What are social cohesion and social conflict?
What is the role of language in social cohesion/conflict?
What is the role of minority language rights and multilingualism in conflict and social cohesion?

JOSEPH LO BIANCO
University of Melbourne
21 October 2016
“Minority populations living in subnational conflict areas are often subjected to prolonged assaults on their identity that contribute to their perceptions of injustice. Such assaults are quite often policy driven such as language policies, citizenship criteria. “The main source of violence is state minority contestation, (for example addressing critical issues such as language policy)”.

p76, Parks, Colletta, Oppenheim, 2013, Contested Corners of Asia, The Asia Foundation
“language grief”: ethno-linguistic diversity and language problems are “pervasive sources of conflict”, and language grief “overlooked or downplayed” in conflict analysis.

Neither language differences nor grievances lead to violence, political protest yes, but not ethnic violence
Immanuel Kant
‘Perpetual Peace’, 1795.

Only a world of liberal republics engaging in free commerce can provide conditions for lasting world peace and bring an end to war between states.

“Liberal Peace Theory” a mainstay of US foreign policy.

Woodrow Wilson's approach to post WW-1 reconstruction at Versailles Peace Conference. Critical concepts in setting up of global architecture of economic management after WW-2 and the creation of UN.
Galtung’s Peace Terminology

Negative Peace
Positive Peace
Peacebuilding
Peacemaking
Peacekeeping
Structural violence
Root causes of conflict
Sustainable peace

These concepts are now part of the mainstream language of peace analysts and practitioners of peace mediations and policy.
New War Thinking

Emerging New Wars Thesis, post Cold War transformation of violent conflict, a corollary of transnationalism and globalisation.

Mary Kaldor and Mark Duffield

New wars fought by combinations of state and non-state networks. Based on identity politics to “fight in name of a label as opposed to ideology”; aim to achieve political, rather than physical, control of the population through fear and terror” (Kaldor, 2012)

War as “network enterprise”; “rhizomatic and anti-institutional in character”; does not follow “traditional state-based pattern of escalation, stalemate and decline” (Duffield, 2001)

Duffield (2001), Global Governance and the New Wars
Kaldor (2012), New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era
The Girl Who Stood Up for Education & Was Shot by the Taliban

Malala demanded girls be allowed to go to school, was shot in the head by Taliban on a school bus in 2012, awarded Nobel Peace Prize 2014

August 2015 the UN adopted Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs)

Goal 4 “peaceful and inclusive societies”
Goal 5 “ensure inclusive education”
Goal 16 “achieve equality” for girls and ethnic indigenous minorities.

UN appointed Malala ‘Ambassador’ for SDG in recognition of her struggle for education rights in societies where schooling is denied to girls. In her 2015 book she stresses importance of mother tongue education

Malala Yousafzai
Do language problems contribute to social conflict? Does language contribute to social cohesion?

Brown and Ganguly (2003) studied 15 multi-ethnic Asian countries. LP a technical failure and a political disaster in most cases often w ethnic violence. In 13 of the 15 cases governments dealt with ethnic language issues ‘poorly’ or ‘disastrously’.

Language important because of

*survival* (minority groups’ sense of existential threat)

*success* (research showing mother tongue education reduces education inequalities)

*symbolism* (language recognition legitimizing equal citizenship).

National elites adopt self-serving language policies and grossly disadvantage the poorest, rural and ethnic communities.
How we ask the question is critical

• Many monolingual societies are riven with conflict.
• Many multilingual societies have little or no conflict.
• Multilingualism does not correlate with either conflict or cohesion.
• Multilingualism is related to conflict and cohesion according to whether languages are aligned inequality.
“This is a Muslim community in a mainly Buddhist country and they speak their own Malay dialect. The fact that most don’t speak Thai means they have done poorly in the Thai monolingual school system and have not always gone on to higher education. As a result, they face problems finding work which makes it easier for youth to be drawn into conflict.”
“Role of Education in Peacebuilding”: synthesises findings from the exacerbating effects of education (language, history, citizenship-belonging) Lebanon, Nepal, Sierra Leone
Research by Mario Novelli and Allan Smith, Dec 2011

Proposal on Peacebuilding and Education presented to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Netherlands by UNICEF New York, September 2011

>>> Netherlands Grants for Peacebuilding activity:
e.g. conflict analysis, intervention tools
PBEA/LESC: Netherlands and UNICEF

Program to strengthen resilience, social cohesion and human security in conflict-affected contexts (vision).

Includes countries at risk of conflict, experiencing conflict and recovering from conflict.

Strengthens policies and practices in education for peacebuilding (strategic result).
LESC: Country Focus

Myanmar/Burma

PHASE 1: 2012-2014  Language education planning--focused on main ethnic clusters
PHASE II: 2014-2016: national language policy (Mon, Kayin and Kachin States, Special Education, Mandalay Conference, July Symposium etc)

Ms MALAR SAN

Malaysia

Stateless children in Sabah and Sarawak
Orang Asli in Peninsular Malaysia and also Borneo
Vernacular-National Schools (Chinese-Tamil-Malay)

Dr. VICTOR KARUNAN

Thailand

Three reports on Regional Status for Patani Malay, Intercultural Education in the Curriculum and Scaling Up Bilingual Education
Asia-wide
High Level Policy Makers.  Bangkok, 9 November 2013  UNESCO

Thailand:
South Thailand. Hat Yai, 5-7 February 2014

Myanmar
Indigenous and Ethnic Rights in Education, Yangon, 27-29 June, 2013:
LP Forum, Eastern Burma Community Schools. Mae Sot, 12-14 Feb 2014
Education & Social Cohesion. Mawlamyine, Myanmar, 27-28 May 2014
LP and Peacebuilding, Naypyidaw, Myanmar 29-30 July, 2014
LP and Peacebuilding, Mawlamyine, 6-7 November, 2014
Collective policy writing: Mawlamyine, 11-12 February, 2015
National coordination, Naypyidaw, March, 2015
Deaf and Sign Language, Yangon June 2015
Karen State Policy, Hpa’an, June 2015
Kachin State LP, Myitkyina, June 2-15
Deaf and Sign Language, Yangon 27 October, 2015
Karen State Policy, Hpa’an, 23-24 October, 2015
LP and Peacebuilding, Mawlamyine, 22 October , 2014
Currently a total of 20 dialogues

Malaysia
National & Vernacular Schools. Kuala Lumpur, 9-10 April 2014
Indigenous Communities. Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, 7-8 May 2014
Education and Social Cohesion, Kuching, Sarawak, 27-28 August 2014
Work so far has concentrated in Mon, Kayin (Karen) state, Kachin state, NPT, Yangon, Sagaing Division, Chin State and also with Displaced Persons in Thailand.
**Consultation**
* Observations, field visits, interviews all across Myanmar 2013-2016
* Circulation of principles with working groups at the state and Union level
* Incorporation of feedback and questionnaire responses

**Specialist inputs**
* The languages of Myanmar
* English in Myanmar and ASEAN
* Special needs (Sign Language and education for disadvantaged groups)
* Case studies of multilingualism, at community and local school level
* Policy Environment Scan

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**~ 20 Facilitated Dialogues**
at Union, region and state levels

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**The Mandalay Conference**
Feb 8-11, 2016

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Combining all these inputs into a consolidated policy proposal

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**An agreed draft language policy**

(Approval will be requested from government of the principles, policy aims and implementation plans)
Facilitated Dialogues on LP

2. Language Policy, EBCS, Mae Sot, 12-14 February, 2014
5. Language Policy and Peacebuilding, Mawlamyine, 6-7 November, 2014
8. Deaf and Sign Language, Yangon, June, 2015
9. Kayin State Policy, Hpa’an, June 2015
10. Kachin State Language Policy, Myitkyina, June 2, 2015
11. Deaf and Sign Language, Yangon, 27 October, 2015
13. Language Policy and Peacebuilding, mawlamyine, 22 October, 2015
17. Mon State Language Policy, Mawlamyine, January 2016
18. Kachin LP writing, Myitkyina, 14-16 March 2016
19. Mon state LP launch, 19 March 2016
FDs in Myanmar
Participant views

“I love the policy, example and explanations to support mother languages to be used in education system”
(Mawlamyine)

For me best is ways of MTB-MLE teaching, to develop ethnic language, objective of policy, short/long turn teaching”
(Mawlamyine)

The conversation with college principals and professor, exchange and sharing of education knowledge and rich diverse language (Naypyidaw)

Process of building up content of policy. Examples, especially how to rescue dying languages and the next example (Naypyidaw)

The technique of drawing and making consensus to promote peace in Myanmar (Naypyidaw)
National Symposium July 2016

July 11-13 in Naypyitaw
First Lady, Daw Su Su Lwin, Minister for Education, Dr Myo Thein Gyi and Minister for Ethnic Affairs, Naing Thet Lwin, UNICEF Representative, Dr Bertrand Bainvel

Reports and guidance from policy drafting teams in Mon, Kayin and Kachin states.

Session by U Aung Naing Oo, Vice-Chair of Mon State Parliament, on the role of state governments and parliaments in endorsement and implementation of language policy.

Strong representative delegation from all state Hluttaws and district administrations

Naing Thet Lwin is an ethnic-Mon, current and first Minister of Ethnic Affairs in the government of President Htin Kyaw.

Dr Myo Thein Gyi, current Minister (immediate predecessors) Dr Khin San Yee, 2014-March 2016; Aung San Suu Kyi, 30 March 2016-6 April 2016, and Su Su Lwin, MP for Thongwa in the House of Representatives, wife of President of Myanmar, and a critical figure in education reform policy for the country.
Social Cohesion

The term “social cohesion” has different meanings with three common elements:

- social inclusion
- social capital
- social mobility
TRUST, INCLUSION, MOBILITY

“A cohesive society works towards the wellbeing of all its members, fights exclusion and marginalisation, creates a sense of belonging, promotes trust, and offers its members the opportunity of upward mobility.”

OECD

—

“resilience...not absence of tension, but the ability to resolve it”

Vincent Pang, University of Malaysia, Sabah
Sustainable Peacebuilding in Education: An Analytic Framework
Mario Novelli, Mieke Lopes Cardozo, Alan Smith
(Research Consortium on Education and Peacebuilding Universities of Sussex, Amsterdam and Ulster)

- Addressing the legacies of conflict
- Transitional justice
- Truth, Justice, Reparations
- Developing social cohesion
- Building new relationships of trust
- Recognition of diversity in the structures, processes and content of education in terms of gender, language, politics, religion, ethnicity, culture and ability in conflict transformation
- Ensuring equitable participation in decision making
- Developing a Democratic and participatory culture
- Right to organise, protest, engage with decisions that affect them
- Respecting diversity and identities through education
- Ensuring equitable participation in decision making at all levels of the education system
SLOW ACTING EFFECTS

FAST ACTING EFFECTS
Some ways education can stoke conflict & specifically language and literacy education and policy

GENERAL

• Education is sometimes used as a weapon in cultural repression of minorities;
• Manipulation of history and textbook content for political purposes;
• When equal access to education is denied, e.g. through unequal funding or discrimination, this can fuel grievances that may lead to conflict.
• The governance structures in place for representation and participation in decision-making in education can be potential sources of conflict if not transparent, inclusive and accountable.

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

• Slow acting effects: literacy, inappropriate language of instruction
• Fast acting effects: hate speech
• Unequal access to dominant languages and dominant literacy
• Differential access to ‘capital’ in curriculum, i.e., to valued knowledge
• Poorest, most remote, indigenous, ethnic minority, female and disabled children particularly disadvantaged.
• In all LESC countries ethnic minorities are overwhelmingly disadvantaged in all schooling, but with MTB-MLE initiatives the achievement gap is lowered, children stay on at school longer, and school has fewer alienating effects on them and their families.
LESC AIMS and ACHIEVEMENTS

CONFLICT ANALYSIS

Section 6 of Synthesis report sets out 9 major points of connection between ‘language’ and ‘social cohesion’

“Toolkit” to appear soon
“Suggestions” document circulating

INTERVENTION TOOLS

• MLE policy can and should be designed via Facilitated Dialogues: 35 in the region with excellent effect
• Action research
• LP processes and understandings