication, getting to know each other.

I asked if she was a volunteer only or also a participant in the camp and if she had only participated in her region:

I went to another camp in another region. I think it was Ternopil region. And in that camp, I was a volunteer. In Transcarpathia, our region, our Oseredok Transcarpathia of BUR made its own camp. In this camp, I was a person who organized volunteers' free time with activities for communication and friendship. But volunteers have good dialogue and good communication when they don't have any activities. They talk while they wait for dinner or talk at night and these things are very important because they want to talk, and they want to know about other people, and it was very good. And when you see that, you know that you do the most important part of your project. You help people get to know each other, created some connection between them. After this camp, people stay in communication and travel to each other.

Valeriia's experience is directly related to the everyday peace as the "everyday peace is dialogic in the sense that it relies on interaction, social recognition, and social responses (Skeggs, 1997: 4). The strategies used by individuals and groups (e.g. avoiding contentious conversation topics) rely on reciprocity, or an unspoken pact whereby actors agree to abide by the same ground rules within broadly shared parameters."²¹ Participants agreed to work together knowing

21. Mac Ginty, "Everyday Peace," 554.

they would meet people from other regions of Ukraine and that they would have to communicate to complete their projects during the camp.

Anhelina

Anhelina also shared her experience volunteering with BUR. While I had already learned about BUR from Valeriia as her interview preceded Anhelina's, I asked similar questions as I wanted to honour each participants' individual experiences and stories of volunteering with the organization, rather than assume I had some sort of "expert" knowledge of the organization:

There is an organization called BUR – Building Ukraine Together. So, after my prom, I went to one of the camps in Zhytomyr, Zhytomyr oblast, in Zhytomyr region. And it was far away from my home, but I was impressed with it. It was about one week long. After this camp, I went to another camp for two weeks. It was an English camp also connected to BUR.

I asked how she found out about the organization and how she got involved and whether she was a participant in the camp or if she was a leader:

I got to know BUR from my friend at that time. The organization was working on the camp like the one in Zhytomyr region in my town. They were working on a camp like this. I was not actually involved in the work of the organization at that time. It was more like I came a few times to take a look at what is going on and why people from different parts of Ukraine are coming to a not so popular town and doing some work here.

I asked if she was curious about it. She replied:

Yeah, it was a curiosity, a curiosity about peoples' motivation. You know there were many stereotypes that volunteers are those people working very hard for nothing or something like that. So, I was just curious – is it like that or not? Because there were many stereotypes. I just checked on the Internet. I had found information about the camp and the dates suited me. I decided to join as a volunteer, not as a leader.

I asked if she would share more information about the camp and what it looked like. She added the following context:

The camp was about some reconstructions. That's how it happens with BUR camps. The day is divided into two parts. The first one is some reconstruction, some work, and the second part is more educational, cultural. There were three families we were working to help. We were helping them to rebuild their houses. Those families were in...we have a

term here in Social Work...in difficult life circumstances. The fourth objective was to create some kind of public space area.

I asked how many participants were involved and if they were from different places or from her city only.

It was in different places. There were about 40 people per week. Each week has 40 volunteers. From different areas of Ukraine, even from the United States. Actually, all volunteers are from different parts of Ukraine. There were also some local volunteers involved.

While Anhelina did not comment directly about building relationships with young people from different regions in Ukraine, it was evident that the camp had a positive impact on her life by the way she spoke about her experience. When Anhelina moved to Lviv, she moved into BUR Khata (house) – a flat where people connected to BUR lived together. She explained that she decided to become a BUR Ambassador to encourage students to join BUR:

I went to a camp. Then, I used to live at BUR Khata. And then in the next year, I became a BUR ambassador. So, I used to prepare presentations, give some talks and present at Lviv Polytechnic. For example, telling students that there are such opportunities to join BUR. So then BUR, they decided, the organization decided to create Oseredky. Centres, local centres. At different cities. Transcarpathia was one of the six centres that was created in 2019. Now, there are probably 13 of them already. I was involved in the creation of that one. Until spring of this year, I used to work at that centre, and I was responsible for communication.

Anhelina's participation in BUR camps and then as a BUR ambassador further demonstrates that young people are building peace through volunteering activities at the local level in Ukraine. These activities inspire them to continue volunteering or engaging in civil society, furthering the prospects for the development of positive, sustained peace in Ukraine. The final section of this chapter explains BUR's significance for peacebuilding in Ukraine.

BUR's Significance for Peacebuilding in Ukraine

As demonstrated through the experiences shared by these two participants, it is evident that BUR is an example of a successful model of peacebuilding through volunteering. As stated

on their website, “BUR emerged in 2014 as a volunteer action to rebuild houses in Eastern Ukraine damaged by war. However, over time, BUR has become a volunteer movement all across Ukraine, forming a new generation of responsible Ukrainians who are making change. Therefore, BUR is about building, still not only houses, but bridges of communication between Ukrainians.”²²²³ By participating in BUR, young people see that they have a stake in their community, which is critical for empowerment. In an interview with Ukrainian Weekly, Didula aptly states,

the Building Ukraine Together project, which began with a simple desire to help, has evolved into a national mechanism for aid and community development, Mr. Didula continued. “Ukraine is full of ideas. There is often a lack of people with the confidence and resources to bring these ideas to life. And when volunteers from all over Ukraine come together, communities can accomplish more than they thought possible.”²⁴

Conclusion

In this chapter, a brief overview of volunteerism in Ukraine and the role of young people in volunteering as peacebuilders was provided. This context was connected to the analysis of civil society and young people in Ukraine from Chapter Two and to the theory of critical consciousness from Chapter Three. Then, participants’ volunteer experiences with two local organizations in Ukraine were shared. These organizations were Youth of West and East Together and two who volunteered with Building Ukraine Together (BUR) (“Будуємо Україну

22. “Про Нас (About Us),” Будуємо Україну Разом (Building Ukraine Together) (website), 2019, accessed February 10, 2022, <https://bur.lef.org.ua/en/pro-nas/>.

23. Between 2014 and 2019, they have engaged 2,800 volunteers, worked in 62 cities, renovated 214 houses, painted 60 murals, and created 52 public spaces. For more information about BUR’s work, please visit their website: <https://bur.lef.org.ua/en/>.

24. Roman Tymotsko, “Building Ukraine Together Project Celebrates Five Years,” *The Ukrainian Weekly*, January 10, 2020, <https://www.ukrweekly.com/uwwp/building-ukraine-together-project-celebrates-five-years/>.

Разом (БВП)). Participants' volunteer experiences show how volunteering is empowering and helps young people realize their potential to build peace in Ukraine. As explained at the beginning of this chapter, the ongoing development of the volunteer movement in Ukraine post-independence has helped Ukraine move forward from its Soviet, colonized past to an empowered nation of Ukrainians. Those who volunteer in Ukraine value the opportunities and enrichment that volunteerism brings to their lives and support Ukrainians through their work, which in turn, supports Ukraine's development as a nation. The following chapter explores participants' hopes and dreams for their future and Ukraine's futures and their visions for a peaceful Ukraine as shared during both phases of this study and connects their thoughts to Lederach's theory of the critical yeast and the importance of bread (specifically kolach) in Ukrainian culture.

Chapter Eight: Ukraine's Future – Our Hopes, Dreams, and Visions **Восмий Розділ: Майбутнє України – Наші Мрії, Надії, і Уявлення**

Introduction

This chapter focuses on participants' hopes and dreams for themselves and for Ukraine's future, as well as their visions for a peaceful Ukraine as shared during the peacemaking circle. The first section highlights participants' responses from their interviews. The second section discusses the context for the peacemaking circle as well as participants' hopes and dreams for Ukraine's future and their ideas for a peaceful Ukraine. Finally, participants' hopes, dreams, and visions for Ukraine's future are tied to Lederach's theory of the critical yeast as outlined in Chapter Three. This final section shows how participants' actions and ideas are the "critical yeast" needed to build peace in Ukraine. This analysis is further tied to the symbolism and significance of bread in Ukrainian culture and traditions.

Hopes and Dreams for Ourselves, Our Families, and Our Communities

The final question of the interviews asked participants to share their hopes and dreams for themselves, their families, their communities, and for Ukraine's future. As was done in Chapter Five, participants' responses are shared individually to highlight their personal thoughts and I have grouped their responses about their own futures, futures of their family, and community together as not all participants responded to all aspects of the question. One participant, Angelika did not specifically share her hopes and dreams for herself as she focused on hopes and dreams for Ukraine's future and her response will be outlined later in this chapter. The following section focuses on their hopes and dreams for Ukraine's future. Common themes identified in participants' responses are analyzed in subsequent sections of this chapter.

Anhelina

For myself, I think I would love to stay within Social Work. Thinking about Social Work, working with youth, I would like to enter the master's program and after graduation, I would like to go back to Transcarpathia and work with youth there. Because the Social Work in Transcarpathia is not so developed as here in Lviv and there have to be some changes done there despite the de-centralization going on.

As I was not familiar with the de-centralization going on in Ukraine, Mariana elaborated:

Mariana: Yeah, there was kind of a big movement for the last few years in Ukraine. Local authorities have gained more powers.

I asked which sectors had gained more power and if it was that they had gained more influence.

Mariana replied that

People at all levels have gained more. You know it was very centralized in Ukraine. All of the decisions have to be made at the national level, but now we have de-centralization, so local authorities, which are often people living in the area, they have more power, more money. They can make decisions without following the national level of decision-making.

When asked if Anhelina wanted to add anything, she noted that the changes in Social Work she mentioned had started to happen in the last year. She then shared her hopes and dreams for her family's future:

I would love to go more often to visit my family more. When I was a child, there were some talks in my family about getting Hungarian citizenship. There, it is kind of a widespread practice in Transcarpathia to get double citizenship. Like Ukrainian and Hungarian. We were talking about that, like getting a passport and maybe moving to Hungary. So, in 2015, when I bought and brought to my house different sizes of small and large Ukrainian flags, my relatives probably understood I would not leave Ukraine.

Anhelina and I discussed the Zakarpattia regions' closeness to Hungary in terms of proximity and the dialect that is spoken there as a combination of Ukrainian, Russian, Slovakian, Hungarian, and Polish. At this point in the interview, I shared information about my own ancestry and my family's history and which oblasts my family immigrated from in Ukraine and how important this was to me. I also shared how I hoped that I would be able to come to Ukraine soon and visit the places where my grandparents and other family lived. The conversation we

had in this interview further demonstrates a connection to human needs theory and the significance of family for Ukrainians as a way for us to connect with our identities and I was able to establish a connection with Anhelina when we discussed this topic.

Valeriia

Valeriia spoke about the importance of staying in Ukraine and not moving away for her studies. She stated that the biggest impact she could make would be to stay in Ukraine and work on its development. This is tied to the ideas of critical consciousness and empowerment and how they overlap, “both are associated with attempts at overcoming oppression and fostering human development, community participation, and wellbeing.”¹ It is evident that Valeriia feels that she is aware of some of the issues that Ukraine and Ukrainians face and how she is empowered to dedicate her time and efforts to supporting Ukraine’s development in the future:

I was asked many times why I’m not moving from Ukraine and studying somewhere else, but I think that the biggest impact we can make is to stay in Ukraine and build it.

I asked what she meant by “build it.” She explained that

To develop here myself and to develop my country, to put something into its development.

With regards to her community, Valeriia shared she hoped that development would take place within her region, working on increasing and spreading our Ukrainian production and creating Ukrainian products:

Developing in the region, within the region itself, somehow like that. For example, working on Ukrainian production to be spread out, to maybe eliminate the production from other countries, other products from other countries, but creating Ukrainian ones.

1. Brian D. Christens, Lawrence T. Winn, Adrienne M. Duke, “Empowerment and Critical Consciousness: A Conceptual Cross-Fertilization,” *Adolescent Research Review* 1, no.1 (2016): 15, <https://doi-org.uml.idm.oclc.org/10.1007/s40894-015-0019-3>.

Michael

About my future, I think it will be okay. It will be all good. I will be actively working on my development, so I think it will be good. And my family as well. About the community, I would say I can see many positive changes due to de-centralization and thanks to some active leaders.

N6

For myself, I have some hopes to graduate successfully. I've just started my studies, but that's what I'm thinking of. I hope my family will be good, will be okay.

Dasha

Looking at the situation in Ukraine, at the profession I have chosen which is not very much developed in Ukraine still. And regarding my studies, learning the language, I would think maybe of moving to and working in another country.

Our Hopes and Dreams for Ukraine's Future

Participants' hopes and dreams for Ukraine's future were connected to their involvement in civil society in Ukraine, their volunteer experiences, and their goals to work towards the establishment of some organizations or social enterprises to further support Ukraine's development. Again, participants' responses were closely tied to the literature presented in Chapter Two on young people's involvement in civil society in Ukraine, literature on empowerment, and the development of critical consciousness. Connections to this literature are outlined in this section as when they are applicable to participants' responses.

Anhelina's response demonstrates that she, too, is empowered by her volunteer work and the people she surrounds herself with in working towards Ukraine's development. Finding commonalities and shared values with whom she interacts when volunteering helped motivate her. This connects to the cognitive component of psychological empowerment, where one

recognizes a “...commitment to collective interests, leadership, and decision-making skills, and knowledge of different options for social and civic action.”²

One of the four values at our organization, BUR, is the belief in Ukraine. When I am surrounded by people who I call “Burivtsi” [Бурівці], those within the organization, those who are sharing the same values, who believe in the unity of Ukraine, I am sure that the future of Ukraine is great and changes will happen more quickly if there are more people like that, sharing the same values.

I asked for clarification about whether it was belief in Ukraine or a united Ukraine:

Belief in Ukraine. Belief in Ukrainian society, without emphasis on it being united or not. Just in Ukraine. As I am studying at Lviv Polytechnic and working at the university, I’m realizing that my future is connected to public activity. Civil society. Civil society activity.

I asked if she wanted to add anything else before we ended the interview. Anhelina added that

I would really like to have something of my own, not really a business, more like social entrepreneurship, to have some project like that. For now, I’m thinking about it. You know, promoting social...kind of values. Working on that for now. I’m studying about that, but I would also like to work on something like that, to develop and promote these values.

Angelika noted that the impact of the war on people, including herself, had implications for the psychological and mental health of Ukrainians and she expressed how it was difficult to imagine how long it would take for Ukraine and Ukrainians to heal from the war. However, in spite of the difficulties Ukrainians would face as they recovered from the war, she hoped for people to be peaceful and free. Her thoughts connect to freedom and identity needs. Having freedom of movement within the territory in which one lives in is a basic human need, and well-being, happiness, and joy must also be met in Ukraine as Ukrainians are unhappy and unsatisfied given the context of the war and pandemic.³

For now, I am really afraid of the results of this, this conflict because of how to re-establish everything, how much time we will need to cope with all of the results. For

2. Christens, Winn, and Duke, “Empowerment and Critical Consciousness,” 19.

3. Galtung, “International Development,” 309.

example, these negative things, like PTSD. I cannot imagine how much work has to be done to work on everybody's trauma and to cope with that, to live further. We know there are many breakups. We know it has a very negative impact on men and financial losses. I cannot imagine how much time we need to recover from all of it. But, I really, really have a dream for Ukraine to final get better, to get free, for the war to stop. For people to feel free and more peaceful. To be able to move freely. I would really love for Ukraine to get back our territory because I cannot...I just don't understand how you can take the land which was for years belonging to one state, to one country. And, I don't want my family to know the war.

I asked if there was anything else she wanted to add. She did, and added that

What I can add here, what I'm often thinking about is how anyone can actually work on some kind of improvement. Maybe creating some organizations which would somehow foresee the need of people. How to support people, how to provide some help. For us to be ready to cope with everything we are getting. The main question for me is how can we help? What can we do to help?"

I asked if she meant Ukrainians by "we."

I just believe that everyone can do something. Everyone can do something to improve this situation.

I asked if she wanted to share any hopes and dreams for herself. She added that

In the context of the conversation, I would say that I believe that a lot depends on if everything will be okay in the country. It will influence our happiness as well because many areas of life depends on this, like living in the country. I would really love for our people to become happier, [narod Ukrainsky] to become happier. The people of Ukraine to become happier because I think that today with all of that and the pandemic, we are very unhappy.

Michael's response focused on the changes he would like to see in Ukraine. The changes he identified focused on education, healthcare, public office, and political life, as well as changes to the mentality of Ukrainians in the sense that their critical consciousness and awareness would be raised in such a way that they would be empowered to take action and realize their individual role in creating positive changes in Ukraine:

About Ukraine, I really hope and I want to see more positive changes in Ukraine. But I would say more and more people lose their faith in this. That is at least what I hear.

I asked what he meant by positive changes:

Changes in education, studying in general and its organization. Organization of education. The way it is organized. Changes in the healthcare system. Changes in the functioning of public offices. The quality of services in general. And I would also say to change the peoples' mentality, or the way people think as well.

I asked if he meant the way people think about Ukraine or in general:

I would not say about Ukraine, just the way people are thinking. More like realizing that each person has to do something for change in Ukraine. You have to do your part to see some changes. Each person has to do it. I would say there are too many different ways to explain one situation and everyone chooses the version which suits him or her, so there is no clear understanding of the same things.

N6 mentioned his hope for the war will end and a return to "normal" life but noted some interesting connections between the war and the impact of Russian media on Ukrainians:

For Ukraine, I just hope that the war will finally end, and it will go as it was. Or maybe it will never get to that point. I'm not sure. I think we will never treat Russia like the way we did before the conflict.

I asked what he meant by his comment about treating Russia differently after the war:

After getting the independence, I would say that the attitude towards Russia was getting better. But after war, I think most people just hate them. I mean, hate Russians. Like hate the government first of all, but also their population as well. Because of war, because of the humiliation of Ukrainians on their TV. Because of propaganda and so on.

I clarified if he meant that Ukrainians were humiliated on Russian TV and if they saw a lot of Russian TV in Ukraine and that's where he saw the different portrayal. He said yes:

Mostly, yes, Russian TV. But I'm getting that from the news. It's very often on the internet, there are different parts published, so you can see how they humiliate. For example, Stepan Bandera. They say he's Nazi, that he was conducting genocide against Jews and all that stuff. A lot of that kind of information. My attitude towards Russia or maybe not toward Russia, but more like Russian television is shifting towards very negative. To people who work on Russian TV.

His response to my question about Ukraine's future demonstrates critical consciousness in that he is aware of how the media is an oppressive force that Russia uses within Ukraine to control the narrative about Ukraine's history as well as Ukrainians' understanding of the various narratives that exist about the war in Eastern Ukraine. This further connects to human needs

theory, specifically freedom needs as Ukrainians such as access to independent media that Ukrainians have demanded since its independence. Russian narratives in media and propaganda about Ukraine, its history, language, and people, remain embedded in Ukrainian society and are another layer of Russia's attempts to continue its colonization of Ukraine through a hybrid war that uses psychological and emotional tactics to infiltrate the minds of the Ukrainian people.

Valeriia and Dasha's responses emphasized the need to end the war so that the current and future generations of Ukrainians could return to their pre-war lives, demonstrating the importance of security needs as basic human needs that fail to be met in Ukraine at this time due to the ongoing war.

Valeriia

One of my wishes for New Year's Eve is that the war will be finished. I don't want it to become a tradition, but it is. I would like my children not to see these things. I want them to be born in the independent state and country. Without war.

Dasha

I would really love for all of that to stop. We know that somebody gets profits from the war. And what I want is for people to stop dying for somebody's...or something like profiting from the war. There are many people who are very negative towards Russia and Russian people. But I'm not taking such a radical side. And for some people, it's surprising because like you know I depended on that situation very much, but I'm trying not to be radical or something like that. I don't really think that people are guilty by themselves. I'm thinking that it's because of the politicians. And not only Russians, but also Ukrainian politicians. I really want, not only for Ukraine, also for Russia, I want all of that to be over. I just want that simple people, regular people, who are not guilty in all of that to stop suffering from that.

Common Themes

Some common themes emerged from the participants' visions for a peaceful Ukraine: the importance of completing their education, staying in Ukraine rather than going abroad, for the war to end, and need to take responsibility for making positive changes in Ukraine, so that

Ukraine can develop further from within. Under Galtung's typology of basic human needs as explored in Chapter Three, the themes from participants' responses related to the four types of needs. The importance of education and completing their education is related to welfare needs. Participants realized the importance of completing their post-secondary education as a means to secure a better future for themselves and to be able to stay in Ukraine. Education and the theory of critical consciousness are also connected. Education can be formal or informal, but it is in interacting with others in our learning through dialogue and exploring these ideas that awareness and consciousness are raised.⁴ The idea of staying in Ukraine relates to freedom needs where they are free to choose their course of study, free to move around, and free to choose where they live and their way of life – free to be Ukrainian.⁵

Furthermore, the theme of the war ending relates to security needs, specifically protection against collective violence.⁶ Participants recognize the lasting impacts that the current war has had and will continue to have on Ukrainians, regardless of where they live. The following section explains participants' ideas and visions for a peaceful Ukraine that they shared during the peacemaking circle.

The Peacemaking Circle: Our Visions for a Peaceful Ukraine

This section is divided into common themes that arose during the peacemaking circle. As described in Chapter Four, only one formal question formed the basis for the discussion during the circle: "What are your visions for a peaceful Ukraine?" After the peacemaking circle ended, participants noted in their de-brief that they were surprised that they were able to generate so

4. Flaherty, *Peacebuilding with Women*, 71.

5. Galtung, "International Development," 309.

6. Galtung, "International Development," 309.

many ideas from one question and in only two hours. This speaks to the power of peacemaking circles to create a safe space for dialogue between different people, where having a willingness to listen to others' ideas can not only help build relationships and help resolve conflict but can generate ideas for building peace from within Ukraine.

Staying in Ukraine

Participants emphasized the importance of staying Ukraine after they finished their studies. This was also mentioned in their interviews. Only one participant, Dasha, specifically shared that she would consider going abroad after she completed her studies, but it was not clear if this would be to leave Ukraine permanently. Participants desire to stay in Ukraine and work on development, civil society, and help society at home was inspiring, particularly given that the war had been going on eight years at the time of the peacemaking circle. Their responses also showed that despite the challenges that Ukraine and Ukrainians face, participants want to stay in Ukraine and support further satisfaction of basic human needs, specifically identity and freedom needs since they see themselves as part of Ukraine's future:

You know there are people who want to go abroad as soon as possible and there is a group of people who want to stay. And I think I belong to the second one – I want to stay because I see my future here. I think we have a future only if each person really understands that he or she belongs to Ukraine. That he or she is Ukrainian. Because I think there is that problem that many people don't really feel themselves Ukrainians and they only have Ukrainian passports. I think that for those people who don't feel themselves Ukrainians, who cannot be named responsible citizens. For them to become responsible, I think we need at least 20 years for that. (Anhelina)

She elaborated on this idea later in the peacemaking circle with a personal story:

Ukrainians often go somewhere abroad to look for a better life or a better fate. And what they don't know is that their life here and now is the better life they have. For example, my dad is working abroad, he's traveling to work abroad. And every time I talk to him, I'm saying "let's look for a job for you here, so you don't have to travel every time." And what he is saying is that there is no such level of salary here. And partially I do understand him and partially I don't. The person who lives here, who is Ukrainian, like from one point of view, he has that right. Might have this desire to go abroad, to get as

much money as he or she wants to entertain himself, herself, when he or she is young. Many justifications can be found for that. But as many can be found for them to stay in Ukraine.

I think that Ukraine can be peaceful when people stop considering something foreign to be better. For example, as an example, I can provide this that people who are over 50 years old, they were often saying that it was better during the Soviet Union times. When people will start to develop in Ukraine and not develop to go abroad. Not to work on getting something better abroad. When they will see and work towards their future in Ukraine. I think it will be like not at the time when the aggression will stop, or the violent action will stop. But more when people realize who they are. And when they start to live more consciously and as Angelina mentioned, would consider themselves Ukrainians not just by passport. (Valeriia)

Corruption in Ukraine

Corruption in different areas of Ukrainian society was also brought up by participants as something that needs to be eliminated. They mentioned corruption in the context of employment and people securing employment because of connections rather than qualifications. A second thread of the conversation shifted to the tax evasion of entrepreneurs. Anhelina mentioned how politicians need to come from local areas and from the bottom-up, as they would have the motivation to change the country and have local experience. Finally, corruption in education was mentioned in terms of increasing the quality of education Ukrainians receive in post-secondary institutions. In Korostelina's study on national resilience in Ukraine, a key theme of respondents was "...the theme of political and economic change as a foundation of national community power and resilience...some respondents emphasized that the war on corruption has the same importance as the war in the East of Ukraine."⁷ Without addressing corruption in Ukraine, it may be difficult for Ukraine to move forward as a nation where people feel empowered and the opportunities to move ahead in life are available to everyone equally:

7. Korostelina, "National Resilience," 15.

Very often people get jobs by knowing each other, knowing someone. The HR area is poorly developed here. At the local level, there are often people who appear there because they know someone, by acquaintances. That's how they would get there. At the top, the government of Ukraine, we would say that there is no formed...teamwork. And there are no pro-Ukrainian leaders there. (Michael)

Following Michael's ideas on taxes and entrepreneurship, I would add something. I think that entrepreneurs avoid paying taxes because it takes too much money from them. Their income does not correlate with the funds they are paying, taxes they are paying for their employees. Therefore, they are writing numbers much lower of their salaries for their employees so they will not get to pay too much for them. Too many taxes, too many tax payments. (Valeriia)

Michael added to Valeriia's comments on taxes:

I think that it's more about the consciousness of people, the type of their thinking, and Anhelina was talking about that. The first thing is the types of thinking that our taxes are too high and the second one is there is no desire to pay taxes and this is normal. This is considered the norm. (Michael)

Anhelina spoke about the need for politicians in office who have knowledge of Ukraine and want to be politicians in Ukraine to change the country, not only because they possess a Ukrainian passport. They also need to have a vision for Ukraine; something she did not think was evident in the current political climate in Ukraine. This speaks to identity needs of roots, belongingness, and the desire to associate with similar groups of people who share a common vision for their future.⁸

I have this idea. I have this feeling, that when public actors, not the politicians from above from some political entities, but more like representatives from the people come to politics. If they do it, it will be better for the politics in Ukraine and in general. When the person, say from the bottom, comes up, when the person is doing that, she or he has much more motivation than the person who just rules from the top. It will be much more useful and the quality will be much higher. I would say the politicians now are those, as I mentioned, who are Ukrainians by passport. But I would say that those people who are coming from the crowd, from the bottom, they have much more motivation to change the country. And they have more experience. The politicians are more people with some learned operations they can do, but they don't have this vision. They are just working in the government, but they don't have that history or story of doing things, of having the vision for Ukraine. They don't have it. (Anhelina)

8. Galtung, "International Development," 309.

Later in the circle, she also spoke about corruption in post-secondary education.

Speaking about Ukrainian education, I would say that we need more integrity there as well. Without corruption, to make it easily accessible. Very often Ukrainians are just going to the universities to get the education just to have the document to say “I have it” but not for having quality education. I think it is very important for Ukrainian education to become more conscious about it. (Anhelina)

Patriotism...or Ukrainian Consciousness-Raising?

A final theme that emerged near the end of the peacemaking circle related to the idea of “patriotism” in Ukraine. Angelika talked about not being raised in what she considered to be a patriotic family outside of learning the Ukrainian national anthem. For her, she wanted to see Ukrainian children learning to describe how they see their country and what it means to them:

I will speak about some kind of patriotism. I’ve been raised in a family that was not really patriotic, we did not speak about that. We were not taught to love our country. It is like you have to value your motherland, like your country, the country you live in. You have to learn the anthem. I would like to have a mini course of patriotism. For those parents, for those families, maybe at Kindergarten or at schools to just help raise patriotism and raise children that way. Yes, we do have Ukrainian history, we learn about Ukraine, but I would love to have something more philosophical, like a course. How do you see Ukraine? Or what is Ukraine for you? I think answering those kinds of questions would help to form more conscious civil...public opinion about the country.

Anhelina added to this discussion but did not think that “patriotism” was the right word. She spoke about the need to raise children in Ukrainian culture, music, cuisine, and traveling around Ukraine to see different parts of the country to see all that Ukraine has to offer, rather than having children dream about going somewhere else. She referred to it as “Ukrainian consciousness” that is needed in Ukraine now. She added that people must realize that they can be a part of changes in Ukraine, regardless of their age or upbringing. It is based on motivation and desire. However, how to help people to realize this motivation or desire, was another dilemma:

I agree with Angelika here. I was not raised in a patriotic style or family...I would not use the word patriotism. I don’t know how to substitute it. But I would speak more like a

child should be raised within Ukrainian culture, being taught about Ukrainian culture, music, cuisine. Travel around some cities or being showed some interesting places in Ukraine, so the child would not just dream to go abroad to see something interesting. If parents do something like that, it would be much easier for people to get this conscious[ness] which Ukraine requires from us now, this Ukrainian kind of, Ukrainian type of thinking. Ukrainian consciousness which we need now.

Even though I haven't been raised in a patriotic family, I am doing some things which I think are connected to changes in Ukraine. I would say a lot depends on the environment the person is in. To help people understand that if they want to make some changes, it doesn't depend on age. It can be a person who is 20 years old or 50 years old. To realize that you can become a part of it, a part of changes in Ukraine. I would say it doesn't depend on age or the way you've been raised, it depends on motivation and desire. But how to help people realize it, it's another question. To feel yourself connected, and to feel yourself being able to become a part of changes.

Anhelina and Angelika's discussion of this idea of Ukrainian consciousness demonstrated a keen awareness of the need to feel connected as Ukrainians, regardless of geographical location or age. In the interviews that Korostelina conducted, a key subtheme that emerged in her study emphasized the importance of common history, culture, and language for developing Ukraine's resilience as a nation.⁹ She writes that respondents noted celebrating common holidays, speaking Ukrainian, and promoting Ukrainian culture were key to Ukraine's strength and resilience as a nation. It was interesting that respondents in her study identified a similar theme to Angelika and Anhelina: the theme of cross-regional exchange and travel within Ukraine.¹⁰ This was identified as something that can contribute to relationship building and understanding between people and that this can be a benefit for young people, "our young people should know about their country and different regions. It will make us more resilient to external threats."¹¹

9. Korostelina, "National Resilience," 17.

10. Korostelina, "National Resilience," 17.

11. Korostelina, "National Resilience," 17.

As I analyzed participants' responses during the peacemaking circle and thought about how this connected to Peace & Conflict Studies (PACS), I kept coming back to Lederach's theory of the critical yeast and how it not only related to the volunteer initiatives participants had taken part in, but also to how many ideas shared during the peacemaking circle by only four people could be the spark, or *critical yeast* to generate peace in Ukraine. Lederach's theory is outlined in Chapter Three as part of the theoretical background of this thesis. In the section that follows, I connect participants' ideas from the peacemaking circle to the critical yeast and its connection to the significance of bread in Ukrainian culture and traditions as "the breadbasket of Europe."

The Critical Yeast, Kolach, and Peacebuilding

As I re-read Lederach's chapter about the critical yeast as I was writing my thesis, I noticed several connections between this theory, PAR, participants' ideas about engagement in civil society as shared in the peacemaking circle, and to Ukraine's rich history, culture, and traditions and our connection to bread, specifically kolach (коляч). My analysis of the connection between these elements follows below.

Ukraine: "the Breadbasket of Europe"

Bread (хліб – khlib), and the grain used to make it, are important items in Ukrainian culture and traditions, "Ukraine has been a formidable producer of grains such as wheat, rye, millet, oats, and the staple buckwheat since time immemorial, so it is no wonder that bread is an ancient symbol of Ukrainian hospitality."¹² Bread is sacred among Ukrainians and plays an important role in our holidays, rituals, and religious customs and celebrations. There are several

12. Annette Ogrodnik Corona, *The New Ukrainian Cookbook: A Blend of Tradition and Innovation* (New York, NY: Hippocrene Books, Inc., 2012), 169.

different types of bread that each have their own essential ingredients, features, and symbolic meanings.¹³ One such bread is the *kolach* (колач). *Kolach* is best known as a circular, braided bread served at Ukrainian Christmas, and "...is a very old symbol of good luck, eternity, prosperity, bountiful life, and general welfare."¹⁴ In the final section of this chapter, I draw connections between the critical yeast, the process of making kolach, and participants' ideas shared in the peacemaking circle. Participants in this study and their ideas form the critical yeast that is needed to build peace in Ukraine.

Making Kolach (Колач): Building Peace with Critical Yeast

Like the kolach, PAR is frequently referred to as a "braided process of exploration, reflection, and action."¹⁵ Participants were involved in this study, grounded in PAR, where an exploration of their lives, their actions in volunteering, and their reflections and visions for Ukraine's future took place. Much like a kolach, these three elements were braided together in this study. Another theme that emerged from the peacemaking circle and visions for Ukraine's future focused on participants' desire for increased engagement in civil society by all Ukrainians. Participants talked about people needing to take responsibility for action, from picking up trash when they see it, to participating in projects in their communities (and across Ukraine). Aligned with this theme, participants also noted positive changes they are seeing with regards to youth engagement in civil society post-Maidan. Their ideas within this theme further demonstrate that

13. Ogrodnik Corona, *The New Ukrainian Cookbook*, 169.

14. Darlene Litchie, "Traditional Ukrainian Ritual Breads," Cooks Creek Heritage Museum (website), August 2003, accessed March 5, 2022, <http://www.cchm.ca/index.php/articles/breads>.

15. McIntyre, *Participatory Action Research*, 5.

young people are the critical yeast that is needed to activate peace and expand its growth throughout Ukraine.

As described in Chapter Three, Lederach's first element of the theory of the critical yeast is the principle of yeast. Despite being the smallest ingredient, it is the only one that makes the dough grow.¹⁶ As young people living in Ukraine, participants in this study are examples of the critical yeast. Through their engagement in civil society and volunteering, they have been actively engaged in peacebuilding. We can think of peace as the bread, or kolach, that requires different ingredients (yeast, flour, water, and so on) to be mixed together and then baked. As Lederach states, "what you look for is the quality of what happens if certain sets of people get mixed."¹⁷ When certain people meet, get to know one another, work together, and recognize common goals and motivations for peacebuilding, they create opportunities for their ideas to rise, just like yeast is needed for our kolach.

In the peacemaking circle, Michael and Anhelina talked about the need for people to be more active in Ukraine and to take responsibility by engaging in civil society:

I would love to see people more active in Ukraine. I would say that it would be great to see people who are learning about the situation, who want to move forward. I think the problem is that people just graduate and become doctors, lawyers, economists, and they don't really care about something else. And the last thing I would say is that a prosperous or successful and secure Ukraine starts with people. (Michael)

I would say that my idea of vision for the future of Ukraine is very simple. It's about each citizen of Ukraine feeling responsible, feeling responsibility because now it's more like Ukrainians are waiting for the state to give something to them. It's about taking responsibility. For example, when you see it's dirty in the premises you share, you help to clean it. Do your part. Do your part in such small things. And my friends here and my friends outside of this research empower me to be a part of these changes. (Anhelina)

16. Lederach, *The Moral Imagination*, 92.

17. Lederach, *The Moral Imagination*, 92.

The second principle of the theory of the critical yeast is the need to activate the yeast by situating it in a safe environment conducive to growth.¹⁸ However, Lederach's third principle cautions against activating the yeast too quickly. If we mix the yeast into the other ingredients too quickly, it will not have the opportunity to grow.¹⁹ In this study, participants were brought together in a virtual, safe space to share their stories and share their visions for a peaceful Ukraine. A second connection to this principle is related to the volunteer initiatives that participants took part in where young people from different parts of Ukraine were brought together in a safe space to work on community development projects, getting to know one another in order to create change. If we do not activate and engage the potential of young people (and Ukrainians in general) in civil society or in situations of war in a way that enables them to come together in a safe space to cultivate their ideas, no lasting change or positive peace will be developed. This connects to making kolach as once activated, the yeast must sit in a warm place and be allowed to grow for a short period of time.²⁰

Angelika mentioned that she had noticed an increase in the consciousness of young people in the last few years:

I would switch to maybe something different here. I would say that comparing Ukraine, Ukrainian youth processes which are going on, I would say that many organizations were started. Young people became more conscious. I would say that recently, comparing Ukraine quite recently and now, it is getting better. Those changes are visible for me. And I would say that we, if we take this kind of speed and follow it, we will get even better. We will become even better.

This consciousness-raising can be connected to the fourth principle that involves mixing the yeast together with the other ingredients and the need to work the dough through kneading it

18. Lederach, *The Moral Imagination*, 92.

19. Lederach, *The Moral Imagination*, 92.

20. Ogrodnik Corona, *The New Ukrainian Cookbook*, 176.

before putting the bread into the oven. The yeast, provided it is given the opportunity to activate and grow in a safe environment, continues to be resilient as the dough is worked and kneaded. In agreement with Angelika, Anhelina cited Euromaidan (Maidan) as a catalyst or inspiration for youth to get involved in civil society in Ukraine. Those who started Maidan, many of whom were young people and students, were the yeast needed to start the movement and revolution that followed. Anhelina also highlighted that there was an absence of research as to why more CSOs have been created in Ukraine, but the level of activity or engagement within CSOs is not increasing. This was also something noted in the literature I consulted in relation to civil society and volunteerism in Ukraine found in Chapter Seven. Perhaps this was an example of the yeast being mixed too quickly into the mass and the kolach not turning out as planned:

I agree with Angelika that some things are changing. I would say that during and after Maidan, the youth movement has been activated. The different volunteer initiatives were there, and I would say that the numbers of organizations have been raised, but because I'm actually doing some research on volunteer organizations in Ukraine now and volunteer movements in Ukraine now and before. I can say that the numbers have raised, but at the same time, the activity of volunteer organization is slowing down, or is staying stable, it's not raising. I haven't found the answer yet why it is like that.

However, even if the level of engagement within CSOs is not increasing, Golovakha et.al write that

...revolutions gave a push to the development of voluntarism, which was especially influential at the start of the hybrid war with Russia. Volunteers generally gained quite a high level of trust in Ukrainian society. Though volunteer movements have somewhat weakened compared to the times of Euromaidan and the start of the hybrid war with Russia, it remains a potentially strong force in Ukrainian society.²¹

Therefore, there is still much impetus and hope that the activity of CSOs and volunteering in Ukraine will continue to expand. In sharing their visions for a peaceful Ukraine in the peacemaking circle, it was evident that participants were ready to continue working to build peace by working with fellow Ukrainians (the mass). The dough for kolach must be covered and

21. Golovakha et.al, "Conclusions: Institutional Reform," 269-270.

left to rise in a warm place for about two hours, similar to the length of the peacemaking circle, where many ideas rose through the warmth of the dialogue and discussion.

Finally, when we are ready to bake the bread, or kolach in this case, there are several tasks that must be completed simultaneously: we must preheat the oven, braid the dough to create the kolach, and prepare the egg wash that we brush the kolach with once it comes out of the oven. This connects to the fifth principle of multi-tasking and the critical yeast, “while one set of things is set in motion in one place, attention is always given to the horizon of what is coming and what will be needed in another.”²² In the same way, participants in this study were adept at multi-tasking – they were going to school, volunteering, and making connections with one another in different places and at different stages in their lives during the peacemaking circle, but all of this happened within Ukraine. The peacemaking circle took place in a group setting, but also within the context of their own lives, their hopes, and their dreams as part of Ukraine’s future. The peacemaking circle was an opportunity for them (as the critical yeast) to come up with ideas that could be shared with other Ukrainians (the other ingredients) to develop the dough, then bake the kolach (build peace) in Ukraine. As aptly stated by Anhelina:

Maybe we do need something like one more revolution in our country, or something else to start some changes. Maybe it has to happen at the bottom, like whispering to each other “let’s change the country.” Maybe it can help, just start the movement like this.

Conclusion

This chapter shared participants’ hopes, dreams, and visions for Ukraine’s future and for a peaceful Ukraine based on their responses during the interviews and peacemaking circle. Key themes from their conversations were highlighted in this chapter and connected to the theory and literature on human needs theory, critical consciousness, and empowerment. The final section of

22. Lederach, *The Moral Imagination*, 92.

this chapter used Lederach's theory of the critical yeast and connected this to participants' responses in the peacemaking circle about engagement in civil society. This was further connected to the significance of bread in Ukrainian culture and traditions through baking kolach to show that the participants in this study are the critical yeast needed to continue peacebuilding in Ukraine. The final concluding chapter of this thesis offers a summary of findings, the personal significance of this study, and my personal reflections four months after facilitating this study, where the context in Ukraine has completely changed as Russia further invaded Ukraine and began a full-scale war on February 24, 2022.

Chapter Nine: Conclusion and Reflections

Дев'ятий Розділ: Висновок і Роздуми

This chapter summarizes the findings of this study, explores the personal significance of this study, and reflects on my experience of meeting and engaging with the participants and the connections that were made. This study was completed in October and November of 2021. I began writing this thesis in December and continued to write in January, February, and March 2022. As I wrote the last five chapters (including this one), the situation in Ukraine changed drastically as Russia furthered its invasion of Ukraine and began a full-scale on February 24, 2022. The final section of this thesis provides a brief update on the current situation in Ukraine as Russia's war against Ukraine wages on and will include my personal reflections as I finished writing this thesis on the 36th day of this war.

Summary of Findings

This study has three main purposes. The first was to explore the lived experiences and life stories of young people (aged 18-35) living in Lviv, Ukraine through interviews and a peacemaking circle. Second, this study explores the lived experiences of participants and the impact of the ongoing war on their lives. Third, as the war continues, it is imperative that the stories and voices of young people be heard. Participants' volunteering experiences with initiatives that brought groups of people together from different regions to work on common projects are examples of the everyday peace at work in Ukraine. The topic of volunteering and peacebuilding in Ukraine remains under researched in the literature and the hope is that this study can somehow contribute to this literature. Finally, the common themes that emerged from the peacemaking circle demonstrate that participants in this study (young people living in Ukraine) are the critical yeast needed to develop lasting, positive peace in Ukraine.

The first chapter of this thesis establishes the topic and scope of this thesis. It included a brief discussion of the use of the word “war” to describe what has been happening in Eastern Ukraine since 2014. It also included the purpose of the study and research questions, my positionality as the researcher, and the significance and limitations of this study. Chapter Two provides a timeline of the key events in Ukraine’s history from late 2013 to the present (mid-February 2022)¹ as well as an overview of the development of civil society in Ukraine. In the context of this study and thesis, it was important that an analysis of the role of young people in Ukrainian civil society was included to demonstrate the strong influence and impact of young people as active participants in Ukrainian politics and civil society. Young people in Ukraine possess all eight components of empowerment as articulated by Schwerin: they are highly educated, active in civil society, and well-connected to the rest of the world. In working and collaborating with other like-minded young people in Ukraine, they will continue to be empowered. Young people in Ukraine are and will continue to be the force that will build lasting peace from within Ukraine as the next generation.

Next, the third chapter of this thesis outlines the theoretical background for this study based on human needs theory, critical consciousness, and the theory of the critical yeast. All three theories were applicable to young people in Ukraine (and the participants in this study) and are well-suited to PAR and narrative research. As outlined by Galtung, the four types of needs (welfare, security, identity, and freedom) were relevant to young peoples’ experiences in Ukraine. While some needs are consistently met in Ukraine, there are some needs within welfare, security, and freedom needs that have failed to be met, or are not adequately being met since the war and pandemic began.

1. See footnote 16 for context.

Critical consciousness was connected to raising awareness about ones' lived experiences and causes of oppression that affect young people in a given society or context. In learning about participants' lived experiences, I learned about what they believe must change to move Ukraine and its people forward into a peaceful future. Opportunities for de-brief, reflection, and making connections during both phases of this study provided a means for participants to activate their critical consciousness and awareness as the critical yeast to share ideas about how they envisioned a peaceful Ukraine.

The fourth chapter of this thesis outlines the research methodology including PAR/YPAR, feminism, and feminist research. An overview of the study design includes a description of the interviews and peacemaking circle as the phases in this study. This chapter also includes an explanation of the recruitment process, data analysis, and ethical considerations of this study. Mariana's role, as the interpreter in this study was established. The work in this chapter demonstrates my deliberate and careful selection and considerations of methodologies, research tools, and research process that provides the basis for this study.

Chapters Five through Eight highlight the lived experiences and responses of participants as shared through the interviews and peacemaking circle. In Chapter Five, I explore participants' life stories and lived experiences as shared during their interviews through which I learned about the importance of family in participants' lives, including the special relationships that some participants had with their grandparents. Learning about participants' childhoods, adolescence, and transition to university led to a deeper understanding of structure and the significance of education in Ukraine. The impact of translation and the nuances of language in cross-language research also shed light on how finding the "right" word when working with Mariana in the research process helped ensure that participants' lived experiences were captured and translated

accurately. Mariana's role in this study was unique as a young woman and PhD student studying Social Work at LPNU and as my colleague and co-researcher. Without her, this study would not have been as successful as it was.

Next, Chapter Six discusses the impact of the war in Eastern Ukraine since 2014 on the participants which they shared during their interviews. The participants in this study have all been impacted by the war based on their lived experiences. Participants' responses to this question illuminate the importance of semantics and the use of appropriate word to define the war in Ukraine from a Ukrainian perspective. In facilitating this study, my thinking was challenged as I learned more about the importance of using accurate language to validate the reality of what is happening on the ground in Ukraine and in all communication with others to acknowledge their perspectives.

Chapter Seven connected Mac Ginty's ideas about the everyday peace to the literature on volunteering in Ukraine. Several participants in this study were involved in civil society and volunteering, and their volunteerism was focused on peacebuilding that brought people from different parts of Ukraine together to work on community projects in various locations across Ukraine. Participants' experiences with Youth of West and East Together and Building Ukraine Together (BUR) demonstrates their dedication to making positive change in their communities, building peace from the ground up at the local level. The literature on volunteering and peacebuilding in Ukraine is limited. I hope that this chapter may contribute to further research on this topic.

Finally, Chapter Eight shares participants' visions, hopes, and dreams for Ukraine's future from their individual interviews and the peacemaking circle. The key themes that emerged from the peacemaking circle were analyzed and tied to human needs theory, critical

consciousness, and the literature on empowerment as presented in Chapter Three. Then, I tied Lederach's theory of the critical yeast and the act of baking kolach, a traditional Ukrainian bread, to participants' responses about increasing engagement in civil society in Ukraine as a means to enhance Ukraine's development as a nation. This analysis demonstrates that the participants in this study, and young people in Ukraine, are indeed the critical yeast that will lead the development of positive peace in Ukraine.

Personal Significance of this Study

In this study, I have acted as a facilitator and co-researcher in this exploration of participants' lives and lived experiences as young people living in Ukraine. I approached this study in an open manner, without set expectations or assumptions, knowing that the process would be fluid and would require flexibility on my part to ensure participants were comfortable and able to participate. I enjoyed the ebb and flow of the research process. I led with my heart, listened actively with my ears, and engaged my mind. As aptly stated by Senehi, "stories simultaneously engage mind and heart...stories' ability to touch the heart makes them a powerful tool for social change."²

As a young, Ukrainian Canadian woman (an "insider-outsider"), facilitating this study gave me the opportunity to further explore my ancestry through dialogue and conversation with the participants. I found commonalities between my own story and theirs, learned more about Ukraine's people and culture, and guided participants in identifying their visions for a peaceful future for Ukraine. Young people in Ukraine have been and will continue to contribute to Ukraine's future as a peaceful nation as the critical yeast. Each person's life, each participant's

2. Jessica Senehi, "Constructive Storytelling: A Peace Process," *Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies* 9, no. 2 (December 2002), 52-53, <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/pes/vol9/iss2/3/>.

life story is precious and valuable, and their experiences are theirs alone to have and to share with others. I have shared their stories in this thesis with the utmost care and respect and I am honoured to have been trusted with their stories. I learned a lot from the participants in this study and about conducting PAR research virtually with young people living halfway around the world.

The War in Ukraine: Four Months Later

The pursuit of Ukrainian sovereign land by her neighbours has been relentless over the course of history. At the time of this research, the most recent pursuit began eight years prior with Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and subsequent occupation of Eastern Ukraine (Donbas) in early 2014. Unfortunately, and to the shock, horror, and disbelief of Ukrainians and people around the world, Ukraine was further invaded by Russia on February 24, 2022, almost three months to the day after I completed the peacemaking circle for this study. Russia furthered the invasion it began in March 2014 on false pretenses, using much of the same rhetoric to somehow “justify” its actions in February 2022. Some of these false pretenses include, but are not limited to, the argument that Ukraine does not exist as a nation (or does not deserve to exist as a nation), is a nation that must be “de-Nazified” and purged of its “fascist” roots, and that its history is fabricated, and its culture, language, and traditions are insignificant and can be easily eliminated and replaced by a Russian “superior.”

Over the past 36 days, media outlets and social media around the world have brought attention to and continue to focus their reports on the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The broadcasts and social media posts are often accompanied by graphic photos and videos of events and of Ukrainian people. This has given rise to an awareness about Ukraine, its history, its people, and the plight of its citizens and the fallout of an escalating war that began eight years.

The international community has responded in many ways including deliberate, punishing sanctions against Russia, the ostracism of Russia from its key positions in the world order, the provision of weapons, arms, and armour for Ukrainian soldiers and volunteer fighters, and humanitarian aid, to name a few. Many Western nations have helped civilians who are fleeing the conflict with food, shelter, clothing, and safe haven (basic human needs) in which to wait out the war. However, no one has agreed to support Ukraine on the ground or provide much needed air support and defense to protect vulnerable civilians who bear the brunt of Russian violence as their homes, families, and livelihoods are destroyed with every passing hour. The violence, death, and destruction has been relentless, and Russia shows no sign of stopping anytime soon despite several attempts at peace talks between both parties.

The deliberate targeting of civilians through the constant bombardment and attack on residential areas, homes, hospitals, and schools continues since day one of this war. At the time of writing, nearly 4 million Ukrainians, mostly women and children, have been displaced by the war – this represents almost 10% of the population.³ This does not include the estimated 6.5 million people who have been internally displaced and 12 million who are stranded in areas affected by the fighting.⁴ Civilian casualties are estimated at 3,167, but the “ONCHR believes that the actual figures are considerably higher as the receipt of information from some locations where intense hostilities have been going on has been delayed.”⁵ The complete destruction of and human devastation in the besieged city of Mariupol continues as Russia continues to block

3. “Global Conflict Tracker: Conflict in Ukraine.”

4. “How Many Ukrainians Have Fled Their Homes and Where Have They Gone?” *BBC News*, last modified March 31, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-60555472>.

5. “Ukraine: Civilian Casualty Update 31 March 2022,” *United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights*, last modified March 31, 2022, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/03/ukraine-civilian-casualty-update-31-march-2022>.

humanitarian aid and the safe passage of civilians out of danger. The civilian casualties are estimated to be upwards of 5,000 people in this city alone and nearly 160,000 people remain trapped in the city with little to no access to food, electricity, or water.⁶ No part of Ukraine has been left untouched by this war – it has affected and continues to affect the lives of all Ukrainians.

Korostelina defines resilience in the Ukrainian context “...as a form of power that enhances the capacity of a national community to heal from trauma, effectively resists perpetrators of violence, and positively transform intergroup relations to remove communities from contexts of chronic violence and war.”⁷ Ukraine’s president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, whose popularity sat at 31% at the end of December 2021,⁸ has become an exemplar of wartime leadership, resilience, and dedication to his country. He not only refuses to leave Ukraine but he has ensured that people around the world are reminded daily of what Ukrainians are living through while as the West watches on their TVs, computers, and phones. Print and social media have also provided a venue for the broad sharing of heartfelt stories of resilience, empathy, and humanity as once again, in their typical fashion, the Ukrainian people are pushing back against Russia’s most recent invasion and are defending their land, culture, language, and identity in every possible way, demonstrating their resilience in many (often creative) ways.

6. Aaron D’Andrea, “Nearly 5,000 Dead in Mariupol So Far During Russia-Ukraine War: Mayor’s Office,” *Global News*, March 28, 2022 1:53 p.m. CST, <https://globalnews.ca/news/8715627/mariupol-death-toll-russia-ukraine-war/#:~:text=Almost%205%2C000%20people%2C%20including%20roughly,according%20to%20the%20mayor’s%20spokesperson.>

7. Korostelina, “National Resilience,” Abstract.

8. Nils Adler, “Ukraine’s Zelenskyy: A Wartime Statesman for the Social Media Age,” *Al Jazeera*, March 3, 2022, accessed April 1, 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2022/3/3/ukraines-zelenskyy-a-wartime-statesman-for-the-social-media-age>.

In Korostelina's interviews, many respondents mentioned Ukraine's power as a resilient nation, "they stressed that while Ukraine has experienced extensive hardship, Ukrainians have demonstrated a high level of resiliency...Many respondents highlighted the strength and power of Ukrainians such as 'strong Ukrainian spirit' [and] 'the nature of Ukrainian people as having hope.'"⁹ Many civilians (within and outside of Ukraine) have stepped up to feed, clothe, and house Ukrainians who have fled their homes. There are those who have risked their lives to save people in Ukraine, rescue animals and pets, and those who have come forward to fight to defend Ukraine (or return to Ukraine to volunteer to defend their homeland or defend Ukraine in principle). In all of these examples, the Ukrainian people have demonstrated and continue to show that they are resilient, and they will not back down or stop fighting until peace (its negative and positive forms) are reached with guarantees of Ukraine's sovereignty (pre-2014).

As is part of Ukrainian tradition, those who have been displaced or have fled Ukraine and wish to return to their homeland, and all those who want to help in the peacebuilding and rebuilding process will be welcomed to Ukraine with open arms and our welcome bread, the kolach. People, especially young people in Ukraine, including the participants in this study, will continue to rise again, like the critical yeast that they are. While Ukrainians may have to be creative in their recipe for peace in Ukraine this time, the blending or mixing of ideas will create the dough that will be baked in a safe and sovereign Ukraine to create the bread, the kolach, that will bring lasting peace to Ukraine, giving rise to a stronger, more resilient Ukraine.

My Personal Reflections

Maksymchuk and Rosochinsky write "most of us in the Western world have little firsthand knowledge of war. Normally, we are not forced to face war, fight in a war, flee from

9. Korostelina, "National Resilience," 12.

war. We don't get tortured, see our homes and schools collapse, lose relatives and friends to war, spend months locked up in basements 'because this is war.'"¹⁰ As I was writing my thesis, this quote resonated with me, especially given the events of the past 36 days. Watching this war unfold has been unbelievable, surreal, and heartbreaking, and I have recognized my privilege as a Ukrainian Canadian and how fortunate I am not to be experiencing this war first-hand. It is hard to believe that I met the participants only four months ago and that their lives and Mariana's life have been turned upside down. I think about them constantly as I finish writing this thesis. I also reflect on my grandparents' and great-grandparents' experiences fleeing Ukraine due to war and persecution, and how history is unfortunately, repeating itself decades later.

As I sit and write the final chapters of this thesis, in the safety of my own home in Winnipeg, listening to Kvitka Cisyk's¹¹ anthology of beautiful Ukrainian folk songs, I cannot help but cry and grieve for Ukraine, its people, my family that remains in Ukraine, my friends in Canada who have family in Ukraine, Mariana, and the participants who shared their stories and lived experiences in this study. I am so fortunate to have met each participant in this study and I will cherish their stories and the moments I had facilitating this research as a precious, unique, and life-changing experience. I can only hope and pray that Mariana and the participants are as safe as they can be at this time and that they will have the opportunity to see their hopes and dreams for themselves, their families, their communities, and Ukraine become a reality in the (very) near future.

10. Oksana Maksymchuk and Max Rosochinsky, eds., *Words for War: New Poems from Ukraine* (Boston, MA: Ukrainian Research Institute, Harvard University with the Borderlines Foundation for Academic Studies and Academic Studies Press, 2018), xiii.

11. My Mama played Kvitka's cassette tapes (and eventually CDs) at home when I was growing up. I have fond memories of listening to this music with her. Please see this website for information about Kvitka Cisyk: <http://kvitkacisyk.com/>. The YouTube playlist of many of her songs can be found here: <https://youtu.be/dpr9QN3lpKo>. I hope you enjoy it as much as I have.

As a firm believer in grassroots peacebuilding, I remain an optimist about the power of young people to change the world, especially young people in Ukraine. As horrific and devastating as the past 36 days have been in this dark, difficult, and tragic time for Ukrainians in Ukraine and in the diaspora, deep down in my heart, I know that Ukraine will emerge victorious. Ukraine will once again be a united nation, stronger than ever because of the resiliency and perseverance of its people to preserve Ukraine's unique and rich history, language, culture, and traditions as an independent, democratic, and sovereign nation where its people can achieve their dreams. Слава Україні! Slava Ukraini (Glory to Ukraine)! Героям Слава! Heroyam Slava (Glory to the Heroes)!

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Appendices – Додатки
Appendix A
Individual, Semi-Structured Interview Guide

In the first phase of this research project, participants will be asked to share their life stories, sharing as much detail as they feel comfortable with in individual, semi-structured interviews. Using semi-structured interviews will help develop trust and rapport with participants so that I can learn about their life stories, their experiences growing up in Ukraine, and how their lives have changed since Russian aggression began in 2014 in Eastern Ukraine. I will guide the process by asking a series of open-ended questions. I will only intervene during the interview should I need to encourage participants to continue or ask a clarifying question. I have developed these questions based on the topic of this research but have also consulted the source listed below for guidance.

Interview Details:

- Interviews will be scheduled (based on participants' availability) and facilitated via a licensed version of Zoom.
- Participants do not need to download or purchase a version of Zoom to access the session.
- Participants will need a laptop/computer and an internet connection.
- An Interpreter will be present to assist with translation.
- I will ask the questions in Ukrainian, but participants may respond in Ukrainian or English.
- Interviews will be 1-2 hours in length.
- Interviews will be recorded (audio only) using a hand-held recorder.

Interview Questions:

Before getting started with the questions, I will introduce myself to the participants, sharing personal information about the reasons for the project and about my Ukrainian Canadian heritage to make participants feel comfortable sharing their stories with me. Participants can ask any questions that they have of me or of the process before we begin with the interview questions. Prior to beginning the interview, participants will be reminded that the interview will be audio-recorded (as they consented to) and that they do not have to answer any questions that they do not feel comfortable answering. They are not forced or encouraged to respond to or share any experience they do not feel comfortable sharing. The information shared during their interview will be kept confidential between the Researcher, the Interpreter, and the participant. They may choose to keep their cameras off during the interview if they would like. Participants will be informed that if they would like to withdraw from the research project at any point, they may do so verbally or in writing via email. Participants will also be reminded that there will be no negative consequences if they wish to withdraw from the research project. Participants will be asked to confirm their preferred name as indicated on the Consent Form prior to beginning the interview. This is the name they will also use in the Peacemaking Circle.

1. Do I have your permission to begin audio-recording the interview?
2. Could you please tell me about your life, beginning with where you were born, the circumstances of your family at that time, your place in the family, etc.?
3. Please tell me about your childhood and adolescence, your school years, family, friends, and interests.
 - What was life like where you grew up?
 - What was of interest to you?
 - What did you want to do when you grew up?
4. What were things like as you came into adulthood?
 - Did you go to university/college (if applicable)?
 - What type of work did/do you do?
 - What were/are your interests?
 - What was/is important to you?
5. What has life been like since Russian aggression began in Eastern Ukraine in 2014? How has it impacted you?
6. Could you describe your life now? Who and what are important to you? What does a day in your life look like?
7. What do you do for fun, to relax?
8. How do you cope when you face hardships? What kinds of things do you do? What gets you through hard times? Who (if anyone) do you turn to?
9. What hopes and dreams do you have for yourself, your family, your community, and for Ukraine's future?

De-Brief (Post-Interview):

- How did participating in this interview make you feel?
- How are you feeling now?
- Thank you for participating in this interview. I greatly appreciate your participation.
- What is your contact information so that I can provide you with a copy of your individual interview transcript and a summary of the research results?

Source: Flaherty, Maureen. *Peacebuilding with Women in Ukraine: Using Narrative to Envision a Common Future*. Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books, 2012, 207.

Appendix B

Peacemaking Circle Guide

In the final phase of this research project, participants will come together to take part in a virtual peacemaking circle (also known as a talking circle). Peacemaking circles are intended to provide a safe, non-judgemental space to engage in the sharing of ideas, reflections, and feelings in response to specific questions. Including a virtual peacemaking circle as part of this research is important as people who live in Ukraine still have much in common in spite of ongoing Russian aggression in Eastern Ukraine. Participants in the project (should they come from Eastern and Western Ukraine) would be able to learn more about one another through the peacemaking circle, finding common ground needed for peace and security. This phase of the project will act as a type of visioning exercise where participants can share their hopes, dreams, and aspirations for Ukraine's future and how they see their role in that future unfolding. This may inspire participants to work together toward peacebuilding in Ukraine, but this is not part of this research project.

Some of the advantages of holding a peacemaking circle online are that travel is unnecessary (limiting travel time and stress), participants can stay safe in their own environments, and there is no risk of Covid-19 transmission.

Peacemaking Circle Details:

- The peacemaking circle will be facilitated online using a licensed version of Zoom and scheduled based on participants' availability.
- Participants do not need to download or purchase a version of Zoom to access the session.
- Participants will need a laptop/computer and an internet connection.
- Participants will be part of the peacemaking circle as a group.
- An Interpreter will be present to assist with translation.
- I will facilitate the peacemaking circle in English, with some Ukrainian translation and support as needed.
- It is anticipated that this exercise will take 1.5-2 hours to complete.
- The exercise will be recorded (audio only).
- Participants will need to bring an object that will act as a talking stick or talking piece that they will hold when they are speaking in the circle.

Peacemaking Circle Guide:

Part 1: Check-In

Prior to beginning the peacemaking circle, participants will be reminded that the interview will be audio-recorded (as they consented to) and that they do not have to answer any questions that they do not feel comfortable answering. They are not forced or encouraged to respond to or share any experience they do not feel comfortable sharing. Participants will be informed that if they would like to withdraw from the research project at any point, they may do so verbally or in writing via email. Participants will also be reminded that there will be no negative consequences

if they wish to withdraw from the research project. They may choose to keep their cameras off during the interview if they would like and use the chat feature if they do not want to speak verbally. Participants will be reminded that as they have signed a confidentiality agreement, they are to keep what is shared in the peacemaking circle confidential and that the Researcher and Interpreter will also keep what is shared confidential.

To begin the peacemaking circle, participants will re-introduce themselves, sharing their name and pronouns. They can respond to the following questions if they are comfortable:

- How are you today?
- Where are you joining us from? Home, school, etc.

Part 2: The Peacemaking Circle

At this time, I will provide participants with an overview of peacemaking circles and how to participate in them in an online context. A sample script is outlined below.

Peacemaking circles are intended to provide a safe, non-judgemental space to engage in the sharing of ideas, reflections, and feelings in response to specific questions. Peacemaking circles are often used in restorative justice circles, especially in Indigenous contexts. Circles can be used to reduce the hierarchy in the group as all members are equal and can see one another. Individual contributions to the circle are valued and stories tend to flow more naturally in a circle. In our peacemaking circle today, we will talk about your visions for Ukraine's future as a peaceful nation. I know that you have already shared some hopes and dreams for Ukraine's future and your role in that future with me in your individual interviews, but re-visiting it in the group may reveal common ideas or visions that might inspire you to work together in peacebuilding in Ukraine. Peacemaking circles take time and the process should not be rushed. It is a place where you can share from the heart and share as much or as little as you feel comfortable sharing. If you are comfortable, I would encourage you to turn on your camera for this exercise so that we can see each other's faces to create a comfortable and welcoming space online.

Another key element of peacemaking circles is the talking piece (or talking stick). In a peacemaking circle, only one person speaks at a time and they typically hold an object while speaking. Only the person with the talking piece speaks while the rest of the group listens. If you do not want to share anything, you may "pass" on to the next person in the circle. Before coming to the circle today, you were asked to bring an object of significance with you. Since we are having our circle online, when you are speaking, you can hold the object that will act as your talking piece. Once you have finished speaking, you can pass it on to the next person by saying "I pass to ____." We will determine where our circle starts and the order shortly.

Some important guidelines for our circle are:

1. Speak from the heart
2. Listen from the heart
3. Be spontaneous – there is no need to think or plan your response ahead of time
4. Express yourself economically and sincerely
5. Be respectful of others – speak when it is your turn and do not interrupt others

Question for Peacemaking Circle:

As participants will have been asked about their hopes and dreams for Ukraine's future in their individual interviews, this question will serve to open dialogue amongst participants to share their visions for Ukraine's future.

1. What is your vision for a peaceful Ukraine?

Part 3: Check-Out/De-Brief

Once everyone has had the opportunity to answer the question, we will go around the circle once more for each person to say no more than three words about how they are feeling. I will then thank the participants and review next steps in the research process, leaving some time for questions. The Teams or Zoom session will then be ended.

Source for Peacemaking Circle Process (In-Person): Flaherty, Maureen and Sonya Stavkova. "Instructor's Manual." Course Manual developed for Participatory Action Research in Social Work." Department of Social Work and Sociology, Lviv Polytechnic National University. Developed in collaboration with Peace and Conflict Studies, Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Manitoba, 2018, 20-22.

Source for Peacemaking Circle Process (Virtual): <https://healingcirclesglobal.org/how-to-host-a-virtual-circle>

Source for Questions: Flaherty, Maureen. *Peacebuilding with Women in Ukraine: Using Narrative to Envision a Common Future*. Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books, 2012, 207.

Appendix C Confidentiality Agreement

This agreement was placed on University of Manitoba letterhead and translated into Ukrainian.

Research Project: Обмінювання Розповідями та Творення Миру Молоддю в Україні
(Sharing Stories and Envisioning Peace with Young People in Ukraine) – A PAR Project in
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I understand that in signing this form I agree to respect and keep confidential and private all information shared with me by other participants in this research project. I understand that any information I share will be held in the same strict confidence by the other participants. This includes information about the identity of the other participants, identities of their families and friends, and any other personal or identifying information that is shared, unless they specifically agree otherwise.

The purpose of this agreement is to facilitate free and open discussion with each other in our virtual group meetings associated with this research project. I understand that I am free to talk about my own involvement in this research project with whomever I please.

Participant's Signature

Date

Interpreter's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

Додаток С

Угода про нерозголошення

Дослідження: Обмінювання Розповідями та Творення Миру Молоддю в Україні (Sharing Stories and Envisioning Peace with Young People in Ukraine) – Дослідження шляхом участі у Львові, Україна

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Я розумію, що підписуючи цю форму, я погоджуюся поважати та тримати в конфіденційності і приватності всю інформацію, якою зі мною поділяться інші учасники/учасниці цього дослідження. Я розумію, що вся інформація, якою поділюся я буде зберігатися в такій самій суворій конфіденційності іншими учасниками. До цієї інформації належить інформація про ідентичність інших учасників, їхні сім'ї та друзів, а також будь-яка інша особиста чи ідентифікаційна інформація, якою можна поділитися, якщо лише вони не погодяться з іншим.

Мета цієї угоди - сприяти вільній та відкритій дискусії один з одним на наших віртуальних групових зустрічах, пов'язаних із цим дослідженням. Я розумію, що можу вільно говорити про свою участь у цьому дослідженні з ким захочу.

Підпис учасника

Дата

Підпис перекладача

Дата

Підпис дослідника

Дата

Appendix D Consent Form

The Consent Form was placed on University of Manitoba letterhead and translated into Ukrainian.

Research Project: Обмінювання Розповідями та Творення Миру Молоддю в Україні (Sharing Stories and Envisioning Peace with Young People in Ukraine) – A PAR Project in Lviv, Ukraine

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This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research project is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information. They must be reminded that they are not forced to or encouraged to respond or share any experience they do not feel comfortable sharing.

Research Project Description

The purpose of this research project is to explore the lived experiences of young people (aged 18-35) living in Lviv, Ukraine to understand the impact of the ongoing Russian aggression in Eastern Ukraine since 2014. The research project will involve connecting with other young people living in Lviv, Ukraine online through Zoom to share stories and envision your hopes, dreams, and aspirations for Ukraine's future as a peaceful nation and how you see your role in Ukraine's future unfolding. The main research questions of this research project are: first, what are the lived experiences of young people living in Lviv, Ukraine? What was it like to grow up in Ukraine? Second, what changes and/or challenges are young people facing in their communities in light of ongoing Russian aggression in Eastern Ukraine since 2014? Third, where do they turn for support when times are difficult? What gets them through hard times? Fourth, how are they building and/or can they build connection and a sense of community with other young people? Finally, what are their visions for their own futures and the future of Ukraine? How can they begin to build peace in Ukraine as the next generation?

How will the research be conducted?

General Information about the Research Project

- This research project will take place online using a licensed version of Zoom. This research project has two phases: individual interviews and a peacemaking circle.
- Participants will be between the ages of 18-35, living in Lviv, Ukraine and be a university student to participate.
- The total time commitment for participants will be no more than five hours maximum.
- The individual interviews and peacemaking circle will be scheduled on different dates and times depending on participants' availability.
- This research project will be audio-recorded.
- Questions will be asked in Ukrainian or English and participants may respond in Ukrainian or English. An Interpreter will be present to assist with translation during all interviews and sessions.
- Participation in this research project is voluntary.
- There is no cost to you and no personal remuneration.

Participation, Privacy, and Your Identity

- Participants can choose to identify themselves online using their names, use an alias, or remain anonymous. You will inform the Researcher of your preferred name to be used the research project in this consent form and will re-confirm prior to beginning the individual interview.
- Turning on your camera on your computer is optional for all phases of the project, depending on participants' comfort level, but will be encouraged to create a welcoming space for dialogue and conversation.
- You may choose not to respond to any questions without repercussions.
- You do not have to share information that you do not feel comfortable sharing in the research project.
- After the research has been completed, you will receive a transcript of your individual interview (within one month of interview completion) and a summary of the research findings within one year of the end of this project (on or before September 30, 2022).

Individual Interviews

- Interviews will take 1-2 hours to complete.
- Interviews will take place online using a licensed version of Zoom. You do not need to download Zoom to participate.
- Interviews will be audio-recorded and an Interpreter will be present to assist with translation.
- During the interview, you will be invited to share your stories growing up in Ukraine and the challenges you are facing in your communities due to the ongoing Russian aggression in Eastern Ukraine.
- There will be an opportunity to de-brief after the interview has been completed.

- After your interview has been transcribed, a copy will be sent to you. You may review and make edits to your interview transcripts. Any revisions or edits to your interview transcript must be completed and sent back to the Researcher within two weeks of receiving your transcript.
- If you choose not to make revisions to your interview transcript, the interview transcript will be used in the research results in its original form.
- If you have questions about your interview transcript, you may contact the Researcher or Interpreter.

Peacemaking Circle

- The peacemaking circle will take 2-3 hours to complete.
- You will meet with other participants online using Zoom.
- The peacemaking circle will be audio-recorded and an Interpreter will be present to assist with translation.
- During the peacemaking circle, you will have an opportunity for participants to meet together as a group to explore their hopes, dreams, and aspirations for Ukraine's future as a peaceful nation and discuss how you see your role unfolding in Ukraine's future.
- There will be an opportunity to de-brief after the peacemaking circle has been completed.

Withdrawing

- You may withdraw from the research project at any time until materials are shared publicly – up to October 31, 2021.
- If you choose to withdraw before October 31, 2021, any copies of the audio-recording of your individual interview will be destroyed if the interview has already been completed.
- There will be no negative consequences if you choose to withdraw from the research project at any time.
- You may withdraw from the research project at any time verbally or in writing via email.

What are the possible benefits and risks associated with participating?

I anticipate no risk greater than in everyday life in participating in this research project, even though sharing your story and any challenges you are facing may bring up strong emotions. I request that you only share your personal story and not that of any third party. I hope that participating in this research project will provide you with the opportunity to meet other young people living in Lviv who may be from different regions in Ukraine. You will get to learn about their lives and their hopes, dreams, aspirations for Ukraine's future as a peaceful nation. Hearing the stories of others, especially during this ongoing period of Russian aggression, may help you appreciate the perspectives and stories of others and recognize commonalities that may inspire you to work together to build peace in Ukraine as Ukraine's next generation.

How will the results of this research project be shared?

Once your individual interview has been reviewed and transcribed, you will receive a copy of the transcript of your individual interview to review and provide feedback on (see Individual

Interviews section above) and to keep. You may share the transcript with anyone you would like to. In the process of the research and during thesis writing, recorded material and transcripts will be kept on my personal computer, which is password-protected. I am the only person with access to my computer, but the Interpreter will also have access to transcripts and recorded material to assist with translation. Transcripts will be destroyed within five years of completing the research (by December 31, 2026). Audio recordings will be destroyed once transcription has been reviewed and completed (expected by December 31, 2021).

The research findings will be disseminated as part of my Master's thesis in the Peace and Conflict Studies program at the University of Manitoba. My thesis will be made publicly available through the thesis collection of the University of Manitoba's scholarly works repository MSpace. It may also be disseminated in the future in journal articles or at conference presentations that may arise but are unknown to the Researcher at this time.

The University of Manitoba may look at your research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way. My Academic Advisor, Dr. Maureen Flaherty, will have access to records as necessary and may also know some identifiers.

This research has been approved by the Research Ethics Board at the University of Manitoba, Fort Garry campus. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Officer at 204-474-7122 or HumanEthics@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Statements of Consent

Identification:

_____ **I would like** to be identified by name or alias in the research results/reports. If so, please provide the name or alias that should be used in identification:

_____ **I would not like** to be identified in the research results. Please keep my identity confidential and remove/disguise all identifying information from my transcription, from any research materials, and any report associated with the research.

Research Process

_____ I consent to the audio-recording of my individual interview.

_____ I consent to the audio-recording of the peacemaking circle.

Research Results

I would like to review the transcript from my interview:

Yes _____

No _____

I would like to receive a copy of the transcript from my interview:

Yes _____

No _____

I would like to receive a copy of the summary of the research findings:

Yes _____

No _____

Contact Information for Dissemination of Transcript and Research Findings

Mailing/email address: _____

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

Participant's Signature

Date

Interpreter's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

Додаток D Форма згоди

Дослідження: Обмінювання Розповідями та Творення Миру Молоддю в Україні (Sharing Stories and Envisioning Peace with Young People in Ukraine) – Дослідження шляхом участі у Львові, Україна

Дослідниця: Александра (Алекс) Козелко
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Науковий керівник: д-р Морін Флаерті
Доцент – Студії миру та конфлікту
Манітобський Університет
Вінніпег, Манітоба, Канада
Maureen.Flaherty@umanitoba.ca

Ця Форма згоди, копія якої буде залишена Вам для Ваших записів та довідки, є лише частиною процесу поінформованої згоди. Вона покликана дати Вам уявлення про те, про що йтиметься у дослідженні, і про те, що передбачає Ваша участь. Якщо Ви хочете отримати більш детальну інформацію про щось, згадане тут, чи інформацію, яка тут не включена, Ви можете сміливо запитати. Будь ласка, використайте час, щоб уважно прочитати цю форму та зрозуміти всю супутню інформацію. Пам'ятайте, що Ви не повинні відповідати на питання чи ділитися будь-яким досвідом, якщо Вам це неприємно.

Опис дослідження

Мета цього дослідження – вивчити досвід молоді (віком 18-35 років), яка проживає у Львові (Україна), щоб зрозуміти вплив російської агресії, що триває на Сході України з 2014 р. Дослідження передбачатиме спілкування з молодими людьми, які живуть у Львові (Україна) в онлайн форматі через платформу Zoom і спрямоване на те, аби вони могли поділитися історіями та баченням своїх надій, мрій і прагнень майбутнього України як мирної нації та свого місця у майбутньому розвитку України. Основними питаннями дослідження є: по-перше, яким є досвід молодих людей, які проживають у Львові (Україна)? Яким було зростання в Україні? По-друге, з якими змінами та/або викликами стикаються молоді люди у своїх громадах у світлі агресії Росії на Сході України з 2014 року? По-третє, куди вони звертаються за підтримкою у важкі часи? Що допомагає їм долати труднощі? По-четверте, як вони будують та/або можуть побудувати зв'язок та почуття спільності з іншими молодими людьми? Нарешті, яке їхнє бачення власного майбутнього та майбутнього України? Як вони можуть почати будувати мир в Україні як наступне покоління?

Як буде проводитися дослідження?

Загальна інформація про дослідження

- Це дослідження відбуватиметься онлайн за допомогою ліцензованої версії Zoom. Дослідження складається з двох етапів: індивідуальні інтерв'ю та Миротворче коло.
- Для участі в дослідженні учасники повинні мати 18-35 років, проживати у Львові (Україна), та бути студентами університету.
- Загальний час участі для учасників складатиме максимум п'ять годин.
- Індивідуальні інтерв'ю та Миротворче коло будуть призначені на різні дати та час, залежно від можливостей учасників.
- Це дослідження буде записано в аудіо-форматі.
- Питання ставитимуться українською чи англійською мовами, учасники також можуть відповідати українською чи англійською мовами. Для допомоги з перекладом, під час усіх інтерв'ю та сесій буде присутній перекладач.
- Участь у цьому дослідженні є добровільною.
- Для Вас не передбачається жодних витрат та особистих винагород.

Участь, конфіденційність та Ваша ідентифікація

- Учасники можуть ідентифікувати себе онлайн, використовуючи свої імена, псевдоніми або залишатися анонімними. Ви повідомите дослідника про бажане ім'я для використання у дослідження у цій Формі згоди, а потім повторно підтвердите його перед початком індивідуального інтерв'ю.
- Увімкнення камери на комп'ютері необов'язкове на всіх етапах дослідження, залежно від рівня комфорту учасників, але буде заохочуватися для створення затишного простору для діалогу та розмов.
- Ви можете не відповідати на будь-які запитання без жодних наслідків.
- Вам не потрібно ділитися інформацією, якою Вам неприємно ділитися у дослідженні.
- Після того, як дослідження буде завершено, Ви отримаєте стенограму Вашого індивідуального інтерв'ю (протягом одного місяця після завершення інтерв'ю) та резюме результатів дослідження протягом одного року після закінчення цього проекту (30 вересня 2022 р., або раніше).

Індивідуальні інтерв'ю

- Інтерв'ю триватиме 1-2 години.
- Інтерв'ю проходитиме онлайн із використанням ліцензованої версії Zoom. Вам не потрібно завантажувати Zoom, щоб взяти участь в дослідженні.
- Інтерв'ю буде записано в аудіо форматі. Для допомоги з перекладом буде присутній перекладач.
- Під час інтерв'ю Вам буде запропоновано поділитися історіями свого зростання в Україні і викликами, з якими Ви стикаєтесь у своїх громадах через агресію Росії, що триває на Сході України.
- Після завершення інтерв'ю буде можливість провести дебрифінг.

- Після того, як Ваше інтерв'ю буде транскрибовано, Вам буде надіслано копію. Ви зможете переглянути та змінити стенограми інтерв'ю. Будь-які зміни або редагування стенограми Вашого інтерв'ю мають бути завершені та надіслані досліднику протягом двох тижнів після отримання Вашої стенограми.
- Якщо Ви вирішите не змінювати стенограму свого інтерв'ю, у результатах дослідження буде використана її початкова форма.
- Якщо у Вас є запитання щодо стенограми Вашого інтерв'ю, Ви можете зв'язатися з дослідником або перекладачем.

Миротворче коло

- На створення Миротворчого кола піде 2-3 години.
- Ви зустрінетесь з іншими учасниками онлайн за допомогою Zoom.
- Миротворче коло буде записано в аудіо-форматі. Для допомоги з перекладом буде присутній перекладач.
- Під час Миротворчого кола Ви матимете можливість зустрітися з іншими учасниками разом як група, щоб дослідити свої надії, мрії та прагнення майбутнього України як мирної нації та обговорити, як ви бачите власну роль у майбутньому розвитку.
- Після завершення Миротворчого кола буде можливість провести дебрифінг.

Відмова від участі в дослідженні

- Ви можете відмовитися від участі в дослідженні в будь-який час, доки матеріали не будуть опубліковані публічно – до 31 жовтня 2021 р.
- Якщо Ви вирішите відмовитися від участі до 31 жовтня 2021 р., всі копії аудіозапису Вашого індивідуального інтерв'ю будуть знищені, якщо інтерв'ю вже було завершено.
- Якщо у будь-який час Ви вирішите відмовитися від участі в дослідженні, це не матиме ніяких негативних наслідків.
- Ви можете відмовитися від участі в дослідженні у будь-який час усно або письмово електронною поштою.

Які можливі переваги та ризики, пов'язані з участю в дослідженні?

Я очікую, що участь у цьому дослідженні не буде більшим ризиком, ніж у повсякденному житті, хоча розповідь Вашої історії та викликів, з якими Ви стикаєтесь, може викликати сильні емоції. Я прошу Вас поділитися лише своєю особистою історією, а не історією третьої сторони. Я сподіваюся, що участь у цьому дослідницькому проєкті надасть Вам можливість познайомитися з іншими молодими людьми, які проживають у Львові та можуть бути з різних регіонів України. Ви дізнаєтесь про їхнє життя та їхні надії, мрії, прагнення до майбутнього України як мирної нації. Слухання розповідей інших людей, особливо в цей період російської агресії, може допомогти Вам побачити перспективи та цінність історій інших людей, а також побачити схожості, які можуть надихнути Вас працювати разом над побудовою миру в Україні як наступного покоління.

Як будуть оприлюднені результати цього дослідження?

Після того, як ваше індивідуальне інтерв'ю буде переглянуто та розшифровано, Ви отримаєте копію стенограми Вашого індивідуального інтерв'ю для перегляду, надання зворотного зв'язку (дивись пункт Індивідуальні інтерв'ю вище) та збереження. Ви можете поділитися стенограмою з ким завгодно. У процесі дослідження та під час написання дипломної роботи записані матеріали та стенограми будуть зберігатися на моєму персональному комп'ютері, захищеному паролем. Я – єдина людина, яка має доступ до мого комп'ютера, але перекладач також матиме доступ до стенограм та записаних матеріалів, щоб допомогти з перекладом. Стенограми будуть знищені протягом п'яти років після завершення дослідження (до 31 грудня 2026 р.). Аудіозаписи будуть знищені після того, як транскрипція буде переглянута та завершена (очікується до 31 грудня 2021 р.).

Результати дослідження будуть розповсюджені як частина моєї магістерської дипломної роботи на Студії миру та конфлікту Манітобського університету. Моя дипломна робота буде доступна публічно в колекції дипломних робіт MSpace –репозитарію наукових праць Манітобського університету. Вона також може бути розповсюджені в майбутньому у журнальних статтях або на презентаціях під час конференцій, які можуть з'явитися потім, але наразі невідомі досліднику.

Манітобський університет може переглянути Ваші записи, щоб переконатися, що дослідження проводяться безпечним та належним чином. Мій науковий керівник, доктор Морін Флаерті, матиме доступ до записів у разі необхідності, а також може знати деякі ідентифікатори.

Це дослідження було схвалено Радою з етики досліджень Манітобського університету, кампус Форт-Гаррі. Якщо у Вас є якісь зауваження чи скарги щодо цього дослідження, Ви можете зв'язатися з будь-якою з вищезазначених осіб або співробітником Відділу з питань етики людини за номером 204-474-7122 чи на HumanEthics@umanitoba.ca. Копія цієї форми згоди була надана Вам для зберігання та довідки.

Заяви про згоду

Ідентифікація:

_____ **Я хочу**, щоб мене ідентифікували за іменем чи псевдонімом у результатах/звітах дослідження. Якщо так, будь ласка, вкажіть ім'я або псевдонім, які слід використовувати для ідентифікації:

_____ **Я не хочу**, щоб мене ідентифікували в результатах дослідження. Будь ласка, зберігайте конфіденційність моєї особистості та видаліть/зашифруйте всю ідентифікаційну інформацію з моєї транскрипції, будь-яких матеріалів дослідження та звітів, пов'язаних з дослідженням.

Дослідницький процес

_____ Я даю згоду на аудіозапис мого особистого інтерв'ю.

_____ Я даю згоду на аудіозапис Миротворчого кола.

Результати дослідження

Я хотів/хотіла б переглянути стенограму мого інтерв'ю:

Так _____

Ні _____

Я хотів/хотіла б отримати копію стенограми мого інтерв'ю:

Так _____

Ні _____

Я хотів/хотіла б отримати копію резюме результатів дослідження:

Так _____

Ні _____

Контактна інформація для розповсюдження стенограми та результатів дослідження

Поштова/електронна адреса: _____

Ваш підпис у цій формі свідчить про те, що Ви достатньо добре зрозуміли інформацію щодо участі у дослідженні та погоджуєтесь взяти в ньому участь як його суб'єкт. Це жодним чином не позбавляє Вас Ваших законних прав і не звільняє дослідників, спонсорів чи залучені установи від їх юридичних та професійних обов'язків. Ви можете вільно відмовитися від дослідження в будь-який час та /або утриматися від відповідей на будь-які питання, які вважаєте за краще пропустити, без жодної шкоди чи наслідків. Ваша подальша участь має бути такою ж поінформованою, як і Ваша перша згода, тому Ви можете сміливо просити роз'яснень або нової інформації протягом усієї участі в дослідженні.

Підпис учасника

Дата

Підпис перекладача

Дата

Підпис дослідника

Дата

Appendix E

Participant Recruitment Poster

This was placed on University of Manitoba letterhead and translated into Ukrainian. This poster was distributed by colleagues at Lviv Polytechnic National University for participant recruitment.

Research Project Title: Обмінювання Розповідями та Творення Миру Молоддю в Україні (Sharing Stories and Envisioning Peace with Young People in Ukraine) – A PAR Project in Lviv, Ukraine

Are you a university student aged 18-35 and living in Lviv, Ukraine?

If you are, I am interested in hearing your life story and about your life in Ukraine. I want to learn about the changes and challenges you have faced since Russian aggression in Eastern Ukraine began in 2014. I want to hear about your hopes, dreams, and visions for Ukraine's future as a peaceful nation and how you see your role in Ukraine's future unfolding.

Who can participate?

- You were born in Ukraine and currently live in Lviv.
- You are 18-35 years of age.
- You are a university student.

How much time will it take?

- This research project has two parts.
- There will be individual interviews and a peacemaking circle that are part of this research project.
- Each part may be scheduled at a different day/time to accommodate participants' availability.
- It is estimated that the interviews will take 1-2 hours and the peacemaking circle will take 2-3 hours for a total of 5 hours maximum.
-

How and where will we meet you?

- We will use a licensed version of Zoom, an electronic platform used to meet online.
- You do not need to download or purchase a version of Zoom to access the session. A link will be provided to you.
- You will need a laptop or computer with audio (video is optional) to join the sessions online.

Who is doing this research?

- This research project is being conducted by a graduate student researcher from the University of Manitoba (Winnipeg, Canada).

What will happen with your story?

- Each part of the research project will be audio-recorded. No video recording will occur in this research project.
- To engender a circle of trust, we will ask all participants to affirm confidentiality in the peacemaking circle; all information will be managed to protect privacy. For more information on data management for this project, contact Alex Kozelko (Researcher) or review the Consent Form for more information.
- Each participant will have the option to receive a copy of the transcripts of your individual interview and/or the summary of the research findings.

If you are interested in participating in this research study and sharing your story and vision for a peaceful Ukraine, please contact:

Alexandra (Alex) Kozelko
MA Candidate – Peace and Conflict Studies Program
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada
kozelko@myumanitoba.ca

This research has been approved by the Research Ethics Board of the University of Manitoba (REB2). If you have any concerns or complaints about this project, you may contact Alexandra or the Human Ethics Coordinator at 204-474-7122 or humanethics@umanitoba.ca



Додаток Е

Постер для залучення учасників/учасниць

Дослідження: Обмінювання Розповідями та Творення Миру Молоддю в Україні (Sharing Stories and Envisioning Peace with Young People in Ukraine) – Дослідження шляхом участі у Львові, Україна

Ви студент/ка у віці 18-35 років і проживаєте у Львові (Україна)?

Якщо так, то мені цікаво почути Вашу історію життя та про Ваше життя в Україні. Я хочу дізнатися про зміни та виклики, з якими Ви зіткнулися після початку агресії Росії на Сході України у 2014 році. Я хочу почути про Ваші надії, мрії та бачення майбутнього України як мирної нації та про те, як Ви бачите свою роль у майбутньому розвитку України.

Хто може взяти участь?

- Ви народилися в Україні і наразі проживаєте у Львові.
- Вам від 18 до 35 років.
- Ви студент/ка університету.

Скільки часу це займе?

- Це дослідження складається з двох частин.
- В рамках цього дослідження відбудуться індивідуальні інтерв'ю та Миротворче коло.
- Кожна частина може бути запланована в різний день/час відповідно до можливостей учасників.
- Інтерв'ю триватимуть приблизно 1-2 години, а Миротворче коло триватиме 2-3 години, що загалом займе не більше 5 годин часу учасника/учасниці.

Як і де ми з вами зустрінемось?

- Ми будемо використовувати ліцензовану версію Zoom – електронну платформу, яка використовується для онлайн -зустрічей.
- Для доступу до сесії Вам не потрібно завантажувати або купувати версію Zoom. Вам буде надано посилання.
- Щоб приєднатися до сесій онлайн, вам знадобиться ноутбук або комп'ютер із аудіо (відео необов'язкове).

Хто проводить це дослідження?

- Це дослідження проводиться студенткою магістерської програми Манітобського університету (Вінніпег, Канада).

Що станеться з Вашою історією?

- Кожна частина дослідження буде записана на аудіо. Відеозапису не вестиметься.
- Щоб створити коло довіри, ми попросимо всіх учасників підтвердити конфіденційність у Миротворчому колі; вся інформація буде використовуватися із захистом конфіденційності. Для отримання додаткової інформації про управління даними у цьому дослідженні зверніться до Алекс Козелко (дослідниці) або перегляньте Форму згоди для отримання додаткової інформації.
- Кожен учасник/учасниця матиме можливість отримати копію стенограми свого індивідуального інтерв'ю та/або резюме результатів дослідження.

Якщо Вам цікаво взяти участь у цьому дослідженні та поділитися своєю історією і баченням мирної України, будь ласка, звертайтеся:

Александра (Алекс) Козелко
Студентка магістерської програми – Студії миру та конфлікту
Манітобський Університет
Вінніпег, Манітоба, Канада
kozelko@myumanitoba.ca

Це дослідження було схвалено Радою з етики досліджень Манітобського університету (REB2). Якщо у Вас є якісь занепокоєння чи скарги щодо цього проекту, Ви можете зв'язатися з Александрою або Координатором з питань етики людини за номером 204-474-7122 або humanethics@umanitoba.ca



Appendix F

Social Media Post

This script was translated into Ukrainian and was used to distribute my recruitment poster (see Appendix E) if my colleagues at Lviv Polytechnic National University choose to utilize social media (Instagram or Facebook) to aid in participant recruitment.

Are you a university student aged 18-35 and living in Lviv, Ukraine?

If you are, I am interested in hearing your life story and about your life in Ukraine. I am a Ukrainian-Canadian graduate student from Winnipeg, Canada whose research project is called Обмінювання Розповідями та Творення Миру Молоддю в Україні (Sharing Stories and Envisioning Peace with Young People in Ukraine) – A PAR Project in Lviv, Ukraine. I am looking for participants to be a part of my research project! I want to learn about the changes and challenges you have faced since Russian aggression in Eastern Ukraine began in 2014. I want to hear about your hopes, dreams, and visions for Ukraine's future as a peaceful nation and how you see your role in Ukraine's future unfolding. Click the link to learn more about my research project and how you can participate!



Додаток F
Social Media Post

Ви студент/ка університету у віці 18-35 років і проживаєте у Львові (Україна)?

Якщо так, то мені цікаво почути Вашу історію життя та про Ваше життя в Україні. Я-українсько-канадська студентка з Вінніпегу, Канада. Моє дослідження має назву «Обмінювання Розповідями та Творення Миру Молоддю в Україні» (Sharing Stories and Envisioning Peace with Young People in Ukraine) –Дослідження шляхом участі у Львові (Україна). Я шукаю учасників/учасниць для участі у моєму дослідженні! Я хочу дізнатися про зміни та виклики, з якими Ви зіткнулися після початку російської агресії на Сході України у 2014 році. Я хочу почути про Ваші надії, мрії та бачення майбутнього України як мирної нації та про те, як Ви бачите свою роль у майбутньому розвитку України. Натисніть на посилання, щоб дізнатися більше про моє дослідження та про те, як Ви можете взяти в ньому участь!





Appendix G
Oath of Confidentiality Form (For Interpreter)



**University
of Manitoba**

Research Ethics and Compliance

Human Ethics - Fort Garry
208-194 Dafoe Road
Winnipeg, MB R3T 2N2
T: 204 474 8872
humanethics@umanitoba.ca

Oath of Confidentiality

I, _____, am a member of the research team involved in the research project entitled “_____” (the “Research Project”).

In connect with the Research Project I hereby agree as follows:

- I will respect the right to privacy and confidentiality of all participants in this Research Project.
- I will keep all the research information shared with me, including but not limited to recordings, transcripts, data, research results, data files, inventions, (hereinafter the “Research Information”) secure and confidential and will not disclose or share the Research Information with anyone outside the research team.
- I will store all research information in the data management methods outlined in the approved ethics protocol while it is in my possession.
- I will store and use the Research Information in the way it was approved by the research ethics board.
- I will not make any copies, duplications, or transmit the research information unless approved by the principal investigator of the Research Project.
- In consultation with the Principal Investigator, I will adhere to the methods and deadlines of disposal/destruction and retention as outlined by the approved ethics protocol.

I will notify the principal investigator if I discover that the Research Information is not being managed as it was approved by the research ethics board or if it is not being kept confidential or secure as required by this Oath of Confidentiality.

(Interpreter - print name)

(Signature)

(Date)

Appendix H

University of Manitoba Ethics Approval



**University
of Manitoba**

Research Ethics and Compliance

Human Ethics - Fort Garry
208-194 Dafoe Road
Winnipeg, MB R3T 2N2
T: 204 474 8872
humanethics@umanitoba.ca

PROTOCOL APPROVAL

To: **Alexandra Kozelko** (Advisor: Maureen Flaherty)
Principal Investigator

From: **Andrea Szwajcer, Chair**
Research Ethics Board 2 (REB 2)

Re: **Protocol # R2-2021:059 (HS24953)**
Обмінування Розповідями та Творення Миру Молоддю в Україні
(Sharing Stories and Envisioning Peace with Young People in
Ukraine) – A PAR Project in Lviv, Ukraine

Effective: September 7, 2021

Expiry: September 7, 2022

Research Ethics Board 2 (REB 2) has reviewed and approved the above research.

REB 2 is constituted and operates in accordance with the current [Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans – TCPS 2 \(2018\)](#).

This approval is subject to the following conditions:

- i. Approval is granted for the research and purposes described in this application only.
- ii. Any changes to this research must be approved by the Human Ethics Office (HEO) before implementation.
- iii. Any deviations to the research or adverse events must be reported to the HEO immediately.
- iv. This approval is valid for one year only. A Renewal Request Form must be submitted and approved prior to the above expiry date.
- v. A Study Closure Form must be submitted to the HEO when the research is complete prior to the above expiry date, or if the research is terminated.
- vi. The University of Manitoba (UM) may request to audit your research documentation to confirm compliance with this approved protocol, and with the UM [Ethics of Research Involving Humans](#) policies and procedures.

Funded Protocols: Email a copy of this Protocol Approval, with the corresponding UM Project Number, to ResearchGrants@umanitoba.ca