Title: Education peace building deeply divided societies

Duration: 42.42 mins

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Thanks everyone for having me tonight. It's great to actually have a chance to finally talk about my research in a bit of time. This talk will not focus on the whole spectrum of cultural institutions but it will look specifically at education and peace building in deeply divided society. It will draw on the work I did for my PhD and that was published in my recent monograph with [Palgrave - 0:00:23] but also on some work that I'm doing here with Stefan Wolfe and other people in the political settlements research group and specifically on the work we're doing around creating a big data set of political agreements in internal conflicts.

So what I'll do in about 45 minutes hopefully is first talk about the relationship between formal education and conflict or peace. Essentially there are debates that formal education, so schooling or university education that takes place in formal settings might not be the most important influence on a person's identity and on their perception of their surroundings. However, there are some recent researches that show that it does have an impact and it specifically has an impact on children internalisation of identities, on their perception of others as well as on their perceptions of a state and this recent research was carried out a lot in Northern Ireland by people like [Connelly and Mat .. - 0:01:29]. If you're interested in this topic I highly recommend that you have a look at their work. It looks at children's perceptions of others since they are three years old so it's very topical. The second reason why formal education is important is the fact that schools, unlike families, peer groups and other informal institutions, can be reformed centrally after civil wars.   So

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there is a space for us to have an impact on what happens in the immediate post-conflict phase and have a positive impact on that.

The second part of the talk will look at formal education in peace processes and it will use the new ICCS data set of political agreements in internal conflicts which is not fully completed yet but we have the first results out of it, to understand what is included, what approaches are adopted and what the most frequent approaches to education reforms are in peace processes throughout the world. It's important to look at peace processes and peace agreements because authors like Davies show that what happens in the immediate post-conflict phase tends to crystallise and the reforms that are being implemented while peace is being negotiated – and at the time of negotiation of an agreement – tend to crystallise. So this is something that we need to be very aware of.

The third part of this talk will talk about formal education in the aftermath of a peace process and specifically look at different constrains to the implementation of education reforms and it will do so through reference to my field base, the study of three divided societies. Megan O'Leary talked about the meta-conflict that occurs when you talk about any conflict and part of the meta-conflict over these three societies is a conflict over their name. So in the case of Northern Ireland, depending on which community you come from, you might talk about the region using a different name, such as 'North' or 'Ulster' or 'Northern Ireland' for example. In this talk I will talk about Northern Ireland more generally. The same applies to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia which is known within the country as the 'Republic of Macedonia', despite the fact that it doesn't really encompass the whole region which historically has been known as Macedonia and which has been partitioned between Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia during the first Balkan war.   Because of this meta-conflict and because of ease of talk, I'll sometimes refer to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia as simply 'Macedonia', just for short. And for Lebanon I'll address its name and its heritage more broadly and more

deeply when we go and look at controversies over the history curriculum in Lebanon which I'll talk about in a second.

Right, so, what is the relationship between education and conflict, or education and peace? There was a Unicef report by [0:05:05] in 2000 which talked about the two phases of education in ethnic conflict and this report was then picked up in another excellent work by [0:05:16] produced for the FID in 2003. What they argue is essentially that education is not an ambiguous force for good in deeply divided societies and in societies that undergo conflict, but rather it can have two different impacts. It can exacerbate conflicts, it can perpetuate it over time, but it can also act as a catalyst for peace and stability in the aftermath of violence and this is because, as you can see in this spiral diagram, schools can replicate or challenge political values and patterns of authority and that the research about it comes from a tradition in the 1960s and 70s embodied in works like [0:06:07] and [0:06:07] works about the relationship between politics, inequalities within societies and schooling. Education also produces and reproduces social identities and in this context works related to social identity theory are particularly useful to frame our understanding of schooling. This is because of four main ways in which education acts upon children and upon society at large. The first way is potentially by indoctrinating and recruiting children for military activities and you might have this in very obvious ways such as instances where children are being kidnapped from schools to be recruited by militias, or you might have instances such as what happened allegedly in Iran during the Iran/Iraq war when children were apparently handed over plastic keys to paradise to encourage them to join into martyrdom in the war. But there are also more subtle ways in which schools can be militarised. An obvious example could be the recent idea that we should implement a military ethos in British schools which has been promoted in the last few years. The second way which education can foster peace or exacerbate conflict is by conveying a sanctioned or [0:07:45] culture and here we're talking about curricular contents such as languages, such as the teaching of religions or symbols about religion, or the teaching of history as we will explore later. The third

way is the fact that schools can entrench or erode the social economic inequality of different communities in a state and this is most obvious in cases like in [0:07:45] apartheid South Africa where you have segregated education systems which entrench and perpetuate the social economic inequality of the black community, but in more subtle ways can happen in a lot of different contexts. And the fourth way is the fact that schools further allegiance or opposition to a state and they do so through their hidden curriculums, so the symbols, practices and whatever happens within the school such as singing an anthem, saluting a flag, personalising the state into a picture of a president or a picture of an important historical figure.

So much of the literature argues that these four functions of education that has such an important impact on both conflict and peace are accomplished through three main aspects of schools, which are contents – so the curricula – structures, so whether schools are separate or mixed depending on the background of children attending that school, and wider patterns of inequality and exclusion that might be reproduced within schools and that way they might be perpetuated in education and beyond. And if you're interested in these three different aspects, Gallagher gives a very nice overview of how they apply to the case of Northern Ireland in particular.

So there are some key assumptions or key findings in the field of education and conflict, or education and peace, and they all generate several interesting questions - well, questions that I believe are interesting at least. The existing literature does suggest first that increasing numbers of peace processes address formal education. A 2008 study by Save the Children was then picked up in 2010 by [0:10:18] has been published widely and it argues that two thirds of peace processes between 1989 and 2005, in increasing numbers, addressed formal education. However, if you go and look at the study itself you find out that this study is based on 37 peace processes out of over 300 that were concluded in that period and that they don't only focus on civil wars; they also focus on inter-state conflict, internationalised conflict. So they sort of compare apples with oranges. So the big question remains: do

increasing numbers of peace processes address formal education? Second, Smith and [0:11:03] in their 2003 study identified three main approaches within education systems and two education reforms. They argued that education systems can be assimilationist, so they can be characterised by single institutions which operate according to the assumptions of the dominant community and where minority needs are marginalised or suppressed. They can be separatist or how I like to call them, pluralist. So separate institutions or separate voices are given to different and homogenous groups within the education system and they can be integrationist, or as I call them, [syncretist 0:11:48] and they can result in common but diverse institutions that reflect the diversity of the population both through their structures, through their hidden curricula and through their manifest curricula. There is a consensus within the literature that education reforms best address the roots of conflict be expanding access to schooling to reduce previous marginalisation and by adopting a syncretistic approach to a curricula. But what we don't know is which aspects of education are actually tackled by these processes and what is the dominant approach within these processes to the reform of education systems? That's something that I'll also look at.

The third idea is that the primary challenge to implementation of educational reforms in the aftermath of [0:12:43] conflict tend to be practical, meaning that there are obvious challenges in terms of the funding, infrastructure and other constraints. The big question is, is this the case? Is there any other constraint that we should be aware of and this relates to the fourth idea which is that education reforms don't happen in vacuums. However, a lot of the literature about education reforms in the aftermath of a conflict doesn't look at structural constraints such as socio-economic factors and in the case of my personal interest, constitutional and political structures which might constrain education reforms over the long term. So my question in relation to this is do political systems established at the end of conflicts constrain education reform and how do they do this? So this is what I work on and this is what I'll talk about, essentially.

Part of the research and part of addressing these key research questions is looking at this new ICCS data set of political agreements in internal conflicts, which we're very very proud of because finally it's coming together. It's a data set collecting the provisions including 228 intra-state agreements which aim to end violent conflict, which have been grouped into 119 peace processes and we mean peace processes as packages of agreements which address the same conflict and are deemed to constitute an organic agreement as a whole. So by looking at peace processes rather than at single agreements, we avoid duplication of provisions and false negatives and false positives in coding. They look at 52 states over 5 continents, so they're pretty comprehensive, over two decades, so from 1989, the end of the Cold War until 2008. The peace agreements are drawn from the UN peacemaker peace agreements database in case you want to go and have a look. They are all coded for a number of provisions – the dark purple ones – including the ones I'm particularly interested in, so power sharing, different aspects of power sharing – executive, legislative, judiciary, territorial, economic – as well as provisions about culture and institutions at large, so symbols, cultural associations, media support, as well as education specifically. The coding about education is broken down into categories by the type of education reform, meaning reform of the contents of the management, of funding of education and of access or inclusion, as well as in terms of the approach, so whether the reform is integrationist, assimilationist or pluralist. So that gives us a good snap-shot of where we are in terms of reforms in peace processes.

So what does it tell us? So the data set shows that unlike the finding of Save The Children report, not massive amounts of peace processes address education reform. If you look up until 2005 there's no evidence that two thirds of education, that peace processes deal with education reforms at all. However, in the last few years you can see that as a proportion of the total number of agreements of peace processes concluded, you can see that the line is increasing so it's approaching. We have the idea that things are getting better but there is by no means this great spike in the number of peace processes that address education reforms. When we look at how education

reforms specifically address the roots of conflict we have some equally interesting findings. So the data set reveals that as expected, most peace processes reform education to expand access to schooling for formally marginalised groups and this might mean things like the scholarships or it might mean increasing funding for schooling in the languages of certain excluded minorities and it is strongly linked to provisions for the establishment of justice and the redressing of marginalisation within these countries. You can also see that the reform of management and funding is also quite prominent if you look at different peace processes and that usually relates to provisions for decentralisation of control, of education specifically. So for giving local communities and previously warring communities more control over the contents and the management of schooling. On the other hand the reform of curricula is quite minor in terms of the peace processes in which it appears. Again, if we look at the single clauses in the different peace processes it is confirmed that most of them have a syncretistic approach. So essentially they're seeking to shape schools into inclusive institutions which are diverse as well. Just about the same proportion of educational clauses tend to take an assimilationist approach or a pluralist or a separatist approach. So that tells us that peace agreements tend to promote a more syncretistic approach to education reforms, which is in line with the expectations of current research and with the recommendations of current research. However, it is known that only a minor proportion of the reforms prescribed by peace agreements get actually implemented in their aftermath, so it's important to also look at the different challenges to this implementation. The most obvious culprit for non-implementation of education reforms tends to be the usual funding issue.

Now it's obvious that conflict and post-conflict countries tend not to invest widely in education reform and in the improvement of educational services. However, if we look at the level of official development assistance invested in education, it's not as bad as you could expect, particularly looking at the level of ODA invested in conflict and post-conflict countries. By this I just mean the countries in the data set that we're looking at. So it is a level which is above

average for sure. So this suggests that whereas perhaps commitment on the domestic level in financial terms is not as strong as you would like to see it, international action seems to be quite on task and they seem to be committed. You can also notice a slight decline in the percentage of total official development assistance invested in education between 2002 and 2012. There are no more recent data so it's not really clear whether it's simply a glitch or whether it's a wider trend, so we need to wait for a few more years until they publish another set of data on [0:20:51].

The second idea is that international players as well as domestic players are not committed to the implementation of education reform. So to measure the idea of commitment we decided to code provisions within every peace process in terms of whether it was a soft or a hard provision. So hard provisions are those provisions that contain deadlines that are entrenched in the constitution or that appear in implementation timetables within the peace process. However, soft provisions on the other hand are provisions which are just mentioned and suggest less commitment to their implementation and if you go and track actual implementation after peace agreements, it is quite closely correlated with whether the provision is a hard or a soft clause within the peace agreement itself.   Now you can see that soft clauses have been increasing massively and there are many more soft clauses than hard clauses and this might explain why a lot of these reforms are not implemented. It might just explain the fact that perhaps these reforms are just something nice that you can write in a peace process and forget about it when it's time to implement them.   However, I also believe that there are some wider constrains to the implementation of certain reforms and these wider constrains have to do with the context in which implementation has to take place, and specifically with the political context.

So to explore the idea, well, to explore the hypothesis that political systems place a constrain on the type of education reforms that you can implement after a violent conflict, I looked at three post-conflict deeply divided societies. Again, even the term 'post-conflict' can be controversial in certain cases,

particularly in the case of Lebanon which is alternatively considered as post-conflict, pre-conflict, conflict, society depending on what region you look at, in at what time frame and at what conflict you're considering. But there is evidenced of declining levels of violence within each of these societies since the major outbreaks in the case of Northern Ireland between 1968 and 1998 with the troubles, in the case of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in 2001 with conflict between the NLA, the Albanian Rebel Army and the Macedonia security forces, and in the case of Lebanon in the case of the 1975-1989 civil war that engulfed the country. So as you can guess from the map, the three societies have very very little in common. The only thing that stands out is the fact that they all experience violent conflict and that they all try to manage them or regulate them by adopting complex [0:24:12] power sharing which is a method of conflict management which I'll briefly explain. Is everybody familiar with power sharing? [silence] Sort of. Excellent. So at least this slide is useful.

So complex [0:24:31] power sharing is also known as power sharing, despite being just one of the different approaches to power sharing out there. It's a mechanism for the management or amelioration of violent intra-state conflicts and it prescribes elements of self-government and shared government. Specifically in terms of self-government, it prescribes autonomy for [0:24:58] warring communities as well as their rights to veto any reforms that they feel threatens their identity, their culture and their autonomy itself. In terms of shared government, you have provisions for executive power sharing which might translate in big coalition governments where every group gets represented or it might translate into automatic formulas to make sure that every party that achieves a certain proportion of the votes gets included in government, as well as provisions for proportionality. So the sharing, proportionality in terms of electoral provisions, so proportional electoral loads as well as the sharing of funding on the proportional basis depending on the demographic strengths of certain communities, or in certain cases even the sharing of administrative posts proportionally to the demographic or political strength of different communities and is certainly the case in Lebanon.

There are also some complementary mechanisms that make power sharing complex and these complementary mechanisms are the ones that we deal with a lot within the political settlements research group, so they are things like territorial self-governance, super power intra-state bodies, transitional justice provision or in my case, provisions for education reforms. The peace processes in Lebanon, in Northern Ireland and in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia are all cases of complex [0:26:44] power sharing because they do contain all of these provisions, although in different configurations and with different degrees of liberalism or rigidity. All of these cases also include extensive – well, pretty extensive – educational reforms by comparison with other peace processes. And you have a summary of them here. If you look at the three peace agreements in Lebanon, Northern Ireland and Macedonia, you can see that they tackle a curricula, they tackle the management and finance of education. Can you read? It might be a bit tiny. The management and finance of education and they also tackle the structure as well as access to education for formally marginalised groups. They include assimilationist reforms, syncretistic reforms as well as pluralistic reforms. Now the traffic lights are supposed to show which of the reforms are fully implemented – in green – which are partly implemented – in orange – and which are not implemented at all – in red. It's pretty clear just from this table that assimilationist reforms tend to be marginalised, pluralistic reforms are implemented fully, whereas the record for syncretistic reforms is a bit more mixed. So why could this be the case? Can we look for a reason within the political system itself? This is where my qualitative study comes in and the study included over 75 interviews with different government members, spokespersons of political parties, bureaucrats, scholars, curriculum writers, officers in international organisations, members of NGOs, a lot of journalists and others, who came from all the main communities within the different societies as well as being representors of international organisations and international servers. The questions I asked were very vague questions. It turns out that it's very useful to ask vague questions when you go for fieldwork but vague questions that revolved around the relationship between power

sharing as a political system and educational reform as a force for peace, stability and social cohesion in the different countries.   So what has changed in education since the conclusion of the peace agreement? Does education contribute to social cohesion peace and reconciliation? And which education reforms do you think are most necessary and what are the challenges to these reforms? I also used official documents, reports, newspapers cuttings, as well as a lot of secondary literature to inform the findings.

My hypothesis was that education reforms tend to be included in peace agreements if at least one of the previously warring communities supports it. So the idea is that through this hypothesis you would explain the contradictions within the peace agreements as instances of constructive ambiguity which help get to an agreement faster.   However, once the agreement is finalised and once a new political system is in place, which is characterised by power sharing, the second hypothesis is that the core political values and political practices will affect implementation of the reforms included in the peace agreement, and specifically only the reforms that will be supported by all the affected communities will then be implemented. This would essentially explain the discrepancy between what is written in the peace agreement and what is ultimately implemented. It would also explain why separatist or pluralist reforms tend to be implemented more frequently because they affect a lesser number of communities; they only affect perhaps one community and its rights to autonomy rather than affecting every single community in the state.

Now my findings tended to confirm this hypothesis. They suggested that shared government is reproduced at all levels of the administration once power sharing is established and this makes it impossible to reach any decisions without the consensus of all the affected communities, which explains why educational reforms are not implemented unless they are supported by affected communities. The findings also suggest that the core value of autonomy and pluralism also impacts on implementation of education reforms and often prevents the implementation of assimilationist reforms,

which explicitly challenge values such as autonomy and pluralism in deeply divided societies.

So just to give you an idea – we still have time, right?

[Yeah, yeah]

Excellent!

[You've got at least another ten minutes]

Oh, excellent. So just to give you an example, I thought I would run you through the vicissitudes of Lebanon's common history curriculum.   As you may recall, the [0:32:43] agreement prescribed creation of a unified curriculum for history and citizenship education. Now, in 1992, curriculum aims were established and approved for history and the curriculum was published, six books were drafted and nothing happened. In 99, new curriculum aims were established and approved, new curriculum was published and some committees were convened to draft textbooks. The textbooks were completed by 2001 and distributed to the schools and then there was a controversy and the textbooks were withdrawn from circulation. In 2009, again new curriculum aims were established, a new curriculum was presented to the Council of Ministry and a new controversy erupted with clashes on the street, violence and again, nothing happened. So Lebanon doesn't have a unified history of curriculum at present. A unified history curriculum exemplifies quite clearly the idea of an assimilationist education reform because you would formulate a unified narrative of the past and convey it in the same way to children in every single school.

Now what's interesting about all these attempts is the fact that every curriculum drafting committee and every textbook graphic committee included members of the main religious and political communities of Lebanon. One of the Directors of the Centre for Educational Reform and Development argued

that it wasn't pure academia, so he wasn't too proud of the way they went about it, but it was the only way to achieve the consensus needed for them publishing the aims, publishing the books and getting schools to adopt those books, which they would have rejected seeing their community was not represented during the negotiations. However, despite the reproduction of a system of power sharing even at a lower administrative level, you can see that all three attempts failed. In 2001, they failed over a controversy about the description of the Muslim invasion of the [0:35:11] in 634/638 AD and the argument was that in Chapter 3 of the textbook, the title of a table was they all went and Lebanon stayed independence of a nation. The Minister of Education reading this page argued that the Arabs felt like they were treated like any other coloniser, like the French who came to Lebanon and then left; like the Romans who came to Lebanon and then left. He argued that Arabs and Muslims in particular would feel discriminated by that sort of portrayal of the history of Lebanon which resonated more clearly in his argument with the Christian narrative of an independent Lebanon who had a [0:36:01] heritage and was linked with the Mediterranean rather than being linked with the Arab work. Now there are a lot of arguments over whether that's the case and over whether there were other interests at play, but the result of this controversy was that all the textbooks were physically withdrawn from the schools and put on the side and they were not seen again – the whole series. In 2011 when the new curriculum was presented to the Council of Ministers, again you had a controversy over the portrayal of the contribution of different communities to the independence of Lebanon. So in this case the controversy focused around 2005 and the events that saw the assassination of ex-Prime Minister Rafic Hariri, massive demonstrations on the streets of Beirut resulting in the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanese territory. Certain political parties, generally the ones connected with Christian communities, argued that that was a [0:37:12] revolution that led to Lebanese independence, a second Lebanese independence. Other political parties, particularly Hezbollah, argued that [0:37:24] revolution was a name that was coined by an American diplomat so it was offensive locally and it was also offensive to portray Syria

as an occupier when Syria was instrumental in ending the real occupation of Lebanese territory, which was actually Israel's occupation of the South.

So this controversy which started within the Council of Ministers, which provides seats for all of Lebanon's 18 communities, spilled over into the streets, it led to violent clashes and the Minister of Education at that point decided to declare a moratorium on historic textbooks, and quite obviously the political and security situation in Lebanon since 2012 has deteriorated to the point that it's really not possible to tackle the issue of history books again.

So how does this story relate to my hypothesis? Essentially the examination of the story of history curricula and the history of education policy in Lebanon suggests that the Muslim communities have   historically been the ones pushing for more assimilationist or integrationist approaches to education reforms in Lebanon. At the end of the civil wars you had these communities asking for inclusion of provisions on common history textbooks in the peace agreement and as hypothesised, because a relevant community asked for a reform, the reform appeared in the [0:39:08] agreement which [0:39:11] the implementation of common history textbooks. However, the establishment of power sharing resulted in two particular changes. First you had the patterns of consensual decision making. As I mentioned, every committee included all the main relevant communities of Lebanon, which meant that no draft of the curriculum or no draft of the textbook could be passed unless it was supported by all those relevant communities.   And second, you also have a more material issue related to values, such as pluralism and the valuing of the autonomous and independent history connected to the different communities of the Lebanon, which would be challenged by the existence of a unified history book of itself.   So the interaction between these practices and values which are generated by power sharing ensured that no history curriculum exists at present in Lebanon and you have over 28 history textbook series which are taught in different schools and generally reflect at least partly the narratives and the histories of Lebanon's different communities.

OK, so do we have a few conclusions? This was a very quick overview of my research but there are six main points that can be taken home. First is the fact that unfortunately relatively few peace processes address education, formal education, and that their number is not increasing massively. So it would be worth having a look and perhaps encouraging policy makers to pay a bit more attention to education in the aftermath of conflict. Most clauses about post-conflict educational reform actually promote a syncretistic approach to schooling and this confirms both the prescriptions and the findings of a lot of the theory about education and conflict. Again, when they address education, peace processes mostly promote the expansion of access to schooling to redress in the most obvious way the injustices of the past. However, we also see that many education reforms, especially those that are syncretistic and assimilationist in focus, tend not to be implemented in the post-conflict phase and lack of funding and infrastructure as well as lack of commitment partly explains the lack of implementation of such education reforms. However, it's also important to look at the values and practices of different political systems as a form of constrain on the implementation of education reforms themselves and perhaps of reforms at large after peace agreements. And particularly I argue that power sharing places some very specific constrains on which education reforms can be implemented and how in the aftermath of a peace process.

That's it.

[Thank you]

That's all right.

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