FIELD REPORT
RESEARCH PROJECT "RADICALISATION OF VIOLENCE IN HIGH-RISK SOCIETIES: CONDITIONS FOR PEACE"

Tetyana Malyarenko,

Ukraine

<u>My core objectives with this project are:</u> to provide a broad and theoretically well-grounded understanding of the formal and informal institutions, on the local, national, transnational and regional level, that are the best suited to prevent the escalation of conflict and maintain peace; to develop an in-depth understanding of how political, economic, social and cultural factors interact to create high-risk and conflict-prone conditions that facilitate violent radicalisation and which constellations of these factors are most conductive to creating a stable and safe environment for citizens by avoiding radicalisation and violent conflict; and to provide clear and specific policy recommendations of how to create and modify institutions that mitigate the risk of radicalisation and conflict escalations given a particular set-up of specific political, economic, social and cultural conditions.

<u>During my research fellowship at UC Berkeley</u> I focused my work on theories of conflict and conflict resolution and the relationship between them. Starting with a basic analysis of the concept of conflict and how it is used in different social science disciplines, including sociology, political science and international relations, I put these broader conceptions into the specific context of the theme of my research project and discussed different theories of conflict, enriching and illustrating them with empirical data. The workshop and meetings with the teaching and research staff at UC Berkeley focused in turn on theories of conflict resolution, discussing main approaches, pointing out links between them, and between theories of conflict and conflict resolution more generally, in order to understand the significance of initial assumptions that academics make and how they impact on their theoretical explanations and practical recommendations. This was complemented by a focused discussion on teaching conflict studies that enabled me and my colleagues-fellows to develop teaching and research skills and to translate knowledge and understanding into impactful teaching.

<u>Project outline and progress achieved</u>

The project investigates why we observe peace in situations where we would expect to see violence. My research concentrates on domestic and transnational institutional frameworks that enable and reward actors to solve conflicts peacefully. Most conflict studies focus on the onset of war, its duration and intensity or post-war transitions (Ballentine & Sherman, 2003; Collier & Hoeffler, 2004; Fearon & Laitin, 2003; Hegre, 2004; Sambanis, 2002; Walter, 2004), while contributions from conflict resolution provide, often limited, empirical evidence of 'stability

conditions' for particular types of settlements (e.g., Lapidoth, 1995, Lijphart, 1977, McGarry and O'Leary, 1993, Schneckener and Wolff 2004, Weller and Wolff 2006). However, there has been little systematic investigation of the process of the escalation of violence and the conditions for peace. My research addresses this shortcoming. My research is based on the assumption that there are latent conflicts and cleavages that carry high potential of radicalisation and escalating into large-scale violence, but that are settled without resorting to violence. Such latent conflicts might be prevented from escalation through successful negotiation and peaceful redistribution of political power and national wealth, or due to early international mediation. Empirically, the puzzle is this: why was there violent conflict in Georgia, Moldova, and Azerbaijan, when nothing similar happened in Crimea and the Baltic states; why was there civil war in Bosnia, but not in Montenegro?

Based on findings from the quantitative civil war literature, I focus on factors that have commonly been found to increase the risk of such large-scale violence (e.g. Hegre and Sambanis, 2006). I then analyse how domestic and transnational institutions have managed to peacefully resolve conflict under high-risk conditions, or have failed to do so. In these cases, I have been investigating under what conditions different institutions were able to limit the escalation of violence or whether and why they completely failed in preventing large-scale violent radicalisation. Current research has largely relied on investigating the role of domestic political regimes, such as democracy and non-democracy, when analyzing the impact of political institutions on civil war (e.g., Davenport & Armstrong, 2004; Hegre et al., 2001). Little attention has been paid to what exactly it is about political regimes that makes them more or less prone to violent conflict or able to diffuse conflict (e.g., Colaresi & Carey, 2008; Gates et al., 2006). My research is aimed at unpacking broad concepts of political regimes to reveal how particular political institutions affect peace with the goal of providing concrete policy recommendations and a framework for risk assessment. It will further our understanding of how political institutions can change incentives to successfully manage cleavages and facilitate the peaceful resolution of conflict instead of exacerbating cultural divisions and hostility into a security dilemma (Posen, 1993; Lake and Rothchild, 1997; Walter and Snyder, 1999). The other point of analysis is how other national institutions, such as welfare systems and the national economic framework can contribute to the prevention of violent radicalisation of conflict.

In addition to national institutions, the research focuses on transnational institutions and linkages as tools to establish and maintain peace and avoid conflict. Most research on armed conflict has ignored the impact of such institutions and linkages, but recent work has shown that ignoring cross-border and regional connections can be misleading when assessing the risk of civil war (Gleditsch, 2007). Main idea is to explore how such institutions contribute to preventing latent conflicts from escalating to violence. Transnational linkages that are known to be associated with conflict incidence, such as transnational ethnic communities, refugee flows and interstate rivalries, are used to identify high risk countries. It is necessary to evaluate how regional and national institutions, such as, for example, the European Union, can contribute to conflict management efforts and marginalize rele-

vant extra-territorial actors or provide representation, incentives and space for negotiation to contribute to conflict prevention. Such institutions may be reconfigured to decrease the risk of violent radicalisation, for example through conditionality applied by international organizations that changes incentives for and behaviour of conflict parties or by modifying bilateral relations between states in order to limit the risk of violent radicalisation.

To identify high-risk countries and situations, I have focused on the following factors, which have received substantial attention in the literature on civil war and have been found to increase the risk of civil war.

A.   **Economic opportunity.** A recent strand of theorizing about the incidence of violence and civil war has emphasized opportunity and greed as a major explanatory variable over more traditional grievance-based approaches (Collier and Hoeffler, 1998, 2001; Fearon and Laitin, 2003). While not without its critics (e.g., Sherman and Ballentine, 2001; Sambanis, 2004), economic opportunity is an important variable in analyses of violent radicalization, focusing on the economic and financial viability of rebellion and civil war. Understanding how economic conditions and opportunities, such as rebel groups being able to generate income through exploiting natural resources or governments being unable to adequately equip and pay their military due to poor tax revenues, is a significant dimension of understanding the conditions of peace and violent radicalisation more broadly.

B.   **Environmental factors.** The role of environmental factors in violent radicalisation and civil war has become a prominent explanatory element in the conflict literature. Recent research has investigated how resource scarcity and abundance, as well as climate change shape the conflict potential within and between countries (e.g., Homer-Dixon, 2001; Gleditsch et al., 2006; Furlong et al., 2006).

C.   **Organizational behaviour.** Another strand in the literature has recently identified organizational behaviour as another variable that may be causally related to the presence or absence of violence in inter-group relations and help explain the process of radicalisation and mobilisation (e.g., McAdam et al., 1996; Lichbach, 1995; Gates, 2002; Weinstein, 2007). Moreover, various datasets (e.g., MAROB) have been developed to test relationships between organisational behaviour and the incidence of violence. My idea is to analyze these links and examine the conditions under which particular organisational structures and modes of behaviour are likely to emerge. On this basis, it will be possible to draw policy-relevant conclusions on how to shape an environment in which patterns of violence-inducing organisational structures and behaviour can be prevented from emerging and which policy interventions need to be carried out to effectively contain violent escalation.

D.   **Social-psychological and emotional factors**. One strand in the literature on civil war has argued that the sheer intensity of violence experienced cannot simply be explained on the basis of rational choice theories. Rather, it is individual

and collective identities and the emotions on which they are based that help us understand the onset, duration, and intensity of violence (Horowitz 1985; Kaufman 2001; Petersen 2003; Ross 1993, 1995, 2007; Volkan 1998). A sociological and psychological perspective on the individual and collective processes underlying and driving violent radicalisation and preventing it, therefore, is an important complement to explanations of violent radicalisation. Understanding what kind of institutions can channel social-psychological and emotional factors away from the escalation of violence and towards peace will make a substantial contribution to our knowledge and understanding of the conditions under which peace prevails.

E.　**Cultural diversity.** The impact of cultural diversity, especially ethnic and religious heterogeneity, on civil war has attracted increasing attention (e.g., Reynal-Querol, 2002; Roeder, 2003; Sambanis, 2001; Wolff, 2006). In the framework of this project I investigate how such diversity can be managed by the implementation of institutional structures and constraints that mitigate problems, avoid the escalation of conflict and maintain peace.

Translating research findings into academic curricula

I expect my fellowship at UC Berkeley to make a number of ***concrete and substantial contributions to research-led teaching***. First, contributions are expected to existing modules on international relations/international security, for example in the form of specific lectures, seminars, and simulation games. Second, the fellowship encourages me to develop an entire specialisation (sets of modules) in the area of conflict and conflict management as a part of existing MA program at my university. Third, and in relation to this, I am now better equipped to supervise undergraduate and graduate dissertation projects in the thematic area of my research.

Typically, the thematic area of conflict and conflict management is **NOT** represented in curricula in Ukraine, but is an essential component in most western universities. Enabling me to develop coherent, theoretically well-grounded and policy relevant courses for the PoliSci/IR curriculum is important in enhancing knowledge about and understanding of the broader challenges to international relations/security today and thus essential in further developing viable curricula in this area in Ukraine.