Ethics, Conflict, and Resolution

By Daniel Rothbart, Professor of Conflict Analysis and Resolution, drothbar@gmu.edu

The dominant theme for this year's Point of View conference, which will be held on the Arlington Campus in Founders Hall Room 125 on February 14 and 15, will be Ethics, Conflict, and Resolution. All speakers are experts within their respective fields, and Laurence Susskind, a prominent figure within the field of conflict resolution, will be the keynote speaker. The principal goals of this conference are to reflect critically upon the value commitments that make up conflict analysis and resolution and to examine their implications to develop new ideas, strategies, and goals for our work. The following topics will be addressed: Value judgements and reflective practice; Alternative approaches to ethics; Gender, ethics, and conflict; Reflections on basic needs; The moral lives of conflict actors; Power; Tensions of Peace and Justice; Inquiry into the ethics of knowledge production; Codes, conventions, and professional constraints; Culture and the political economy of funding; Human rights and conflict. During the conference, a normative perspective is taken on these topics.

Banksy Palestinian.
Photo: Flickr user Ryan Riedel.

Underlying this perspective is a fundamental notion that our field, both analysis and resolution, is axiological. What exactly does this mean?

The axiology of conflict does not demand blind obedience to the "priests" of moral wisdom who are searching for the fount of universal moral truths. Nor does axiology require that we elevate our minds to the lofty heights of "pure" moral reasoning without regard to the lived experiences of conflict actors. An axiology of conflict requires that we probe the ways in which conflict actors make meaning, digging beneath the conflict dynamics, excavating the social landscape, and looking beneath the shallow layer of "facts" to examine the actors' value commitments that lay seemingly dormant. [I believe that insight into conflict axiology draws upon the work of Ludwig Wittgenstein concerning his insights about the deep grammar of our language. A deep grammar of conflict calls for attending to the conditions, characteristics, and forms of life that explain how terms are used within a community of speakers. So, what is the deep grammar of the conflict parties? What is our own deep grammar?]

Conflict resolution is normative by nature. The aspiration for positive change rests on the normative ideals about pro-social (read: humanitarian) patterns of behavior, thought, and emotions. Attempts to engage, entice, enhance, and empower the conflict parties to address their grievances without violence must recognize the practitioners' adherence to the value of peace and justice.

commentary

Inside This Issue...

UNITED NATIONS RESOLUTION 2122:

Creating New Opportunities and Challenges for S-CAR

By Fariba Parsa, Visiting Scholar at the Center for the Study of Gender and Conflict, fparsa@gmu.edu

network

The United Nations Security Council on October 18, 2013 adopted Resolution 2122, aimed at strengthening women's role in all stages of conflict prevention and resolution. This resolution is rather significant as it looks to increase and reinforce the role that women can play at the negotiation table. It is also very unique as all the 15 members of the Security Council agreed to focus on women's leadership in conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

All United Nations-established commissions have been asked to include information on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls. The Council as such recognizes with concern that, without a "significant implementation shift," women would remain under-represented in conflict prevention and resolution, protection and peacebuilding for the foreseeable future." The United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has also urged the Council to deal with the full range of violations of women's rights during conflict, saying that peacekeeping mandates should support national prosecution for serious international crimes against women."

Some important highlights of UN-Resolution 2122 are that it "recognizes the need for timely information and analysis on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, the role of women in peacebuilding and the gender dimensions of peace processes and conflict resolution…" as stated in Article 2. Article 7 "recognizes the continuing need to increase women's participation and the consideration of gender-related issues in all discussions pertinent to the prevention and resolution of armed conflict, the maintenance of peace and security, and post-conflict peacebuilding" and in this regard, the Council continues to encourage states to "develop dedicated funding mechanisms to support the work and enhance capacities of organizations that support women's leadership development and full participation in all levels of decision-
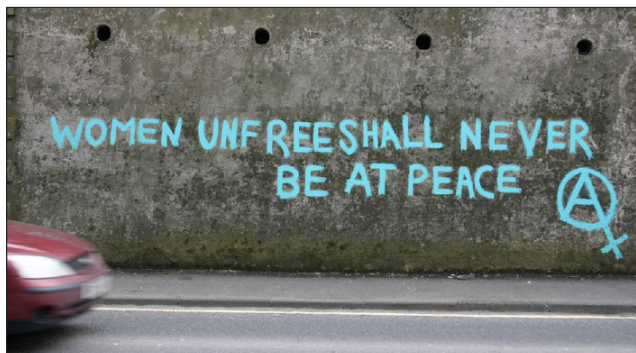
"Women Unfree" - Graffiti on wall of Magee College, Derry. Photo: Flickr user Harriet Barber.

making." Article 8 "stresses the importance of those Member States conducting post-conflict electoral processes and constitutional reform continuing their efforts, with support from United Nations entities, to ensure women's full and equal participation in all phases of electoral processes, noting that specific attention must be paid to women's safety prior to, and during, elections."

This vital need, expressed by the UN-2122 Resolution, is exactly what S-CAR can contribute to the world. A response to this resolution is in accord with the central question we read in George Mason University's Strategic Plan 2014-2024. It reads: "How can George Mason University become not necessarily the best university in the world, but the best university for the world?" We read also in the Strategic Plan that "George Mason University is an innovative and inclusive academic community committed to create a more just, free and prosperous world. One of the seven values stated in the Strategic Plan is: "Diversity is our strength; we include and embrace a multitude of people and ideas in everything we do and respect differences." The Mason Idea in the Strategic Plan states "We educate students to create, as well as to carry out jobs; become agents of positive changes…". This commitment for innovation, diversity and educating "agents of positive change" is a strength of George Mason University.

UN Resolution 2122 as such presents S-CAR with new but not insurmountable challenges. This is an opportunity to show how S-CAR can be best for the world and how S-CAR can support skills for women's leadership in conflict resolution. S-CARs focus should not only be on producing knowledge about gender and conflict but also developing capacity for educating current and future leaders that will focus on gender based negotiation skills. The impact of this initiative will be one where the education of both women and men at the national and international level, will lead to an increase in current as well as future negotiators well versed on gender subjects in conflict resolution. Women especially in the Middle East have very limited access to decision making institutions. There are thousands of women in this region who seek to achieve political influence to build peace and security. One of the approaches to strengthen women in this region in conflict resolution is exactly educating them in leadership and negations skills.

The question now is what will S-CAR do with UN Resolution 2122 and how will it impact the world? ■

Recent S-CAR Achievements

Kevin Avruch's book, "Context and Pretext in Conflict Resolution: Culture, Identity, Power and Practice" was named by the Conflict Research Society (UK) as one of two "CRS Books of the Year 2014"

Dean Pruitt was awarded the 2012 Ralph K. White Lifetime Achievement Award by the Society for the Study of Peace conflict

Dean Pruitt and Sung-Hee Kim had their book "Social Conflict: Escalation, Stalemate and Settlement" translated into the Chinese language and published for use in the People's Republic of China

Danait Tafere was awarded the United Nations Association of the National Capital Area's Graduate Fellowship 2014 (UNA-NCA)

Soolmaz Abooali - was offered a White House Fellowship

Charles Martin-Shields was offered a Fullbright Fellowship

Where the Rubber Meets the Road:

When Migration is not just a Subject, but a Human Struggle for Global Justice

By Marcelle Bugre, Dual Degree Graduate of Ms from S-CAR and MSc from University of Malta, marcel_bugre@ymail.com

Growing up in a semi-extended family in a rather homogenous Roman Catholic community in the South of Malta, I knew the norms and behaviours expected of me, especially those related to gender and social class. However, ever since I was little I knew my path would take me beyond Malta and I was prepared for the reality that I would not be able to meet the expectations of my family and community. I embraced these struggles and in return I received

Marcelle and Ahmad with the New Life Christian Center. Photo: Marcelle Bugre.

the gift of friendship and community with people all over the world. Today I am married to a Ghanaian, Ahmed, and together we pastor an international evangelical Christian church in Malta, New Life Christian Centre. Ahmed is also the Director of the Foundation for Shelter and Support to Migrants (FSM), which he set up in 2010 to provide services for male asylum seekers. After completing the Conflict Analysis and Resolution and Mediterranean Security Programme offered by the University of Malta and S-CAR in 2013, I started working as a Project Development Manager with FSM, where we are embarking on projects that focus on vulnerable migrant groups in Malta and their needs. Ahmed and I have three children who are very much part of our work, and who carry this legacy in their life and future in Malta.

Our work started in 1997 when we migrated to Belgium to study in a Christian Seminary, during which time we worked with a Filipino community made up of domestic workers. It was difficult for us as non-EU migrants to integrate in Belgium, especially as parents of one child with a second on the way, due to restrictions on employment, social and health services. My situation was partly resolved when I returned briefly to Malta for the birth of my daughter, but there were many migrant women who could not do the same. Through our many encounters with migrants, Ahmed and I became aware of the needs of undocumented and irregular migrants who were living and working in Belgium and, as a result of their status, at great risk of poverty, abuse and neglect. In the midst of these struggles the church provided a place of safety for many different people to come together and share their lives. We started teaching, organizing church ministries, and educating leaders to understand the various needs of men, women and children in their communities.

Problem solving is very important in the church context. Migrants usually have many issues in their personal lives, families and communities due to the lack of information, confidence, and resources necessary for addressing problems on their own. Working in a multicultural setting in a church requires knowledge and the experience of learning to problem solve in such a diverse context, especially in how to address gender and inter-generational issues. Although international churches always face the possibility that groups leave to form their own group usually based on cultural similarity, it is often the case that homogenous groups also experience internal conflicts. Sometimes church members may grow tired of the monotonous issues within their group and want to find a more interesting platform from which to grow, learn and find support. Therefore it is important for international churches to keep a healthy balance between multi-cultural expression, and the need of specific groups to express their own culture and language. In Malta this became the model for our present church where people learn to appreciate other cultures, while creating spaces for the expression of one's own language and culture.

Returning to Malta in 2001 was a difficult time for our family. Re-integration was a humbling process considering that we lacked the resources many people expected us to have. I was pregnant with our son, Ezekiel, and I found it particularly hard to return because my life experience had changed me, and I felt that people in Malta would not understand or accept this change. During this same period, boat arrivals from Libya started increasing, carrying large numbers of asylum seekers mostly from sub-Saharan countries. Ahmed and I started visiting detention, which is a closed camp where all migrants were kept, except children and vulnerable persons, for a period of up to 18 months. Although the situation has improved today, I can remember for many years the miserable conditions in which these people were kept, and the various risks people were subjected to because of these conditions.

Because pregnant women were allowed to leave detention, men and women sometimes made arrangements in order for them to be able to leave detention as a 'family.' The stories of many asylum seekers reveal this reality, and that progressively these arrangements were made in Libya, so that women got pregnant early enough to be allowed to leave detention on arrival to Malta. This situation made it difficult for pregnant women leaving detention to integrate and work in Malta, because of the lack of access to flexible childcare services, and because many men abandoned these relationships on getting their freedom.

Spring 2014 S-CAR World Café Film Series

By Alaa Kamel, S-CAR MS Student, akamel2@gmu.edu

In August 2013, the John Burton Library in collaboration with the centers and working groups at S-CAR, started a World Café film series meant to provide a space for students to have alternative discussions, outside the structure of academia about issues facing individuals. As Oscar Wilde once said, "Education is an admirable thing, but it is well to remember from time to time that nothing that is worth knowing can be taught." Based on this theme, a well selected list of movies and documentaries that touched on themes such as race stereotypes in Europe as seen in *The Intouchables*; LGBT rights in Uganda as seen in *Call me Kuuchu*, and the hidden politics of the United Nations as seen in *U.N. Me* among others, were selected and shown to the S-CAR community. Although the messages that these movies and documentaries conveyed were powerful, the added value to those films was in the rich discussions that accompanied their viewing.

Based on the success of this initiative from the first half of the academic year, the World Cafe film series will proceed with another well selected group of films and documentaries through Spring 2014. The series will continue to shed light on issues ranging from the most unbear-

S-CAR students at World cafe film series. Photo: S-CAR.

able deprivation of basic needs to the most unacceptable desecration of one's entity. When the fight for education gets mixed up with the fight for survival and becomes a revolutionary movement led by children who want to learn, as seen in *Girl Rising* (to be shown on 1/28/14 2:00 to 4:00 pm), or when two individuals take it upon themselves to rob 56,000 citizens of the right to vote, as seen in *American Blackout* (3/11/14 2:00-4:00 pm), or even when the strongest military body in the world robs its members of the security and freedom it claims to fight for, as seen in The Invisible War (4/8/14 2:00-4:00 pm); people will fight. The fight may come from the camera lens of a man in Palestine who refused to stop filming as he helplessly watched the building of a fence which dividid his land, as seen in *Five Broken Cameras* (4/22/14 2:00-4:00 pm) or it may come through the tears of a child soldier in Sierra Leone forced to shoot his father, as seen in *Johnny Mad Dog* (on 3/25/14 2:00-4:00 pm). The existence of corruption and brutality is not new news to anyone, nor is the existence of those fighting for civility and justice. This film series delivers the viewer from the broad and general bird's eye view of the selected issues to a clearer cognizance of the intricacies woven into the fabric of each issue. The full list of films and brief descriptions can be found here: scar.gmu.edu/events/film-series. ∎

Approaching Current Affairs from a Conflict Resolution Lens

By Claudine Kuradusenge, MS Student and Events Coordinator, ckuradus@gmu.edu

With the beginning of this semester, the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution is opening its doors to a new form of dialogue. As a student led initiative, the "Current News through a Conflict Resolution Perspective," aims to bring together the diversity that encompasses S-CAR to encourage intellectual discussions about the world around us.

This initiative which will be held twice a month and explores the "news of the day," from various newspapers and analyzes what impact conflict

Claudine Kuradusenge Photo: Mason Creative Services.

resolution can have on the reported events. It also encourages S-CAR students to apply the concepts and frameworks studied in class to real and current conflicts. This initiative will also hope to engage with people from different backgrounds and perspectives to express their ideas and opinions on local and global issues to enrich the school and help create a network and marketplace of ideas essential for the development of the field.

The first dialogue will take place on February 6th, 2014, at 1:00pm in the John Burton Library. For more information, please contact Claudine Kuradusenge at ckuradus@gmu.edu. ∎

Alumna Opinion: Past Policies and Continued Predicament of Displaced Kashmiri Pandits

By Sudha Rajput, S-CAR PhD Alumna, srajput2@gmu.edu

The magnitude of the phenomenon of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) is a daunting humanitarian challenge with upwards of 28 million in displacement (UNHCR, 2013). Conflict-induced displacement results in psychological, cultural, socio-economic, and political transformation of those displaced. Such was the displacement of the 250,000 Kashmiri Pandits (KP), a Hindu minority community in India's Kashmir Valley (Valley), which ruptured the fabric of this community in 1989. This article unfolds the socio-economic costs of past policies and the continued predicament of this community.

KPs accounted for 5% of the population of the Valley, in the state of Jammu & Kashmir (J&K), within a majority Muslim population. "Since late 1989, J&K has been in the grip of a vicious movement of Islamist extremist terrorism" (Gill 2003, 1-2). The Indian authorities claim that in the 1980s, the Islamic guerillas in the Valley, trained and funded by neighboring forces, waged a separatist war dubbed as an indigenous freedom struggle. Anti-India campaigns were followed by police firings and curfews. The year 1989 is marked as a time after which "the guns are never silenced…and Srinagar turns into a war zone" (Pandita 2013, 73). Those voicing pro-India policy became the target of the militants. The KPs, as they professed a different faith, were "specifically targeted, perceived to be symbolizing Indian presence in the Valley," (Rai, 2011). Those who fled now form the pool of 250,000 displaced KPs (IDMC 2010) dubbed as "Migrants."

Most fled to neighboring Jammu and others to Delhi. Having lived in Kashmir their entire lives, their ancestral roots and emotional ties resided in the Valley. Those displaced were teachers, professors, doctors, singers, farmers, businessmen, males and females, young and old, between the ages of three months and seventy years. There were those who were ready for retirement, and those who were yet to enter school. They owned land, orchards and farm animals. These families have a story to tell, their voices and their cultural expressions shed light on how they envisioned their future on the day of their departure from their "land of birth." Some "basing their trust in God," hoped that they will return when the Valley "regains its civility," and could not fathom a future outside of the Valley. Others were convinced that they were denied "their last rights to die in homeland" (research participant). As the everyday policies disproportionally excluded this community (structural violence, Galtung, 1996) it became more difficult for them to protect themselves against death threats.

Similar to other displaced communities, Colombia, Mexico, Myanmar (Meertens 2003, Shinnar 2008, Fuller 2009) challenges were overwhelming. The unplanned move was daunting for those who had never left the Valley before. Metamorphosis of having become anonymous migrants from the respectable traders and proud owners of homes and orchards, and the exposure to camp life traumatized them. For some, the most troubling experience was the exposure to societies with "diluted" values that embraced "inter-caste marriages." The policies that emerged revolved around positioning this crisis as an outcome of a "temporary disturbance," resulting in policies serving the "transitional needs." However, the families position the crisis as "irreversible," having permanently damaged their community. Given this divergence, the policy portfolio has yielded mixed outcomes, some policies falling short of intended goals, some in direct contradiction and some adding to families' predicaments.

Moving out of their villages for the first time reflected a loss of home and identity. The national response through "township" like settlements did not reduce their sense of homelessness and identity. After 23 years, families lament the loss of their ancestral homes; the "transitional accommodations" only jeopardized their sense of permanence. Arrival in new cities meant new challenges, as the locals realized that the stay of the KPs was not temporary, they "developed an antipathy towards this community" (Pandita 2013, 134). Locals made a case to push the families out of their communities, and the officials responded by relocating them to the "migrant quarters."

Sudha Rajput Photo: Sudha Rajput.

Nicholas Van Woert, S-CAR and University of Malta Dual Degree

By Michael D. English, PhD Candidate and Malta Program Coordinator, menglis1@gmu.edu

Nicholas Van Woert is a graduate of the dual degree Master's program in Conflict Analysis and Mediterranean Security offered by S-CAR and the University of Malta. He came to the field of Conflict Resolution with a background in history and a desire to apply the lessons of the past to the problems of the present in an effort to contribute to the discussion on conflict and international development. Nicholas tells me, "I would never want to be the voice, but rather a perspective on a round table that will help those responsible for making decisions on projects benefitting communities around the world." To achieve his goal, Nicholas began volunteering with Communities Without Boundaries International (CWBI) after taking a course on reflective practice with Maneshka Eliatamby, CWBI's Senior Vice President and Chief Program Officer, and S-CAR Ph.D. alumna.

Nicholas is currently a Program Associate with CWBI and is primarily engaged on the Youth Without Boundaries (YWB) initiative, a program responsible for empowering youth around the world to create and implement sustainable, community based projects. He states, "The best experience of CWBI is having the opportunity to meet so many people from around the world. Connecting with people from different backgrounds and exchanging

Nicholas Van Woert. Photo: Nicholas Van Woert.

stories makes my position at CWBI so worthwhile. The stories I have heard from individuals can be heart breaking, but at the same time, I hear stories that give me hope for the future."

He is also engaged with another international NGO, Spirit of Soccer (SOS), and currently acts as their social media specialist. Spirit of Soccer uses the sport as a tool for education to teach children in conflict and post-conflict zones about landmines, explosive remnants of war, and unexploded ordinance. SOS's most recent program set up at the Zaatari Refugee Camp in Jordan, works with children from Syria and teaches them how to identify an explosive item and what steps should be taken in the event that they find one.

In the future, Nicholas hopes to continue working with communities to identify their needs and develop programs to fulfill those needs. He aims to further his work with CWBI to create a network of colleagues around the world interested in tackling issues like the Millennium Development Goals. "We must recognize that we have the power to make the future what we want and it is important to gain perspective from as many different people as possible."

Information on Communities Without Boundaries International can be found at http://www.cwbi.org/. Check out Spirit of Soccer's webpage at http://spiritofsoccer.net/. ■

Charles Crawford, S-CAR Certificate and MS Program

By Kwaw de Graft-Johnson, PhD Student and Newsletter Editor, kdegraft@gmu.edu

Charles Crawford is part of the new cohort of Masters students, admitted to S-CAR in the spring of 2014. Charles is also currently enrolled in the S-CAR certificate program where he is mainly focusing on the evaluation of conflict resolution programs as well as problem solving workshops. As he said "I believe that receiving diplomas in both categories [certificate and masters] at S-CAR would strengthen my theory, research and practice background."

Charles is originally from the West African nation Liberia, where he experienced over 14 years of civil war. "No one should experience any type of war the way I did in Liberia. The whole experience robbed me of my youth, my education as well as my dignity." Charles is very grateful that he did
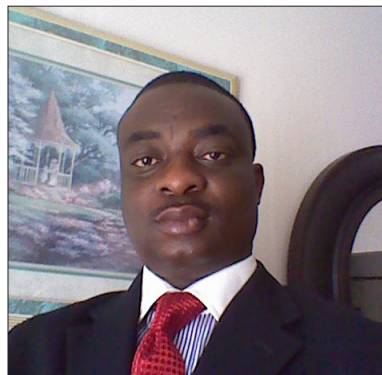
Charles Crawford. Photo: Charles Crawford.

not lose his life like many of his friends and family did during the conflict and he is determined to channel his energies into being an ambassador to promote non-violent concepts in conflict resolution. As he noted, "sometimes when I realize that individuals are hell bent on pursuing violence as a way of conflict resolution, I get incensed. I immediately point them to my home [Liberia] and show them the scars that will take a few generations to heal."

After S-CAR, Charles would like to return to Liberia and help his country in its efforts to build and strengthen their peacebuilding programs. Although a lot of work and people are already involved in this process, Charles still believes that many more people are needed. "The intensity of the conflict took most of us by surprise. It is only with the 'all hands on deck' maxim, that a more stable and durable Liberia would be realized." ■

Ethics, Conflict, and Resolution

Do we find axiology in conflict analysis? Some would say "No," since conflict research is, should be, value-neutral—unaffected by the researchers' moralistic sentiments. I believe that such a boundary between the 'is' and the 'ought' of conflict cannot be sustained. In our attempt to understand and explain conflict, we analysts tacitly interweave the "is" of protracted violent conflict with our ideas of "ought" and "ought not."

Consider a simple experiment. Try to extract the normative content from detailed case studies of genocide, human rights abuses, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing, and bigotry. It cannot be done without bizarre distortions. Read, or reread, the Human Rights Watch reports of mass violence in Darfur, the witnesses' accounts of genocidal violence in Rwanda, the testimonies of victims of brutality before the Commission of Tribunal of Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa, and the indictments by the ICC for crimes against humanity. Notions such as genocide, human rights, crimes against humanity, and others cannot be reduced to value-neutral properties such as features of bodily movements. These notions are charged with normative content.

Consider Vamik Volkan's notion of chosen trauma. The intense feelings of humiliation, vengeance, and hatred linked to chosen traumas foster violent reactions against those who presumably perpetuated their suffering. Similarly, Johan Galtung's notion of structural violence as systematic inequality between the "haves" and "have-nots" cannot be understood as morally neutral. The suffering of the "have-nots" represents a radical injustice that is life-threatening . While chosen traumas are social psychological maladies and structural violence is systematic injustice, both are real and morally negative. So, the axiology of conflict interlinks value judgments with the mean-
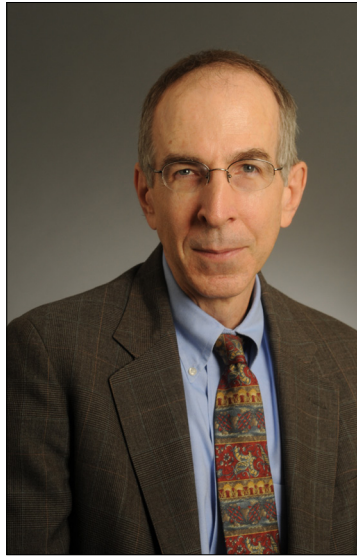
Daniel Rothbart. Photo: Mason Creative Services.

ings of many conflict-related encounters.

For another example, consider the meaning of violence to actors. Going beyond the notion of violence as a physical force, we find that conflict actors assign binary meaning to violence through normative categories, like purity or danger, friend or foe, virtue or vice. For conflict actors, the implementation of violence against an adversary is rationalized as avenging a moral offense or injustice, honoring "our" God, or securing the homeland, among many other possible meanings. At the core of such rationalizations are strong moral concepts, and what makes them so strong is that they are situated deeply in notions of identity and difference. Enemy militants are characterized negatively— vicious, power-hungry, depraved, or obsessed with evil. Protagonists are identified positively—virtuous, heroic, brave, and honorable. In acting justly, protagonists are positioned as morally pure, adorned by God, living in the image of our sacred figures, and endowed with virtues given only to those born in the sacred homeland.

Within conflict axiology, one important topic centers on the conflict protagonists' normative reflection on horrific experiences. There is a common need for many protagonists to address "What is the right thing to do for myself and for others?". Some conflict actors rationalize their campaign of violence as necessary in a larger campaign against the enemy. Others may engage in acts of compassion by offering sanctuary to potential victims. It is from this perspective that one might say that protracted conflicts have their own normative pathways on which participants may tread, some being militant pathways while others are more humanitarian. No matter which one is chosen, these pathways comprise varying elements of a conflict actor's moral life. ◼

Where the Rubber Meets the Road

In 2008 I started an undergraduate programme in Social Policy at the University of Malta, and while studying I used the internship opportunities of the course to continue working in various aspects of the migration field. I worked with Malta Red Cross in detention, and also with a local development organization, KOPIN, in designing and applying for projects for the empowerment of Somali women in the open centers. In 2011 I took advantage of an international exchange programme, to spend a semester studying at George Mason University while working with Farmworker Justice in Washington DC, an organization that advocates for the rights of migrant farmworkers.

On returning to Malta I focused my Social Policy dissertation on the experience of Filipino domestic workers in Malta, as this was the first undergraduate research of this kind. The purpose was to expose policy gaps and group vulnerability to academics, Filipinos, organisations and relevant authorities. Today Ahmed and I continue our work, supporting and empowering vulnerable migrants and their communities. Conflict resolution studies can be very beneficial for Malta, but more needs to be done to connect the benefits of this programme with the expansion of strategic conflict resolution and peacebuilding in Malta and in the Mediterranean region. ◼

Displaced Kashmiri Pandits

These townships meant to provide a close-to-home like experience, resulted in the moral hazard of robbing them of the needed services, and families resent "living in a vacuum without political space and rights" (research participant, Rajput, 2012).

Economic policies also created a dilemma. The pressure of securing adequate means of livelihood often spills into the host communities. To alleviate such pressures, policies included "temporary use" of the shops, by retaining the shop ownership, the government prohibited the users from altering the shops. Further socio-economic ills stem from the "migrant" label, which locals used to "dictate rules for inclusion/exclusion" (Tilly 2005, 6-7). The most enduring of the predicament has been the issue of return, entrenched in national policies and families' own stance. The families remain in a state of dissonance (Festinger 1957), reluctant to commit to a "mixed society" or return to a society that "humiliated their identity" (research participant). Given the elapsed time, the government's own stance remains ambiguous. On the one hand, they view this community as "migrants" who left "of their own volition" where the right of their return is a non-policy issue. Positioning the crisis as a "temporary disturbance," exempts them from rehabilitation in new communities. However, the families praise some policies as having made a positive difference. Under the "Special Allocation for Children of Kashmiri Migrants," KP children availed themselves of education benefits. This empowered the children with survival skills and kept them from becoming victims of the streets and child labor, prevalent in many displaced communities (Aker et al. 2006). The prolonged absence from their homes has meant a shift in how the families reflect on the changes. For some, these changes reflect as growth and achievements, for others a disconnected identity.

Policies remain a function of how the elite positioned this crisis and the consequent narratives (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999). The physical act of displacement that occurred at one point in time set off a spiral of social and economic repercussions. Regardless of the personal stories triggering their departure, the exact date and time of their "shameful departure" is now ingrained in their psyche. After 23 years, those who dream of returning admit that the social fabric of their society has changed forever and that society can never be trusted again. The policy solutions exclusively addressing the rift between the KPs and the locals, through "townships," have missed the larger structural context, needed to restore the long-term aspirations of the families. The predicament of this community needs to be understood as symptomatic of a larger problem that requires structural reform in the Valley. Kashmir faces internal clashes among factions about the future of the State, with the fate of the Valley in limbo. Since being evicted from their homes, in 1989, the families remain in exile, with the vision of returning becoming more blurry with each passing year. ◼