

International Relations

news & views

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Tufts Program In International Relations

Virtual Networking Forum

By Katie Santoro, LA '09 and Moira Todd, IR Program Administrator

In November, the Tufts Program in International Relations and Tufts Career Services hosted an innovative and exciting career development event: *International Affairs Virtual Networking: A Global Online Forum*. With nearly 200 registered alumni and student participants and an array of informative forum posts, the pilot program was a clear success.

The online networking forum was designed to foster greater student-alumni interaction by utilizing existing technology to connect IR majors in Medford with alumni working in the broad field of international affairs around the world. The forum provided IR students with first-hand advice from IR professionals by tapping into the broad experience of Tufts alumni.

The participating alumni exemplified the varied opportunities available to IR majors. Fields represented included international business, the U.S. Foreign and Civil Service, non-profit organizations, the Peace Corps., political campaign consulting, and global health; one alumnus was also a Fulbright Scholar. The diversity of the participants and their career experiences catered to the range of interests of IR students.

The participants also embodied the international nature of Tufts with several alumni living abroad in countries including Germany, Brazil and Ukraine and some students participating while on study abroad programs. The perspectives of the international alumni were particularly beneficial as many IR students plan to work or study abroad in the future.

Prior to the start of the forum, alumni posted brief profiles on their professional and academic experiences and interests. After reading about their

impressive backgrounds, students posed questions to a specific alumnus or to the entire forum. These questions covered a variety of topics ranging from when to attend graduate school, the benefits of continuing foreign language study after graduation, how to find that first job after college and different IR career paths, such as the State Dept.'s civil service.

The alumni participants provided timely and informative answers. They emphasized the importance of networking and internships in finding a job, and one alumna stressed the value of using the resources available to students through Tufts Career Services. The exchanges over the course of the week created an ongoing dialogue between students and alumni.

While one-on-one networking is very valuable and should not be entirely replaced with virtual networking, the online format of this forum was an excellent cost and time saving alternative. Students and alumni, particularly international participants, were able to contribute without spending time and money to travel to Tufts. This enabled a larger and more diverse representation of Tufts alumni working the broad field of international relations to interact with IR students from the comfort of their own home. Additionally, by holding the forum over the course of a week, virtually everyone who wished to participate could at any time of day—minimizing scheduling problems and maximizing student and alumni participation.

The IR Program and Career Services plan to send evaluations to participants and to post a formal publication on the IR website, which will summarize student questions and alumni responses. The publication can be read by current and future students to gain further knowledge and exposure to the excellent career and internship advice; thus extending the benefits of the first week-long virtual networking event.



IR Trivia Night

By Thomas Eager, LA '09

On the night of Wednesday, November 19 the IR Director's Leadership Council brought together IR majors and members of the greater Tufts community together for the DLC's first WorldWide Trivia night. With 70 questions devoted to all realms of international affairs - including historical events, world leaders, cuisines from across the globe, international relations theory, and more -- WorldWide Trivia offered a night of competition, socializing and fun among IR majors and those with a bent for knowledge of international relations.

The top three finishers received gift certificates to local restaurants and all competitors left with the consolation prize of an official Tufts IR mug. The DLC plans on hosting another such event during the spring 2009 semester -- likely with the inclusion of Tufts faculty as competitors.

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IR Program News & Views

Q&A with New IR Core Faculty Member, Ryan Centner

By Robin Carol, LA '10



As a Tufts graduate (LA '98), you are now back at your alma mater as an assistant professor of sociology. What is that like?

The strangest part is not that my former professors are now my colleagues--that's been fairly easy. The strangest thing is to be back in the same place after ten years and for the place to mostly be the same, but I'm here in a different capacity. I remember the campus as an undergraduate, having a good time. Now, professors can have a good time too, but it's different to have campus as your workplace and to have it be a professional environment. I'm working it out though.

Does being a Tufts graduate give you additional insight into what students are looking for?

I think of my undergraduate experience as being not so long ago, but to my students, ten years probably seems like a long time and I'm sure I just seem old. I do have some sense of students' needs, because I can remember, say, the structure of the IR major, or the Sociology major, or the distribution requirements at Tufts, and those kind

of things. I haven't had to think about them for a while but I recall a lot, so I can hit the ground running in terms of advising and teaching.

The teaching that I'm doing, though, is on very different topics than I had when I was here. Part of the reason I was able to come back was I ended up specializing in very different subfields than I had done when I was here; subfields that aren't really covered by Tufts faculty. I branched out into urban sociology and leadership, with a focus on the global south, or the developing world. Those things are new to sociology at Tufts so that's helpful in creating a niche for myself back here.

What are your classes and areas of study?

This semester I'm teaching Urban Sociology and Sociology of Leadership. Urban Sociology has been my foremost specialization, on social life and social change in cities. I try to give the class a more cosmopolitan approach than the standard urban sociology class, which is usually more exclusively about the U.S. I bring in cases and issues from a broader range of places.

The course I'm teaching next semester is a seminar on the cities of the global south. It looks at case studies in Latin America, Africa, and Asia to try to address an urban sociology that remains relevant in the 21st century, as the world is now more urban than rural for the first time. More people live in cities than not for the first time ever. The bulk of urban centers of the world are now in the global south. Yet most of our ideas in sociology are about Chicago and L.A., for example. But we need to think about other places that represent the urban future, and see what fits from Chicago or Paris, and what needs to be recast or rethought in that context.

Have you spent time abroad? Why is an international context important for studying cities?

For my dissertation, I spent two years doing research in Argentina. I enjoy traveling in general and I've managed to get around quite a bit. When we're dealing with cities and urban policies and problems it's important to have in mind a whole mental catalog of city forms, problems, and policies. One way to do that is by traveling or living abroad, but obviously that's a privilege that not everyone can attain. But it's also possible through a kind of virtual traveling, and wide reading about cities in different parts of the world.

It can be very relevant to try to understand what other issues countries are dealing with because even though it might seem like such a different place, in might have a lot to do with what's happening in our backyard. It's important to have that mental catalog of cities, to draw on the examples of other places, and think about coming up with creative solutions. That's generally a problem that Americans have in so many fields of policy-- the U.S. acts as if there isn't a whole wealth of examples in the rest of the world on how to fix problems or look at what could go wrong or right when pursuing a certain policy course.

International Relations and Sociology might not commonly be paired. Why do you think the two fields fit together? Why might you encourage studying the two fields together?

It remains very common to divide sociology and IR. People from either field don't necessarily connect them. I doubled majored in Sociology and IR at Tufts and I think I was the only person in my year to do it. Ten years later, I have met a handful of people doing that combination, but I don't think it's all that common. There's a lot of promise there, but it's largely untapped promise.

I think these disciplines together are promising because it's important to study IR not just as the realm of

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Q&A with New IR Core Faculty Member, David Ekbladh

By Robin Carol, LA '10



What brought you to Tufts and how do you like it so far?

What brought me to Tufts? It's a great institution with a deserved reputation for strength in international studies. The word on the street is Tufts is a wonderfully collegial place and it's living up to that. I met sharp colleagues and bright students when I interviewed here. Why wouldn't I come? Both make me happy to be here. I take seriously the teaching mission at Tufts and one reason I'm here is as to be a resource for students.

Where are you from? What are your past teaching experiences?

I've taught at Yale on a fellowship, Columbia during my graduate work, and elsewhere as temporary faculty, so the teaching ropes are not entirely new. Outside the academy, I worked for the Carnegie Corporation of New York, a foundation, on some programs on international affairs and conflict prevention. I also worked with a UN educational program for a short while. Both experiences gave me an

appreciation of how world politics are shaped by a variety of actors. I'm originally from North Carolina, but have lived all over.

What are your hobbies or interesting facts about you?

I'm an avid hiker. Students, if they run into me off-campus, would probably see me with my dog. I love to cook. Being in New England is a plus because I've always wanted to take up luge.

What is your area of expertise?

The US and the World is the official title of my position. It includes US foreign policy and foreign relations as well as international perspectives. This semester I'm teaching a survey of US foreign relations through 1900. Tufts gives you a one course break your first semester. I'm teaching the second half of that class, which brings the story up to the present, in the spring and a seminar on the Coming of America's Second World War, which looks at how a world crisis created conditions that brought the United States into a global war. As for my own research, I'm interested in how the United States has used development to engage the world and I'm also breaking ground on a second book on the 1930s.

What got you interested in history and international relations/foreign policy?

I've been a lot of different places. I grew up in the South near places steeped in history and traveled a respectable amount. As for international affairs, I grew up in the '80s when the Cold War was waxing and then suddenly waned. I realized how important world events were to everything, like whether we were going to wake up dead after a sudden nuclear war—a formative thing when I was young and also shows how old I am—but also that world affairs opened up new opportunities. I was in central Europe in the early 1990s and

you saw how the economic opportunities literally changed overnight in places like Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic. In going to those places, I saw the importance of the United States as an international presence. I went abroad to discover the United States.

Have you spent much time overseas? Do you feel like going abroad has changed your perspective on teaching?

Living, working, and simply traveling abroad absolutely changed my perspective. From a purely US standpoint, you realize the importance of the United States to the world—that people look at it and they have an opinion about it in all of these places. I have family in Sweden I've visited a number of times. I studied in Europe, in Austria. I worked for short stints in Japan and Costa Rica. After I finished my dissertation, I treated myself to a trip across Siberia, something I had always wanted to do. I spent part of a summer in the Caucasus in 2006 and was just in Africa. This summer I was in a Lalibela, Ethiopia, a place well off the beaten path, and people were asking me about Obama. Still, at the same time you learn to contextualize that the United State is not everywhere and everything. You learn the U.S. is influenced by rest of the world even as we influence it.

What types of students would be interested in your classes?

Those who want a deeper grounding in the forces that shape international life will enjoy my teaching. History touches a lot of things in life beyond just diplomacy and government. It touches people and culture and perception. In my foreign relations class we were just talking about the American civil war and some of the art it inspired internationally. This was just one of the many international issues surrounding the American civil war. But, rest assured, students will still

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Addressing State-Fragility: An African Perspective on Statebuilding

By Kelsi Stine, LA '10
Borghesani Scholar

The recent upsurges of violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo highlight an ongoing debate in the international policymaking community- how to tool foreign interventions within African nations so as to increase stability without worsening dependency and chaos. From colonial times up until the present, Western nations have a long track record of working with state capacity and governance in Africa, efforts

which have rarely, if ever, resulted in the development of fully sovereign states with thriving populations. Still, the financial, political, and economic support of outside actors is often needed to bring domestic efforts towards effective governance to fruition.

Yet what does an “African” vision of effective governance look like, and how can foreign donors best support this vision? With support from the Anne E. Borghesani Memorial Prize, administered by through the International Relations program, and the Synaptic Scholars program, at the Institute for Global Leadership, I had the opportunity to explore this question

through a summer internship at the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI). CMI is a private diplomacy group in Helsinki, Finland headed by former Finish President and recent Nobel Peace Prize winner Martti Ahtisaari. I spent ten weeks developing a seminar titled “Addressing State Fragility: An African Perspective on Statebuilding” which is being held in Brussels in February, 2009. While two-way dialog between donors and leaders in recipient countries is emphasized in policy rhetoric, it rarely translates into tangible communication channels needed to drive endogenous ownership in development and reconstruction programs. In response to this gap, the CMI seminar was

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Clean Energy & Market Failure in India

By Daniel Enking, LA '10
Borghesani Scholar

As my train pulled away from the Delhi station on a hot, humid day in July, I walked to the open door and watched innumerable high-rises, slums and factories drift by. Although it was a cloudless day, the sun was partially obscured by the haze that is part of daily life in India’s capital. The piles of garbage that separated the tracks from the slums are a testament to the failure of India’s government to invest in infrastructure or enact laws that would create market solutions to its problems. The sight of stray wandering, venerated cows picking through the rubble refused to add to the absurdity of the situation added to my sense of the country’s complexity.

The stated goal in my application for the Anne E. Borghesani Memorial Prize was to “discover what conditions are needed in order to scale up the use of clean, distributed energy in India.” The use of small, renewable energy producing units like solar panels in rural areas of developing countries not only reduces pollution but also aids in economic development, providing light

and power for farming and cottage industries. During my experience traveling down India’s west coast, I learned that the challenges to such efforts are much more systemic than



Daniel (center) with John Hoopes and Michael Mazgaonkar of the Mosda Collective

I originally thought, and speak to many of India’s greater development challenges.

While traveling from Delhi to Bombay, my friend John and I were invited to take a one-night detour to visit the rural village of Mosda, nestled in the mountains a few hundred miles from the coast. A nearby village provided a perfect example of the failure of the government’s proposed solution to the country’s energy problem:

giving away thousands of free solar panels, mandated for to the rural poor to for produce producing their own electricity. A few years later the panels still sit, virtually unused. Our host Michael, the head of an organization called the Mosda Collective, explained that because there was no demand for, or demonstration of how to use, these new devices, the villagers never had any incentive to use them. Instead of implementing policies that would have created a market for these solar panels, the government has chosen what have proven to be ineffective top-down approaches.

If India is going to solve its energy problems, it first needs to stop giving away electricity in order to buy votes, as is the current practice in many regions. Only then will it be possible to scale up the use of clean, distributed energy. But the problem is still much more complex. Modern energy technologies have still not reached rural villages like Mosda. The streets of India’s cities are still clogged by cars, rickshaws and motorcycles with dirty two-stroke bikesengines. A land as diverse as India will require diverse and creative solutions. If I learned one thing during my time in India, it is that I have only begun to scratch the surface.

Scholarship Opportunities

The IR Program offers two research scholarships that enable students to study, intern, volunteer, and/or perform research abroad. Research can greatly enhance your experience at Tufts, challenging you to critically apply what you have learned as you explore 'real-world' questions in the field of international relations.

IR RESEARCH SCHOLARS AWARD

Application Deadline: Monday, March 9, 2009 by 4pm
International Relations Program Office (Cabot 605)

The IR Research Scholars Program supports original, high-quality undergraduate international research. Aimed at IR sophomores or juniors who anticipate producing an upper-level research paper in their senior year, whether for an IR thesis, directed research, conference submission or external essay competition. The scholarship will support a minimum of eight weeks of IR Core Faculty-mentored summer research for the gathering of materials and data.

Awards will be granted to both students and faculty mentors. The competitive program's goal is to support the development of faculty and student mentoring relationships and the advancement of strong international research skills critical to professional or academic goals.

Applications for both scholarships are available in the IR Office (Cabot 605) and on the IR website's Scholarship & Funding Opportunities page via the following link:
<http://ase.tufts.edu/ir/researchOpportunities.htm>.

ANNE E. BORGHESANI MEMORIAL PRIZE

Application Deadline: Monday, March 2, 2009 by 4pm
International Relations Program Office (Cabot 605)

This prize is awarded to second-semester sophomores and juniors who undertake a research project, an internship, a volunteer activity, or plan of study in any field involving international issues. Designed to foster the spirit of the award, the prize encourages personal growth and independence, while increasing one's understanding of all peoples and encouraging a commitment to the world community.

Second-semester sophomores and juniors from ANY department or major with a minimal GPA of 2.8 or above are eligible. Preference is given to U.S. citizens, but students of any nationality are urged to apply. Students are strongly encouraged to attend the Borghesani proposal writing workshop on Jan. 28 at noon.

Also available on the IR website's Scholarship & Funding Opportunities page (see link above) is a list of Tufts University Scholarships as well as additional funding opportunities.

Event Wrap Up

U.S. State Department Student Internship Information Session

“The State Department has been changing. It has become a more welcoming place for everyone,” Diplomat-in-Residence Suneta Halliburton explained to attendees of the State Department Information Session, held on Oct. 8.

During lunchtime, Halliburton met with 15 students who were interested in learning about the internship and future career opportunities available in the U.S. Foreign Service. With an application deadline approaching on Nov. 1, the event provided an overview of the internship program, and answered questions about the application process.

Because of the competitive nature of the State Department’s internship program, Halliburton reminded students to “sell themselves” and to focus on writing coherent, tight, and logical statements of interest. She said that preference for certain popular bureaus could also make acceptance more difficult. For example, over 3,000 students applied last year

for a post in the Middle East; only 300 were selected.

Despite this reality check, Halliburton went on to describe the benefits of working in the Foreign Service, and the opportunities that the State Department can open up for students. “The point [of an internship] is to expose you to the Foreign Service life and hopefully to interest you in that career,” she said. In addition to summer internships, the State Department offers several fellowship programs and intensive language programs.

“There are a lot of positive experiences that can shape what you want to do in your life,” Halliburton said. As a senior officer, Halliburton has served all over the world, most recently as Consular General in Naples, Italy, before assuming her current post as Diplomat-in-Residence at Tufts. She serves as a resource year-round for students looking for advice about the Foreign Service.

Meet the Mentors Event

On Oct. 1, students were greeted by smiling upperclassmen as they emerged from their Intro. to IR class. This was an opportunity for IR students to ask questions about the IR program and a way to publicize the IR Mentors Program.

IR Mentors are available year-round to guide students who are navigating the IR major, or who may have questions about internships, study abroad, or course requirements. The peer-to-peer program fosters constructive interactions between current majors, prospective majors, and even prospective students.

The event brought mentors from diverse IR concentrations together to offer advice in a more organized setting. “IR is a more complicated major, because there are many requirements, so it can be more daunting. It’s nice to have people to answer questions—I wish I had attended an event like this as a freshman,” mentor Alicia Evangelides said.

Evangelides also felt that having the event after the Intro to IR class allowed more students to stumble upon the Mentors program and learn about this resource. “It’s not as intimidating,” she said. To learn more about the IR Mentors, please visit <http://ase.tufts.edu/ir>

UN Day Panel

To coincide with United Nations Day, October 24, a panel of Fletcher students with previous work experience at the United Nations offered their expertise and advice to an audience of interested IR students. “The UN: A Firsthand View” allowed those looking ahead to a future at the United Nations an opportunity to find out more.

The panelists, all graduate students, explained that a graduate degree is something important to consider when heading into the world of the United Nations careers. They also described the different “posts” at the UN—the G-Posts, which are more administrative, and the P-posts, which are professional, career long positions. Transitioning from a G to P post requires either a graduate degree or passing a competitive exam. One panelist, Adela Raz, had recently taken the exam and was waiting to hear her results.

All of the panelists said they would like to return to the UN. “It’s an organization with noble goals. The big picture of what you’re involved in is really satisfactory,” Jean-Claude Berthelot said. “It is an enriching

experience working with colleagues there.”

“The experience, the exposure, and the work have immediate outcomes and gratification a lot of the time,” Raz said. “You meet all kinds of people all over the world at the UN. You are able to have a strong positive impact and role in helping countries.”

Mackinnon Webster mentioned her pride in working at the United Nations. “Working at the UN, you are involved in everything going on; you have a seat at the table of the discussions, which is amazing, despite the bureaucracy and other frustrations and problems,” she said.

Writing and communication skills, as well as a grasp on at least two of the UN languages, were both seen as vital by the panelists. They also recommended that undergraduates gain experience in the field through international NGOs or by working as a UN volunteer.

Berthelot summed up the feelings of all the panelists when he said that working for the United Nations makes for a “stimulating environment.”

-Robin Carol, LA’10

IR Program News & Views

Forgiveness and War in Northern Uganda

By Rachel Bergenfield, LA '09
IR Research Scholar

“There is no one who has ever expressed that [they do not forgive]... I forgive fully.”

-A young man living in an Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) Camp

“I support forgiveness. I forgive the rebels, so they will come home and then we can arrest them.”

-A young, female teacher working in a small village

“[P]eople talk about forgiveness, but... we just want this war to stop.”

-A local religious figure and professor

I returned to northern Uganda last June to study community transitional justice, or organized and unorganized ways in which survivors and communities seek justice, co-existence, a shared narrative, and peace in their everyday experience and surroundings. Northern Uganda has been in a civil war for over two decades, but, for the past two years, has experienced relative stability with the prospect of peace. I focused particularly on the interactions between community transitional justice and the “peace-building” programs of non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Forgiveness is an important and contested element of the current shape of community transitional justice in northern Ugandan communities. The popular sentiment is that the survivors have forgiven the rebel group (the Lord’s Resistance Army or “LRA”) for the crimes that were committed against them. Whether this forgiveness extends to the Government of Uganda is usually, conspicuously not discussed in much Western discourse, even though

the government is believed to have committed major atrocities against civilians as well. This attitude of forgiveness is what survivors publicly communicated in consultations with LRA delegations, arranged through the Juba peace process. Religious, cultural, and local government leaders advocate for forgiveness. Many Western peace advocates and journalists also note the



World Food Program food distribution in Pabo IDP Camp

special capacity of northern Ugandans to forgive, suggesting they have done so fully and deeply.

But is it really possible that an overwhelming majority of a society truly forgives—in the dictionary sense of absolution or an end to feelings of resentment—the people who committed the most brutal types of crimes against their loved ones and themselves? Many people don’t know who committed the crimes against their family members, so in these cases forgiveness cannot refer to any specific person or incident of violence. What, then, does their forgiveness mean? I spoke with people about their personal processes. A young woman named Stella (name changed) told me she forgave the rebels for killing her family members, but could never forgive her boyfriend for unknowingly transmitting a disease to her. Peace (name changed) makes and sells local brews in an IDP

Camp. Her husband was killed by the LRA several years ago. When I asked her if she forgave, she told me, “No. Those people [the LRA] destroyed the good relations with my husband. I cannot look for another one.” She then told me that the emphasis on and pressure to forgive was “oppressing.” Still, Stella and Peace’s words were uncommon; most people told me that they did indeed forgive.

When I asked people why, common answers included, “So that the situation can improve” or “So the rebels will come home.” Coming home means that the combatants stop fighting and return to their civilian lives through the government’s amnesty process. Others told me that it did not really matter if they forgave or not, as their decision would not change anything.

As I understand it, the decision to forgive is a practical one and not emotionally- or ideologically-based, as forgiveness is generally perceived. The Ugandan army could not (or did not) stop the War, and neither could the Juba peace talks or the International Criminal Court’s intervention. There is a sense that all the powerful actors --the government, Uganda’s neighbors, the national army, and the international community-- were not able to or chose not to protect them or stop the violence. Forgiveness is then the only remaining choice that can bring an end to the war in this highly limited set of options. It is clear that forgiveness has little to do with feelings of absolution or with some unique capacity of northern Ugandans to forgive when faced with the most horrific violence; it is a practical decision made within a specific context to achieve specific goals, including peace and stability.

If forgiveness is not what Western dictionaries say it is, what are the

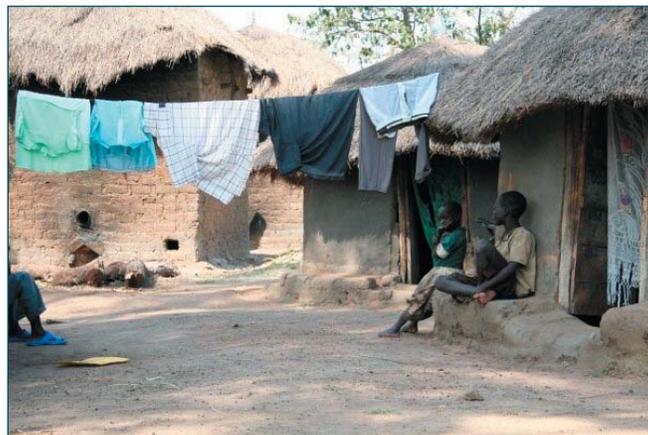
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Bergenfield article, continued from pg 7:

Western NGOs whose programs I studied promoting? Nothing is done without unintended consequences. We understand that the work of humanitarian organizations in various countries has sometimes re-enforced oppressive power dynamics that may have laid the groundwork for conflict in the first place. Particularly since the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide, a great deal of policy and practice has been developed to address this. Can NGOs that do peace programming to promote healing, transition, and reconciliation ever have similar effects? Are there conditions under which promoting forgiveness can be a negative process? When, if ever, is it the role of an international NGO to promote it?

I shared some of these thoughts and questions with my Ugandan “father” one night after dinner. Following a long conversation about NGOs and their work he said, “When you walk past people, their bodies are there, but their minds are so far away. It’s another war, and it will last for a long time.” I think he meant that, though he personally finds the work of most NGOs very important and useful, the legitimate personal and community healing and recovery process is extremely distant right now. Perhaps



Opit Internally Displaced Person Camp

many of the NGOs will be gone when (and if) people are truly able to begin it.

Stine article, continued from pg 4:

designed to encourage dialog between the European Union policymaking community and representatives of African government and public advocacy groups as to how to improve support of African efforts to improve state resilience through a process called “statebuilding”.

Statebuilding is becoming an increasingly popular field of analysis. It operates at the nexus between peacebuilding and development, consisting of endogenous processes that share state-society relations in a way that safeguards against poverty and instability. Foreign actors have a responsibility to enable this transformation with financial and technical assistance in a supportive rather than dictative manner. However, internal paradoxes pose severe complications in prioritizing and strategizing for statebuilding initiatives. Money can have a gravely destabilizing effect on weak governments by creating financial incentives to control federal offices through violence and corruption. Meanwhile, governments

often cannot develop effective service delivery mechanisms that contribute to human security and trust in public institutions without foreign financial aid.

Meeting President Ahtisaari and working with his talented staff introduced me to the inner workings of private diplomacy activities. In addition to its bi-lateral work with foreign governments, including Liberia and Indonesia, CMI organizes professional conferences, workshops, and information communication technology (ICT) initiatives to help international actors work together more effectively in responding to crises. My work consisted primarily of writing the seminar’s background paper, conceptualizing and planning the agenda, finding speakers, organizing conference logistics, and drafting President Ahtisaari’s keynote address. I focused heavily on issues of governance and state fragility, particularly the debates within these fields, and the challenges they pose to well-intended policymakers who often do more harm than good

through their interventions. Further, my internship challenged me to form my own opinions about issues such as local ownership and capacity building techniques.

The international community is beginning to realize that “democracy” varies significantly in practice outside of the Western world. Idealized notions of Western institutions are often ill-fitting in societies where the historic, geographic, and cultural contexts differ from our own. The “mass society” social patterns that precipitated the organic formation of civil society in the US and Europe are only recently developing in Africa, and it will be a long time before the individualized notions of “citizen” dominate group or ethnic affiliation in many locations. Lastly, there is a need for more realistic expectations about the limitations of political rights in achieving social and economic equality. Greater patience, flexibility, and strategic coordination by Western states and multinational institutions are needed to support African initiatives towards human security and national prosperity.

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Centner Q&A, continued from pg 2:

diplomats and perfectly solid nation-states, but as the connections between different societies, which is key in getting beyond a more traditional, stodgier definition of international relations. IR is also about many other kinds of relations: across, around, and within societies and countries.

There's something about the sociological imagination that allows people to position themselves and understand how they fit into society and how other people of different kinds of backgrounds fit into society in relation to each other. That helps you understand your own society better, but also other societies, which is such an essential insight for IR.

One of the absolute worst things you could do is to think about all of these different countries as monolithic, homogenous units where everyone is

the same inside. You want to be able to understand--and sociology will help you do this--the differences that exist within each of these countries. People move around; ideas and other countries' influences penetrate these nation-states, and it's very debilitating to think of international relations as just relations between perfectly formed containers, because that's not how the world actually exists.

Where are you from? What do you do in your free time?

I'm from Portland, Oregon, but in the time between Tufts before and Tufts now, I was living in San Francisco and Buenos Aires, for work and grad school and research. I'm basically a nerd--I turned my studies into my life! I love travel and I love cities, but I also love to study them. I love to experience the diversity in cities. Everywhere you go, you're going to have a livelier, more diverse environment in large cities, so

that's what I enjoy very much.

What are some of your impressions of Boston as a city?

I'm still rediscovering it myself. I think as an American city, Boston is interesting in the way that it has been so shaped by immigration, and continues to be. There are some sources of immigration that are similar to other cities but many are different. I hope to do some local research, especially about Brazilian communities in the Boston area, but I plan to also continue some work in Buenos Aires by bringing in a comparative lens on urban interventions in Sao Paulo and Istanbul – but that's a whole other story. For now, of course I welcome all kinds of students to my office hours, but I would especially be interested in getting to know students who are interested in Brazil or Brazilians in Boston, who might want to do some research in that vein in the near future.

Eklbladh Q&A, continued from pg 3:

get a healthy dose of politics.

What do you think is valuable about studying international relations?

Among many other things, the world can hurt you. We need clarity on a spectrum of things because the world is a small place. Historical context gives you a way of comprehending and working on global concerns as well as world finding your own place within it. In a purely individual sense, when you understand more about the world, it makes it a more interesting and enjoyable place.

When you were in school, what was the most important moment for you?

One of the biggest moments was during high school. I was living in Pennsylvania and I came home, turned on the TV, and there was the Berlin Wall going down. I wasn't in Germany.

I was in no way directly connected to those major events, but seeing those images offered a window on of the power of world affairs. I knew the world had changed. , nNagging fears I had about superpowers colliding in a nuclear war began to dissipate that night. You grasped the power of media—you could turn on the TV and have one type of experience. It was pivotal. I understood that something momentous had happened and that how my life was shaped was going to change. And purely personally, a number of years later, when I was in Austria, I could cross the border to the Czech Republic; I could easily take a day trip to Hungary. Suddenly the world's political geography, and where I could go within it, had been altered because of this massive shift I had witnessed at a distance.

Many IR students follow the news and current events. What are the benefits of studying history alongside the events happening right now?

It's very important because it's very hard to comprehend the now without the past. You can end up blundering around in the present if you don't. If you look at September 11, it is easy to understand it was a major event. Once it became clear an Islamist group was responsible for attacking the U.S., you can only fully grasp why people would feel compelled to do that with a reading of history. Part of America's response to that one event, however haltingly, is to try to get at that context, and history is an indispensable tool. Take another example: the images of people ripping down the Berlin Wall were striking in and of themselves, but you really don't appreciate how dramatic it all was until you know the history of the Soviet empire and the Cold War.



Tufts Program in International Relations
Cabot Intercultural Center, Rm. 605
Tufts University
Medford, MA 02155
USA



Announcements

IR Program Staff

Director
Malik Mufti
Assistant Director
Kirk Lange
Program Administrator
Maira Todd
Program Coordinator
Elizabeth Gottlieb
Student Assistants
Robin Carol
Breese McIlvaine
Katherin Santoro

*The IR News & Views
newsletter highlights
events and people in the
Tufts IR community.
The publication appears
twice a semester and
welcomes feedback
and submissions from
students and faculty.*

Upcoming Events in the New Year!

Issue as Muse 2009: A Night of International Artistic Inspiration
Saturday, February 7th

Presented by The Tufts Program in International Relations DLC

Proposal Writing Workshop for Borghesani Prize Applications
Wednesday, January 28th, 12 - 1pm, Cabot 702

Please Consider Registering for

INTR 91: International Research Colloquium

Co-taught by Professors Eichenberg and Penvenne, this course builds research skills for study abroad and international programs that might later form the basis of a senior project, research seminar paper or thesis.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM THE IR STAFF!



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