

Facilitating Nation Building in Ukraine

By Karina Korostelina, Associate Professor of Conflict Analysis and Resolution, ckoroste@gmu.edu

Twenty years ago Ukraine gained its independence and started its path towards a free market economy and democratic governance. Where is it now after the change of four presidents and the Orange Revolution? According to the Freedom House Annual Report in 2011, on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 representing the highest level, civic society in Ukraine scored at 2.75, democracy scored 4.61, and corruption scored 5.75. The Report further states that national political power in Ukraine is consolidated in the hands of President Yanukovich, who regained control over the cabinet, the security service, and the



Kiev Friendship Arc, Ukraine. Photo: K. Korostelina.

prosecutor general after the restoration of the constitution in October 2010 to its pre-2004 state. Despite President Yanukovich's pledge to increase the autonomy of local governments, his actions and policies resulted in the strengthening of centralized political power. The Freedom House Report also emphasized anti-democratic trends that impact civic society and freedom of the media including politi-

cal pressure, arrests, and administrative detentions of NGO activists and journalists. According to Pew Forum research, approval of the change to democracy in Ukraine dropped from 72% in 1991 to 30% in 2009, a decline of 42% -the biggest fall among all post-Soviet countries. Approval of the change to capitalism also declined from 52% to 36%, positioning Ukraine in the fourth place from the bottom after Hungary, Lithuania, and Bulgaria. Moreover, 69% of respondents prefer a strong leader over democratic government (20% respectively), again the biggest gap in Europe. The preference of having democratic leaders declined from 57% in 1991 to 20% in 2009. Fifty-five percent of Ukrainians disapproved of democracy (the biggest disapproval rate in Europe) and Ukrainian respondents declared that economic prosperity was

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Commentary

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The Impact of 9/11 on Conflict Resolvers: 10 Years in Perspective

By Maija Jespersen, Research Intern, Kommon Denominator, research@kommondenominator.com



KD Research Team: (left to right) Yasmina Mrabet, Maija Jespersen, Dr. Alma Abdul-Hadi Jadallah. Photo: GMU.

The effects of the fall of the Twin Towers in 2001 rippled through the conflict resolution field like a pebble thrown into a pond – or perhaps more like a meteor. The effects described by practitioners in the immediate aftermath of 9/11 were numerous and varied, from realizing a need to learn about traumatic stress to questioning the very idea of neutrality. As a part of her doctoral research published in 2006, S-CAR alumna Dr. Alma Abdul-Hadi Jadallah completed 53 interviews with lead, mid-level, and grass-root practitioners in the conflict resolution field to explore and document these effects.

Ten years later, Kommon Denominator (KD), a conflict management consulting firm affiliated with S-CAR, investigated whether those findings are still relevant today, and what new developments have occurred in reaction to the events of 9/11. The follow-up study included 11 practitioners, about 20% of the original number interviewed, representing the same three levels of practice. Here is what KD confirmed:

The level of the trauma experienced in the US following the events of 9/11 continues to cause practitioners to question their ability to influence outcomes. Many practitioners see their work as operating on a smaller scale, help-

ing individuals and communities, and noted that the field of conflict resolution (CR) was not and is still not well placed to influence outcomes. After 9/11, CR practitioners felt that most people outside of the CR field did not really understand the scope and power of the resources available to deal with a great number of aspects of a conflict situation. KD's follow up study indicates that CR practitioners still feel that this is the case.

Practitioners continue to question the idea of neutrality, and some even reject it entirely as a possibility. 9/11 made many

practitioners aware of their own cultural biases, and in the ensuing decade, practitioners continue to learn more about other cultures and approaches. Humility about the limitations of practitioners' own cultural context, and respect for others, seems to have taken root in the field in the aftermath of 9/11 and remains a strong theme today. This includes religious differences, as the surge in faith-based initiatives after 9/11 remains strong.

Terrorism took on new importance as the US launched its "War on Terror," and it continues to receive a lot of attention from a funding perspective and in curricula. CR practitioners reported concern over the initial US foreign policy response and continue to be disappointed with a largely aggressive US response.

As the aftermath of 9/11 unfolds, some new concerns have naturally developed among CR practitioners. One is the inflammatory nature of the word "terrorist" itself, and how use of that label may be a barrier to dialogue and reconciliation. Another concern is the unintended adverse effects of faith-based initiatives. KD will be exploring these issues and more in a forthcoming article.

For any questions about this research, please contact the Kommon Denominator Research team at research@kommondenominator.com. ■

Explore Your Opportunities: Grants at S-CAR

By Nathan Curfiss, Grants and Development Manager, ncurfiss@gmu.edu

Paraphrasing a concept described in his lecture titled “The Last Lecture: Really Achieving Your Childhood Dreams,” Randy Pausch, who was a Computer Science Professor at Carnegie Mellon University, said that we can sometimes achieve our dreams by “enabling the dreams of others.” Though admittedly a bit utopian, this is the view I have decided to take of grant funding. It is a means to an end that, when applied correctly, has the potential to allow not just the grant recipient, the Principle Investigator (PI), to realize her or his dreams, but also to allow those who are touched by the PI’s work to break cycles of violence, successfully restructure violent organizations, reach out to international and global support networks, increase their access to information, and many, many other outcomes that provide them with the ability to realize their full potential as human beings.

In the space between building a project to “enable the dreams of others” and the successful completion of grant-funded project resides a function of the administrative staff at S-CAR: Grants and Development Manager. My purview, in this new and exciting role, is to provide the support and resources needed for grant applicants to increase their “edge” in the highly competitive world of grant writing. Through shared learning with the S-CAR community, we will continue to build on best practices thereby streamlining grant processes and dramatically increasing quality, diversity, and number of grants received, as well as award amounts.

In the past year, S-CAR has seen a shift in thinking that has allowed us to take serious steps toward the goals mentioned above. In fact, it is because of the hard work of our highly productive PIs, and the growth we have seen in external funding, that I have this fantastic position!

One of our current grants was awarded by the Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Exchanges to Associate Dean of Administration Julie Shedd, Director of Graduate Certificates and Professor Mara Schoeny, and Nike Carstarphen from Alliance for Conflict Transformation (ACT) and S-CAR alumna, to fund the Benjamin Franklin Summer Institute Summer with South and Central Asia. This program allowed S-CAR to bring 43 high school students from



Benjamin Franklin Summer Institute Students in Washington, DC.
Photo: M. Schoeny

countries across Central Asia such as Pakistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan, to name a few, to the United States to learn about American culture and the S-CAR approach to conflict.

Please join me in congratulating Julie Shedd, along with our current PIs, Dean Andrea Bartoli and Professors Leslie Dywer, Marc Gopin, Susan Hirsch, Howon Jeong, Terrence Lyons, Karina Korostelina, Jamie Price, Susan Allen Nan, Agnieszka Paczynska and Mara Schoeny as well as their Graduate Research Assistants (GRAs). Their unwavering commitment and contribution to the field of conflict resolution enables S-CAR to effect meaningful and positive change on a global scale.

Please feel free to contact our office for further details and a more comprehensive list of current S-CAR endeavors. For S-CAR faculty interested in writing a grant proposal, or for our friends and affiliates who wish to collaborate with one of our magnificent PIs on a current or new endeavor, please reach out to me and I will be happy to support you through the process. ■

Grant References

OSP Website: <http://research.gmu.edu/OSP/index.html>

Inspiration: <http://www.cmu.edu/randyslecture/>

initiatives

Dr. Howard Thurman: A Disciple of Peaceful Conflict Resolution

By Dr. Mary Wade, S-CAR Alum, mlight1940@yahoo.com



Dr. Howard Thurman. Photo: Howard Thurman Documentary Film Project

Preparing to teach a three-day retreat on the Life, Teachings, and Spirit of Dr. Howard Thurman, I am reminded of the extensive time spent with him while researching and writing my dissertation.

What is most memorable is how his thoughts and words touched my personal life. Thurman's life is an example of rising above poverty and racial segregation to elevate the self above the circumstances of his surrounding and its story is inspiring. His longing and commitment to elevate the human condition above the grip and grind of pervasive deep-rooted conflicts offer a beacon of hope to all who experience his teachings.

Born in 1900, 27 years after President Lincoln ended slavery, and in the midst of the resurgence of slavery through draconian Jim Crow laws, young Thurman developed his intellect by extensive reading, and his spiritual life through religious training. As great as his mental intelligence was his spiritual intelligence, cultivated through a life of seeking to confront and embrace the mysteries of life and the mysteries inside himself. Out of this search came a reckoning with his connection with all people, thus his assertion that "when I go down deep inside of myself, I come up in every other person." This revelation was essential to overcoming the "walls" that uphold hatred, fear, and deceptions based on race, religion, social, and economic differences. These walls uphold artificial separation and the rejection of humanity between individuals and groups of people. It was also important to what became a lifetime commitment to non-violence. The search also fortified his embracing the natural world that sustains us all. He felt deeply his connection with trees, the seas, and birds, especially penguins.

Few know of Thurman's pivotal role in improving race relations and spearheading the early civil rights movement. Civil rights giants such as James Farmer, Bayard Rustin, and Martin Luther King, Jr. learned under his tutelage. His work with A.J. Muste, leader of the Fellowship

of Reconciliation (FOR), led to formation of the first Race Relations Committee in the U.S., which became the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). He supported labor leader A. Phillip Randolph in organizing what was to be the first civil rights march in 1943 and laid the groundwork for the heralded civil rights march of 1963 where Martin Luther King, Jr. gave his I Have A Dream Speech.

As significant as Thurman's work in formation of the modern civil rights movement was his rejection of religious intolerance. The first African American to meet with the Hindu spiritual and political leader, Gandhi, this Protestant minister embraced people of all religions understanding that beneath all creeds and doctrines is the human Spirit. In this spirit exists a deep yearning to understand how to connect with the source of life, and through that connection, not only survive, but thrive individually and collectively. His leadership in organizing the first interracial, interreligious church in California sealed his commitment to elevate the human being, human relations, and the human experience. ■

Upcoming S-CAR Community Events

Wednesday, October 19, 2011 12:15PM
Contentious Conversations Series, Conversation 4:
Ethics and CAR
Arlington Campus, Truland Building, Room 555

Saturday, October 22, 2011 9:30AM
Salam to Kalam: An Open Space Forum at Mason
Arlington Campus, Founders Hall, Room 126

Tuesday, October 25, 2011 7:00PM
23rd Annual Lynch Lecture: Mme. Yan Junqi
Arlington Campus, Founders Hall, Room 125

Monday, November 7, 2011 7:00PM
Vision Series-Women Waging War & Peace: A
Gendered Challenge to Structural Violence
Arlington Campus, Founders Hall Auditorium

Thursday, November 10, 2011 6:00PM
Annual Open House
Arlington Campus, Truland Building, Room 555

<http://scar.gmu.edu/events-roster>

OpEd: S-CAR Professor Meets U.S. Congressman

By Michael Shank, S-CAR Doctoral Candidate, mshank@gmu.edu

It was a merging of two worlds, with my boss sitting to the left and my professor to the right. As they talked shop - with US Congressman Michael Honda reflecting on his required reading (Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*) and his Japanese American internment experience in Camp Amache, Colorado, and Dr. Dennis Sandole expounding on "smart security" and root causes of conflict - there was a clear synergy of thought.

This was not your usual lobby visit. This was a collegial confab between two septuagenarians who had spent their lives building peace in this troubled world.

Needless to say, it was a treat for me to watch two men whom I admire, espousing the virtues and veracity of peacebuilding – from Congressman Honda's Peace Corps experience in El Salvador to Professor Sandole's recently published work on Peacebuilding, a book which explores the complexities of violent conflict and posits ways to prevent it.

The conversation between the Congressman and the Professor crystallized the very kind of connection I wish for the conflict community – that is, to exchange "lessons learned" with policymakers who are poised to reposition the US role in global affairs.

As multiple wars continue abroad unabated and as income inequality grows exponentially here at home, there is much work to be done and there is no community that knows better the root causes of these violent conflicts than conflict practitioners. If we do not speak up in Washington for root cause, who will?

And in our stead, an alternative (albeit less optimal) solution will, no doubt, be sought. Conflict analysts arise. We need you.

Michael Shank is the Senior Policy Advisor for US Congressman Honda, a doctoral candidate at GMU's School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, and an Associate at the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict in The Hague. ■



(left to right) Professor Ingrid Sandole-Staroste, Professor Dennis Sandole, Congressman Michael Honda. Photo: M. Shank.

Recent S-CAR Articles, Op-Eds, Letters to the Editor, and Media Appearances

US has failed across the board in Afghanistan

Michael Shank, S-CAR Ph.D. Candidate
RussiaToday, 5/15/11

Mosque attacks: on the rise since 2009, but no indictments

Aziz Abu Sarah, Executive Director, Center for World Religions, Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution
+972 Magazine, 10/04/11

Political ramifications of Palestinian bid for statehood

Analysis by Marc Gopin, S-CAR Professor
CTV, 09/25/11

US must vote in favour or abstain

Ibrahim Sharqieh, S-CAR Ph.D. Alumnus
Gulf News, 09/21/11

<http://scar.gmu.edu/media>

press

Lisa Shaw, S-CAR Director of Field Experience

By Catherine Ammen, S-CAR Knowledge Management Associate, cammen@gmu.edu

This fall, Lisa Shaw transitioned to the role of Director of Field Experience at George Mason's School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (S-CAR) from that of Undergraduate Student Services Director in Fairfax. Lisa describes her new position as "integrating and coordinating the learning aspects of field experience," which includes the Applied Practice and Theory (APT) Internship and Thesis options required for a graduate degree. She supervises and coordinates field experience with the undergrad program, which includes the internship and study abroad programs. She will be focusing on four core areas of field experience: coordination, collaboration, innovation and research.

Lisa will be missed at Undergraduate Student Services, especially in the Peer Mediation Partners (PMP) program that grew substantially under her leadership. The program, which focuses on the development of conflict resolution skills, consists of a partnership between Mason students and peer mediators at local area middle schools and high schools. The PMP program has been left in good hands, and will continue at S-CAR's undergraduate program under Brydin Banning

Experiential learning has been part of Lisa's life dating back to 1994 while in AmeriCorps,

and for twelve years in community-based youth programs. She also co-facilitated the June 2010 field experience course to Liberia: "Post Conflict Peace Building in Monrovia," that integrated double loop learning in which students gained practical experience testing and refining theories through action and reflection. Reflecting on her new position, Lisa said lunch conversations were her favorite part of S-CAR.

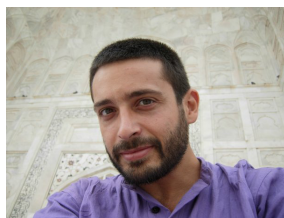
Joking aside, she continues to integrate innovative methods for adult learning, including experiential learning, into the course material. She most enjoys being a part of students' academic journeys as they learn and make new connections - their 'Aha' moments that make all the hard work worth it. If any students are considering the field experience, or have any questions please contact Lisa Shaw at lshaw2@gmu.edu ■



Lisa Shaw. Photo: GMU

Arthur Romano, S-CAR Assistant Professor

By Agnieszka Paczynska, S-CAR Associate Professor and Undergrad Program Director, apaczyns@gmu.edu



Dr. Arthur Romano. Photo: A. Romano.

on how international educators who focus on issues of peace and justice have developed pedagogical practices that are epistemologically congruent with insights of complexity theory. For this study, he drew on qualitative data from interviews he conducted with peace educators in India, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States. From 2004 to 2006, while at Bradford University, Arthur was a Rotary World Peace Fellow.

Arthur brings to S-CAR a wealth of teaching and practice experience. He is a certified Kingian Nonviolence Trainer and has worked with the civil rights activist and close collaborator of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Dr. Bernard LaFayette. Last summer, Arthur joined Dr. LaFayette in a project that engaged former combatants from the Niger Delta. Arthur is also the co-creator of an experimental

S-CAR is very pleased to welcome a new faculty member. Dr. Arthur Romano joins the School as an Assistant Professor in the undergraduate program. Arthur received his PhD from Bradford University in the United Kingdom where he wrote his dissertation

workshop, Diversity Matters Now! which focuses on issues of diversity and working across lines of difference, and which integrates educational theatre, co-counseling techniques, and participatory pedagogy. He is also the founder of Creative Force, a consulting firm that has developed and delivered conflict resolution and diversity trainings at more than 30 universities and colleges across the United States and that has advised university faculty and staff on effective strategies for community engagement in service learning projects and integration of experiential pedagogies in engaged scholarship. Arthur has also designed and taught a semester-long course for "The Scholar Ship" Ocean-Going University, on strategies for navigating global complexity in social justice work, and has taught courses and created experiential curricula with universities in Portugal, Panama, Ecuador, New Zealand, Australia, and China.

This fall Arthur will be teaching three courses in the undergraduate program: Interpersonal Conflict Awareness; Identity Conflicts and Their Resolution; and Community, Group, and Organizational Conflict Analysis and Resolution. He will also be collaborating with the Undergraduate Experiential Learning Project team on developing and testing new simulations, role plays, and other experiential learning tools. ■

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more important for them than democracy (74% vs. 50%).

During the summer of 2011, with the support of the Ebert foundation, I conducted research interviewing people who represent the “1.5 diplomacy” level: scholars, political leaders, and journalists who are active in the political sphere and have an impact on political discourse. The final sample consists of 58 interviewees, including 53 in Kiev and 5 in Simferopol, Crimea. The analysis of narratives identifies major factors that lead to the current situation in Ukraine. One of the major sources of the current Ukrainian situation is that its independence was a result of the fall of the Soviet Union—not of a mass conscious movement for independence. People who had fought for Ukrainian independence for centuries prior were inspired by the idea of sovereignty, but did not have a comprehensive concept of Ukraine. Thus, in 1991 there was no common notion of a Ukrainian nation or nation-state. The Communist Government either did not understand the need for a new concept or were afraid of radical changes. To preserve their power, they did not initiate any serious public discussions and did not make any serious efforts to define Ukrainian nationalism and forge a common identity. Thus, the Soviet ideology continued to penetrate the society due to (a) deprivation of property rights that has led to a paternalistic dependence of the people upon the State and a prevalence of the state oppressing the society and (b) absence of Government accountability, civic responsibility, and collaboration between the Government and the public.

It was believed that the creation of a market economy would result in wealth for all and thus a democracy, but instead, it created a perception of Ukraine as a trophy territory that could be stolen and squandered and a perception of the concentration on economic well-being as a common national idea. A lack of understanding of the need to change and alter the Soviet consciousness inhibited the development a culture of democracy. The Orange Revolution failed to build civil society with civic responsibility and community agency. Instead, it deceived the public with false interpretations of democracy, including the idea of power of majority without rights for minorities. The formation of a common national identity was also impeded by the diverse cultural and historical characteristics of the regions that obstructed critical (re)thinking and assessment of the Soviet heritage, as well as by ongoing influences from neighboring Russia. This ethno-cultural divide, sharpened by the zero-sum thinking, is actively used by political leaders to draw attention away from economic problems. As a result, on its 20th anniversary of independence, Ukraine is still a country in transition, deeply rooted in its Soviet past and deficient of a national idea, a common national identity, and any objectives for development.

Despite the apparent peaceful character of past developments, Ukrainian society is characterized by structural violence, relative deprivation, weakness of state, and communal (ethnic) conflict.

The analysis of interviews with Ukrainian political and intellectual elites has also revealed six consistent narratives: (1) a dual identity; (2) being pro-Soviet; (3) a fight for Ukrainian identity; (4) a recognition of Ukrainian identity; (5) a multicultural-civic narrative; and (6) the Crimean Tatars' narrative. Each narrative is characterized by three main features: (1) a coherent structure with strong internal logic and justification of its legitimacy; (2) a connection with a specific conception of power and morality; and (3) an opposition to other narratives. The mapping of narratives shows that five out of six narratives rest on a primordial ideology and employ ethnic concepts in the development of the national idea. Only one narrative, the “Multicultural-Civic” represented by 16% of respondents, is based on a liberal ideology and civic meaning of national identity. Nevertheless, this narrative recognizes the ethnic diversity of Ukrainian society. Thus, findings indicate that the intellectual landscape of Ukraine is deficient in civic liberal ideologies that define society as a community of equal citizens independently of their ethnicity, language, or religion.

All of these features lead to the perception of the society as a zero-sum game where one narrative should prevail over others' narratives. At the same time, all of these features ensure that there cannot be an overwhelming victory of one narrative over others, or a satisfying compromise between them. The realization of this fact is very important for the opening of a real dialogue in Ukrainian society. Only through systemic dialogue can common ground be established and a cohesive national identity be developed—one based on unifying ideas, including ideas of civic society and a civic concept of national identity, human rights, and equality of every citizen independent of his or her religion, ethnicity, and language.

The absence of a national idea and common national identity was mentioned by all experts as a major source of the current problems. This crisis of attempting to unify disparate national conceptualizations results in an absence of a clear vision for the transition and the final outcomes, slowing the processes of transformation and increasing economic deprivation. The absence of a nationally conscious elite, corruption, and growing ethno-cultural and class divides contribute to the crisis. Most of the experts emphasized the “black and white” mentality, an absence of inter-community and government dialogue, a search for an enemy, and the development of zero-sum approaches to Ukraine's national identity among the different groups. Thus,

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a national dialogue on a common national idea, national identity, and visions of progress can reduce the effects of structural violence, relative deprivation, weakness of state, and communal (ethnic) conflict.

Salient national identity resulting from an emerging common national idea will increase cohesiveness in the society and motivate people to contribute to the national well-being. This, in turn, should contribute to the development of civic society and better democratic governance. The finding of a common national ideology is the mechanism for the development of democratic society. The increased civic participation and civilian agency should lead to a rise in government accountability and a decline in corruption at all levels, resulting again in the reduction of the effects of structural violence, relative deprivation, weakness of state, and communal (ethnic) conflict. A national dialogue will also help to ensure that a common national identity incorporates democratic values, thus increasing a culture of

democracy in the society. Democratic development is one of the major factors that impede the effects of structural violence, relative deprivation, weakness of state, and communal (ethnic) conflict.

The development of a civic based national narrative is threatened by the “Pro-Soviet Narrative” that masks under the idea of a common identity of citizens who comprise Ukrainian society. A major difference is the horizontal relations (the active participation, agency of people, and civic responsibility) in the former democracy-focused systems, versus vertical relations (paternalism, submission to the state, and blind patriotism) in the latter Soviet-style systems. Thus, a national idea should include civic education and the increase of a democratic culture among citizens of Ukraine. ■

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