**Research Program on the Ukrainian Armed Conflict**

The ongoing war in Ukraine has sparked a global discourse across various intellectual platforms and media outlets, dominating headlines and becoming a primary focus of worldwide attention. Multiple factors have propelled this event to the forefront of global concerns.

A cursory examination reveals that this "First Globalized War" (Bertrand Badie) epitomizes the characteristics of the modern world, hence its virtual globalization. Key features include the extensive media coverage of events unfolding at the heart of the international system, the resurgence of large-scale conflicts after a prolonged period of relative peace, the involvement of major powers (particularly NATO and Russia), the economic sanctions imposed by Western nations on Russia and their repercussions on the global economy, the omnipresence of "warmongers" (Pierre Conesa) dominating the airwaves, and the global exclusion of Russia from sporting, cultural, political, and economic spheres.

The ongoing war in Ukraine serves as a stark reminder of the pervasive nature of warfare, as aptly described by Marcel Mauss as a "total phenomenon." In the modern world, warfare has inevitably become total in its scope and depth due to the pervasiveness of hyper-sophisticated communication technologies and the multifaceted consequences it has on the lives of billions of people worldwide.

Unfortunately, this pervasive nature of conflict often hinders the work of analysts, who can no longer operate in the tranquillity often required for knowledge production. The time-consuming and methodical pace of research finds itself competing with the "urgency" of real-time analysis, which seeks to interpret events as they unfold. As Pierre Bourdieu eloquently observed, "In the struggle against the discourse of spokespersons, politicians, essayists, and journalists, scientific discourse has everything stacked against it: the difficulty and slowness of its elaboration, which often means it arrives after the battle; its inevitable complexity, which tends to discourage simplistic and prejudiced minds, or simply those who lack the cultural capital necessary to decipher it; its abstract impersonality, which discourages identification and all forms of gratifying projections; and above all, its distance from received ideas and initial convictions."

Bourdieu urged intellectuals to pre-emptively refuse any suspicion of compromise, which would lead them to turn the weapons of intellectual power against intellectual power by saying the least expected, the most improbable, the most out-of-place thing in the place where it is said. In doing so, they would "refuse to 'preach to the converted,' as common discourse does, which is so well understood only because it tells its audience only what it wants to hear.

The recommendations of Pierre Bourdieu are undermined by the relentless pressure to produce immediate commentary in response to the societal demand for explanations of the numerous events unfolding at an accelerated pace and with global repercussions. Faced with other forms of discourse that excel in simplification and vulgarization, intellectuals are outmanoeuvred by the rapid pen and omnipotence of the spoken and visual over the written word. Aided by political doxa, those who can quickly formulate opinions win the ratings war, and their audience grows exponentially at the expense of the slow pace of the academic tortoise, lapped by the audiovisual hare.

Scientific analysis thus lacks the Greek episteme, which suggested a period of reflection to mature one's thinking by weighing the object of study, turning it over from all sides, and observing its different facets. Analyses have erred in speaking too soon about phenomena that are still unfolding and have not yet reached their conclusion. This has resulted in products imbued with emotions and ideological biases, to the detriment of knowledge that claims objectivity according to the rigorous criteria of the academic world. The academic world demands that nothing be put forward without subjecting it to the crucible of verification. The relentless pursuit of journalistic scoops has eroded the rigor of academic inquiry. Daily, "specialists" literally camped out on television sets have compromised themselves by the shallowness and thinness of their pronouncements, which have sometimes turned into commentaries that mimic the "experts" of football matches or boxing fights.

**The Transformation of the Ukraine War into a Media Spectacle: A Critique of Superficiality and a Call for Rigorous Research**

The Ukraine war has morphed into a grand media event, garnering publicity akin to major electoral campaigns or primetime election results broadcasts in Western democracies. News channels have reveled in this spectacle, adorning their sets with the same talking heads, whose research time remains shrouded in mystery, as they churn out daily commentary.

The Ukraine war is not the only phenomenon to suffer from the superficiality of fleeting glances dictated by the zapping culture in a world of information overload. We hop from one island to another in search of the juiciest scoops for audiences consumed by a pathological frenzy. In the face of such relentless demands, it takes a special kind of genius to maintain record viewership. Hence, a plethora of editorialists take turns captivating audiences with productions tailored to the television format. Intellectuals are largely excluded, their discourses deemed soporific and ill-suited to the urgency and velocity of communication shaken by the competitive landscape of social media, a veritable underground communication that forces mainstream media to play it safe.

To restore order, it is imperative to return to the fundamentals of research while avoiding confinement within the ivory tower of traditional research centers that have ceded too much ground to market-driven think tanks. In understanding and explaining the Ukraine war, the prerequisites of scientific methodology have been the neglected child in a context dominated by activism masquerading as expertise.

**Addressing the Pitfalls of Social Science Research: A Call for Rigorous Methodology in Investigating the War in Ukraine**

In the face of the pervasive shortcomings that plague the scientific investigation of social phenomena, we believe it is imperative to return to the root of the problem. We must establish the fundamental principles that guide the conduct of scientifically sound research. While avoiding the pitfalls of scientism, it is crucial to emphasize the unique nature of the scientific approach, characterized by its rigorous methodology and pursuit of heuristic knowledge. The pursuit of truth in scientific inquiry demands adherence to specific criteria and procedures, without which the endeavor would fall into the realm of alternative knowledge-seeking methods. It is essential to recognize that science does not hold a monopoly on knowledge. Other approaches, such as those grounded in belief, intuition, supposition, trial and error, tradition, common sense, chance, ancestral wisdom, and experience, can also contribute to the pursuit of truth.

In light of this, we advocate for a renewed exploration of the experiences accumulated in the systematic explanation of war, with the aim of equipping the scientific method to generate insightful perspectives that can initiate a process of comprehending and elucidating the war in Ukraine. This endeavor entails establishing a minimal theoretical consensus that serves as a multidisciplinary foundation capable of fostering more objective analyses of war in general, and the war in Ukraine in particular.

Historically, Quincy Wright of the University of Chicago embarked on an ambitious project during the interwar period to systematize the study of war in International Relations. This endeavor laid the groundwork for a social science of war and peace (reflecting Wright's pacifist inclinations), as his approach was adopted by numerous researchers from diverse disciplines across the social sciences. While other such attempts have been made, they have not matched the scope, duration, or ambition of Wright's project.

**Pioneering Efforts and the Need for a Renewed Interdisciplinary Approach to War Studies**

The groundbreaking work of John Galtung led to the establishment of Polemology as a new discipline that scientifically examines war and peace. His contributions provided a significant milestone in systematizing the study of warfare. However, instead of building upon this interdisciplinary and systematic foundation, the field has regressed into fragmented approaches, limiting our understanding of war as a sociological phenomenon. Consequently, when wars erupt, the scientific community often struggles to provide a comprehensive and insightful analysis.

In an attempt to break down silos and foster interdisciplinary collaboration, the Sorbonne War-Studies program was established. This initiative aimed to revisit war studies from a multifaceted perspective, emphasizing the role of armed forces in security studies rather than expanding the concept of "security" indefinitely. By doing so, the program defines the ecosystem of armed forces, encompassing operational environments (relations with territories and populations), decision-making environments (crisis management leadership and division of labor), and professional environments (statuses, careers, and security technologies).

The ongoing war in Ukraine, coupled with the wealth of insightful yet scattered analyses, presents an opportune moment to revive the intellectual pursuit of interdisciplinary war studies. This endeavor should commence on a theoretical level, followed by empirical research, ensuring a solid epistemological foundation before delving into case studies. To rekindle this intellectual adventure, we propose a research program modeled after Emre Lakatos's framework. Through international interdisciplinary collaboration, the contributions of diverse scholars from various fields, representing the breadth of perspectives on human society, should converge to advance the science of war. This collective knowledge can inform our understanding of the war in Ukraine, reducing the intensity of ongoing debates surrounding the conflict.

**Building Upon the Foundations of Interdisciplinary War Studies**

The work initiated by the pioneers of interdisciplinary research on warfare will be furthered by this endeavor. At the time, there was great hope for the establishment of a disciplinary field that would reduce the uncertainties inherent in war studies. It was stated that "The discipline, which is gradually being constructed along different paths, aims to constitute a sector of scientific research that goes beyond the traditional approaches that have prevailed in international law, history, political science, and international relations. It is therefore an attempt to integrate into teamwork all other sciences that are interested in man and life in society. This attempt to bring together knowledge about war and peace should make it possible to remove the barriers between disciplines that prevent us from seeing the world's problems in their entirety."

On other occasions, we have already expressed our opposition to the compartmentalization or other "salami-slicing" of science. It is a pure and simple rejection of artificial segmentation. In line with Bourdieu, it is necessary to defend such an idea of conviviality between disciplinary fields and their interpenetration. He said: "The refusal of compartmentalization between the artificial specialties of sociology, which are most often in the service of corporatist interests of researchers, was ordered by social reality itself, understood as a structured set of relationships between different spaces of practice." We thus observe a perception of social space as multidimensional, impossible to reduce to a binary opposition.

**War: A Multifaceted and Elusive Phenomenon**

War is a multifaceted phenomenon that is very difficult to study empirically due to the conditions of its occurrence. However, it is already difficult to grasp because it is called upon by several semantic corpora. We may well remember that "war is a typically human activity". We are not necessarily more advanced than that. We can add that war is "the act of a rational, physical and social being"; we still do not dispel the obscurity about it. So, we explain the terms of this definition: "Rational, therefore capable of conceiving goals for its actions and of entering into conflict with its peers for very diverse stakes; physical, therefore capable of exercising and undergoing violence; social, therefore capable of cooperation and organization without which violence would remain individual and dispersed."

**The Need for Comprehensive and Interdisciplinary Approaches**

It is thus necessary to deepen and extend at the same time. One thing is obvious: war is a complex and complicated sociological phenomenon that resists traditional analysis and requires effective tools to account for it. It is part of polymorphism and thus adds to the difficulty of understanding it. It requires diachrony, encouraging an extremely long historical approach. It is difficult to analyze with distance and detachment, let alone neutrality. In addition, it is studied in the midst of the din of arms, with the death of men and bloodshed, accompanied by destruction, fire, tears, fears, cries, displacement, famine, separations, suffering, misery, etc.

Brian Hayes aptly observes that "War erases all memories and leaves no one cold-blooded when mentioned: we choose one side or the other, and even the feelings of pacifists are violent. This unleashing of passions hinders a scientific approach to the phenomenon. We look at wars from the perspective of the ongoing conflict and draw lessons from history that suit us to defend our vision and our goals."

To study war, a phenomenon that breeds antagonism among researchers, it is therefore necessary to consider these two aspects: the dissensions between belligerents and the clashes between researchers. It is with good reason that a conference spoke of polemics in polemology. It is necessary to engage in both language and metalanguage. It is necessary to produce a discourse on war to make sense while also producing a discourse on scientific discourses dealing with war.

War is therefore a problem for society. It is often asserted that uncertainty is one of the fundamental characteristics of war and international relations. It is therefore required a great deal of prudence and intellectual acuity for proper analysis. It is above all a problematic issue for different disciplinary fields. For some time now, war has appeared to researchers not only as a technical (military) act, but also as a social act, and even better, as a political act. To analyze it, therefore, one needs a solid foundation in the social and human sciences.

General Bruno Cuche aptly observes that unlike conventional warfare, where strategic outcomes hinge on tactical victories on the battlefield, counterinsurgency cannot be solely won through military might alone. Military force, while still crucial, becomes merely one component of a broader strategy. Rooted in the principles of revolutionary warfare, counterinsurgency, as Raymond Aron aptly distinguishes, no longer aims to impose peace through the absolute annihilation of the adversary but rather to negotiate the terms of peace and establish conditions conducive to its restoration.

General Sir Rupert Smith went further, asserting that warfare has undergone a paradigm shift akin to the scientific revolution articulated by Thomas Kuhn. Rather than interpreting contemporary conflicts through the lens of Samuel Huntington's clash of civilizations theory, which gained prominence following the September 11, 2001 attacks, Smith advocates for recognizing a fundamental transformation in the nature of war. Kuhn postulated that all scientific communities, including military thinkers, operate within a rigid framework of established beliefs, often rejecting innovations that challenge their preconceived notions. Change, according to Kuhn, only occurs when an anomaly disrupts the established norms of their scientific practice. This revolutionary shift, he termed a paradigm shift.

**Amidst the ongoing conflicts and evolving nature of warfare, the current era presents an opportune moment to embark on a critical endeavor that dismantles outdated assumptions and redefines our understanding of war.** Scholars have heralded the profound transformations in warfare, characterized by the intricate interplay of strategic, tactical, and operational levels. To delve into the study of war from a detached and a priori perspective, akin to Kantian philosophy, transcending the confines of sensualism and empiricism, we proposed a comprehensive work in a special issue of the international journal, Dounia, published by the CISRI (Center for Strategic Intelligence and International Relations) in collaboration with Editions L'Harmattan. This work, titled "Normative Approaches and Axiological Neutrality in the Study of the War in Ukraine: Towards a New Polemology," bears a lengthy title that encapsulates a programmatic agenda and an invitation to collaborative knowledge production on warfare from an interdisciplinary and international standpoint.

**An Invitation to Shared Understanding of War: A Prolegomena**

This text serves as an invitation to collaborative inquiry and a call to unify the diverse knowledge pertaining to war, akin to the gathering of kindling to ignite a grand fire that illuminates and warms the path towards understanding war. The analysis presented in this book, published as a special issue of Dounia, deliberately raises more questions than it answers. It functions as a propaedeutic, a launching pad for the urgent need for scientific inquiry into war. The book presents a narrative that brings together prolegomena and ephemerides, intended to serve as a foundation for future, more in-depth and substantial studies that aspire to establish a new dynamic in war research. It aims to serve as an appetizer or hors d'oeuvre, paving the way for more focused, incisive, daring, and rigorous investigations. The text is bound to elicit further questions in the wake of the astonishment evoked by the phenomenon of war (particularly in light of the war in Ukraine).

From this, the necessity of a research program modeled after Lakatos' philosophy of science becomes evident.

While awaiting a definitive description of the quintessential questions surrounding war, we can boldly venture a comparison drawn from the writings of Saint Augustine, who grappled with the problem of time. We believe we understand something until we are asked about it; as long as we are not questioned about the question, we think we know. Indeed, Saint Augustine remarked, "What then is time? If no one asks me, I know what it is. But if I am asked, I do not know."

The issue becomes even more intricate in an era marked by the proclamation of the end of thought systems and grand narratives. Any investigation into major subjects thus appears as an "immense palace whose interior remains unfinished" or as an "edifice awaiting additional stories." Facts are analyzed as a panorama presenting an "inchoate sequence of disparate images." Plato, for instance, spoke of his cave as an observation point that allows for the perception and apprehension of only a bare dimension of reality. Other metaphors have been suggested: the "piece of wax," the "Nature of roses," the "wounds of the mind," the "epoché," the "Gestell," and the "thousand plateaus."

To these, we can add the notion of the "high belvedere" serving as an elevated skylight from which to engage in Socratic questioning and inquire into phenomena. Broadly speaking, war, as a nebula or Clausewitz's chameleon, is a fog that stirs up obscurity. So, what light can we shed to discern its quintessence? Does the totalization of war, along with its globalization, not inscribe it in permanence and perpetuity, echoing Kant's poignant call for perpetual peace?

To nurture this interdisciplinary problematic of war, it is perhaps essential to fully grasp the breadth of questioning surrounding it. We have thus selected one hundred questions on war for the construction of an interdisciplinary polemology and epistemological conviviality. This corpus of questions constitutes a sample that could serve as a starting point to encompass a wider range of spaces and subjects related to war.

1. Is War Knowable?

2. Does War Have Meaning?

3. What Are the Minimum, Optimal, and Ideal Conditions for Observing War?

4. How to Describe War?

5. How to Analyze Causes (the Cause)?

6. Is War a Social Fact of Primitives? Is War a Social Pathology in Modern Times? Is Civilization a Negation of War Supposedly a Barbaric Act?

7. Social and Human Sciences Already Struggle to Consolidate Around the Problematic of Causality, and Therefore Explanation (According to the Distinction Explanation-Understanding of Dilthey and Max Weber), How Would They Go About It? How Can They Cope in a Reality as Complex and Unprecedented as War?

8. One Can Observe and Analyze a Fight. But Can We Meet the Conditions for Observing War as a Violent Phenomenon?

9. Can We Observe War Without Taking Part in It?

10. Can We Observe War by Looking at It from Afar?

11. What Is the Best Scale for Observing and Analyzing War?

12. That of the Fighter?

13. That of the Journalist?

14. That of the War Reporter?

15. That of the Commander?

16. That of the Political Decision-Maker?

17. That of the Stranger?

18. That of the Neighbor?

19. That of the Rescuer? (We Can Refer to the Humanitarian Emotions Emitted by Henri Dunant on the Battlefield of Solferino)

20. The role of the intelligence agent?

21. The role of a peacekeeping mission?

22. The role of a neutral party playing a good offices role?

23. Can war be understood outside of its general context?

24. Is war due to innate human violence?

25. Is war a social construct?

26. War can only be understood as a phenomenon and never as a noumenon. What is the effectiveness of this approach?

27. Can war be explained a priori or necessarily empirically?

28. Is each war not unique in its own way?

29. Can explaining one war be worth explaining all wars?

30. Can a war be fully studied?

31. Would it only be possible to explain a few segments of a war?

32. What distance is needed to maximize the assets in understanding a war?

33. If the first casualty of war is truth, how can science study it with the optimism of extracting truth from it?

34. If there is only hidden science, as Georges Gurvitch thought, how can we access the realities that the belligerents and war phenomena conceal?

35. Can past approaches to war serve the cause of science in research on contemporary wars?

36. Can a war in progress be studied?

37. Shouldn't we wait until the end of a war to study it better?

38. What are the biases (philosophical, moral, existential, emotional, physical, logistical, human, technical, epistemological, methodological, ...) in the study of my war?

39. Does the war let itself be observed docilely? War as a nebula, fog and darkness, what light should be shed on it to bring out the truth?

40. Have the old doctrines and studies of war produced consistent knowledge to answer the inextricable questions of war?

41. Should we not question and revisit polemology to establish multidisciplinary (and interdisciplinary) approaches in order to generate a better understanding of war?

42. The study of war is often essentialized, leaning towards utilitarianism, can it be anything other than a praxeological teleology?

43. Secrecy is existential to war (Metellus, during the Spanish War, replied to a man who asked him what he would do the next day, that if his shirt knew, he would burn it, MACHIAVEL, The Art of War), can we draw anything other than dilatory remarks from the belligerents?

44. Do you need "men of war" to study war?

45. Are polemologists, men of theory, without technical competence, equipped to study war? (Bonaparte said that Machiavelli had written about war as a blind man reasons about colors)

46. What about the concept of "Nation in arms" (French) or Mao's "People in arms"?

47. Was Clemenceau not right when he asserted that war was too important to be left in the hands of the military?

48. Beyond the history of peoples and countries, do there exist fundamental invariants?

49. Should we fear the emergence of new major conflicts?

50. Have not the "specialists" strayed sufficiently in the narration of the war in Ukraine to further undermine the credibility of analyses on issues related to war?

51. Are media formats suitable for seriously analyzing the issue of war?

52. Who is academically and university-legitimate to produce knowledge about war?

53. Is law sufficient to account for war?

54. Philosophy? Which one?

55. Empiricism?

56. Rationalism?

57. Idealism? Kantian transcendentalism?

58. Utilitarianism?

59. Religion?

60. Mythology?

61. Politics?

62. Economics? According to the Marxist view?

63. Sociology?

64. Psychology?

65. Psychoanalysis?

66. International Relations?

67. Medicine? Traumatology?

68. Geography? Military geography?

69. History?

70. Geopolitics?

71. Geostrategy?

72. Strategy?

73. Military studies?

74. Peace studies (Irenology)?

75. Demography?

76. Mathematics?

77. Statistics?

78. Ballistics? Chemistry? Physics? Climatology?

79. What are the ambiguities and inconsistencies of the academic and common use of the term war?

80. "Why war?" Is this a philosophical question? While philosophy since its foundation has strived to ask questions of essence, can it answer the question "What is war?"

81. Is war a matter of passions?

82. Is the study of the causes, roots, explanatory factors, and motivations of wars the preserve of historians alone?

83. Are historians able to elucidate the factual causes, contingent factors, and always circumstantial motives of a historically determined conflict?

84. Do philosophers effectively study the general metahistorical causes of wars?

85. What are the philosophical constructs of the "reasons" for war?

86. Between individual passions and reasons of state, what causes wars?

87. War is recognized as a complex phenomenon. To say the least. But why does the question "What is war?" seem naive?

88. What are the possible combinations of the history of war and war in history? And what about war in the present?

89. Does geography serve primarily to wage war, as Yves Lacoste believes?

90. Can we conceive of the state without war?

91. Is the international system the essence of war or, conversely, is war the essence of the international system?

92. Do the claims of nascent International Relations to the study of the causes of war and the conditions for lasting peace still hold water?

93. Is war a conflict like any other?

94. Do the developments of war not vindicate those who believe that we are tending towards the end of war? Does the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) sound the death knell of war as we have known it? General Sir Rupert Smith believes that the paradigm of war has changed. "Interstate industrial warfare is dead; war, today and tomorrow, will henceforth be fought essentially in the midst of populations, no longer in the midst of armies and facing other armies comparable to ours. This observation is daring because it calls into question a common cultural foundation for European and American armies as well as Western political decision-makers," writes General Bruno Cuche.

95. What is the legitimacy of war?

96. Can war be contained in legislation? What is the relationship between war and law?

97. Are religions and wars exclusive?

98. What credibility should be given to the statistics announced by belligerents and the media, particularly on casualties in battles?

99. Which "image" (of Waltz) should be privileged in the study of war in International Relations? Man? the state? or the international system? How do the different paradigms of international relations study war? Realism, institutionalism, Marxism, behaviorism, neoliberalism, neorealism, constructivism, critical theories, postcolonial studies, green theories, feminism, global politics?

100. In anthropology, which dimensions of man should be emphasized to study war? Homo sapiens, homo economicus, homo ludens, homo habilis, homo faber, homo emoticus, homo politicus, homo atrociticus, homo suicidus, homo collapsolus, homo genocidus, homo polemosicus, homo destructicus, homo massacratus, homo religiocus, homo deus, homo animalus? homo mythologicus?