

CONNECTIONS

An Annual Journal of the Kettering Foundation | 2016

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Kettering's Multinational Research



The Kettering Foundation is a nonprofit, operating foundation rooted in the American tradition of cooperative research. Kettering's primary research question is, what makes democracy work as it should? Kettering's research is distinctive because it is conducted from the perspective of citizens and focuses on what people can do collectively to address problems affecting their lives, their communities, and their nation. The foundation seeks to identify and address the challenges to making democracy work as it should through inter-related program areas that focus on citizens, communities, and institutions. The foundation collaborates with an extensive network of community groups, professional associations, researchers, scholars, and citizens around the world. Established in 1927 by inventor Charles F. Kettering, the foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization that does not make grants but engages in joint research with others. For more information about KF research and publications, see the Kettering Foundation's website at www.kettering.org.

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Citizens in a Global Society

By David Mathews



This year, I am writing the same article for all three of Kettering’s major publications—*Connections*, the *Kettering Review*, and the *Higher Education Exchange (HEX)*. My objective is for readers of each of the publications to know what is being reported in the other two. Together, they tell a more complete story of what’s needed to make our democracy work as it faces global forces that threaten to disempower citizens.

All three periodicals have the same subject—Kettering’s multinational studies, which is the focus of this year’s research review. Their job is to share what we are learning in all of the multinational research and to solicit thoughts from readers. *Connections* will carry stories, not

about Kettering, but about civic organizations in other countries, written whenever possible by the people in those organizations. The *Review* will acknowledge our debt to the articles and books from outside the United States that have had a significant influence on how the foundation has come to understand democracy. And *HEX* will speak to American institutions of higher education about their role in democracy at a time when democracy around the world is in trouble.

TWO CATEGORIES OF MULTINATIONAL RESEARCH

The foundation’s multinational research falls into two broad categories or groups. In the first category, the foundation collaborates with nongovernmental organizations outside the United States that are interested in what Kettering is studying about how people do or don’t become engaged as citizens who exercise sound judgment, the work citizens do in communities to solve problems and educate the young, and productive ways that people can engage large institutions, both governmental and nongovernmental, as those institutions try to engage them. This research is the way the foundation organizes its study of democracy.

At the heart of the word *democracy* is the *demos*, or “citizenry,” and Kettering refers to the ways citizens



go about their work as “democratic practices.” (*Kratos*, or “power,” is the other root of democracy.) The democratic practices that Kettering studies require self-responsibility, which can’t be exported or imported. So the focus of our research is on the United States, not other countries. Yet our studies have been greatly enriched by what the foundation has learned from nongovernmental organizations in some 100 other countries spread across the globe.

Organizations in other countries interested in this research come to summer learning exchanges called the Deliberative Democracy Institutes (DDIs) to share their experiences with one another and the foundation. Some of the participants come back to enter Kettering’s multinational residency program, which now has a large alumni group. These alumni often return as faculty for the institutes.

Kettering’s second category of multinational research is on citizen diplomacy, and it centers on three countries—Russia, China, and Cuba. The governments in these countries

have or have had serious differences with the government in the United States; communications have broken down or been problematic.



Our studies have been greatly enriched by what the foundation has learned from nongovernmental organizations in some 100 other countries spread across the globe.

The premise of the studies, as the late Hal Saunders, Kettering's long-time director of international affairs, explained to the *New York Times*, is that we live in a time when governments face a growing number of problems they cannot deal with alone, so citizens outside government have to fill that void. Citizen diplomacy is not intended to replace or compete with government diplomacy but to supplement it. And from Kettering's perspective, this research gives the foundation a way to study dangerous conflicts, which are, unfortunately, an inescapable part of politics.

RUSSIA

Beginning during the Cold War, the Dartmouth Conference, a joint venture with Russian partners, developed a new process for dealing with conflict that Hal Saunders called "Sustained Dialogue." This dialogue fits between what governments do

and people-to-people programs. When Dartmouth began, nuclear conflict was a real possibility, and Dartmouth opened a line of communication that took advantage of the perspective of citizens. As political scientist James C. Scott has pointed out in his writing, people don't "see like a state" and can convey the concerns of the nation as a whole. That is, citizens who do not have the responsibilities of government have experiences from other walks of life to bring to bear on problems between countries.

The challenges Dartmouth has faced have been almost overwhelming. The possibilities for a nuclear holocaust—even if begun unintentionally—have been real. Kettering got involved because it was, in light of the enormity of the threat, simply the right thing to do. The foundation could never prove that this dialogue was or would be effective. However, it has been going on for 56 years, which is one indication of its value. For much of that time, the larger conference has been augmented by a Dartmouth task force on regional conflicts. Most recently, new task forces have been created to foster cooperative ventures. The first promotes cooperation in medicine.

Recently, during the Ukraine crisis, when the two governments reduced their bilateral contacts, both sides agreed to reinstitute the

“ Dartmouth has provided Kettering a unique opportunity to look at what citizens can do to reduce the possibilities for violent conflict.”



Dennis Meadows, Yuri Zhukov, Yevgeny Fedorov, Harrison Brown, Norman Cousins, and Bob Chollar at Dartmouth VII, Hanover, New Hampshire, December 1972

citizen-to-citizen meetings of the large Dartmouth Conference. The conference has reconvened four times in less than two years. The next meeting has already been scheduled for early 2017, with elections in this country over and the Trump administration in place.

Dartmouth has provided Kettering a unique opportunity to look at what citizens can do to reduce the possibilities for violent conflict. The dialogue involves digging behind official positions and stated interests to try to uncover what is really valuable in human, not just geopolitical, terms. Then, proceeding from that, the two sides try to imagine scenarios of reciprocal steps that the countries could take to relieve tensions and build confidence—while recognizing differences.

Conference participants on the US side have ranged from business leaders like David Rockefeller to journalists like Harrison Salisbury, from scientists like Paul Doty to small-town mayors like Scott Clemons and National Issues Forums leaders like Nancy Kranich. The Russians reciprocated in kind with cosmonauts, scientists, and scholars selected initially by the Russian Institute for US and Canadian Studies, which was led by Georgy Arbatov and later by a group headed by the former energy minister Yuri Shafranik.

CHINA

In 1985, the foundation proposed, and the Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping agreed, to begin nongovernmental dialogues to supplement



the resumption of formal, government-to-government contact. The topics were contentious, such as an increasingly independent Taiwan, which China saw as belonging to them. Deng assigned the Institute of American Studies under Li Shenzhi the responsibility for working with Kettering. This year in Beijing we recognized more than 30 years of collaboration, which has included people like newspaper editor Katherine Fanning, former government official Robert McNamara, and community leader Anna Faith Jones, from the Boston Foundation.

In time, this exchange went beyond two-day conferences to take new forms. The Chinese Institute arranged meetings with others, like the China Institute for International Strategic Studies and the Central Party School of the Chinese Communist

Party. The institute and Kettering also undertook joint studies that are described in a volume, *China-United States Sustained Dialogues: 1986-2001*, edited by Zhao Mei and Maxine Thomas. In addition, Kettering added a program of fellowships to the exchange, which draws scholars from both the institute and Peking University.

Kettering doesn't study China, per se, any more than it studies Russia or any other country. That research is best done by universities and policy institutes. The foundation concentrates on relationships between countries as a whole.

A full account of the roles our foundation has played in China is included in *The Destiny of Wealth*, written by Zi Zhongyun, a leading authority on the United States. The current exchange is built on earlier exchanges going back to 1972. The Chinese have put Kettering in the category of "old friends" and consider the relationship a special one.

CUBA

The relationship between the governments of the United States and Cuba has been disrupted for more than 50 years. Only recently has the relationship begun to change. But nearly 20 years ago, the foundation began a research exchange with a nongovernmental organization in Cuba, the

Antonio Núñez Jiménez Foundation for Nature and Humanity. The exchange didn't take the form of Sustained Dialogue; instead, it has been based on studying comparable problems, such as community responses to natural disasters and environmental damage on the Gulf Coast. Kettering also has provided fellowships in Dayton for staff from Núñez who want to become familiar with the foundation's studies and its methods for doing the research.

The principal joint venture with Núñez is a biannual conference on "active citizenship," a term the Cubans chose. The focus is not on the government-to-government relationship, but rather on similar problems in both societies, like the role of communities in sustainable

economic development and active citizenship in urban renewal. The major papers from these conferences are published in books that are shared in the United States, Cuba, and other Latin American countries. Even though the conferences are a Cuban-US collaborative venture, participants have come from across the Americas, from Canada to Brazil. What began as a bilateral project has evolved into a multilateral one.

CROSS-POLLINATION

Kettering has benefited greatly from the cross-pollination of its two lines of multinational research. As I mentioned, in its study of politics, Kettering has to acknowledge the human potential for violent conflict and have something to say about



how it could be avoided, something that is compatible with democracy. Sustained Dialogue does that. Kettering has also found that, whether in citizen diplomacy or in the citizen deliberations of the National Issues Forums (and similar forums now in other countries), people are more likely to understand one another, avoid conflicts, and maybe even work together when they focus on what is deeply valuable to all human beings, the ends and means of life itself, and not just on facts, ideology, or interests.

What connects the research on Sustained Dialogue and deliberative practices is the same thing that connects all of the foundation's research—it is the focus on citizens and what citizens can do to make a difference. This research is relevant today because so many Americans aren't sure they can make a difference, even in an election season. Votes certainly count. But do they result in meaningful change in an age beset with what seem to be intractable problems—some generated here, some coming from far away? Many Americans aren't sure.

The airwaves today are filled with promises to “empower” people. Yet the true power citizens have is the power they generate themselves by working with others to produce things that can benefit everyone. The democratic practices Kettering

studies are ways this work can be done that will give citizens the power to shape their future. You may recall that in 2009, a Nobel Prize went to Elinor Ostrom, for proving that the products of the work of citizens are essential to making governments and large institutions more effective and responsive.

While the work of citizens might be accepted as essential in local matters and in communities, its value is questioned when the arena is national and international. Nonetheless, there are instances where “just citizens” have had a global impact. Environmental initiatives are evidence of that. Diplomacy, on the other hand, has always been the province of governments. Admittedly, the citizens involved in supplemental diplomacy haven't generally been rank-and-file. And certainly the pseudo-populist argument that skilled, professional diplomats can be replaced by the man or woman on the street is absurd. Sustained Dialogue, however, doesn't draw on professional expertise as much as recognize the importance of the things that human beings hold dear and the value of the distinctive perspective that citizens can bring to the table. It was Hal Saunders' sensibilities as a human being, not just his long experience in government, that led to his insights about what citizens could contribute. Just

as certainly, it was using citizens as a touchstone that has allowed the Kettering Foundation to draw rich lessons from both citizen diplomacy and citizen democracy.

Kettering board member and Dartmouth cofounder Norman Cousins spoke about the role of citizens in his remarks to Dartmouth XV in 1986:

Our meetings have come to occupy a very special place in the relationships between the United States and the Soviet Union. They have justified, I believe, the hopes of President Eisenhower in initiating the project. His deep conviction, as I think you know, was that private citizens who are well informed and who have the confidence of their governments may be able to play a useful role by probing for possible openings that, for one reason or another, do not always surface in the meetings of diplomats.

This does not mean that citizens should be expected to imitate or supercede the diplomats. Quite the contrary. Our role is to raise questions and seek answers that do not ordinarily come up in the official exchanges. We can think and speak in a larger context. We are not obligated to defend every action or decision that occurs on the official level. We can afford to think in terms of historical principle. We need not shrink



The true power citizens have is the power they generate themselves by working with others to produce things that can benefit everyone.

from the moral issues that often underlay the political problems or confrontations. We cannot be expected to commit our governments but, just in the act of identifying such issues, we may be able to invoke the process by which public opinion has a creative and constructive effect on national policies.

Norman makes a similar distinction to the one I made earlier: citizens can bring to diplomacy experiences outside of government. The foundation hopes that in the future its multinational research will show more about the unique contributions that citizens, in tandem with diplomats, can make. These contributions to relationships between countries are what Elinor Ostrom called “coproduction.” ■

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Deliberation: Touching Lives across National Boundaries

By Maura Casey

In March, people from around the world gathered at the Kettering Foundation to explore the approaches that groups from Tajikistan, Germany, India, Brazil, Russia, and the United States are taking to civic education and learning—approaches that range from rap music to deliberative forums. The Multinational Symposium is an annual series of meetings organized by Kettering. Each year, the symposium has a different focus. In 2016, the symposium explored, how do young people learn to engage in the practices of citizenship in a democracy? What can be learned from experiments in using deliberative practices in the civic education of young people?

The approaches are all different. Germany is using music and meet-

ings with public officials to engage youth; in Russia, libraries are the neutral ground for young people to flock to forums; in Brazil, the Steve Biko Institute helps people raise their voices and take pride in their racial backgrounds. But the goals are the same: to develop young people into citizens.

Citizens all have at least one thing in common: no matter what nation they come from, sooner or later they gather to ask one another, “What should we do?” The Kettering Foundation has long researched what comes after that question: how people overcome differences to deliberate together and make good decisions.

Inevitably, some times are more turbulent and challenging than others. That’s the situation those from Brazil say they face.

Widespread protests over economic and political upheaval pose a special challenge to teachers in Brazil. “Democracy seems shaken due to recent events,” said Telma Gimenez, who also stated that even wearing certain colors of clothing can be interpreted as a political act, revealing allegiances for or against the government. “People are fighting. The question is, how can schools go against the current atmosphere to reach students? We help teachers take advantage of the educational moment.”



leadership training there. “Brazil is seen as a model of racial democracy, but when you see the material conditions of these people, we don’t have equality,” she said.

Stefanie Olbrys, a social studies teacher in the Windsor Central School District outside of Binghamton, New York, said that when she was a student, she did not view her voice as an instrument for change. Now that she is an educator, she is determined to give her students a different experience. “Every day, I began to say to my students, ‘What

For Gimenez, that means convening deliberative forums using issue guides on topics like bullying not only to explore the nuances of the issue, but also to allow students to relate their own personal experiences. “We use [the forums and guides] to show the complexities and get away from the confrontational aspects of an issue.”

“Brazil became a democracy in the mid-1980s after a dictatorship lasting decades,” said Andreia Lisboa De Sousa, who works with youth at the Steve Biko Institute. “We forget that; the political culture is not very new.” The Biko Institute has worked for 22 years to teach the skills needed for citizenship to black and native students. Approximately 6,000 students have attended the Citizenship and Black Consciousness course at the institute. Others have undergone





do you think?” In her classes, the students began to deliberate every day and became so engaged in learning that their marks improved and they began to hand in assignments more consistently. Other teachers and administrators also noticed the changes. Now, many more teachers in her school district are using deliberation in their classrooms. “Our state education department sees this as valuable and wants teachers to do this all over the state,” Olbrys said. “It will help students become life-long learners.” One state

education department official visited her classroom and asked one of her students, “What are you learning?” The student replied, “I’m learning how to be a leader.”

But students aren’t the only ones who benefit from deliberation, said Lisa Strahley, an associate professor at SUNY Broome Community College, located in the same Upstate New York county as the Windsor Central School District. “Teachers don’t give themselves a voice, either. In helping students find their voices, teachers find their own voices,” she said.

“I agree with the role of teachers,” said Shamsiddin Karimov, the director of the Tajikistan National NGO Association. “But [in Tajikistan] teachers are among the poorest and most vulnerable populations,” he said. Tajikistan is facing challenges of terrorism, high unemployment, and radical Islam, he said. Civic education is more often used to promote government ideology. As an alternative, Karimov’s organization has a goal of expanding public, deliberative forums to promote democracy in central Asia. Rather than connect with the education system, he and his colleagues reach out to traditional public institutions, such as mosques, the *mahalla* (neighborhood), and the *jamoat* (community), as well as the respected elders involved in each.

Giving low-income students hands-on experience in democracy

was particularly important to Juergen Brecht, a social worker in Mannheim, Germany. “We wanted to start a youth parliament, but did not want to reach only the students from the middle class or upper middle class,” he said. He and his colleagues wanted to give a parliamentary experience to young people who were “refugees or people on the outside of society.” They created groups with a mix of students from various ethnicities as well as income and educational levels. These groups were asked to discuss the problems of their neighborhoods and communities. The project has grown to encompass 16 different districts. Brecht also facilitates meetings between students and politicians, who agree to bring the student concerns to local councils and try to address the problems youth face.

Another project in Mannheim harnesses the power of rap and hip-hop music to connect local low-income students with civil society and students in Bogota, Colombia, said Rainer Kern, the meeting’s representative of the lord mayor of Mannheim. “The students [in Colombia and Germany] create music together, sending sound files back and forth.” The project, which has involved 500 young people so far, uses the music to help students, including refugees, articulate their concerns. “You can have this in cities,



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in camps, in universities—you can connect all these groups and also reach the international community,” Kern said.

“It helps those involved understand that they are citizens—not just of Germany, or of a specific city, but they are European citizens,” observed Antonella Valmorbida, the secretary general of the Association of Local Democracy Agencies based in Belgium.

To promote gender diversity, India passed laws in the 1990s that reserve one-third of local elective offices for female candidates. However, half of the world’s illiterate population

resides in South Asia, and women are more frequently illiterate than men because they have had fewer opportunities for education, said Benish Aslam, a lecturer at Jamia Hamdard University in New Delhi. Because so many women were elected to office for the first time, human rights education and women's empowerment programs were initiated, using videos in many languages to educate them.

The need for encouraging participatory democracy in a diverse nation led to the "Two Cs, one D," approach, said George Mathew, chair of the Institute of Social Sciences in India. "Cricket, because the best players are from Pakistan and India; cinema, because the best actresses and actors are from the Muslim communities,

and democracy, because without a democratic discussion it is impossible to make progress." More women are getting elected to village councils, and many from the village councils will be elected to parliament, continued Mathew.

"Women have come out of their shells. They realize if they don't deal with certain issues, nobody will. Women in some states are making sure that women are represented in a major way. It is a transformational change," he said.

Transformation is a challenge in Russia, said Denis Makarov, the executive director of the Foundation for Development of Civic Culture. "Ten years ago, things were easier, but libraries are still open spaces. Everyone has enthusiasm about what libraries do. Without them, things wouldn't happen as much."

According to Makarov, libraries thrive as places where deliberation can take place even when there are other restrictions. Forums held in libraries attract young people eager to discuss issues of the day.

"We think youth participation in forums is important," said Natalia Polekhina, who teaches the English language at Bryansk Secondary School No. 18. "Young people are excited about the forums. There are issues that unite generations, and one of our objectives is to help young



All this work with youth occurs against a challenging backdrop. Divisions between people seem to be growing around the world; this challenge was not lost on Multinational Symposium participants.



people discover something that affects their daily lives.”

All this work with youth occurs against a challenging backdrop. Divisions between people seem to be growing around the world; this challenge was not lost on Multinational Symposium participants. “I don’t think anyone in this room here needs to be convinced that deliberation and tolerance and citizenship can be taught and that they work,” pointed out Benjamin Barber. Barber, founder and president of the Global Parliament of Mayors Project, continued, “Our question is, how can we impact a world that is going the other way?”

Jill McMillan, professor emerita at Wake Forest University, spoke about her many years of experience with introducing students to deliberation as a way of discussing public issues

in an empathetic way. “Despite our despair that polarization is so strong, I still contend that the most effective antidote is to influence one individual at a time. Human beings want to be heard. But careful, respectful listening—especially of those that take us on, isn’t easy,” she said. “Deliberation is the long view; it is not a quick fix. We need to talk across race, class, cultures, in our families and through art. If the goal is to internalize citizenship, the more often and longer we deliberate, the better,” she said. ■

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A report by Scott London on the 2016 Multinational Symposium is available by contacting Kettering program officer Brad Rourke at brouke@kettering.org.

From Skepticism to Engagement: Building Deliberative Faith among Israeli College Students

By Idit Manosevitch

One of the spaces that seems appropriate for educating people for citizenship is academia. As an educational arena with a public mission and young citizens as key players, it may—and some would argue ought—to be a hub of civic education for deliberative public skills and values. This captures the essence of *deliberative pedagogy*, an area of ongoing research at the Kettering Foundation.

In what follows, I tell the story of what inspired me to get involved in deliberative pedagogy and share some insights from experimentation with Israeli students in recent years.

On January 16, 2013, six days prior to the Israeli general elections, I initiated the first student-led deliberative issue conference at the School of Communication in Netanya



SOFIAN ZAHALKA

Academic College in Israel. The event was tagged “Students say NO to the horse race: Elections Conference 2013.”

The conference was a peak event in an intensive three-month process with my undergraduate seminar students, which combined theory and practice. Theoretical readings and discussions served as a baseline for understanding the essence of deliberative theory and the role of public deliberation in democratic societies. The hands-on process of preparing for and facilitating a deliberative, student-led issue conference complemented the theory and helped students internalize the idea of public deliberation, the norms and values associated with it, and the challenges of pursuing such ideals in practice.

Faculty had cautioned me not to expect more than 50 participants because students—as I should well know—are uninterested, unengaged, and unwilling to make extra efforts beyond the mandatory degree requirements. My students were also wary, and rightly so. A week prior to our deliberative election conference, a political panel took place in the same conference hall, with representatives from 12 different parties running for office. The event was stopped in the middle due to a political dispute, in which the audi-



TAMIR BARGIG

ence began shouting and booing one of the representatives. It was a very disappointing and embarrassing experience for the college community. My students were concerned about moderating group discussions—What if participants don’t talk? What if they get violent and we cannot control them? Some suggested we hire security guards.

But the concerns turned out to be unwarranted. The conference outcomes exceeded everyone’s expectations—students and faculty alike. We had an unexpected turnout of 127 student participants, which surpassed my goal of 100 students. After the opening plenary, students broke up into 10 groups that engaged in lively discussions of the selected election issues. Faculty members were startled to see students actively



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participating in civilized discussions led by their fellow classmates. So were the student-moderators. I cannot help smiling when I recall that beautiful moment when I stood humbled in the middle of the conference hall immediately after the end of the discussions, and numerous students approached me, excited to share their reflections. Group moderators were thrilled about their experience, and first-year students were anxious to find out how they could sign up to serve as moderators next year. Before I knew it, a new tradition was born.

What made these positive outcomes so surprising and unexpected in the views of faculty and students? And even more intriguing is why—despite the unequivocal pessimism among students and faculty—did everyone cooperate and support me throughout the long and demanding preparation process?

Surely, rapport with my students helped, as did the inestimable collegiality among our faculty members. These are essential for pursuing such a complex campus event, and I deeply appreciate and value them. However, given the context of Israeli higher education, these are by no means sufficient for explaining the attitudes and behaviors of students and faculty. Something deeper is going on.

Today, three years later, the ad-hoc experience transformed into an established course in the school's program, and student-led issue conferences have become a tradition. During this time I have collected data from students who participated in the course over the years, as well as from students who learned about public deliberation through their modest one-time experience in a deliberative issue conference. My analysis begins to unravel the initial contrast between the pessimistic expectations, on the one hand, and the unequivocal support and engagement, on the other. The key

for understanding this is the concept of deliberative faith as it relates to the context of Israeli society.

Let's start with Israeli society. Israel is a deeply divided society consisting of a Jewish majority along with a large Arab minority, with a wide array of ethnic groups and varying religious affiliations within the Jewish and Arab populations and beyond. The complex social fabric, along with the delicate political and security situation, give rise to deep controversies about core public issues, thereby posing severe challenges for pursuing deliberative public debate.

Israel's culture and norms of conversation constitute another significant challenge. In her seminal research, Tamar Katriel explains that Israeli speech culture is characterized in part as *casasch* speech, which is

verbal aggression that impinges upon the fabric of interpersonal relationships. Such a speech style may pose barriers for pursuing civilized public dialogue since it comes in direct contradiction with core values of mutual respect, reciprocity, and the fundamental norm of listening.

How do Israeli students perceive the nature of Israeli public debate? Three years of survey data reveal that students' perceptions align with Katriel's argument. The large majority of students, more than 70 percent of the survey participants, associate Israeli public debate with negative attributes, mostly in reference to the norms of conversation that govern it.



SOFIAN ZAHALKA



TAMIR BARGIG

When asked what associations come to mind when they think of Israeli public debate, most of them used poignant negative descriptions such as “problematic,” “verbal battles,” “a dialogue of the deaf,” and “screaming, threatening, offensive.” Only a handful of students used positive or neutral terms to describe the discourse.

Interestingly, students’ characterization of the existing Israeli public discourse does not seem to translate into normative conclusions. When asked how they would shape public debate in Israel if they could shape it in the best way possible, they indicate that public debate ought to be conducted “with respect, giving others an opportunity to speak,” “we should listen more to each other,” and the

like. Differently put, although students emphasized the aggressive and nondeliberative nature of *existing* public debate, their notion of the *desired* public debate adheres to normative conceptualizations of public deliberation.

This leads me to the concept of deliberative faith, what Katherine Knobloch and John Gastil define as confidence in deliberation as a means of resolving public controversies. This definition implicitly captures two dimensions of deliberative faith—a belief in the intrinsic value of deliberation, and a belief in the applicability of deliberation as a means of solving problems in a given sociopolitical context.

My experience with Israeli students suggests that there is a wide



SOFIAN ZAHALKA

gap between the two dimensions. Students' descriptions of the desired public debate align with the essence of normative definitions of deliberation. At the same time, their strong negative descriptions of existing public debate may imply little faith in the potential of pursuing deliberative norms of conversation in Israeli society.

Many of the students that participated in the semester-long course during these three years expressed this gap explicitly. In response to my question, "what do you personally take from your experience in the course?" many students indicated that the process made them believe in the capacity of Israelis to pursue deliberative public discussions. Notably, students expressed this effect while contrasting it with their negative perception of the nature of existing Israeli public debate. For example, one student wrote, "It is possible to conduct a conversation—not yelling and fighting—about important issues," thus implicitly suggesting that although yelling and fighting is the common characterization of Israeli public discourse, the course experience demonstrated that deliberative conversation is a realistic possibility. Another student echoed the same theme: "It is an important course, and it proves that communication students can facilitate a deliberative conference and



Despite the deeply conflicted social makeup and the verbal aggression often found in Israeli public discourse, and perhaps because of those, many Israeli students seem to aspire to public discourse that manifests deliberative norms of conversation.

even participate in round tables." The use of the words *it proves* and *even* suggests that the idea that communication students can deliberate is not a given; empirical proof is needed in order to make one believe in it.

Several students went further and explicitly used the terms *hope* and *faith*. For example:

On the personal level, the conference gave me a little hope, by showing that there are people who are interested in sitting and talking in a serious and respectful manner about issues on the public agenda. Offering an alternative [to the existing nature of public debate], even if it is preliminary, is extremely important.

Finally, the following quote provides the earnest and detailed expression at the gist of my argument:

One of the most significant things that I take from the course is the idea that we can actually—not just in theory—conduct an educated and meaningful [public] discussion. It seems that oftentimes the social reality and the public sphere cut our wings, and paralyze us, and in doing so they stop us from dreaming and pursuing our dreams. There is no doubt that this conference helped create a sense of success in pursuing a different kind of discussion, even if it is merely a small sense. Many of us shared this feeling, and perhaps this will eventually lead us to a much better society, and I say this with no cynicism.

This student begins with a straightforward statement that the most significant contribution of the course was creating deliberative faith. The words *we can actually—not just in theory* implicitly suggest that deliberation is commonly perceived to be merely a theoretical normative idea. By contrast, the deliberative pedagogy experience constitutes an unambiguous refutation of the common perception of the “real-world” applicability of public deliberation. The student also notes that she is

expressing a feeling shared by many classmates—not merely a personal, subjective impression, but a shared, collective one—thus further emphasizing the importance and scope of this effect. Finally, the student concludes with the sense of hope expressed at the outset: “Perhaps this will eventually lead us to a much better society.” This sentiment is reinforced by “and I say this with no cynicism,” thus again reminding us of the Israeli context, in which public discourse is dominated by nondeliberative talk, and people are oftentimes cynical about the potential for pursuing civil public debate.

Despite the deeply conflicted social makeup and the verbal aggression often found in Israeli public discourse, and perhaps because of those, many Israeli students seem to aspire to public discourse that manifests deliberative norms of conversation. I believe that this explains my students’ willingness to immerse themselves in what seemed at the time as a risky endeavor. Notably, enthusiasm about deliberative pedagogy experiences did not decline over time. Year after year, the process continues to spur passion, excitement, and inspiration among students and faculty. ■

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The Mediated Town Halls of the Eastern Cape

By Rod Amner

The town hall meeting is a simple, old-fashioned idea: an informal public space in which community members come together to discuss issues, to voice opinions, or to engage with public figures.

But, despite 22 years of democracy, it is a relative rarity in South Africa.

So, it is significant that in recent years, a number of “legacy” and “emerging” community news organizations in the Eastern Cape province of the country have hosted scores of town hall meetings in a range of formats, all ostensibly aimed at reengineering in some way relationships with and between the people they formerly knew as their audiences.

It is also surprising because the Eastern Cape does not immediately suggest itself as a promising incubator of journalistic, civic, or any other kind of innovation. It is South Africa’s poorest province—beset with



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stagnating industries in the urban areas and the frustrating persistence of sub-subsistence agriculture in most of the countryside. Just 26 percent of its citizens have jobs, and its schools produce the worst educational outcomes in the country—and by most benchmarks, the entire world.

On the other hand, despite its apparent marginality, this province has always been an important fulcrum of South African politics. It is a traditional stronghold of the African National Congress (ANC), producing the bulk of its struggle icons (Mandela, Tambo, Biko, and Hani) and nurturing decades of peaceful, mass-based protest.



The Kettering Foundation has a longstanding interest in how journalists go about the work of reporting in a way that encourages greater citizen engagement in the democratic politics of a given community.

So, when the hitherto unassailable ANC lost political control of Nelson Mandela Bay (formerly Port Elizabeth) to the opposition Democratic Alliance (DA) in the August 3, 2016, local government elections, the resulting shock waves convulsed the region's post-apartheid political landscape.

But, many of the region's journalists were not shocked. Mainstream media houses like Nelson Mandela Bay's *Eastern Province Herald* and Buffalo City's *Daily Dispatch*, along with community outlets like Grahamstown's *Grocott's Mail*, *Skawara News* in the rural hamlet of Cofimvaba, and radio stations like ZQKM, had for years been convening public platforms for engaging citizens in political discourse. Many of their journalists had therefore been in unusually close and deep dialogue with local citizens and communities and had seen the writing on the wall. The Kettering Foundation has a longstanding interest in how journalists go about the work of reporting in a way that encourages greater citizen engagement in the democratic politics of a given community. The examples in this article reveal how journalism practice and community agency can be transformed by a citizen-centered approach to reporting.

THE DISPATCH DIALOGUES

As far back as 2007, a series of highly successful public lectures and panel discussions, called the *Dispatch* Dialogues, were initiated in Buffalo City. Held about once a month in the city's Guild Theatre, these dialogues were intended to create a platform for a broader public discussion about public issues and to bring audiences into that discussion. *Dispatch* page editor, and dialogues organizer and leader, Dawn Barkhuizen says that what struck her most forcefully about the early days of these events was that “participants were virtually rugby tackling each other to get to the microphone—people wanted to speak.” Former *Daily Dispatch* editor Bongani Siqoko attributes their popularity to the “massive hunger” for this type of platform as “there isn't really anything else like this.”

THE COMMUNITY DIALOGUES

Later, a new, citizen-centric version of the dialogues emerged after Andrew Trench became *Dispatch* editor in 2009. These hyperlocal Community Dialogues attracted large numbers of ordinary citizens, in stark contrast to the poor attendance at other public meetings in these communities. Siqoko comments: “You go to a ward committee [meeting] and all they talk about is the ANC's plan for this area, the ANC's election

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manifesto says this and all that. If I'm not a member of the ruling party, in whose interests is this? They do not discuss issues that actually affect the local community.”

Another strong impetus for the Community Dialogues was that the Buffalo City municipality had been wracked by political infighting, bringing local government in the city to the brink of financial and administrative chaos. In the midst of a visible breakdown in basic service delivery, the Community Dialogues provided a rare “vertical bridge” between those elements in local government still committed to public service and an increasingly exasperated citizenry. In



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this context, it was unsurprising that citizens displayed such overwhelming enthusiasm to participate, as the dialogues may have represented the only viable public sphere able to withstand pressure from political society.

THE HERALD COMMUNITY DIALOGUES

The *Dispatch's* work did not go unnoticed by other media houses in the province, including its sister newspaper, the *Eastern Province Herald*, in Nelson Mandela Bay.

When Heather Robertson was appointed editor of the *Herald* in 2011, she was instructed by Times Media that she would need to work hard to shift the paper from a suburban white audience base into one that served the whole city, which she did within four years.

According to Robertson, one of the key reasons for the transformation was her discovery of the *Dispatch* Dialogues that had been running in neighboring Buffalo City for some time before her return to the province. Thus began a series of engagements with communities all over Nelson Mandela Bay to air what she called “the really hard public issues.”

In March 2011, Robertson persuaded an aloof Eastern Cape education department head to listen to the concerns of 600 principals, teachers, parents, and community members in a giant community hall. During a youth dialogue in 2012, the *Herald* got opposition DA student organization members to listen to ANC youth league members and vice versa. In 2015, they organized dialogues



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aimed at making sense of the student anticolonial #RhodesMustFall movement. They also hosted high-profile and well-attended book launches that have turned into major philosophical musings on the country's political crises.

At one dialogue, the chief financial officer of the metro came face-to-face with citizens at the receiving end of his budget. He recorded complaints and handed out his direct e-mail address so that problems highlighted could be addressed. Robertson said that one of the most memorable dialogues was when more than 1,000 citizens at a dialogue told local politicians to stop the petty political bickering that had plunged their city into a crisis. The speakers at the dialogue pleaded with local government ministers not to turn a blind eye “while Rome is burning.” A resident, Xolani Nkonko from Ward 21, said: “We don't want to see who is bigger than who—we just want services.” These voices were brought into the mainstream of the paper and on its digital platforms.

THE HERALD EDUCATION FISH BOWLS

One of the most important ongoing dialogues covered by the *Herald* was about education. In partnership with the Centre for the Advancement of Non-Racialism and Democracy



These hyperlocal Community Dialogues attracted large numbers of ordinary citizens, in stark contrast to the poor attendance at other public meetings in these communities.

(CANRAD), the *Herald* engineered a unique format for these dialogues—“fish bowl” dialogues, which had about 80 officials, educators, learners, parents, and ordinary citizens attending each one (sometimes together and sometimes separately). The fish bowl consists of a small group who have speaking rights in an “inner sanctum,” with the rest of the participants observing in radiating circles. The sanctum is constantly replaced by fresh rings from the outside. It emerged swiftly at the first fish bowl that despite all efforts on the part of some who are clearly committed, something is fundamentally wrong with Eastern Cape education.

The lack of commitment from teachers, in particular those affiliated with the SA Democratic Teachers'

Union (SADTU), was questioned. One principal spoke of how “useless teachers were kept in the system and protected by the union.” Sapphire Road Primary School principal Bruce Damons asked whether teachers would want their children attending the schools at which they teach and why. “We have become so slack and lazy, and have just stopped caring,” he said. “But parents are failing their children too,” noted another delegate.

In response to the questions of “what can be done?” and “what do we need to do?,” an air of optimism suddenly pervaded the room. Practical action on the part of participants included committing to get teachers and parents to work together, presenting a parenting skills program, showing teachers more appreciation, and initiating focus group interventions to get to the nitty gritty of specific failings and teacher grievances at a particular school. Paul Miedema, of the Calabash Trust, hits a positive note: “We must share our success stories. Finding out what works is a fundamental antidote to identifying what is wrong.”

Robertson said of this series: “It has been most constructive in terms of getting towards solutions and seeing schools as community resources—for literacy, after-care, vegetable gardens, etc. By the 10th one they’re getting used to understanding that they have the capacity to solve these

problems.” She added that the fish bowl reporting was different from previous reporting because “it was more solutions oriented.” Also, a number of dialogues have led to follow-up stories and Robertson says the journalists are “out there showing that we are not just highlighting the problems but that we have attempted to be part of finding solutions. It does change the perspective of who we are as a media organization.”

Under Robertson’s leadership, the newspaper’s reporters made strong use of social media—including Twitter, Instagram, and the biggest Facebook page in the province by some distance—which garnered a diverse following. Editors and journalists were available to citizens through cellphone numbers and e-mail, and they invited citizens to get to know them and their journalistic processes. *Herald* journalists actively attempted to take their content to where citizens were located online, rather than hoping those citizens would find them.

Both the *Herald* and the *Dispatch* are commercial entities operating under very difficult economic constraints, but neither can be accused of pandering to the wealthy and powerful segments that are supposedly most attractive to profit-driven news managements. This is not to say that these public dialogues were blind to, or insulated from, a concern

with profit, but the testimony of the newspaper's editorial leadership would indicate that they were primarily guided by a concern for social responsibility and quality editorial in the public interest.

CITIZEN MATTERS

A media development NGO, the Eastern Cape Communication Forum (ECCF), has worked with a range of smaller, Eastern Cape community titles—some in marginal, rural hamlets—to launch a series of dialogues called Citizen Matters. These dialogues have dealt with problems like the lack of local government service delivery, poverty, crime and public safety, alcohol and drug abuse, public housing, xenophobic attacks on immigrant communities, unemployment, and so on. But, some were simply billed as community dialogues, in which citizens were invited to raise with the news organization whatever was on their minds.

THE PROBLEM OF THE PUBLIC IN PUBLIC PROBLEM SOLVING

What are some of the ways that journalists and citizens could collaborate on public problem-solving efforts in a sustainable way, despite some of the constraints posed by the South African context? It is relatively easy to learn about public problems and



Many Eastern Cape journalists are committed to the idea of nurturing a more dynamic and inclusive public sphere and are continuing to use face-to-face town hall meetings, in tandem with online technologies, to make this happen.

by helping to share its agenda-setting function with the public, town halls have helped journalists do this. But, to the extent that solutions were found to any of these problems, it is illuminating to consider who exactly acted (if acting is defined as either designing or implementing solutions).

Town halls have often fallen short of a more deliberative model of public problem solving that journalists could help promote. To help sustain a public sphere to which all citizens have access, and in which all topics of concern to citizens can be articulated, deliberated, and critiqued, Eastern

Cape journalists would need to engage citizens in an ongoing way.

Eastern Cape journalists could be doing much more to encourage citizens to continue their deliberations—and act upon their outcomes—within the institutions of the wider civil society. To aid this process, journalists could offer mobilizing information—for example, information on how to join relevant civic organizations. They could also describe what citizens in other localities have done in the past or are doing to address similar problems; create spaces for citizens to deliberate about those problems among themselves; encourage citizens to join existing or create new (local or larger scale) civic organizations; and publicize citizens' application for resources.

Of course, while some problems are potentially resolvable by citizens themselves, deep wicked problems like dysfunctional schools require more deep-seated, systemic intervention. In these cases, journalists should encourage citizens, in consultation with experts who have particular knowledge about the problems in question, to formulate possible solutions that would include what they might do among themselves, as well as to lobby relevant government officials to enact policy solutions. The fish bowl dialogues began this process—but, this work

was not sustained, and policy has not shifted.

FUTURE PROSPECTS

Many Eastern Cape journalists are committed to the idea of nurturing a more dynamic and inclusive public sphere and are continuing to use face-to-face town hall meetings, in tandem with online technologies, to make this happen. Some journalists are going still further by creating more impromptu venues for interaction with citizens—in public libraries, coffee shops, pop-up news cafes, and forums in public spaces.

The mediated town halls described here may have fallen short of the ideal, which sees citizens share a commitment to engage in sustained deliberation that leads to effective public problem solving. But, it is difficult to deny the power of what has already been achieved or the potential represented by the undiminished desire of Eastern Cape citizens to have both voice and agency in a hard-won democracy. ■

Rod Amner worked for more than 10 years as a writer, sub-editor, and editor for a range of news agencies, newspapers, and magazines in South Africa before joining the country's premier journalism school at Rhodes University. He is currently researching and testing alternative approaches to education reporting and participatory communication for his PhD. In 2016, he joined the Kettering Foundation for six months as a Fanning resident. He can be reached at r.amner@ru.ac.za.

The Library as a Community Center

By Svetlana Gorokhova

The Library as a Community Center project began in 1997 as a partnership between the All-Russia State Library for Foreign Literature and the Foundation for the Development of Civic Culture in Moscow with the goal of teaching librarians throughout Russia how to convene and moderate deliberative forums. From its inception,

the project aimed to position Russian libraries as active members of their community and to work with citizens to address community issues. The project brings everyday people into the center of community problem solving through the use of deliberative dialogue. In more recent years, the work has expanded to include creating community-based issue guides for these dialogues. The project has been a sustainable way for Russian citizens to deliberate together in order to make sound decisions and identify actions for addressing local problems in partnerships with their local library. The Kettering Foundation is interested in how deliberative practices that have come out of our research have been adopted and applied to suit the needs of people in other countries.



My first experience with deliberating was in 1996 at the Kettering Foundation, and it felt like magic. I, like many Russian people, was skeptical about all forms of civic engagement because in the Soviet state you knew that public forums or meetings were always “pro forma” events. I was disillusioned and doubtful about whether people’s opinions would be taken seriously and be heard. When I got to the forum, I thought it would only be talk, talk, talk and not about doing. I did not think about talking as if it was something that is valuable.

I came to this forum about the environment, and thought, “How does this relate to my life? I’m living through a very difficult time in my

country and am worried about what to eat and how to earn some money to maintain my family. Why should I think about environmental problems?” Then I realized that the issue is not something abstract. People were listening to me and trying to understand my point of view, and I was trying to understand their points of view. After that forum, my perspective changed. It wasn’t a drastic change, but I had a new perspective about the problem and saw the value of talking together. I had a feeling of elation and hope for the future. The magic came with the realization that you can do something and that you are being heard.

Deliberating takes effort. You are working on yourself with other



people, and they're working on themselves. There is a problem that gives us something in common. So my definition of deliberation is hard work that results in a joyful union of different points of view—a shared commitment to solving the problem for everybody. It sounds altruistic because in life, typically, you rarely find emotional support from others, but to be in a forum and to work out a decision—to go through a deliberative process—there is something very valuable for everyone. It was a great surprise for me. Wow! It's difficult to explain the effect because a deliberative forum is something that must be experienced—and more than once. I invite people in Russia to come to forums so they can feel this magic of change in themselves and in their perception of the problem.

My work in deliberative democracy has taught me that when a seed is planted, you begin to think differently. I began to think that people need deliberative practices as much as food, entertainment, love, education. It's a basic right. We had been deprived of this kind of activity in the past, and now we need to build it up. When I explain the purpose of the Library as a Community Center project in my country, I say, "People need to exercise their right to be heard, to deliver their opinion, and to participate in decision making



"The library shouldn't be just a place that preserves knowledge, but also the open space where citizens can come to discuss issues they are concerned with and for librarians to initiate discussions. I can see that this work gives results because people are interested. They want to continue the collaboration because it produces results. They bring new partners in to the project. Deliberation is an effective instrument for involving citizens in public life, for developing an active citizen, and for building a civic society. Having deliberation in the library develops it as an active civic institution."

—Natalia Nestarova,
Chief Librarian, Research and
Methods Department,
Bryansk Regional Library

concerning their life. People need to come together, they need to see that they are being heard, and they need to have numerous experiences like this. It needs to be a normal way of living, just as when you are hungry, you eat. If you're a person, you need to be responsible for collective life. You need to be involved." I wasn't aware of how important this is before I experienced it. Now I know it is important for your inner freedom as well as your outer freedom.

The library is a perfect site for this kind of work. By definition, libraries are a public place. Historically libraries have been the place to go for information, for addressing

difficult situations, for finding a job. Libraries are neutral public places with no affiliation with one religion or with one ethnic group—they are for everybody. In the 21st century, libraries are looking for new ways of playing a more active role in communities. Libraries are looking for ways to respond to people's needs. People need to be heard. People need to be reassured that they can have their own say in what is happening in the country. Not only through voting, but also through talking about the problems they have and trying to understand what lies behind these problems. I can't even name another place, another site in the local community, that would be more appropriate for this kind of activity than the library. Where else would you go? There is nowhere else in Russia that offers this kind of public space suitable for the intellectually hard work of deliberation.

In 1997, the All-Russia State Library for Foreign Literature began working with the Bryansk Regional Library. They started with a forum on ecological problems because Bryansk is close to Chernobyl, and there were concerns about nuclear pollution. People liked the forum, and now there are numerous forum campaigns, including the repatriation of art collections that were looted during World War II, the role of



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the library in the community, and crime. More recently, some of the other regional libraries have also been working on crime, but each chose a different type of crime. In Kemerovo, the community chose to work on cybercrime, which is not even considered a crime by the local police. Elderly people were being taken advantage of, and yet no one was addressing it. In Saratov, they are talking about juvenile crime and simultaneously holding forums on how best to ensure the quality of Russian cinema. The Regional Minister of Culture requested that the library frame the issue because 2016 is the Year of Russian Cinema. So it was an interesting combination of work with both local governmental authorities and the community on issues they care deeply about.

My most difficult challenge in my work at the library is to get people to attend a forum, to encourage people

to talk, and to overcome pessimistic views and apathetic attitudes. We need to capture their attention and to develop the reputation of the library as a place where people can come to really express themselves. In Russia, people are not used to talking publicly. We need to make sure they have a space to talk. In some cases, the challenge is to explain what we are doing to the governmental cultural authorities. I am absolutely convinced that we are doing wonderful things for my country, for my professional community, for me personally, and for other people, but sometimes the historical context and terminology issues interfere. For example, the word *democratic* has a negative connotation for many people because of our experience in the early 1990s, when this word was devalued and many people were disillusioned with the processes happening in Russia at that time.



"When we first met the Bryansk team, their leader Nicolay Kovalenko said, 'Even if something happens in a way that you do not expect it to happen, or something doesn't work, you will still notice that it will change you personally.' When I started working with the project, I was a person who could speak and think and listen. After participating, I learned I also could hear. I had worked with people with whom I had quite a superficial understanding, and through this work of conducting forums, I discovered something in the people who were around me, but not necessarily with me. I discovered something about humanity, not just about one or two people. I also can say that I became more tolerant, patient, and don't get irritated knowing that some people think differently than me."

—*Natalia Moskovtseva,*
Head of the Center for
Intercultural Communications,
Saratov Regional Library

This makes it difficult to explain that democracy is not something that exists outside of a person. Democracy is in you. People need to ask themselves, "How are you responsible? What can you do?" It's a practice. We say you need to train your muscles. You need to train your soul and brain as well. To exercise your ability to make decisions you need to have a space, and I think libraries are very good for that. You can't export democracy, and libraries are doing this work so Russia can find its own way.

The library system in Russia is very structured. It used to be an instrument of the Soviet state for the dissemination of ideological information. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the library system remained in place. It is still a great instrument to disseminate information, but because libraries are close to the local communities, they are now places for a community to work on problems. Today, libraries are a good combination—on the one hand it is a governmental structure, but on the other hand it is a space where people can exercise their basic rights.

We are trying to create more horizontal connections among regions that might not work together otherwise. The Library as a Community Center is giving them a way of getting acquainted, and the regions that are further along are sharing

what they know with newer participants. It is a rich experience of intercommunication that allows us to build the network horizontally throughout the country. In Siberia, Novosibirsk, which has participated in the project for two years, just attracted the Research Library of Tomsk State University, one of the biggest universities in Russia. The Bryansk Regional Library, which has developed a network with other schools and institutions in the region, is another example of how libraries can make these kinds of horizontal connections. They now work with Saratov, even though there aren't direct transportation connections between the two regions. As with Tomsk and Novosibirsk, it is only because of this project that they are connected.

For me personally, it is a joy that so many young people are now so interested in this work. They are doing a great thing for our country. Young people are attracted because it is an active way of being involved. Because they didn't grow up during Soviet years, the young have a lot more access to information. They are more self-assured, travel more, and want to be part of decision-making processes in their country. It is such an inspiration to see these young people move from just being interested, then seeing them doing it, and then wanting to do it more. It's



By definition, libraries are a public place. Historically libraries have been the place to go for information, for addressing difficult situations, for finding a job. . . . In the 21st century, libraries are looking for new ways of playing a more active role in communities.

a great transformation. Our Library as Community Center project offers people a basic right: the right to be heard. It's not 100 percent easy. There is always the need to explain what we are doing, especially given the historical context. Libraries have always had a public place in Russia, but this project offers the best way of working with local communities. Many regions, regional governmental authorities, and regional libraries are accepting it as a great model. ■

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Learning with the Citizens' Accord Forum: Building a Shared Society in a Sustainable Democracy in Israel

By Phillip D. Lurie

The Citizens' Accord Forum (CAF) has a daunting mission: to build a shared society in a sustainable democracy in Israel by working to mend rifts between groups in conflict by building bridges, encouraging constructive engagement, and promoting and empowering civic leadership. The Kettering Foundation has been working with this organization for more than three years as they've been naming and framing issues for public



deliberation among Israeli citizens, both Jews and Arabs. Kettering has experimented with a number of organizations attempting to create pathways for citizens to engage with one another over the problems they face in daily life. In these experiments, one aim is for citizens to see themselves implicated in the work of public life, and thus, take responsibility for it. This project is particularly interesting because it's rooted in a longstanding conflict among societies characterized, in part, by different cultural traditions. Moreover, CAF is interested in addressing problems that Arabs and Jews face in daily life, in the context of that conflict.

Kettering's research with CAF is rooted in our concept of joint learning, which focuses on developing shared research questions, exploring these questions through ongoing face-to-face exchanges, and learning. Building on his participation at the Deliberative Democracy Institute, Udi Cohen, codirector of CAF, received a grant from the European Union to convene a series of dialogues among Arab and Israeli citizens to build capacity and trust. CAF has a self-interest in experimenting with innovations in affecting the civic discourse among deeply divided people, and Kettering has an opportunity to learn from those experiences. Together, we want to learn more about:

1. How issue guides can affect the civic discourse among people with different cultures of discussion;
2. How a focus on everyday problems can affect the deliberations and address the underlying issues of conflict;
3. What outcomes emerge from the deliberations;
4. How to convey the outcomes of deliberative forums to policy makers; and
5. How to affect policy decisions.

We've learned some interesting things from their various reports and from meeting together, including:

- **Anecdotal evidence about the true messiness of practicing deliberative politics.** It's also a good example of how practice and



process collide. In fact, it's worth noting that Cohen is, in a sense, a collector of processes, picking out and melding together the parts that he deems necessary to accomplish the goals he shares with CAF ("a shared society in a sustainable democracy"). This isn't meant to be a criticism, but rather an explanation of why there are elements of Kettering's democratic practices, Hal Saunders' "Sustained Dialogue," and John Paul Lederach's "conflict transformation," among others.

- **The importance of concern gathering.** CAF spends a great



The deliberations that CAF convenes are important, if only because they serve as one of the only opportunities for people in this conflict to come together to talk and to be heard. Yet, they recognize that voice alone isn't enough; people have to act in order to truly have agency.

deal of its effort working with citizen groups to identify concerns, recognizing how crucial this is to ensuring that people can see themselves implicated in the issue, both emotionally and as an actor. The process of identifying concerns is done similarly to how one might begin a deliberative forum with a "personal stake" story, while also allowing for discussion and reflection on that story.

- **The challenges of moving from deliberation to action.** The deliberations that CAF convenes are important, if only because they serve as one of the only opportunities for people in this conflict to come together to talk and to be heard. Yet, they recognize that voice alone isn't enough; people have to act in order to truly have agency. One of their struggles remains in how to move from deliberation to action.
- **Democratic practices challenge participants to rethink and learn from their efforts.** It's interesting to see participants struggle with and push against the incorrect notion that the practices of deliberative politics are meant to be a linear process. This was demonstrated in their desire to continue to go back and examine and readdress the things they've already done, suggesting a good example of what happens when this work is thought of less as a



step-by-step process and more as practices through which citizens can address problems.

- **Citizens can learn to work together to solve shared problems by working together to solve shared problems.** That is to say, the joint work on addressing shared problems, while constantly dealing with the question “what can we do?” is a fascinating and effective way to deal with the ethnonational conflict dividing these citizens. CAF learned that a more sustainable democracy creates and builds the content for a shared society and vice versa: “the shared society,” in which its members find ways to work together on solving shared problems, will in turn create the civic content of a sustainable democracy.
- **While various organizations in Israel are working to advance a**

shared society in development, economy, and education, the added value of CAF’s work is in the “democratic content and values” that guide the different initiatives they’re involved in. They found that activities that advance joint economic initiatives require joint civic activity, addressing questions including: What is the nature of this economy? What is the proper relationship between the power of the market and the place of the government in economic activity? What is the place in this process for future generations? There is a need to build relations based on mutual trust and recognition and on a shared democratic agenda. This agenda includes the involvement of all citizens making informed choices in joint decision-making processes. The agenda must



This research is ongoing. Still, our work with CAF suggests some interesting approaches for moving forward in the future.

reflect all citizens of all sectors and social classes. Initiatives that lack these components and that are not built on deliberative practices can only go so far.

In support of this work, the foundation has engaged in a range of ancillary activities. One such example was attending a conference in Jerusalem in October 2014. The purpose of the event was to talk about how to build a “shared society in a sustainable democracy,” both from a theoretical and a practical standpoint. One of the challenges CAF faces is the way that they’ve framed the challenge: shared society in sustainable democracy. What does that mean? Each of these terms and their meanings are open for interpretation, and it’s difficult to come to definitive, agreed-upon definitions. Indeed, much of the time at this conference was spent unpacking the meaning of these terms and how people might act on those definitions. Rabbi Michael Melchior, who

delivered the opening remarks, immediately noted the importance of, and fundamental grounding of, this work in the values that people share, and the necessity for people to work through tensions that arise in that context. This seemed to be accepted by all people in the room as well, and provided a common starting point for participants.

In addition to the conference, my colleagues and I attended a concern-gathering session among a mixed Arab and Jewish (all Israeli citizens) group representing two communities. The issue was focused around a recent war with Gaza and how it affected them, particularly around day-to-day challenges that stem from being neighboring communities. Indeed, it is one of the only places where children from each community (Arab and Jewish) attend a joint school. It was incredibly powerful and a pleasure to be a part of.

We also had a chance to see CAF test out one of their issue frameworks, among staff, on the topic of the 2014 war in Gaza. The guide focuses on what citizens could do in response to this crisis. The three options are 1) War on Racism and Extremism; 2) We Must Talk—We Must Proceed Together; and 3) The Reality Calls for Separation. While only a draft, the book certainly engendered an interesting conversation and was a solid foundation on which to build future deliberative forums.

Finally, CAF has worked specifically toward getting two groups of women (Arabs and Orthodox Jews) to work on framing their own issues for public deliberation. The Arab group framed the issue of women in society, whereas the Jewish women framed the topic of family relationships. In both cases, the women struggled with finding a comfort zone in which they could share their personal thoughts and stories. In each group, the issue caused emotions to run high, and it was necessary to address and work through what was shared. Moreover, both groups seem to be making a conceptual shift from issue framing to a way of collectively solving a problem by getting people to see themselves as implicated and responsible for doing something about it.

Indeed, this last point is crucial, and was recently demonstrated at the CAF exchange in Dayton, Ohio, in July 2016. The mixed group of Jews and Arabs was very well suited to talking with one another about the everyday issues they face together, which in this case was about troubled youth. They could understand the other's point of view, they could recognize the underlying values and commiserate with them, and they could identify and begin working through the tensions that arose during their conversations. In short, these two groups, which usually

find themselves at loggerheads, were able to deliberate together. These efforts could be derailed, however, when participants, as they invariably would, brought the larger struggle between Jews and Arabs into the conversation. The tenor of the conversation would completely change, and the progress they were making in working through their shared problems was lost, as they reverted to an "us vs. them" dynamic. However, their ability to refocus on everyday issues allowed them to recognize that they do share values, in spite of their differences, and that they need to find ways to go beyond simple discovery to the actual hard task of working together.

This research is ongoing. Still, our work with CAF suggests some interesting approaches for moving forward in the future. Such research opportunities include continuing to learn about 1) innovations in practice that would affect the civic discourse among deeply divided people on everyday issues; 2) how the work of a deliberative public can contribute to the work of governmental institutions; and 3) what policymakers (Knesset members, in particular) want to know from a deliberative public about emerging issues. ■

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A Comparative Study of Coastal Communities in Cuba and the United States

By Paloma Dallas with Penny Dendy, Terry Jack, Esther Velis, and Virginia York

This article tells the story of two organizations—one in Cuba and the other in the United States—and the community-based networks they collaborate with to learn how to make a difference on issues that affect both nations.

Nearly two decades ago, the Kettering Foundation began a series of ongoing exchanges with the Havana-based Antonio Núñez Jiménez Foundation for Nature and Humanity, a nongovernmental environmental organization founded by Antonio Núñez Jiménez, a renowned Cuban geographer, archeologist, and speleologist.

As part of these exchanges, the Núñez Foundation was interested in exploring ways citizens can play

an active role in responding to the challenges their communities face. Kettering has long studied how people come together to make progress on difficult problems and do the work of creating resilient communities. Both foundations saw potential in comparing the experiences of communities facing related problems in different contexts.

An obvious opportunity for such an exchange seemed to be their shared geography: the Gulf of Mexico. Communities along the Gulf in both countries face some of the very same challenges, namely a vulnerability to hurricanes, as well as other human-made disasters. These dangers are not going away, so the challenge was, how could they respond? How might people living in those communities begin to work together to protect their communities and strengthen their capacity to bounce back from disasters?

Both foundations reached out to communities that they thought would be interested in taking up this challenge. Because the Kettering Foundation doesn't work directly in communities, they contacted colleagues in Panama City, Florida, and Mobile, Alabama, who have long worked to encourage public deliberation on pressing issues. The Núñez Foundation initially identified the community of Cárdenas, also on the



Gulf Coast, but since the foundation would be leading the work themselves, they decided to select a community in which they were already working. So, after further consideration, they chose Playa Larga in Ciénaga de Zapata, on Cuba’s southern Caribbean coast.

What follows draws from two essays authored by those who led

the work: Esther Velis, director of international relations for the Núñez Foundation; Frances “Penny” Dendy, organizational consultant and community volunteer in Mobile, Alabama; Virginia York, retired professor, consultant, and community volunteer in Panama City, Florida; and Terry Jack, professor emeritus, Gulf Coast State College.



SETTING THE STAGE

Playa Larga, Ciénaga de Zapata, Cuba

The Ciénaga de Zapata has historically been a focus of the work of the Núñez Foundation. The organization's founder, Antonio Núñez Jiménez, carried out studies and research there, and the foundation subsequently maintained relationships and engaged in joint actions with local actors working on environmental issues, such as the National Park Ciénaga de Zapata and the branch of the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Environment (CITMA) of the Ciénaga de Zapata.

Ciénaga de Zapata is one of the areas of greatest biological diversity and fishing productivity in Cuba and

the Insular Caribbean, and it includes one of the country's most extensive and important areas of protected marine coasts. It is also one of the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, given the quality and fragility of its ecosystems. The southern coast of Cuba, where the Ciénaga de Zapata lies, is particularly sensitive due to the predominance of low-lying coasts and fragile ecosystems (wetlands, dry forests, small keys, and reefs) and because it is in the path of hurricanes. The extreme fragility of the ecosystems of the Ciénaga de Zapata and their importance in supporting multiple economic activities requires development planning and management to ensure the conservation of their resources and functionality of their ecosystems.

Ciénaga de Zapata is also a space marked by different historical conditions in two significant points in time: one before 1959, characterized by neglect and isolation, and another after the triumph of the revolution, distinguished by the improvement in the conditions of everyday life as a result of it being included in the country's new development policies. This latter development also brought with it economic diversification and the concentration of the population in regions with more of an urban character, highlighting natural, economic, and social differences. This is also the

site of the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion (known in Cuba as the battle of Playa Girón), a definitive point in the history of the two nations.

The Gulf Coast of the United States

The coastal communities scattered along the northern shore of the Gulf of Mexico in the United States lure people with the beauty of the area, work and educational opportunities, cultural activities, and Southern hospitality. They depend on vibrant economies to provide an excellent quality of life.

The Gulf Coast provides a wide variety of valuable natural resources, including 17 percent of total US crude oil production, 5 percent of federal offshore dry natural gas production, and some of the most productive fisheries in the world. It is also the site for nearly half of the United States' petroleum refining capacity and about half of the country's natural gas processing plant capacity.

The Gulf of Mexico is a vital economic and recreational asset, and yet its fragile ecosystem faces many threats from development. With the rapid expansion of offshore drilling in the Gulf, communities have been impacted by numerous oil spills. These human-made disasters have had a devastating impact on fishing and tourism, as well as quality of life.

Communities on the Gulf Coast have also faced intense tropical storms, including Hurricanes Ivan in 2004 and Katrina in 2005. These hurricanes, along with rising sea levels, have resulted in massive destruction and physical changes along the coast. While there are differing opinions on the cause of this increase in natural disasters, no one denies that there has been a staggering increase in costs to



Communities along the Gulf in both countries face some of the very same challenges, namely a vulnerability to hurricanes, as well as other human-made disasters. . . . How might people living in those communities begin to work together to protect their communities and strengthen their capacity to bounce back from disasters?



restore and rebuild communities and the landscape.

ENCOURAGING JOINT LEARNING

From 2012 to 2014, teams in each country adopted their own approaches to engaging with the local community. Both began by talking with people to understand how they experienced the challenges they faced. In Cuba, the broad challenge was identified as climate change. In the United States, the challenge was enhancing and sustaining quality of life on the Gulf, given tensions between economic development and environmental protection. The team in Cuba moved quickly from working with people in the community to understand their concerns and experiences with climate change to identifying different actions that

might be taken and a variety of actors who might take them. The team in the United States, working in several communities in two different states, focused on developing a deliberative framework that would synthesize common themes and then encourage people to wrestle with the tensions among the various things held valuable.

Activating Citizens in Cuba

One of the key objectives of the work in Playa Larga and Ciénaga de Zapata has been to contribute to improving the resilience of the biodiversity and the capacity of local communities to adapt to climate change in ecologically sensitive coastal areas of Cuba.

The Núñez team began with a “social diagnosis” that would allow them to assess and measure how the community perceives climate change and its effects on their lives. Later they held workshops in the pilot communities with national experts, key local actors, the managers and administrators of protected areas, and members of the communities that might be affected in order to

assess the possible impacts that projected changes in biodiversity would produce in the lives of these people. The idea was to generate, in a participatory manner, a portfolio of adaptive measures that might be implemented.

Achieving success in the implementation of these activities would entail developing training programs on climate change and biodiversity that would involve at least two managers/leaders from each of the participating institutions, local community leaders, workers from the protected areas, and inhabitants of the pilot communities. This would reinforce the creation of local capacities for understanding and adapting to climate change in regions of fragile ecosystems.

In this first stage, the Núñez Foundation largely fulfilled its goal of understanding how the community perceives climate change. It also raised people's consciousness about climate change and encouraged them to suggest possible solutions. It was clear that people saw themselves as both part of the problem and protagonists in the solution. In reference to the work of the group, it was also a rich experience. It was an opportunity for Esther Velis and her colleagues from Núñez to experiment with putting Kettering ideas about naming and framing into practice in their

community work and combine these insights with other participatory techniques they have been using for some time.

How to continue with this work? Velis reports that they will focus on analyzing the proposals offered with an eye to designing strategies for the adaptation and mitigation of climate change, taking into account the proposals that came from members of the community. The information obtained from this first workshop has served as the basis for determining actions for the local authorities to follow and to identify information deficits or gaps where they might work. This experience with the community likewise allowed them to



From 2012 to 2014, teams in each country adopted their own approaches to engaging with the local community. Both began by talking with people to understand how they experienced the challenges they faced.



Virginia York, Penny Dendy, and Esther Velis

identify leaders and advocates who have continued working with them in other activities throughout the year, and who constitute a base of support for future work. Furthermore, this experience helped them improve their tools and knowledge to develop scenarios of climate change with greater accuracy at the national level and in other communities with similar characteristics. It also allowed them to assess the vulnerabilities and potential impacts, as well as have the ability to develop more effective adaptive strategies in other regions.

Activating Citizens in the United States

The US team of Penny Dendy, Terry Jack, and Virginia York began by organizing 10 different community

conversations in 6 communities in Florida and Alabama to identify local concerns and potential actions that might be taken to address them. In recruiting participants, attempts were made to ensure that a broad spectrum of ideas, concerns, and points of view were included. The concerns that people raised and the actions suggested would be used to create a framework to help communities deliberate further about how they might work with one another in addressing the challenges their communities are facing.

Conversations in Panama City, Florida, and Callaway, Florida, included everyone from commercial and recreational fishermen and representatives of the boating industry

to seashell collectors and a writer. New residents and families who had owned beach houses for generations came together to talk. In Port Saint Joe, Florida, where people had experienced financial reversals when both the large paper mill and the chemical plant closed, people nonetheless expressed pride in their hometown, appreciation for sunsets on the water that are not blocked by tall buildings, and a desire to support small businesses rather than have large corporations (such as Walmart) enter the city limits. The assembly included educators, an insurance agent, marina workers, and two high school students.

Since 2004, Mobile has been hit by two major hurricanes, the Deep Water oil spill, and the economic recession that staggered the whole nation. It has also seen major expansion in the shipbuilding industry and was selected by Airbus as the location for its North American assembly plant. The conversations in Mobile centered on providing well-paying jobs for local workers and ensuring that the educational and training programs and the social service networks are in place to maximize the potential for economic growth. People also raised concerns about changes in lifestyle that this growth will generate.

Participants in the conversations in nearby Bayou La Batre, Alabama,

included a number of immigrants from Southeast Asia, many of whom work in the seafood industry. This industry has been one of the hardest hit by recent natural and human-made disasters, and as a result many of these participants are now unemployed or underemployed. Their concerns were much more fundamental: ensuring work to provide food, clothing, shelter, and safety for their families. The younger participants, also primarily of Southeast Asian descent, worried that the “American Dream” of financial security and an abundance of recreational activities was harder to achieve.

Baldwin County, on the eastern side of Mobile Bay, is more affluent, and its economy depends on tourism, retirees, and agriculture. Participants talked about the struggle to balance economic prosperity with preservation of the natural resources that differentiate the area from other parts of the United States. They talked about the need to develop and implement regional plans that respect the character of individual communities



JIM WEST/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

while exploring opportunities to grow the economy. This group also talked in personal terms about what they can and should do to sustain the quality of life while expanding opportunity.

These initial community conversations helped reveal shared concerns and values, as well as tensions. The team took what they heard in the conversations to create a framework for people all along the Gulf Coast to use in making decisions together about their future. The framework adopted three different approaches:

Approach One:

Focus on Preservation of the Environment

Approach Two:

Focus on Economic Development

Approach Three:

Focus on Preservation of Local Culture

How to continue with this work? Some initial deliberative forums were held using this framework, and many of the participants were really struck by the experience. As one said, “People in a community are capable of deciding what direction their community should take.” Others expressed a sense of urgency: “If we do not come to grips with this problem and protect our coastal communities, people will leave this area for other opportunities.” The team said that regardless of profession or point

of view, participants in the forums all expressed their deep love of the community and commitment to its health and prosperity. Because of this commitment, they were willing to wrestle with the uncertainty they were facing.

SHARING PROGRESS

In January 2014, representatives of each of the teams shared what they were learning at a conference in Havana, Cuba. The focus of the conference was on “active citizenship” and its role in strengthening democracy. Both teams had the opportunity to learn from each other’s experiences. For Kettering, it was an opportunity to learn more about how people in communities can start on the path of making collective decisions about their shared future. Núñez and Kettering continue to collaborate. A conference in 2016 began another exploration of shared problems. For the communities chronicled here, the work continues. ■

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For a longer account of this work, see: Esther Velis, “Climate Change and Our Community: Playa Larga, Ciénaga de Zapata, Cuba,” and Virginia York, Terry Jack, and Penny Dendy, “Quality of Life on the Gulf Coast: How Can It Be Enhanced and Sustained?,” in Ileana Marin and Esther Velis, eds., Initiatives in Active Citizenship: Reports from the Third International Exchange on Active Citizenship for Democratic Strengthening in Latin America, the Caribbean, and the United States (Dayton, OH: Kettering Foundation Press, 2015).

The Kettering Foundation and China-US Relations

By Wang Jisi

Since 1986, the Kettering Foundation has maintained a close and fruitful relationship with China, especially with China's scholarly community. As a participant in this relationship from the beginning, I am both humbled

at Kettering's brave and strenuous efforts to strengthen US-China ties and proud of being a small part of them.

In 1986, when I was a junior lecturer in Peking University's Department of International Politics, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) cosponsored with the Kettering Foundation a group visit to the United States. The Chinese delegation was headed by Li Shen zhi, vice president of CASS, and consisted of several senior Chinese individuals and four "young observers," including Yuan Ming of Peking University and myself. We toured Racine, Wisconsin, where we joined the US delegation headed by Kettering president David Mathews and attended a conference together,





which covered world politics in general and China-US relations in particular. We were also entertained by local officials and celebrities in Racine. In fact, what impressed me most was not anything related to China-US relations, but a special session conducted by David Mathews, in which he vividly introduced

Kettering's political philosophy and approach to conducting its projects.

It was the first time I had ever heard a representative of an American NGO explain to us how it worked. During the Racine conference, we had interesting conversations with our US counterparts, some of whom had no China connection at all. Racine was a perfect location that allowed Chinese and American public citizens to get to know each other personally.

I confess, although I had spent 18 months at the University of California at Berkeley in 1984-1985 and toured other American cities and towns during that period, my personal contacts in the United States had been confined almost exclusively to Americans who were interested in China, East Asia, or international politics. It was Kettering that widened my horizon by bringing me to Racine and, later, to Dayton, Ohio, where its

“ With my experience at Kettering, I have developed a strong belief that we will not be able to catch the essence of US foreign policy and US-China relations unless we understand how civil society functions in America.

headquarters is located. This helped me become familiar with grassroots America. In this sense, Kettering opened a window for me—and presumably for many other Chinese colleagues who have participated in the Kettering programs—to observe and understand American society and domestic politics by way of knowing some “real” Americans who live in “typical” US cities like Dayton.

As one of the so-called “US watchers” in China, I used to make the analogy that the relationship between China and the United States is like a state-society relationship. In the China-US relationship, China acts as a state, a hierarchical structure of organizations like CASS and Peking University with individuals in them as a subordinating part, whereas America acts as a society, in which horizontal networks like the Kettering Foundation coexist with governmental organizations but are not subordinated to them. With my experience at Kettering, I have developed a strong belief that we will not be able to catch the essence of US foreign policy and US-China relations unless we understand how civil society functions in America. It will take more time for me, or other Chinese, to fully grasp the meaning of such concepts as “framing public deliberation.” Still, Kettering’s numerous programs have greatly



To be sure, political and cultural differences, as well as geographical spans, divide the two peoples, but these differences are secondary if compared to our shared purposes of life as human beings.

benefited dozens of Chinese citizens and enriched our knowledge about the United States beyond government-to-government connections.

Indeed, it is my own observation that the greatest contribution Kettering has made to the China-US relationship is to bring together social elites from the two societies, making friends between us, letting us know that we share the same purposes of life—happiness, love, family, harmony, and unity. To be sure, political and cultural differences, as well as geographical spans, divide the two peoples, but these differences are secondary if compared to our shared purposes of life as human beings.



In the past 30 years, Kettering's engagement with China's embassy has weathered a variety of troubles and incidents in the official relationship between the two countries, including the threat (and soon after) the collapse of the Soviet Union, the 1989 Beijing political storm, the Taiwan Strait tensions, the NATO bombing of China's embassy in Belgrade, the collision between Chinese and American airplanes over the South China Sea, US arms sales to Taiwan, and most recently, the disputes concerning the South China Sea. Under none of these circumstances did our friends at Kettering hesitate about continuing dialogue with their counterparts in

China, no matter what their political backgrounds were. Kettering has kept sending delegations to China and receiving Chinese guests in America regardless of any moment



of a souring political atmosphere. During dialogues between Kettering and its Chinese counterparts, there was no effort to impose one side's position on the other side, and mutual respect was always shown. It is hard to measure the extent to which Kettering's China connection influenced the bilateral relationship between the two bodies politic, but we are sure that the influence is absolutely positive and greatly appreciated by those whose interests lie in stabilizing and strengthening China-US ties.

We should, of course, pay a heartfelt tribute to David Mathews, former congressman James Leach, Zheng Bijian, Zi Zhongyun, Maxine Thomas, and others in the Kettering community whose leading roles are indispensable.

Regrettably, a few forerunners of Kettering programs, among them Harold Saunders, Robert McNamara, former ambassador Huan Xiang, and Li Shenzhi, are no longer with us. Their dedication and contributions will continue to inspire us and forever be remembered.

Thirty years is not a long period of time in world history, but long enough to reflect generational changes. Coming back to my memories of the first encounter with Kettering in 1986, David Mike Lampton greeted us when the Chinese group arrived

on the East Coast from Wisconsin, and accompanied us for the rest of the program. It was my first time meeting Mike in person. At that time, he was already a well-established China scholar, and president-elect of the National Committee on US-China Relations, while I was a "young observer." Since then, the two of us have cooperated with each other in countless Kettering activities. At the time of this writing, Mike is 70 years old,



Despite all the problems and obstacles we have witnessed over the three decades, the China-US relationship has become more mature and increasingly expansive. I hope the torch will be passed into the hands of younger men and women in our two countries for another 30 years.



and I am 68. Some of our students have already taught their own students. Generations of students have been working together to do research on each other country's culture, history, economics, and politics.

Despite all the problems and obstacles we have witnessed over the three decades, the China-US relationship has become more mature and increasingly expansive. I hope the torch will be passed into the hands of younger men and women in our two countries for another 30 years. By the year 2046, will people continue to discuss possible US "containment" of China, or China trying to drive the United States out of the

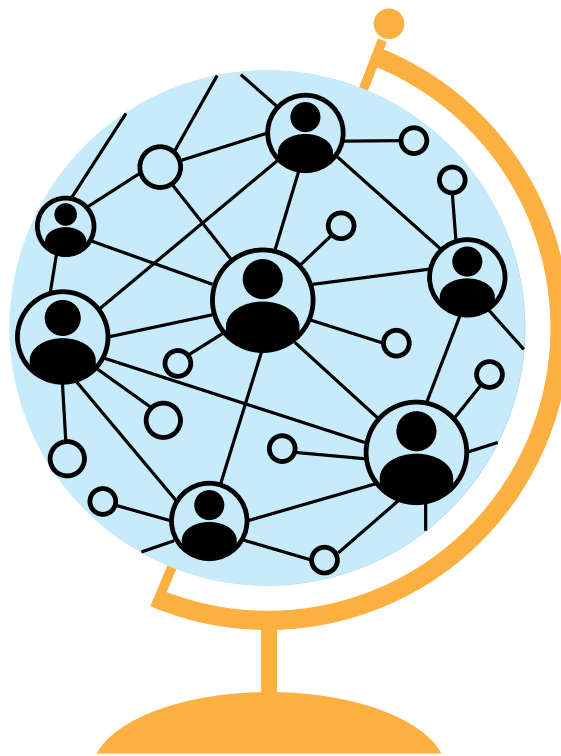
Western Pacific? Or, will the two countries have fought a catastrophic war, as some observers are predicting today? I hope not. However, that depends very much on the mind-set, wisdom, and vision of the people now in their 20s to 40s, who will be working at Kettering, CASS, Peking University, and elsewhere to shape the future of China-US relations. Noting their close communication with each other and comprehensive understanding of the world, we have reason to remain cautiously optimistic. ■

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The International Residents Network: A Self-Sustaining Instrument for Learning and Sharing

By Ruby Quantson

Responding to growing international interest in democracy research, in 1991, the Kettering Foundation established international residencies. These residencies, initially called “fellowships,” include the international residents, the Katherine W. Fanning Residents in Journalism and Democracy, and staff exchanges with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and Peking University.



Residents usually spend several months at the foundation’s headquarters in Dayton, Ohio, exploring questions central to Kettering’s research program. Thus far, about 130 people have participated from around the world.

In the spring of 2014, I embarked, along with Leonardo Correa from Brazil, on a new research project to locate as many former international residents as we could. Both of us are former international residents, which put us in a unique position to interview others and analyze what we heard. This article focuses on the insights gathered from the research, expressed through the thoughts and voices of those we interviewed.



Let us lend our eyes to our colleagues in the network . . . provide an outsider's perspective; let's talk about our failures, what is not working and what interventions we can introduce; let us turn the meetings into an innovation lab and investigate why our political cultures are destroying our democracies.

—resident from Puerto Rico

It particularly highlights existing foundations and structures for building a formidable international network and how this platform could be sustained for learning across the world through self-responsibility as a principle of democratic practice.

A key interest in this research was whether former residents (at least a critical number) were self-motivated enough to be responsible for sustaining the network. This interest was particularly driven by two questions posed in the research interviews:

how might you work with the international network, and how can the network be managed and sustained?

MAPPING OUT OPPORTUNITIES FOR NETWORKING

Interactive Database

The core product generated in this research, critical to the sustenance of the network, was a database or directory on former residents. Intended to operate as an online interactive map, the directory describes careers, interests, and contact details of former residents and therefore offers the international alumni a platform to connect, exchange ideas, and promote collaborative work across a broad range of careers. Several former residents are applying the knowledge acquired during their residency in innovative ways. Their stories have the potential to ignite citizens' actions elsewhere.

For instance, a former resident who currently works as a wood sculptor observed inter alia:

I then took a few chairs and tables of wood; I went to a park near my place, . . . I made a circle, then I invited a few friends and the community. A lot of people came, people from my neighborhood, women that worked around the place, some of my students. . . . Now this place is a space where people can get together and talk about their issues.

What is needed is a means of sharing and learning from these experiences.

Global Voices and Actions for Democracy

The conversations with the former residents also revealed a broad knowledge base enriched by diverse cultures, practices, and experiences useful for knowledge exchange and transfer. The thoughts expressed were not abstract or whimsical; it was a rich and pressing struggle. They spoke to us about the challenges to democracy they see or seek to address within the contexts of a world facing a variety of challenges, including ISIS, Al-Shabaab, and Boko Haram; immigration and refugee crises; polarized politics; diminishing roles for NGOs; and coup d'états and unsustainable development goals in the developing world. When these voices and actions come together, they depict a challenging, yet engaging, global effort toward stronger democratic practices. If these conversations were to take place in a regular (even virtual) space among the residents, the learning and insights would be profound.

Building on Existing Initiatives

Former residents are interacting in many ways all around the world. We have learned of small gatherings in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Fiji, Ireland, New Zealand, Russia, and Tajikistan, to mention a few.

Residents from Ghana have assisted in offering training programs and participated in programs for organizations led by former residents from Zimbabwe and South Africa. The interactions range from simple dinners to exploring democratic practices in policymaking, as well as naming and framing issues. Several former residents are focused on boundary spanning, collaborating with each other to coproduce civic goods that strengthen democracy and promote learning in their respective institutions, as we heard in Kosovo and Tajikistan.

Mapping out these formal and informal connections with the aim of sharing with the larger network



There's been at least 50 people through my Kettering network . . . whom I've visited in the world . . . and developed deep, deep relationships and knowledge and experience exchange over the last 16 years.

—resident from South Africa



Writing papers on general issues that can be related to different people on the network . . . would allow the network to exchange ideas and experiences.

—resident from Guatemala

and upscaling can lead to greater learning and sustenance of the network.

A Sense of Community

We left the conversations with the sense that a community was being woven globally within the network. As we talked on Skype, the telephone, and over e-mail, the geographical boundaries melted, the issues raised from all countries were sharp and pressing, and the need to continue this kind of work around democracy became even more critical. For some it was “consoling” to know they are not alone in this work. There was a sense of “we are in this together.” As one resident from China remarked, “It is also wonderful to learn about what people . . . focus on.” These conversations revealed great interest in sustaining the interactions, and many sought to be part of an interactive platform.

DEALING WITH CHALLENGES TO INTERNATIONAL NETWORKING

While the interest expressed by the alumni toward an active learning network was inspiring, it is certainly not enough for the network to function in a self-sustaining manner. The chances of the network thriving are higher when a number of elements are present.

First, there ought to be a willingness by people to continue to connect. This may sound like a given, but this willingness goes beyond sharing contact details. Indeed, websites and social media platforms for networking do not necessarily get this to happen. As observed by a resident from Jamaica, “[We] need to be more intentional in accessing diverse works . . . around democracy.” This willingness comes with commitment that translates into some concrete actions with roles.

Second, networking thrives on goals. General chats on social and political issues are great—but only for a while. Such conversations are usually useful for homogeneous groups, often from the same country, with shared sociopolitical activities. International networking works better around a mutually beneficial idea, a particular aim, or piece of work.

Third, it is not enough to introduce a subject or piece of a project. We learned that no matter the support shown toward an innovative

piece of work, people need motivation. Self-motivation in networking is critical, but in the face of geographical barriers, the group ought to devise creative ways of animating the platform in ways that keep the network active and motivated to engage.

Fourth, while some things can be done through technology, others are better done in face-to-face meetings. For an international network this is challenging and particularly expensive. We assume that people in the same country do meet and connect, but this is not necessarily so. That said, this research was almost solely conducted through technology. With a lot more creativity, the international network could function at minimum cost through online activities, while building on little country initiatives that help to infuse the face-to-face elements.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

If the interest expressed by the alumni is anything to go by, there is great momentum for a self-sustaining learning platform. The stories we heard illustrate the role that people in the networks around the world could play.

Promoting Regional Learning Centers

How might we build on the informal country meetings we heard about in the interviews? Many of the residents

proposed regional meetings. A resident from India remarked, “We should look for different forms of collaboration—national, regional networks or . . . build a network in different areas. . . . For example, we could build a network of journalists.”

The attractive part of these proposals is that first, they emanate from the former residents themselves, not directed by any central body. More important, the proposed “centers” could bring a larger number of residents in a given region or field of work together, say Africa, than one can have in any particular meeting in Dayton. Additionally, this will enable participants to focus on democratic questions peculiar to their regions and learn from experiments in similar environments.

Interconnecting International Activities

Apart from the common-interest groups we see in some countries,



Some people very far off are lone rangers and may not have many people in their country to support their work.

—resident from Australia



The fellowship just plants a seed and . . . we need to help grow that seed.

—resident from Kenya

there are constellations within the broad international network that require linking nodes. The alumni could connect with the various international projects as another way of updating and learning from organized centers. It will, for instance, be useful to connect more directly and intentionally with the Arab Network for the Study of Democracy and the Citizens' Accord Forum in Israel, as well as with the work in China, Cuba, and Russia. The residents were quite keen on knowing what others are doing. From Zimbabwe we heard: "There's huge expertise in the network, but we do not know what people are doing; I would like to know what other people are doing around issues I am working on."

Creating a Learning and Documentation Cycle

With the amount and quality of civic resources available within the international network, it is our hope that a self-facilitated process will trigger a series of exchanges and documentation of outcomes from which others can learn. As a former resi-

dent observed during the interviews, "The important thing is not to get 60 people talking but to create the avenue for two people who need to talk and for others to be informed and ask questions across countries." This happens when the stories and what we learn from them are consciously documented.

CONCLUSION

After 25 years of the residency program, we are at the point at which the international network should produce tangible outcomes. How can we sustain the network for long-term benefits? It will be useful for new residents to know they can engage in a global conversation with former residents when they are selected for the residency program. This requires some level of commitment from the international residents. The platform will also need champions, animators, or moderators.

More critically, this research, and by extension this article, serves as a renewed call to the international network to reactivate self-responsibility for sustaining the network. We invite alumni to think about how we might continue to interact and share our stories, research, and experiences in building stronger democracies around the world. ■

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Meeting the Challenges of a World Divided: Engaging Whole Bodies Politic

By Harold H. Saunders

Harold H. Saunders, assistant secretary of state in the Carter administration and the recently retired director of international affairs at the Kettering Foundation, who spent more than 20 years in high foreign policy positions in the United States government, died on March 6, 2016, at his home in McLean, Virginia. He was 85. Over the past 35 years, Saunders developed and practiced the process of Sustained Dialogue, which he described as a “five-stage public peace process” to transform racial and ethnic conflicts. He was the author of four books, coauthor of another, and coeditor of still another, all dealing with issues of international peace. This article is drawn from the revised edition of his book Politics Is about Relationship: A Worldview for the Citizens’ Century (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 1-11, 257.

Our country and our world are deeply divided. Too many people have lost the capacity to listen thoughtfully, to talk respectfully, and to relate constructively. A culture of dialogue generated and sustained over time by citizens outside government is critical to peace and to equitable and sustainable economic, political, and social development.

The challenges of our troubled world require political—not just technical—responses. There are some things only governments can do—negotiate binding agreements, make and enforce laws, provide for the common defense, fund public projects and programs. But some things only citizens outside government can do—transform conflictual human relationships, modify human behavior, and change political culture. Only governments can negotiate peace treaties, but only people can make peace.

As John Gaventa wrote, “When aware of their rights and agency, and when organized with others, citizens have the power and capacity to bring about fundamental and lasting change. . . . While the idea of citizen-driven change has been around for a long time, it still stands in sharp contrast to many other paradigms which dominate public affairs.”



The Kettering Foundation lost a respected colleague and friend when Harold (Hal) Saunders passed away early this year. He earned degrees in American studies from Yale, went on to the CIA, and wound up in the White House and State Department. He was known for his steady hand in difficult situations. He joined Kettering in 1991 as director of international affairs, where he was able to continue his work with the Dartmouth Conference and infuse all of Kettering's international work with this same steady approach to relationship building. Saunders believed in family and friends and his work, which focused on Sustained Dialogue. His hope was that others would take an interest in Sustained Dialogue, which grew partly out of his experience in the Middle East and also from his work with the Russians. Before he died, Saunders and his wife, Carol, were made aware of the Kettering Foundation Board of Directors' intent to establish the Harold Saunders Award for Research on Sustained Dialogue. They were delighted. The criteria and application process will be announced at a later date. The award will be a living memorial to his life's work.

The conceptual lenses we use to understand events determine how we act. Achieving a fresh way of understanding the world around us requires new conceptual lenses to bring a rapidly changing world into focus. Thus, we must spend some time reflecting on how we think about politics.

To act more productively, we must change our way of understanding how our public world works—a world that is falling behind in meeting its challenges. My aim is to help each of us see the world through new lenses and demonstrate that these can change how we act.

Five challenges top the human agenda at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Responses to all depend on citizens outside government as well as on the governments *they* constitute.

First is whether and, if so, how people of different racial, ethnic, cultural, historic, and economic backgrounds can coexist peacefully, justly, and productively. Whatever the specific arrangements societies make, the choice is between a productive peace and dehumanization and destruction. How such choices are framed, made, and executed is the essence of politics.

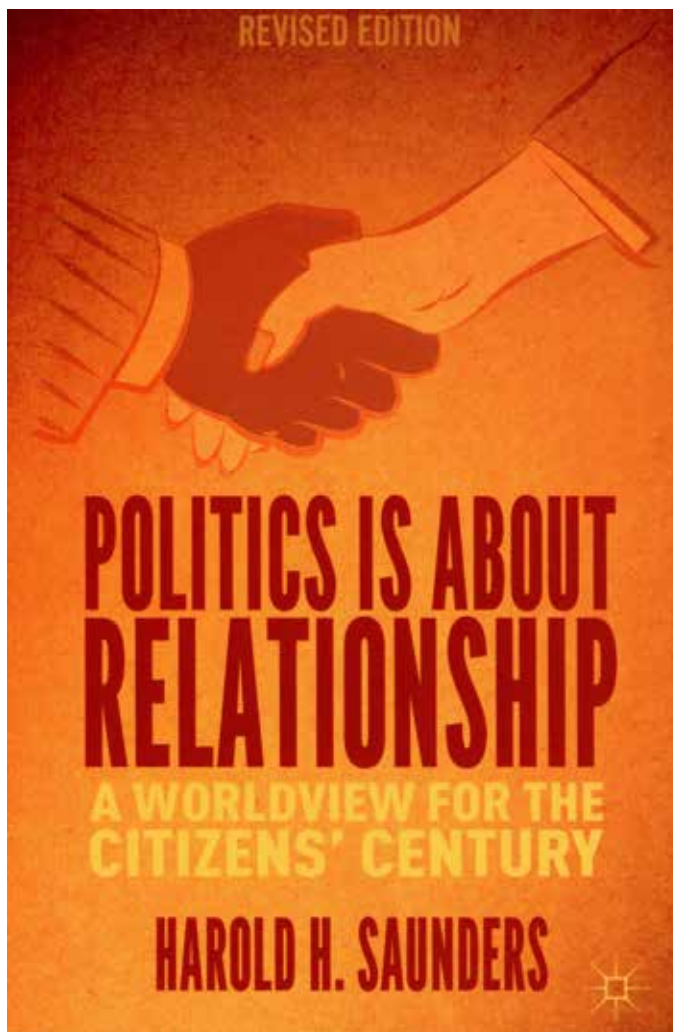
Second, the gap between the rich and the poor widens—both within and between countries. Societies are

increasingly fragmented, crime-ridden, and violent; we neglect the power of citizens to build whole bodies politic worthy of defining their identity. Sustainable and just economic development requires building productive relationships within and across polities.

Third, ideological gulfs within and between societies widen and deepen. Recent events demonstrate that alienation, hopelessness, ideological extremism, and anger can be expressed in devastating ways by tightly organized, committed, and marginalized individuals. The challenge to polities is political—creating an environment that offers dignity and realistic engagement to all. A violent response alone cannot make the world either more peaceful or more just.

Fourth, we are taxing the earth beyond its ability to sustain us. Since 1972, periodic global conferences have placed the environment on the global agenda and urged multilateralism to protect it. Technical remedies may meet some challenges, but we lack political capacity to right the balance.

Fifth, some see the new century as a crossroads for humankind, but governance falls far short of the challenge. In the words of former Czech President Václav Havel: “It is not that we should simply seek new and better ways of managing society, the



economy, and the world. The point is that we should fundamentally change how we behave.”

The global project of the twenty-first century is political: to engage citizens in and out of government in whole bodies politic in responding to these challenges. With some leap of faith, I have called this “The Citizens’ Century.” Only citizens can change political culture. Only citizens can decide to work and relate in different

ways. Only by engaging the resources of whole bodies politic can we as citizens meet our challenges. Bodies politic that exclude or ignore much of their populations are not whole, nor are they engaging the full richness of resources they need to meet the challenges of this new century. Engaging whole bodies politic is both a practical and a moral imperative.

A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR WHOLE HUMAN BEINGS IN WHOLE BODIES POLITIC

The conceptual lens used for the study and practice of politics prevalent for two generations at the end of the twentieth century has focused on

government and other political institutions such as political parties and interest groups—the structures and wielders of power. In internal affairs, the mantra has been “politics is about power” with power defined as control or the ability to coerce. In international politics, we have spoken of the “realist paradigm” or “power politics model” focusing on states pursuing objectively defined interests in zero-sum contests of power with other nation-states. We need a way of understanding politics that embraces citizens both inside and outside government since each have work that only they can do. If we see them as parts of a whole dividing the labor, the challenge to each group is to enlarge their own capacities—and then to stretch those capacities by learning to work together to build whole bodies politic. Today, neither government nor civil society is strong in its own right because citizens in and out of government are not conducting their relationships in productive ways.

I present new conceptual lenses—new assumptions about how the world works, a new political paradigm, and an operational concept with a practical instrument for putting that paradigm to practical use. The paradigm and the assumptions behind it are the starting point for changing how we act.

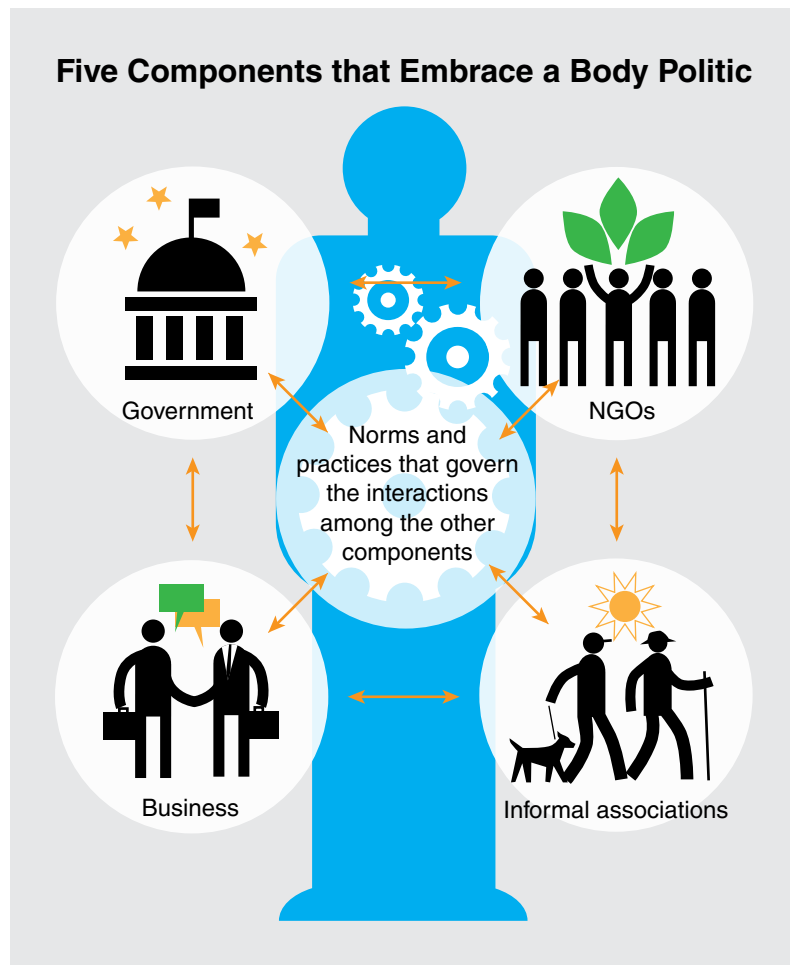


The global project of the twenty-first century is political: to engage citizens in and out of government in whole bodies politic in responding to these challenges. With some leap of faith, I have called this ‘The Citizens’ Century.’

The proposed paradigm: *politics is a cumulative, multilevel, and open-ended process of continuous interaction over time engaging significant clusters of citizens in and out of government and the relationships they form to solve public problems in whole bodies politic across permeable borders, either within or between communities or countries.* This focus on a *multilevel process of continuous interaction among citizens* contrasts to the traditional focus on a linear sequence of actions and reactions among institutions as in a chess game. Continuing *interactions* are the essence of that process. What is important are the interplay and interpenetration between entities—not just the action by one upon the other.

To capture this process of continuous interaction, I have used the human word *relationship*, carefully defined in terms of five components: identity, interests, power, stereotypes, and patterns of interaction. Relationship is a diagnostic tool because it enables practitioners to organize the elements of complex interactions for analysis. It is an operational tool because practitioners can get inside each component of relationship to change it.

This paradigm and the concept of relationship bring human beings—citizens outside as well as inside government and related institu-



tions—into the study and practice of political life. That does not denigrate the importance of states and governments. By itself, however, government is not enough. Citizens need their own instruments. The paradigm, the concept of relationship, and the instrument of dialogue broaden our focus to include the rich resources of whole bodies politic.

My hope is that we can find common purpose across the spectrum of

scholars and practitioners in meeting the challenges humankind faces. The success of our attempt depends heavily on recognizing that there is nothing more authentic than the experience of whole human beings tackling their most difficult challenges in whole bodies politic. Experience nurtures a different way of knowing. I know of no fuller way to understand political life than to plumb the complexity of human experience.

As a framework for analysis, I suggest—and a few others are moving in this direction—thinking of a body politic as embracing five components: government, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), business, informal associations that citizens form to pursue their interests, and the norms and practices that govern the interactions among the other components. The manner in which these elements interact defines the “governance” of a body politic. The focus is on the interaction. Do they act in authoritarian, competitive, or conflictual ways? Or do they interact in complementary or collaborative ways respecting such principles as reciprocity? The question is not only whether government can attend effectively to the needs of citizens but also whether citizens can interact productively to do the work that only they can do. The norms and practices that govern the totality of those

interactions may grow out of years of experience, or they may need to be negotiated as in the wake of a revolution or the sudden overthrow of an authoritarian regime.

Effective, creative, and just government is, of course, a key actor in promoting development, but as many citizens have said, government cannot do it all. Sustainable, just, and equitable development requires constructive interactions among all elements of a body politic—good *governance*.

THE CITIZENS’ CENTURY

Politics is about relationship—citizens connecting to improve the quality of their lives together. Dialogue is their instrument, enhancing their capacities to concert. Human beings will not be whole until they learn to relate through open and honest dialogue. To create a just and compassionate political environment, they constitute government. Citizens inside and outside government must learn to relate peacefully and productively for the benefit of all. Politics will not be whole until all citizens—inside and outside government, scholars and practitioners—are engaged collaboratively in serving the whole.

Engaging whole human beings in whole bodies politic is the great project of the Citizens’ Century. ■

Searching for Balance: America's Role in the World

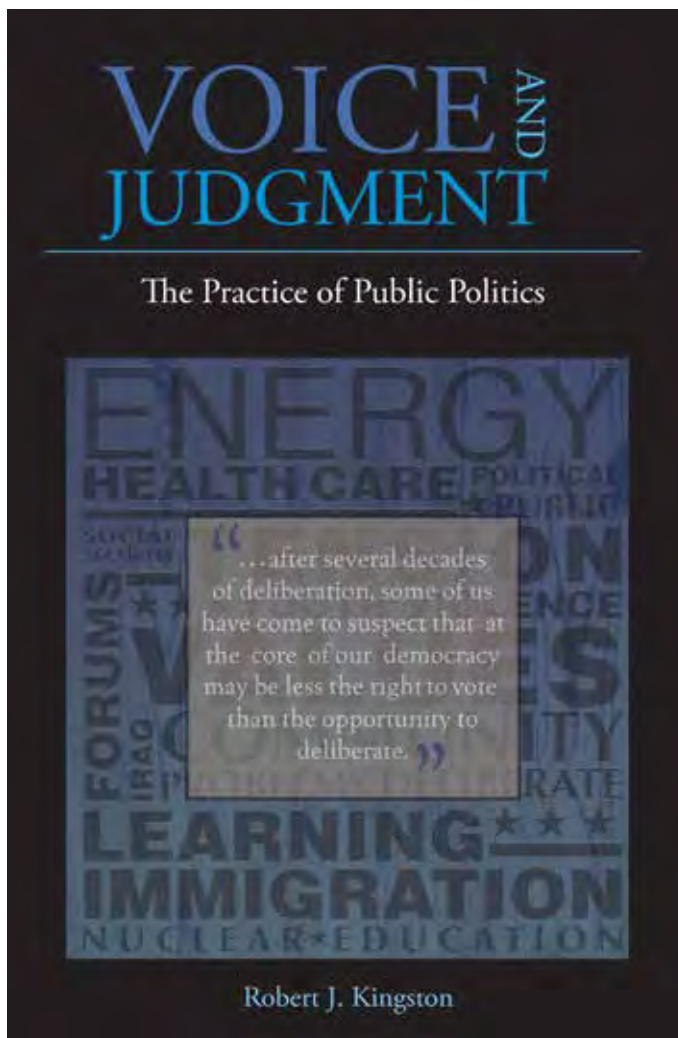
By Robert J. Kingston

Robert J. Kingston, who spent 35 years developing the theory of deliberative politics along with colleagues at Public Agenda and the Kettering Foundation, died on August 20, 2016, in Long Island, New York. He was 87 years old. Born in London, Bob's career took him to the United States as an English professor and later as president of the College Board and acting chair of the National Endowment for the Humanities, executive director at Public Agenda, and finally as senior associate of the Kettering Foundation, where he served as editor of the Kettering Review. This article is drawn from Kingston's book Voice and Judgment: The Practice of Public Politics (Dayton, OH: Kettering Foundation Press, 2012), 27-29, 53-57.



All of us, I suspect, while we were still young children, encountered some history-making event that we know was to change the comfort of our little world. We did not surely understand it, nor even really “know” what it was; but we knew that it “happened,” that it “meant” something, and that someday, therefore, we should have to cope with it. To the now elders among American citizens, such an “event” may have been Pearl Harbor or the atomic bomb on Hiroshima; to a very few, even Poland, or Neville Chamberlain getting off a plane from Munich, a piece of paper (signed by Adolf Hitler) fluttering in his hand declaring, more wrongly than he could imagine, “Peace in our time!” Or for a somewhat younger generation, it will have been 9/11—and new enemies, new friends.

The long and continuing sequence of National Issues Forums—which (as this is being written) have addressed



something near 100 issues, nationwide, over the past 30 years—provides now a valuable indication of the progress of public thinking, and the continuities in it, over time, otherwise unavailable, the likelihood of which was perhaps not fully apprehended during the earliest years of the NIF experiment. America’s sense of its place in the world is one such continuing theme.

In the 1980s the country passed through the depths of the Cold War, which, in effect, culminated with the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Well, this was perhaps not the precise “depth” of the Cold War, granted Sputnik, the space race, and the Cuban Missile Crisis; but the period was certainly filled with deeply troubled and passionate concern about the relative nuclear strengths of the two superpower rivals. Three times in that decade the NIF forums took on a consideration of the US-Soviet relationship. Then again, immediately following the end of the Soviet era in 1989, they turned to consideration of America’s role in the world. And in the fall and winter of 2002-2003, within weeks of the US attack on Iraq, citizens were again discussing “Americans’ Role in the World” in their National Issues Forums.

Questions of international relations and foreign policy present a particular challenge to citizens of democracies, especially if they see themselves as a nation of immigrants. For most of the past century, fortunate Americans thought of themselves as somewhat better off than the rest of the world, and perhaps envied by it! When wars have had to be fought, they have been fought in places other than the United States itself and caused less of its citizenry to be

directly involved in fighting. And the outcomes of the Second World War and the Cold War seemed to place the United States in a position where it could provide extraordinary assistance to the rest of the world, while fearing virtually nothing from it. At least, so some leaders and many citizens like to presume, while others seemed sometimes to prefer to pursue a policy of strength through fear.

VALUES, INTEREST . . . AND THE “RIGHTS” OF OTHERS

The language of “liberty” and “freedom” seems always to have described Americans’ intentions; but in the latter half of the 20th century, US assistance, civil and military, had been provided to and through other nations primarily so that they might remain anticommunist, rather than to the end of their becoming necessarily democratic—or even committed in principle to the exercise of human rights. “Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité”—this was distinctively not the rhetoric of American democracy. It may have therefore been inevitable that “the ugly American” was to become well known, even in Southeast Asia before the Vietnam War, and that “Yankee, go home” was to become a sustained and familiar injunction internationally throughout the decades that had followed World War II. Nonetheless, in the

1980s and 1990s, a foreign policy that made—or at least claimed to make—the provision of American assistance dependent upon an improvement in matters of human rights (democratization, bit-by-bit) had become increasingly used. The linking of US assistance to a declared commitment to democracy and human rights—even of concessions to communist nations, insofar as they agreed to observe American-style human rights—had thus become “respectable” topics of public conversation.

But such assistance was not always viewed favorably in regard to all countries. In 1992, two-thirds of National Issues Forms participants, responding to an “exit” questionnaire, had expressed agreement with the sentiment that “working for short-term gains with dictators like



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Americans, in a post-Cold War world, at a time when the nation did not feel itself directly threatened, were reassessing their judgments about themselves and their own nation.

General Noriega or the late President Marcos is immoral.” In Madison, a man similarly pointed to the hypocrisy of a stand on behalf of democracy when we have clearly supported leaders who do not pursue our ideals, whenever that suited our purpose. A woman in El Paso thought we generally should mind our own business: “Especially in Latin America, the United States is not perceived as benign and is interfering constantly in the affairs of certain countries. I don’t think we should involve ourselves in the internal affairs of other countries.” “Do we ourselves really know our democracy?” one young man asked, admittedly somewhat more extreme in his rhetoric than most. Another insisted that although we claim to

support human rights and democracy elsewhere, we have tolerated human rights violations among allies. And a man in Albany, Georgia, said, “Let’s face it, the United States has been guilty of economic exploitation of the Third World. . . . This is something that will have to be addressed.” These discussants professed themselves to be variously liberal and conservative, and they clearly shared a determination to reassess the moral imperatives behind American policy. Yet when asked, “What role should the United States play in the world?” only 1 in 20 of forum participants responding to exit questionnaires placed the highest priority on “promoting democracy and human rights, whenever they are threatened.”

It now becomes clear that these Americans, in a post-Cold War world, at a time when the nation did not feel itself directly threatened, were reassessing their judgments about themselves and their own nation. “It worries me to speak as if we’re the good guys,” said a Texas woman, in the late 1990s. “It seems like we have the idea that we do it so right and so perfect that it should be what everyone else does.” “I don’t always feel that what we have in this country is necessarily the best for everyone else in the world,” echoed a woman in Georgia.

In context, the purpose of such statements was evidently not to declare *mea culpa*. The deliberations here have a more meditative, less accusatory quality. With apparent sincerity, these forum participants, trying to redefine America's role in the world, were coming to grips with a hard and very American question: how to reconcile some of the clear moral imperatives that Americans have always honored in theory, with the proper and necessary *self-interest* that they perceived might always tend to shape the limits of foreign policy.

In one forum, a woman with her own command of recent history pointed out:

Every time we decided to continue to support the bad guys in

the world, not only have we not won, but we've gotten something that was worse. We decided to support Chiang Kai-shek, hoping that we would rescue China from communism— and we got Mao; the day before Castro marched into Cuba, we supported Batista; when we got rid of the democratically reelected person in Iran, we got the Shah. And so every time we have tried to do that, we have gotten something worse. It's a strategy that simply hasn't worked out historically. Aside from the moral value that what we did I think is terrible, politically it never works out; we always end up getting something that could be worse than what we had before. I don't think that is a very good strategy.





Daniel Yankelovich and Robert Kingston, A Public Voice, Washington, DC, May 1994

From this followed a corollary, which quite apparently settled as a bedrock principle for foreign policy among these groups in the 1990s, following the collapse of the Soviet Union: we have no obligation to make others in our own image, nor any right to do so; each nation must offer and pursue its own definition of human rights. Perhaps paradoxically, in group after group, after the 1989 demonstration of Tiananmen Square was cited, discussions of our relationship with China underscored the point. Disgust with what Americans had seen broadcast from Tiananmen Square still registered strongly, years after the event, but the determination to affirm that judgment was consistently coupled with a widespread reluctance to have it influence our *policy* toward China. Sixty-three percent of forum participants at the conclusion of the NIF discussions in 1993 had agreed that, “We should

develop working relationships with China, even if they are guilty of human rights violations.” In dialogues at the start of the new century—one in 2000 focusing specifically on Americans’ concerns with respect to the Chinese, another in the spring of 2003 relating to Iraq—the “right” of the United States to adjudicate the “rights” of citizens of other nations was broadly called into question.

Whether or not to spread democracy through the use of American power was to become a matter of increasing public concern in 21st-century deliberation. In the summer of the year 2000, for example, in forums held in 20 communities across the United States as part of a larger, ongoing US-China dialogue, participants had considered the degree to which the United States might “promote and foster human rights” in China. Initially, participants characterized human rights by

reference to various contexts: some were concerned about acts of civil disobedience, still recalling the image of the young man facing the tank in Tiananmen Square, years before; some were concerned about the ideal of justice, asking, “Why did this have to happen?” and, “Why is there no monument or sign indicating what happened?”

Yet the published report of these dialogues on US/China relations goes on to say that participants then

became more reflective about US incidents that have created the need for harsh measures. The Los Angeles riots fueled by conflicts between Koreans and African Americans were mentioned. Some brought up the Watts riots. As the discussion turned to the need for internal order in our countries, in a forum held in the southwestern United States, one person asked, “Comparing Kent State versus Tiananmen Square, are we really different?” Another responded, “It’s like calling the kettle black.”

The report on these forums also cites one participant’s observation that “Americans cannot expect traditional human values to be the same in every country.” The report continues:

At an Ohio forum one participant offered this analysis: “As

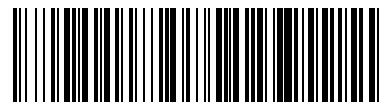
Americans, we tend to think of human rights as civil rights, such as the right to vote and a fair judicial system. The Chinese think of human rights differently, such as the right to work and to share their economy. Everyone is taken care of materially in some way.” One person said, “The United States should be willing to give and take, but not dictate,” when it comes to human rights. “We stress human rights too much,” she went on. “This is important but should be staged in policy over time.”

The report concludes, “the more they deliberated choice, the more all the participants emphasized a summary that one person offered up: ‘Whatever solutions to Chinese problems there are, they must be Chinese solutions, not American solutions.’” So, as in the much earlier deliberations about US-Soviet relations, there is an important tension evident in these public deliberations about the US-China relationship, and it is by no means a subtle one. The Americans in these forums are prompted both by an interest in *spreading* their idea of democracy and by a reluctance to *enforce* its adoption. For they have a far from unblemished record themselves, they think, as they move between the ideal and the convenient. ■



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