The Contested Role of Education in Conflict and Fragility

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This book brings together new thinking on education’s complex and evolving role in conflict and fragility. The changing nature of conflict, from inter- to intra-state, and with shifting geopolitical power balances, demands a reconceptualization of where education is positioned. Claims that education on its own can be an agent of conflict transformation are disputed. Deliberate attempts at peace education are not without critics and controversies. This collection aims to generate new realism from empirical and reflective accounts in a variety of countries and political contexts, as well as provide innovative methodological approaches to the study of education and conflict. The particular distinctiveness of the volume is the emphasis on ‘contested’ – it includes the debates and disagreements on the many faces of education in conflict, as well as material on teaching controversial issues in fragile contexts. Crucially, it underscores how education itself exists within highly contested projects of state, nation and region building.

As well as overview comparative chapters, the collection encompasses a range of specific contexts, geographically and educationally – Algeria, Canada, El Salvador, Israel, Kenya, Mexico, Morocco, Nepal, Tunisia, UK and US, with settings that include schools, higher education and refugee camps. Focuses range from analyses of education in historical conflicts to contemporary issues such as post Arab Spring transformations. Perennial concerns about religion, colonialism, protest, integration, cohesion, emergencies, globalization and narrative are given new slants.

Yet in spite of the debates, a cross-cutting consensus emerges as the crucial need for critical pedagogy and critical theory if education is to make any mark at all on conflict and fragility.
The Contested Role of Education in Conflict and Fragility
THE WORLD COUNCIL OF COMPARATIVE EDUCATION SOCIETIES

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Scope:

The WCCES is an international organization of comparative education societies worldwide and is an NGO in consultative partnership with UNESCO. The WCCES was created in 1970 to advance the field of comparative education. Members usually meet every three years for a World Congress in which scholars, researchers, and administrators interact with colleagues and counterparts from around the globe on international issues of education.

The WCCES also promotes research in various countries. Foci include theory and methods in comparative education, gender discourses in education, teacher education, education for peace and justice, education in post-conflict countries, language of instruction issues, Education for All. Such topics are usually represented in thematic groups organized for the World Congresses. Besides organizing the World Congresses, the WCCES has a section in CERCular, the newsletter of the Comparative Education Research Centre at the University of Hong Kong, to keep individual societies and their members abreast of activities around the world.

The WCCES comprehensive web site is http://www.wcces.com

As a result of these efforts under the auspices of the global organization, WCCES and its member societies have become better organized and identified in terms of research and other scholarly activities. They are also more effective in viewing problems and applying skills from different perspectives, and in disseminating information. A major objective is advancement of education for international understanding in the interests of peace, intercultural cooperation, observance of human rights and mutual respect among peoples.

The WCCES Series was established to provide for the broader dissemination of discourses between scholars in its member societies. Representing as it does Societies and their members from all continents, the organization provides a special forum for the discussion of issues of interest and concern among comparativists and those working in international education. The first series of volumes was produced from the proceedings of the World Council of Comparative Education Societies XIII World Congress, which met in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, 3–7 September, 2007 with the theme of Living Together: Education and Intercultural Dialogue.

The first series included the following titles:

Volume 1: Tatto, M. & Mincu, M. (Eds.), Reforming Teaching and Learning
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Volume 1: Napier, D.B. & Majhanovich, S. (Eds.) Education, Dominance and Identity
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Volume 3: Ginsburg, M. (Ed.) Preparation, Practice & and Politics of Teachers
Volume 4: Majhanovich, S. & Geo-JaJa, M.A. (Eds.) Economics, Aid and Education
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The third series of volumes has been developed from the proceedings of the World Council of Comparative Education Societies XV World Congress which met in Buenos Aires, Argentina, June 24-28, 2013 with the theme of New Times, New Voices. This series will include a number of volumes under preparation including:

Volume 1: Gross, Z. & Davies L. (Eds.) The Contested Role of Education in Conflict and Fragility
Volume 4: Majhanovich, S. & Malet, R. (Eds.) Building Democracy in Education on Diversity
Volume 5: Olson, J., Heidi Biseth, H. & Ruiz, G. (Eds.) Educational Internationalisation: Academic Voices and Public Policy
The Contested Role of Education in Conflict and Fragility

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INTRODUCTION
The intention of this book is to bring together new thinking and research on education’s complex and evolving role in conflict and fragility. In different contexts around the world, at different levels of education, and from different theoretical lenses, education occupies a contested space. The changing nature of conflict, from inter- to intra-state, and with shifting geopolitical power balances, means the need to reconceptualize where education is positioned. Claims that education on its own can be an agent of conflict transformation are disputed. Deliberate attempts at peace education are not without critics and controversies. The aim of this collection is to generate new realism from empirical and reflective accounts in a variety of countries and political contexts, as well as provide innovative methodological approaches to the study of education and conflict.

Initiatives in peace education, peace-building, conflict resolution and social cohesion are rooted in history, but also linked to visions of the future. Studying education’s role in peace and conflict is often justified by the need to help secure the future against further violations of human rights, whether based on ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability. Does it accomplish those ends? At a time when many societies are more diverse than ever before, legitimate concerns about nationalism and xenophobia underscore the importance of an inquiry into whether conflict sensitivity and critical political education can function to develop mutual understanding and shared goals.

The particular distinctiveness of our volume is the emphasis on ‘contested’ – that it includes the debates and disagreements on the role of education in conflict, as well as material on teaching controversial issues in fragile contexts. Such concerns are not just about contexts labelled fragile states, but recognition that social cohesion can be fragile even in countries seen as stable. This is never more apparent than in the spread of ISIS and its effects on community perceptions in many countries. Education policy must be scrutinized anew: we find for example how education policy is now learning from conflict states, rather than the other way round. Methodologies of ‘measuring’ conflict and fragility need constant critical review, as do the theoretical frameworks which underpin quantitative and qualitative research.
The idea for this volume came from the thematic group on Education and Conflict at the World Council of Comparative Education Congress in Buenos Aires in 2013. Many of the chapters in this collection stem from papers presented and discussed there, updated and revised after critical review. Others were specially commissioned. As well as overview comparative chapters, the collection encompasses a range of specific contexts, geographically and educationally – Algeria, Canada, El Salvador, Israel, Kenya, Mexico, Morocco, Nepal, Tunisia, UK and US, with settings that include schools, higher education and refugee camps. Focuses range from analyses of education in historical conflicts to contemporary issues such as post Arab Spring transformations. Perennial concerns about religion, colonialism, protest, cohesion, globalization and narrative are given new slants. There are unique and original takes on a whole variety of contestations.

The structure of the book is to drill down from broad theoretical approaches, through education policy to the people involved and then the pedagogy. There are of course overlaps, and the more theoretical chapters are not dehumanized any more than the pedagogical chapters are atheoretical. But the four sections do reflect different concerns and overall starting points of the writers. Crucially for this volume, they all echo actual or potential debates.

The first section, *Debates on Theory and Methodology*, introduces three very different focal points, and three different – but complementary – demands for new thinking. Michalinos Zembylas and Zvi Bekerman ask for a rethink of the theoretical grounding of integrated education in conflicted societies. Policy on integration can rest on essentialised differentiations, and the authors argue for a new theoretical language on integrated education. After a review of shared or integrated education historically and empirically, they discuss the main theoretical traditions which have seemed to justify integration in the education sphere – social cohesion and acculturation theory, the contact hypothesis and multiculturalism. This critique, particularly of the assumption that there is something called ‘group identity’ or ‘group culture’, leads to re-theorization, using Butler’s concept of vulnerability and Kristeva’s analysis of interaction and proximity. Collectively, these ideas offer a different vision and practice of integration and sense of community in conflicted societies, a new point of departure, a renewed politics of recognition. In its contentious concerns that integrated education may reproduce existing structures of division, this chapter is an excellent place to kickstart debates.

Julia Paulson and Robin Shields show how the concept of fragility – which is now part of the language of conflict and education – introduces further complexity into causes, effects and interconnections between violent conflict, poor educational performance and instability. Yet the definition and measurement of concepts like fragility are notoriously difficult. The authors offer new insights, based on their very recent research which shows that conflict and fragility have clearly differing effects on education. While detailed examination of data confirms that the greater the intensity of conflict, the greater the negative effect on school enrolment, and that there is a statistically significant relationship between state fragility and educational
enrolment, a startling finding for some is that when controlling for fragility, the relationship between conflict and enrolment was no longer significant. Is fragility then a common cause of both conflict and changes in enrolment? There follows a detailed examination of current (somewhat narrow) measures of conflict and a critique of the methodological problems around of the sorts of data sets used. A similar detailed critique of shifting and ambiguous concepts and measures of fragility comes next. A key reminder is that any measurement of fragility is simultaneously a theory of how a society should function. However, the concept is vague and ambiguous. The authors’ in-depth scrutiny of a wealth of statistical data together with examination of different indices of conflict and fragility mean this chapter is invaluable – indeed essential – for any researcher seeking to establish connections in the education-conflict-fragility nexus.

The third chapter in this first section takes yet another lens, and in fact is called ‘changing the prism’ – this time with the spotlight on the education in emergencies (EiE) field. Christine Monaghan explores how the discipline of International Relations (IR) offers possibilities for a critical research agenda in this field. While there have already been paradigm shifts in asking for reframing EiE in a broader discourse of security studies, Monaghan goes further in advocating IR approaches. Of the three major paradigms of IR – realism, constructivism and liberal institutionalism, Monaghan argues that constructivism offer scholars in EiE the greatest breadth of possibilities for new thinking and research. She outlines the ontological and epistemological premises of constructivism as applied to EiE, as well as locating a range of methodologies. Her preferences are historical institutionalism (interviews with elites, oral histories, archives) and frame analysis (how agents within a structure use language). The chapter concludes with a ‘narrative snapshot’ of curricular change in a refugee camp in Kenya, which shows how this research methodology can be productively used. This chapter is useful not just to EiE scholars but any researcher looking at education’s contested role in peacebuilding.

The second section, Debates on Policy and Politicisation includes discussion of three different aspects of policy: the origin; the ideology; and the political economy. Brent Edwards firstly reveals how education reform in conflict-affected settings can be influenced by international organisations. Conflict states are particularly susceptible to such influences – but importantly, there are ‘blind spots’ where those reforms that are inscribed lack transparency and accountability. International organisations must ‘sell’ their policies to sustain their raison d’etre. Edwards chooses the example of El Salvador’s EDUO reform – education with community participation. He shows how the reform had a number of political agendas, including the wish to undermine the power of the teacher unions. The World Bank used EDUO as an opportunity to experiment with new governance. Edwards reveals how it had in fact led to a second class system of schools being created that marginalized large proportions of the student population. Yet after ostensibly rigorous evaluation, EDUO was also then used to influence reforms in other countries. International organisations appear
to have a short menu of preferred policies. The chapter raises disturbing questions about the reach of such organisations as well as issues of when a reform is chosen, whether during or after a conflict. Edwards gives intriguing suggestions for research on other countries during certain periods in conflict or afterwards.

Next, in line with the focus of the book on contestation, Lynn Davies looks at the contested role of religion and conflict, and at the nexus of religion, education and conflict. Research indicates that conflicts based around religion are more intractable than others. While religion can provide personal security, at the national level religion, nationalism and violence can become intertwined to threaten security. Davies develops an amplification spiral to show how the exclusivity of religion becomes superiority which becomes intolerance which becomes the notion that God is on your side and finally which becomes expansionism for God. The urgent policy proposal is therefore for secularism in governance and schooling, but this proposal needs to acknowledge and debunk myths around secularism, which Davies does – including the myth that secularism is the same as atheism. She shows how a dynamic secularism is in fact a friend to religion and supports a diversity of religious beliefs. However, religion is not to be elevated above critique. The educational implications are to avoid divisive faith-based schools where possible, but also for students to learn about religion in a critical way, in order to interrupt some of the amplification spiral. Learning about the tenets of secularism (for example rights, or the rule of law) is not so controversial, but the more contentious implications are for a critical approach to sacred texts, so that young people can challenge extremist or misogynistic passages or interpretations. Mistakes made in the name of religion also need surfacing. The overall argument is that religion cannot be immune from critical pedagogy.

Finally in this section Tejendra Pherali, through the lens of the conflict and post-conflict situation in Nepal, argues that political interference, corruption and informal governance in education are the biggest barriers to post-conflict educational reforms. Reforms that are largely issues-based and adopt purely a technical approach to programming are particularly vulnerable. Post-conflict, it is important to address the sector-wide as well as inter-sectoral issues of exclusion. Conversely, social transformation and peacebuilding needs to include education sector reforms. Pherali includes a critique of the well-known Schools as Zone of Peace (SZOP) initiative in Nepal, while recognizing its positive benefits. The core of the chapter is to use a political economy approach to analyse conflict, with a valuable grid which juxtaposes social, economic, political and security concerns against national, district and local features. Teachers are revealed as political activists, with professional disengagement and loyalty to political parties rather than the state. School governance is also politicized. Peacebuilding can be attempted through curricular reform, but dealing with sensitive issues in a politicised society is clearly complex. Education for peace should raise critical awareness of social and political conditions that fuel or mitigate conflict, in order to identify transformative approaches to achieve peace with social justice. The question becomes how to engage critically with the issues relating to unfair social and educational policies such as biased representation or
omission of diverse cultures in the curriculum, ignorance of the mother tongue in
formal education, unequal access to education and unequal or no representation of
diverse communities in educational policy making. Such questions clearly relate to
contexts much wider than Nepal.

Section Three is called Debates on People as Agents of Change, and explores
how and why people become active in transformation – either of situations or of
themselves. Anna Virkama firstly looks at the role of intellectuals in the revolts of
the Arab Spring, with a focus on three countries in transition: Algeria, Tunisia and
Morocco. Her concern is the place of higher education (HE) and academic freedom in
such countries. Is there a gulf between Arab intellectuals and the largely anonymous
young people who led the protests? This chapter denies this charge by looking the
interplay of actors in HE and civil society in the Maghreb. Definitions of ‘academic
freedom’ and of ‘intellectuals’ are given before proposing a threefold perspective
of the role of intellectuals: historical, generational and transnational, the latter
particularly important in the role of diaspora intellectuals. The chapter analyses the
problematic state of HE in a post-colonial context, leading to the ‘culture of despair’
among youth. The valuable in-depth analyses of HE in each of the three countries
provide a rich resource to understand the complex motivations and networks
of protesters. It is shown conclusively how all three countries had very engaged
intellectual communities and how the universities have been important arenas in
the battle for change in civil society. This seems not because the universities were
officially spearheading academic freedom and critical pedagogy, quite the opposite:
there were protests against the educational reforms imposed by the government,
or to demand more employment for graduates. However, what is instructive is the
different forms and new dynamics in the latest protests, for example differences in
whether there are confrontations between Islamists and leftist students. The protests
of the 21st century are not just social and economic demands, but also aspirations for
democracy and constitutional change. New communications technology and new
virtual public spaces have emerged: the participation of students as bloggers and
citizen journalists offers new possibilities for student activism where freedom of
speech is limited. The challenge is how to ensure enough freedom of expression
on the university campus while guaranteeing the security of students and avoiding
violent confrontations. This is now an issue not confined to the Mahgreb.

Zehavit Gross’s chapter in contrast begins from a micro-level case study which
probes how Israeli Arab and Jewish students who were studying together on a conflict
resolution course coped with their competing loyalties during the Gaza war of
2008–9. The point of departure is whether and how a university course can serve as a
venue for experiential learning where civic engagement and peace education is studied
and practised. Gross relates an incident which led to huge tensions between the two
sets of students, and where, as facilitator, she had to deal with extreme stereotypical
accusations, including that all Arabs were terrorists. High emotions were aroused.
As a facilitator of dialogue groups, Gross’s questions were whether the encounter
should focus on the group-political aspect or rather the personal psychological and
interpersonal components. The Israeli setting, where stereotypes are learned, serves as a venue for both the cultural and social situatedness of learning. Palestinian Arab Israelis can be rejected on both sides – by Palestinians in the West Bank or Gaza and by Israeli Jews. The gap between the ideal of Israel as a multicultural and inclusive society and the reality on the ground makes neutral facilitation difficult. The turning point came from when everyone in the room was crying and hence the realisation that all were human beings; collectivist discourses made it impossible to hold a dialogue, but personal discourses opened it up. Gross explores how transformative mediation methodology underpins such contexts, aiming not to change the situation but the participants. The chapter finishes with a discussion of the relevance of Castells’ distinction between legitimizing, resistance and project identities, and whether or how project identities around peace and reconciliation can work.

In the final chapter of this section, we return to the Mahgreb, but with a different lens: a historical one on the Algerian war of independence, and on schools rather than HE. Alexis Artaud de La Ferrière examines the action of the Front de Liberation National (FLN) of opposition and disruption of the French state school system for Algerian Muslims. These actions were part of a larger campaign of disruption, but made a political point by challenging the legitimacy of the schooling project as conceived by the French state. As he points out, this facet provides elements of historical precedent for more recent campaigns against state education, such as in Afghanistan or Nigeria. The chapter first explores the political motivations for French investment in educational development in Algeria, that is, as psychological warfare, then how the FLN positioned itself against these. It is intriguing how the French analysis of education at that time corresponds to neo-Marxist accounts of the governance function of state schooling. Counter-insurgency becomes about manufacturing consent. Original research in the FLN archives provides fascinating detail of FLN strategies and internal conflicts. Atrocities and violence are revealed by both sides. Troubling ethical questions are raised about justifications for violence in anti-colonial struggles, which are relevant across a wide range of historical and contemporary locations. In a broader reflection on the meaning of colonialism and colonial education, de La Ferrière concludes with an argument that colonial education remains a barrier to political emancipation in many parts of the world. Neo-colonialism by the French in South West Africa and discrimination against French citizens of African descent constitutes internal colonialisation inherited from the classical domination of France over African colonies. In such a context educational institutions have an intrinsically dialectical nature, controlling populations but also distributing cultural and intellectual resources which can be employed for emancipation. de La Ferrière graphically shows from his case study how the coloniality of a specific school system needs a fine-combed analysis.

In the final section, Debates on Pedagogy, four chapters on teaching and learning in conflict and post-conflict situations exemplify the current debates on how peace should be taught, if at all. We start with Candice Carter’s review of attempts at guidelines and standards for peace education. Standards are now used by many
donor agencies for assessment of projects, for example INEE’s well known Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies. The standardization movement across the world certainly needs examination and critique, including its neo-liberal agenda of comparisons of student achievement. Carter shows a lack of coherence, linked to different state goals for ‘peace’ education – whether defence or individual problem solving without violence. Standards that omit peace history will normalize violence as a means of national defence. Limitations associated with the standards for education include a lack of applied curriculum theory, a disconnection with social justice and an impediment to peace and conflict pedagogy. However, NGOs have been promoting strands of peace-oriented education in their guidelines, and Carter gives more promising examples. This chapter describes a very interesting grounded methodology to examine the constructs, theories, principles and aspects evident – or not – in peace education, mostly in USA and UK, but also in a range of other countries. It is confirmed that standards tend to prescribe the norms of the dominant culture, so that non-dominant groups have needed to create their own standards. No government has a truly visionary pedagogy. Governments may promote social and emotional competences for their individual citizens, but not for their institutions. Currently available standards for peace education represent partially conflicting goals for student preparation. Carter concludes that students deserve education that prepares them to identify the roots of structural conflicts affecting peoples’ wellbeing – something missing in many current state standards.

The next three chapters in this section then provide illustrations of possibilities in specific contexts. Firstly, from his studies in Malaysia and Canada, Timothy Cashman became interested in how international policies are taught in the US curriculum, and chose a US high school on the US and Mexico border as a case study. The border wall within walking distance of the school was constructed to impede the flow of human traffic, goods, ideas, fauna and contraband form crossing to the US from Mexico. and hence represents a geopolitical border. As Cashman reveals, it is a very interesting context to ask how educators report on their discussion of US policies, and, in particular, US led wars and anti-terrorism measures. What happens in border classrooms can be considered through lenses of border pedagogy. Here, educators found that the reliance on high stakes test scores as the sole measurement of their students’ knowledge acted to limit their opportunities for border pedagogy; a pedagogy of place was lacking, a pedagogy which could provide a narrative of local and regional politics that is attuned to the border region. The testing regime constituted another border wall. Students lacked chances to engage in dialogues that compared their daily realities and understandings as border region students with their transnational peers. In its juxtaposition of so many different types of border, this chapter provides a highly innovative theoretical as well as empirical take on how learning about conflict and conflict policy occurs.

In a related vein, Pauline Kollantai starts her chapter with the notions of bridging and bonding across divides, but her interest is in the use of religious story-telling in diverse communities where there is potential for the breakdown of trust and
harmony. As she elucidates, story telling has been an essential part of being human across all cultures, and she takes this further to argue that narrative thinking is the optimum form of thinking for learning and expressing what we know about ourselves and others. The story provides the framework for understanding the past, engaging in the present and envisioning the future. Stories are part of the political process of restorative justice. Yet stories are also manipulable, and can be used to compel action; Kollontai acknowledges that they can be either a constructive or destructive tool in conflict. So are there certain stories that cannot be used in peace-building? Or is it the way they are told? Kollontai embarks on a useful critique of Putnam’s work on social capital, pointing out that throughout Putnam’s work there continues to be a serious lack of engagement with Islam. Yet the important general message about building social networks and people committing themselves to each other remains valid. Her point of concern is the value of RE in schools in promoting social cohesion – which might form one of the many debates in this book. She paints a convincing picture of the power of stories in different religious traditions, and provides a case study of research in a primary school in a diverse ethnic setting in UK. Religious stories were seen as important for children learning about other religions and developing empathy, and specific stories were identified as particularly helpful. The research also looked at pedagogy and evaluation, with the latter revealing some of the problems of more violent stories, with children reacting by justifying revenge and retribution. Kollontai’s nuanced and in-depth knowledge of how stories are framed in different sacred texts is invaluable, as is her perception about dangers of over-simplification. The introduction of her concept of ‘binding’ takes us forward – more than bridging and bonding, this is a deep sense of identification and sense of responsibility towards each other irrespective of religious, ethnic and racial difference.

The chapter by Grace Feuerverger concludes this section with a highly personal account of making a difference in students’ lives, and portrays the ‘magic’ of teaching her education students in Canada. Hers is an avowedly religious and spiritual perspective, with concepts such as soul, contact with the Divine and the enchantedness of our world. But it is also political, in her work with the students on Martin Luther King, on how to make dreams realities. Her aim is to transform ‘boring courses’ such as Curriculum Foundations into something that will also transform students. Feuerverger’s work and experience in the Jewish-Palestinian community and school Neve Shalom/Wahat Al-Salam in Israel is at the heart of this narrative. Education has the power to create a ‘home’, through peoples’ shared reflective narratives – and we see the connections to Kollantai’s account of the power of narrative for ‘binding’ in the previous chapter. Feuerverger proposes an ‘engaged pedagogy’ – which involves bringing one’s own confessional narrative into the classroom, and encouraging ‘intense self-scrutiny’. In this vein, she opens up in class about being a child of Holocaust survivors, and what that meant growing up in Canada; this led to intense discussions on ‘foreigners’, on racism, bigotry and hatred. While these are nightmarish phenomena, the optimism and dreams about
social change which Feuerverger conveys provide a welcoming note to end this section.

The volume ends with a concluding analysis from Mieke Lopes Cardozo and Ritesh Shah, two of the convenors responsible for the thematic group at WCCES which generated this collection. This conclusion is able to identify four emerging arguments that reflect the changing discipline of comparative and international education. These are that history matters, interdisciplinarity matters, critical theory matters and multiscalar and contextualized analyses matter. History matters in order to prevent history repeating itself. Interdisciplinarity matters to ensure studies of education go outside the educational space, and locate phenomena in the structural conditions of society – as well as drawing on the richness of personal experience. Multiscalar analysis demands recognition of different levels of scrutiny, that is, how conflict is located in complex and highly unequal systems of local, national, regional and global actors, institutions and practices. The authors then reflect on moving the field of education and conflict forward. This is away from problem-solving approaches to those under the umbrella of critical theory, in order to question and challenge conditions perceived as hegemonic for social transformation. As they have argued in their own research, rather than presenting an evolutionary or consensual process of change, education must be acknowledged as existing within highly contested projects of state, nation and region building. Books such as these can allow us to see the many faces, not just two, that education has in relation to conflict and fragility.

Endnote

Finally, it can be mooted that of these many faces in conflict, and from the different angles from contributors, there would in fact be some convergences. In the book emerge deep exposes of different sources of manipulations of education – by nationalist governments, by international organisations, by religious authorities, by colonial powers and by warring factions in conflict – sometimes acting together in even more powerful combinations and alliances. What seem like benign initiatives in community education, integration, multiculturalism or religious tolerance can default to the status quo of inequality or divisiveness. Because of this, a theme running through the book is the desperate need for education to be founded on a critical pedagogy which scrutinizes structural causes of poverty, violence, conflict and extremism, and one which tackles head on the question of power. As with initiatives in transitional justice, this is not an abstract examination of structures and systems, but includes identification of real players and agents in the perpetuation of conflict. One central question remains however. How many governments and authorities in conflict-affected states – or even stable states – will actually welcome and promote such a pedagogy, one that of necessity critiques government, critiques religion, and critiques education itself and the fatally uneven way it is structured? Not many. Protesters and critics who are identified in the volume
will in some ways take action in spite of their education, rather than because of it. Yet however manipulated, we see that education does provide bedrocks of literacy, social awareness and contacts – and with new communications technology, a more assertive and networked set of learners is bound to emerge. We have to hope that the current shocks of terrorism and extreme violence will generate a genuine counter-narrative – by governments as well as by educationists. And we would look forward to a second volume detailing this. Our thanks to the contributors of this one for their detailed, well-researched and perceptive insights and contestations.

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The Place of Contestation in the Discourse of Conflict Education

The objective of this section of the introduction is to describe and analyse the place of the component of contestation in the discourse of conflict education. First Judaism’s approach to disagreements and contestation between different and opposing opinions is presented, which is pivotal to conflict discourse in Israel and for Jews worldwide, and can serve as a starting point for debate as to its wider relevance. The discussion then broadens out to examine several factors that accelerate the contestation component in educational discourse in conflict regions more generally. A critical analysis is performed of research studies that have explored the nature of discourse between conflict groups, and their failure to address contestation is discussed. Finally the development of a culture of contestation in educational research and practice is proposed.

CONTESTATION BETWEEN VARIOUS OPINIONS – THE CORE OF CONFLICT DISCOURSE IN JUDAISM’S APPROACH

Education is a space with room for competing voices that represent different forces and starting-points of the debate. The world of Judaism and the Talmudic corpus are based and structured on that contestation between different voices. Judaism distinguishes between two types of disagreements in contestation: between different voices defined as ‘le’shem shamayim’ (for the sake of heaven), and those that are not ‘le’shem shamayim’. We read in the Mishna, Masechet Avot 5:17 ‘Every argument that is for the sake of heaven’s name, it is destined to endure. But if it is not for the sake of heaven’s name – it is not destined to endure. What is an example of an argument for Heaven’s sake? The argument of Hillel and Shamai. What is an example of an argument not for the sake of heaven’s name? The argument of Korach and all of his followers’. An interpreter of the Mishnah, known as Bartenura, wrote that in an argument for Heaven’s sake ‘the objective, and our end goal in that argument, is to arrive at the truth . . . but in an argument that is not for Heaven’s sake, the goal is control over others and winning the fight’. In other words, argument for the sake of heaven is a practical argument aimed at seeking the truth, and since it deals with truth its content will remain relevant even after the argument is concluded.
(like the disagreements of principle between the House of Shamai and the House of Hillel, that are shown below)

An argument whose background is personal reflects a struggle for power and the desire to rule, and will not remain relevant when it is concluded (like the dispute of Korach and his followers). Korach and his followers came to Moses intent on taking over the leadership in the name of equality and democracy – they argued that the whole congregation is holy, and ask why Moses and Aaron should exult themselves over everyone. Since their request for leadership was driven by material personal interest, by the desire to rule, not out of the desire to serve the people of Israel, they were swallowed up and buried deep in the earth. In Judaism’s pantheon of ideas and opinions, no one remembers the components, character and nature of a disagreement with a negative, and non-constructive nature – only the bitter end of being swallowed up by the earth.

It seems then that Judaism’s perception of argument is not necessarily a negative one. One finds in Judaism and the Talmud substantive disagreements between different worldviews and perceptions. Judaism sees nothing wrong in arguments; the Sages said of contesting arguments that ‘both this and that are the words of the all-powerful God’. In other words, two contesting opinions possess inherent quality and can be considered holy. However it’s noteworthy that Jewish law ultimately rules according to one of them only (usually in accordance with the House of Hillel which takes a more pragmatic and lenient line. According to Judaism’s perception, two differing opinions does not imply that one is wrong, and the perception of halacha (Jewish law) stems from an overall worldview that differs from the reality. For example there is a disagreement in halacha between the House of Shamai and the House of Hillel concerning the way in which the candles should be lit during the festival of Hanukkah. Hillel says ‘mosif va’holech’ – meaning adding on to the candles. On the first night you light one candle, on the second night two candles, and so on until the full number of eight candles are lit. Shamai believed that the candles should be lit according to ‘pochet v’holech’, meaning lighting fewer candles every night. On the first night you light eight candles, on the second night seven, and so on.

The Sages argued that fundamentally that disagreement is rooted in an overall worldview regarding how we deal with evil. Shamai says that all the forces of evil must be burnt by fire – ‘So shalt thou put the evil away from among you’ (Numbers 17: 7). Hillel says that in order to battle evil, we must add light. In this approach, it is light and more light that will bring the great light, as we can see on the final day of Hanukah when all eight lights are lit. Hillel perceives the battle with evil as a progressive process of adding goodness, and objects to the radical approach of burning evil. The two approaches express two contesting worldviews. The ruling of halacha does not attest to the other opinion being incorrect, for pragmatic reasons, the more lenient approach is chosen, not the more rigorous one, unconnected to the quality of the other approach.
Judaism views contesting opinions as typifying the society that breaches them, and allows alternative options to be accommodated. Moreover, Rabbi Kook sees contesting opinions and the basis for the contestation, as a condition for shaping real peace. He writes: ‘There are those who think wrongly that world peace will come about only through one kind of thinking, opinion, and characteristic. So, when they see scholars studying the wisdom of Torah, and thus the varieties of approaches increase thereby – they think that the variety causes disagreements, and the opposite of peace. It is truly not so. Because true peace can only come to the world by various streams – peace will grow when everyone can see everyone else’s methods, and it will become clear that there is room for each one, each according to its place, value, and theme. And in the case of matters that seem unnecessary or contradictory – once the veracity of that wisdom is revealed from all sides – it is only by bringing together all the parts and details, all the apparently different opinions, all the different streams – it is through them that the light of truth and justice will be revealed, and the Word of God, fear of God, love of God, and the light of the Truth. So it is the scholars who bring peace, not dissension, because by widening scholarship, by interpreting and generating new wisdom from different approaches, from numerous perspectives – it is they who engender peace. For as it is written: ‘All thy children shall be taught of the Lord’ (Isaiah 54: 12). Because the world will see that everyone, even those whose opinions differ, all serve the Lord.

Rabbi Kook’s approach is that genuine peace will arrive only once all rival opinions co-exist, without narrowing or minimizing other opinions. One can find an approach that explains the variety of competing approaches in halacha because of the individual’s weakness that impels him to create a biased, or unclear view of reality because of his inability to see. Different approaches are required, that examine reality from different perspectives, and also an approach explaining that differing opinions derive from the pluralistic character of Divine will. Here, the divide between the religious pluralistic approach and the democratic pluralistic secular approach can be bridged even though it is a matter of two different sources of authority.

Tova Ilan (a central figure in the introduction of religious reforms and pluralism into Judaism) explains how one can bridge between outlooks that are apparently contradictory. She maintains that ‘In the idea of modern democracy there is in fact a similar idea, that laws and civil freedoms are actually the result of compromise between opposed opinions. Although they do not always represent what seems to us just and true, at the end of that process, they create a balance. Stemming from this is the need and duty to criticize government, but also the need to understand the partial nature of the truth that we represent. There is a need for humility, for perhaps our truth is not the absolute truth. That sort of humility will lead not only to attentive listening to the opponent’s words, not only to refraining from belittling him, but also to an attempt to ponder the inherent contradictions of the matter – any matter – and to bring up proposals for solution, that deal proactively with the rejected side.

In fact, according to Ilan’s approach, both the religious and secular approach are aware that human consciousness will always be partial and limited to time and place,
and thus there is a need to apply critical approaches – and most of all humility that leads in turn to listening, and not belittling the other. Conflict education that enables the conscious introduction of contesting opinions allows the creation of true freedom and choice, creativity and innovation.

FACTORS INTENSIFYING CONTESTATION AND VIOLENCE IN THE EDUCATIONAL DISCOURSE IN CONFLICT REGIONS

Conflicts and contestation principally derive from tangible conflicting interests which are perceived as momentous, such as territory, power, land, language, and independence (Salomon, 2002, p. 32). Below four main factors that intensify and accelerate violence and contestation in conflict regions are presented. Though they are interconnected, they are presented discretely so as to highlight the uniqueness of each component and its contribution to the entire perception.

1. A major factor which accelerates contestation in the educational discourse in conflict regions is the failure of multiculturalism. It implies unwillingness to accommodate the different and the other; inability to accept complexity; and failure to change and accept situations of change. Those various failures led to an ‘easier’ alternative solution – that of conflict – instead of the acceptance and integration which the architects of multiculturalism envisioned. Its failure encouraged competition of a negative form. Al-Haj maintains that the pivotal problem is that multiculturalism is grounded on control, instead of participation, a situation particularly notable in education systems, as described below. Multiculturalism grounded on control means that the ruling hegemonic culture allows the different cultures some expression (chiefly technical and external) of their uniqueness, contingent on their remaining loyal to the ruling hegemony’s principles. When multiculturalism is grounded on participation, it implies accepting each group’s right to be different, to preserve its unique culture, identity, and way of life, even though they may run counter to the ruling hegemony’s outlooks. It fosters reciprocal respect by esteeming each group’s national and cultural uniqueness, and crystallizes a shared citizenship by introducing each group to other groups’ cultural values, and by creating a shared cycle of its common civic values, in a process of sharing power and preserving the principles of equality and justice (Al-Haj, 1998, p. 321).

2. Another source of intensifying violence and contestation of a negative nature is deepening of the zero-sum game orientation. This approach, in which there is always a winner and a loser who are situated in a permanent contestation, reduces the motivation to create contact, collaborate, and overcome hostility. Jamal (2007) argues that among the problems in regions with a national conflict is that the national identity is considered the norm, sui generis, and ‘taken-for-granted’. That essentialist approach perceives national and cultural groups as coherent groups confronting and contest with each other. It is a problematic approach
which serves as an obstacle to educate about conflict, since ‘it transforms identity into a sort of shield protecting society’s security. Identity becomes a kind of homogenous, permanent trait which – when challenged – causes problems and raises obstacles’. This outlook sees relationships between the parties from a thin, restricted perspective, based on total profit and loss relationships. The narrow and total perception encourages each party to become entrenched in its position, and so each one sees the other party’s position as opposed to and threatening its own existence. As a result, the other’s wellbeing is seen as adversely affecting one’s own wellbeing. These attitudes do not happen by chance, but are methodically and cleverly structured by education and socialization, and they constitute the material that ignites and feeds the flames. No contact is possible in that reality, and sometimes contacts are intentionally prohibited – for if the parties had some sort of option to meet and come into any kind of contact, even superficial, it might moderate the tension and anxiety to some degree.

3. Another source of intensifying violence and negative contestation is power relationships – Al Haj (1998) maintains that the chief reason for conflicts are the social and economic divides between the majority group and the minority, and remarks that ‘when the majority oppresses and denies the minority’s identity and historical narrative, it is a major factor in boosting the potential for conflict and deepening the divides’. The schooling system and the school curriculum tend to reflect the power system and the dominant culture prevailing in wider society, and particularly the asymmetrical majority-minority relationships within it. Gamal contends that in a system of controllers-controlled, the stronger side tends to preserve the status quo while the controlled try to undermine it. ‘The struggle over the status quo becomes a mechanism that feeds the dichotomy between the two sides which consider themselves homogenous’ (Al-Haj, p. 12). Michael Apple (2002) believes that the curriculum reflects the controlling hegemony’s ideology, and to some extent reinforces the negative stereotypes attributed to the minority groups. The school system does not enable “positive” contestation. Instead of being a catalyst for social change, the schooling system is a mechanism that operates to conserve the status quo; accordingly, events that occur after inner or external conflicts only intensify the embarrassment and helplessness that characterise the education system in conflict regions.

4. Another source of intensifying violence and negative contestation is silencing the religious aspect of the conflict. This is dominant in the Israeli-Arab conflict. Peace discourse frequently has a liberal secular nature that disregards the religious aspect of the conflict. Denial of a conflict’s religious aspect competes with the perception and simplistic engagement with the religious aspect as a necessary evil, and less valuable, in the name of enlightened liberalism’s view that religion is a primitive necessary evil. This renders the debate shallow and does not enable positive contestation. Two principal discourse patterns that relate to the Israeli-Arab conflict can be discerned in the research literature (Gross & Gamal, 2014): one that we term “coexistence discourse,” and the other which
we define as “religious struggle discourse.” Coexistence discourse is primarily secular and engages with the Palestinian people’s legitimate right to a sovereign state. Proponents of this right present civil arguments that draw on liberal-secular concepts. In contrast, religious struggle discourse has a religious nature. The two types of discourse clearly reflect totally different worldviews: the discourse of coexistence, used by Arabs and Jews alike, positions the state of Israel as a secular state that should relate to its citizens regardless of their religion or ethnic affiliation, and is perceived as possessing power and withholding the rights and the coexistence discourse from the Palestinian people. In contrast, from the Jewish perspective, the discourse of religious struggle views Islam and the pan-Arab culture as controlling much of the Middle East and preventing peace with the Jewish people. From the Islamic viewpoint, the discourse of religious struggle views the Jews as infidels, whose presence in the land of Israel directly harms Islam. According to Islam, there are two conditions under which a nation can exist: Dar al-Islam and Dar al-harb. The first situation, in which a nation is ruled by Islam and governed by its laws, is considered most desirable. The second condition is problematic in terms of Islam – it relates to countries that are not subordinate to the dictates of Islam. These nations’ fate is, as their definition suggests, harb – destruction in Arabic. There is a distorted view that claims that the goal of Islam is to attain a situation in which the world is Dar al-Islam. The means to be applied may be peaceful, claims this view, but the Koran says that when this cannot be achieved, then a holy war – jihad – must be launched to impose Islam (Lewis, 1998: 121–122). Ignoring the religious aspect of the conflict within the educational discourse (see Gross & Gamal, 2014) and concentrating only on its secular liberal aspect does not allow a full comprehension of its foundations, does not fully respect the religious participants who are deeply involved in it and does not allow a true management of the peace discourse (see also Abu-Asba, Jayusi, & Sabar-Ben Yehoshua, 2011).

THE NATURE AND CHARACTER OF THE EDUCATIONAL DISCOURSE BETWEEN CONFLICT GROUPS

Research into encounters of conflict groups in secondary and higher education has accumulated substantial knowledge on the importance of contact, and the effectiveness of contact between conflict groups; on stages in the development of discourse between the groups; and on the distinction between the character and nature of the discourse (collective or individual).

1. The encounter between conflict groups from the perspective of contact theory

Allport’s intergroup contact theory (1954) was one of the theories that created a turn in the field of research into intergroup encounters. It maintains that contact between
conflict groups is likely to decrease prejudice and to build greater willingness for proximity; the theory provided the basis which justifies reconciliation programmes for conflict groups across the world. Allport holds that there are four criteria for contact which lead to interaction; the groups must have equal status at the time of contact; there must be shared goals; there must be collaboration between the groups; and there has to be institutional support for contact. In his research, Pettigrew added another criterion – that there should be some potential for friendship between the participants. Contact theory argues that conflict groups who created opportunities for some kind of contact were able to soften and moderate intergroup hostility, and could sometimes create friendship and empathy at different levels. Contact theory completely ignores the element of contestation between the groups, and its impact on the nature and quality of contact; it tends to focus on those elements that enable societal uniformity.

Many research studies have validated contact theory, though in tandem other researchers note that the impact is mostly effective in the short- and immediate-term; if the meetings do not continue, the contact’s impact disappears as does the sense of empathy and the negative form of contestation surfaces constantly. In fact the absence of a guided encounter, as happens in educational intervention programmes that create monitored contact – the contestation element takes over the discourse and its true or virtual impact of the contact fades away. It is however worth noting that most of the research studies were short-and immediate-term, and long-term research is needed to examine the impact of the contact and especially the retrospective impact of the contestation element in contacts between conflict groups. Contact between conflict groups is a complex event, with several stages, as we show below.

2. Stages in developing educational discourse between conflict groups

Steinberg and Bar-On (2002) examined encounters between Jews and Arabs in Israel and explored the structure of the discourse and changes that occurred in the process. They identified seven development stages in the discourse between conflict groups, in the transition from an ethnocentric discourse to a dialogic one, as follows:

Stage 1 – *the lack of contact*, where an ethnocentric dialogue takes place – in which each side clings to its position; the other, who was meant to be a partner in the dialogue, is not addressed.

Stage 2 – *attack* – each side, or sometimes one side, attacks the other in a hostile, accusation-laden style. Though this stage consists of an attack on the opponent, it does pay some attention to the opponent.

Stage 3 – *a window opens* – the sides start expressing emotions and try to share their own personal experience with the other side. At this stage, each side is still entrenched in its positions, and cannot understand the other side’s perspective.
Stage 4 – *initial assumptions are undermined* – each side recognizes the existence of possible other options, and the basic need to listen to and understand them.

Stage 5 – *intellectual discussion* – people listen to the opponent’s arguments, and there is a preliminary attempt to reach agreement.

Stage 6 – *accommodation of the other* – participants not only listen to the other side, but also talk reflectively about their thoughts. Each side asks the other side clarifying questions, in order to try and better understand them,

Stage 7 – *a moment of dialogue* – a moment with some emotional and cognitive understanding. There is genuine contact between opponents that makes it possible to grant legitimacy to the other’s narrative. At this stage, there are some moments of empathy between groups.

Most researchers found that dialogue founders chiefly at the ethnocentric stage, and occasionally reached the dialogue stage. Ethnocentric discourse delegitimizes the opponent and often creates dehumanisation processes: when the opponent is perceived as less human, it follows that his life is less valuable, his pain less than ours, his children not as precious, and his life less important. The tensions between conflict groups, the frustrations, anxiety and anger, all prevent significant progress towards dialogue. In my opinion, a pivotal failing of this typology is that it disregards the contestation aspect between conflict groups. The objective of the educational intervention programme according to this approach is to reach social consensus and a dialogue in which the stronger side accepts the narrative of the weaker one and contains it. Its major weakens is arguable that it permits a priori a situation in which people continue co-existing with the contested and conflicting worldview. This focuses on the resolving of the competition but not the unchanging reality in which the conflict is the a permanent structural foundation between two people or groups, and the educational intervention programme must train them, to truly co-exist with the opposing opinions.

3. *Between personal and collective discourse in the educational arena in encounters between conflict groups*

Besides the educational research that analyzes contact between groups in the educational arena and the stages in which conflict groups develop, research has been conducted which addresses the aspect of focusing the encounters between individuals, and between groups. Discernible in the literature are two fundamental and different approaches describing how interaction unfolds during contact between two conflict groups in the course of an educational intervention process (Salmon, 2002). One approach describes a process of transition from the micro to the macro; that is, a process in which dialogue takes place to try and develop interpersonal
relationships with people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds – which provide the conflict’s basis. According to this approach, creating interpersonal understanding and empathy in an interactive process tends to result in a better understanding of the other’s collective (see Gross, 2013). The individual, in this approach, who participates in a dialogue in the framework of an intervention programme, will be able to perform transformative processes that will project the feelings of the individual from the individual sphere towards the public sphere, the general public, and the collective. And in turn, this paves the way to reconciliation between collectives (in other words – peoples) not just successful dialogue between individuals.

Another approach (Sagy, 2002) describes a process of transition from the macro to the micro: it maintains that because what is at stake is a conflict between historical narratives of different, hostile collectives with inherent sets of beliefs, values, worldviews, and identities – the focus in an interactive intervention process should be on analysing those narratives and the basic conflict that divides the different groups.

The literature also offers a third approach which links together the two previous ones (see Bar-On & Kassem, 2004) – asserting that a meeting in the framework of an educational intervention programme should be based on the personal narrative and family story of each participant. The way in which the individual experiences and conceptualises the conflict in the intervention programme helps to move towards perceiving the conflict simultaneously from both the personal and collective viewpoints. Researchers have found that processes of reciprocal empathy between participants from rival groups developed in groups in educational intervention programmes, and that in turn led towards a shift away from an interpersonal discussion towards a collective one. It enables a dialogue in which it is possible a priori to grant legitimacy to the collective narrative of the other – and this contains of course the personal input described and expressed in the personal life-story which the participant presented during the educational intervention process. I believe that what is common to the two approaches is the disregard of the contestation aspect of conflict. Underlying the three approaches is the assumption that eradication of the dispute (at both the micro and macro level, and at both levels combined) will make it possible to resolve conflicts by the stronger side becoming ready to ‘accommodate’ the narrative of the weaker side, and thus to end the dispute. Focusing research on the personal or group point of origin has a functional nature, that does not invalidate the dispute between conflict groups, and did not change the broader perspective of studying the phenomenon. This approach proposes a ‘thinner’ examination of conflicts, with the naive and unrealistic belief in removing the competitive basis which – while it has lethal potential – also has the potential for rebirth and productivity. The three approaches outlined above represent at the principled level, a differing perception of the concept of conflict described below.
Z. GROSS

CONFLICT – PROBLEM OR CHALLENGE? – AND A LEVER
FOR BUILDING A JUST SOCIETY

Underlying the three educational intervention processes described here is a fundamental worldview that sees conflict as a challenge, a form of leverage to construct a just society, but ignoring the element of dispute that is integral to the conflict constitutes a problem or source of threat. While in the past, conflict was perceived as the root of all social maladies, recent research literature reveals the attempt to see conflict as a fundamental phenomenon that is inherent in healthy and just social life. This innovative approach to conflict (Pinson, Levy & Soker, 2010) contends that we cannot describe social relationships without addressing the existence, as an integral part of society, of conflicts of interest, clashes of identities, contestation, disagreements and disputes connected to power relations. This approach, therefore, does not address the various parties’ positions and imagery of the conflict in terms of bias and deviation (which is found, for example, in the use of stereotypical and prejudicial concepts), but rather as components of different types of discourse on the conflict. The approach reflects a dynamic perception of the social reality, and does not see struggles and conflicts as situations set in stone, but rather as a source of changes and new struggles; it is an approach based on the constructivist (non-sui generis) approach to social identities (Benhabib, 1995, 90). Later, Davies’ research (2011) proposes a wide-ranging typology of educational approaches to conflict, which has two axes: active-passive, and positive-negative, resulting in four quadrants. Active-negative approaches teach stereotypes, defence and even hatred of Others. Passive-negative approaches teach acceptance of war and conflict as normal, or ignore the inclusion of recent conflict in their citizenship curriculum. Passive-positive approaches will emphasise tolerance and personal problem solving; but it is not until one reaches active positive approaches that one finds contentious dialogue, encounter and the encouragement of action to challenge violence and injustice. This typology then makes it possible to examine schooling perceptions, positions, and practices regarding how historical and current conflicts, nationally and internationally, are tackled. More particularly, it provides the option to evaluate the significance of the discourse that develops, in terms of its contribution to empowering the material nature of the conflict or developing a more complex and realistic position regarding contestation. This position, which takes its inspiration from Davies, is likely to encourage pupils to acknowledge the existence of contestation, and to develop practices based on active involvement in the search for positive approaches to it. This is antithetical to the common tendency in which pupils develop a passive approach to conflict, or even an approach that disregards completely its contested aspect.

To sum up, we have seen that conflict education previously focused on preventing or reducing conflicts and contestation, usually at the interpersonal level, and in particular eradicating or minimizing the contestation aspect in the complex responsibility for national and global conflicts. Conflict was perceived a
priori as negative, but alternative approaches have been developed more recently, maintaining that positive conflict (as in the workings of democracy) becomes a major factor in generating productive discourse in education, relevant to current global crises in conflict and extremism (see Davies, 2004 and 2008). It is the basis of education and the foundation of a society granted on equality and justice. The approach enables response to the complex postmodern reality in which attempts are not made to find solutions but rather to structure a mechanism that can accommodate and institutionalise conflict and contestation – allowing the conflict to be managed rather than resolved.

CREATING A CULTURE OF CONTESTATION

The objective of this introductory overview was to suggest a different approach to the concept of contestation, one that neutralises the negative aspect of contestation and addresses its positive and productive potential to promote contestation as a constructive way of managing conflict. In educational research we must today discuss and practise the shaping of a culture of contestation. Contestation a priori also has an educating aspect since it nurtures the inner balance of the individual (homeostasis). This creates curiosity and a sense of criticism, a positive significance that in turn creates learning and new insights (Shulman, 2000). Life without disagreements is a frozen form of life that can result in stagnation and corruption. In comparison, life with regular contestation between foundations that do not accord with each other creates a dynamic world that strives for regulation and response to the new cognitive and emotional challenges that arise. Educating for a culture of contestation and for life where clashing forces are a given aspect, encourages better, more authentic coping with the complex and conflicted reality we live in. To encourage educators to employ positive contestation within the educational system implies developing a culture of contestation within the education system. The notion of a culture of contestation is inspired by the UN definition of a culture of peace: this is a set of values, attitudes, modes of behavior and ways of life that reject violence and prevent conflicts by tackling their root causes in order to solve problems through dialogue and negotiation among individuals, groups and nations. A culture of contestation is a hermeneutic process that involves continual adaptation, criticism and reflection.

Kluckhohn (1951, p. 86) argues that ‘culture consists of patterned ways of thinking, feeling and reacting, acquired and transmitted mainly by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiment in artifacts, the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e., historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values.” Hofstede has enlarged the scope of this definition to adapt it to different settings and contexts. Hence culture is perceived in his terminology as ‘the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category
of people from another” (Hofstede, 1991, p. 5). This conception implies that culture is a multi-layered entity that is contextually bound.

A culture of contestation means the acknowledgement of the fact that two (or more) contesting opinions possess an inherent quality. While educating about contestation previously constructed conflict as negative, alternative approaches have been developed more recently, maintaining that contestation among people and ideas is a major factor in generating productive discourse. It is the basis of a society founded on equality and justice. The approach enables response to the complex postmodern reality in which attempts are not made to find solutions but rather to structure a mechanism that can accommodate and institutionalise contestation – and allow it to be managed rather than solved.

REFERENCES


PART 1

DEBATES ON FRAMEWORKS, THEORY AND METHODOLOGY
INTRODUCTION

Historically, segregated schools are the norm. An alternative educational model is provided through integrated schools—schools where children who are more normally educated apart are deliberately educated together. Integrated schools have originated in Northern Ireland but similar efforts are now met in several countries (e.g. Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Croatia, Israel) (see McGlynn, Zembylas & Bekerman, 2013). Integrated schools are believed to be essential in contributing to the healing of the wounds that afflict conflicted societies, easing the path towards peace, reconciliation, and integration (Bekerman, 2004, 2005; Ben-Nun, 2013; McGlynn, 2007; McGlynn, Niens & Hewstone, 2004). In writing about integrated education though—its scope, its challenges, the social and political forces that drive or oppose it—the temptation is to suggest that integrated schools constitute “a magic panacea” (McGlynn, 2007, p. 271) in the route to challenge conflictive perspectives.

Our studies during the last decade in the conflicted societies we come from, Cyprus and Israel (Bekerman & Zembylas, 2012)—countries in which conflicts are still better understood as based on ethnic/national and not religious terms—as well as other researchers’ work in countries in which conflict might be characterized as a religious divide (e.g. see Davies, 2004; Gallagher, 2004; Hughes & Donnelly, 2012) indicate that the solutions offered in schools (including integrated schools) are often part of a larger rhetoric which seems to be much more an answer to political needs rather than to the complex educational realities of conflict and division. Thus, the theoretical assumptions that are made are often grounded in essentialised (e.g. ethnic or religious) differentiations between ‘self’ and ‘other’, ‘us’ and ‘them’. We wonder whether what is really needed in integrated education is a different theoretical language of the notion of ‘integration’ itself, one that somehow overcomes the dominant language about ‘social cohesion’ or the ‘integration’ of differences among identities that are perceived to be homogeneous and collective.

This chapter takes on the issue of ‘integrated education’ in conflicted societies and engages in a deeper analysis of its dominant theoretical concepts, approaches, and implications. The analysis offered here is a theoretical one and opens up questions which need to be accounted for, when we want to develop practical
educational strategies on integrated education; we have discussed these practices in other publications (e.g. see Bekerman & Zembylas, 2012; McGlynn, Zembylas & Bekerman 2013) but space limitations do not allow us to do it here. The present discussion suggests that the theoretical language that drives current approaches of integrated education may unintentionally be complicit to the project of hegemony and status quo, thus preventing social transformation towards shared and just societies. As we will explain, present research on integrated education in conflicted societies suggests that the main theoretical traditions which seem to justify integration in the education sphere are those of social cohesion and acculturation theory, contact hypothesis and multiculturalism. We analyse these traditions theoretically and look at some of their empirical results in conflicted societies, highlighting the problematic implications of the language that essentialises group identities. In the process to find an alternative theoretical language, we use some of the ideas of Judith Butler and Julia Kristeva’s to reconsider integrated education. This project, we argue, has important implications for ongoing debates about integrated education in conflicted societies (see McGlynn, Zembylas & Bekerman, 2013).

The chapter begins with a brief overview of integrated education—its historical roots and the empirical evidence available—especially in conflicted societies. Then, we discuss the main theoretical traditions and assumptions which seem to justify integration in the education sphere. The following section suggests the need to re-theorize notions of integration; for this purpose, it introduces Butler’s analysis on vulnerability and Kristeva’s (2010) ideas on interaction and proximity. The final section of the chapter suggests the need for rethinking the theoretical language of integrated education to encourage more critical self-reflection and challenge the assumption of essentialised group identities.

INTEGRATED EDUCATION: HISTORICAL ROOTS AND EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE

Generally speaking, the idea of integrated education is not unique to conflicted societies. Discussions on integrated schooling have been initiated in the United States as a result of segregation at all levels of society. While the results on school integration in the United States may not be conclusive, a recent review of research shows that “schools that are racially, ethnically, and socioeconomically diverse lead to educational outcomes that undergird the attitudinal antecedents to and structural conditions for social cohesion in multiethnic, democratic societies” (Mickelson & Nkomo, 2012, p. 197). The empirical evidence from the United States shows that integrated education is positively related to school performance, cross-racial friendships, acceptance of cultural differences, and reduces racial fears and prejudices. At the same time, though, it is also recognized that integrated schooling does not necessarily preclude re-segregation and fails to challenge the essentialisation of race, class or ethnicity.

Although there is no similar review of research in Europe or around the world on the impact of integrated schools, a general picture on ‘shared’ or ‘integrated’
education is gradually emerging. This picture shows that there are similar achievements when it comes to cross-group friendships and acceptance of differences, but there are also numerous challenges (e.g. social, psychological, political) in efforts to desegregate schooling (Bekerman, 2009b; McGlynn, 2007, 2009; McGlynn & Bekerman, 2007). For example, in Northern Ireland there is research evidence that integrated education may have a positive effect on identity, out-group attitudes, and forgiveness, with potential to heal division and promote a less sectarian perspective on things (McGlynn et al., 2004). By allowing members of the conflicting communities to meet and experience education together, it is shown that more fluid and culturally layered identities may be developed and more tolerant and thus less prejudiced perspectives are constructed (McGrellis, 2005). At the same time, it is shown that many integrated schools avoid addressing divisive issues such as religion and politics; as it is pointed out, this avoidance reinforces the psychological barriers which sustain division and group differences (Donnelly, 2004; Hughes & Donnelly, 2007; McGlynn, 2011). Also, researchers raise concerns about the effectiveness of contact in integrated schools, when the rest of the society is still deeply segregated (McGrellis, 2005). Recent research (Hughes, 2011) looks at the issue of integrated schooling from a more critical perspective and suggests that integrated schools for all children may not be a realistic option in some conflicted societies; therefore, it is argued, if governments and other organizations are serious about their social cohesion goals, a more coherent and targeted approach to relationship building is needed.

Similarly, bilingual integrated schools in Israel are often portrayed as a necessary tool to bring the two conflicting communities together and build a shared citizenship (Bekerman, 2004, 2005). It is suggested that there has been some success in terms of mediating conflicting national narratives and creating opportunities to talk about the conflict and recognize ethnic, religious and other differences (Bekerman, 2004). However, as Bekerman argues, many complexities in the classroom are often left unattended and bilingual schools fail to address the underlying social structures that support the nation-state ideology. The emphasis on distinct identities, in particular, may in fact subvert efforts towards integration, peace, and social cohesion (Bekerman, 2009a; Bekerman & Maoz, 2005). This has also been identified in comparative studies of integrated or shared schooling in Israel, Cyprus and Northern Ireland (e.g. see Bekerman, Zembylas & McGlynn, 2009).

Recent research by Abbott (2010) and McGlynn and London (2013) in the context of Northern Ireland makes an attempt to widen the scope of integrated education by introducing the concept of ‘inclusion’ not only as an educational response to children with ‘special needs’ but also as a response to the diversity of all learners. This shift has been identified initially in teachers’ and administrators’ discourse in the integrated education sector and may be interpreted, in our view, in at least two ways. First, while dealing with integration challenges at the school level, integrated schools have come to understand that differences are differences and thus all differences need to be acknowledged, if we seriously want to do something in the world; thus integration
needs to account for gender, class, ethnicity, religion, special needs and all possible
differences. This could indeed be considered a critical development, emerging from
more constricted perspectives on integration limited to ethnic or religious terms.

There is, however, another possible interpretation that is less optimistic. It is well
known that schools often function as a special type of outlet for mobility of certain
populations. Integration, understood mainly in religious terms (e.g., Northern Ireland)
or in ethnic-national terms (e.g., Israel and Cyprus), used to be a good starter to attract
new markets but now it is not enough or it may not be working well enough in the
sense of promoting social cohesion agendas. Moreover, this form of integration may
not engage enough ethnic or religious group representatives. Thus, in their watch for
new markets which will allow the development of the integrated education sector,
officials look now for other directions of inclusion such as special needs.

THEORETICAL TRADITIONS IN INTEGRATED EDUCATION

So far, we have looked at the historical roots and the empirical evidence available
for integrated education in conflicted societies. In the present section, we delve into
three theoretical traditions that, in our view, have been used to justify integration and
its value in the education sphere—social cohesion and acculturation theory, contact
hypothesis and multiculturalism. Our goal is to briefly discuss these traditions and
outline some of their theoretical assumptions that we find to be problematic; this is
an important task, if we wish to identify theoretical openings for new concepts and
approaches in integrated education.

Social Cohesion and Acculturation Theory

First, a major theoretical tradition in which integrated education has been grounded
combines social cohesion and acculturation theory. Though less identified with the
educational sphere, social cohesion and acculturation theories also substantiate the
work of integration. Although there is no single definition of ‘social cohesion’, this
term can be linked to the generation of shared values, and denotes an awareness
of social exclusion and inclusion (Tawil & Harley, 2004). Social cohesion places
emphasis on integration of the individual and the group as the basis for overcoming
conflict (Green, Janmaat, & Cheng, 2011; Green, Janmaat, & Han, 2009). This
understanding of integration, however, often implies that ‘other’ (e.g. minority)
groups must adopt the majority’s norms so that society becomes cohesive. That is, those perceived to be in need of integration are expected to acquire the
values hailed by the majority or whatever powerful group stands as the pillar of
civilization. ‘Others’—the migrants, indigenous, and disabled—are integrated into
the ‘citizens’—the abled and hegemonic.

Assessing educational policies and practices from a social cohesion perspective
involves a number of problematic issues, especially in conflicted societies (Tawil &
Harley, 2004), having to do with the ways in which identities are understood
RETHINKING THE THEORETICAL GROUNDING OF INTEGRATED EDUCATION

and constructed in relation memory and citizenship. As Green and his colleagues (2009) point out, few have a clear vision regarding official identity in conflicted societies; moreover, there is little evidence that integrated education actually leads to social cohesion. The idea of homogeneous identity still persists in visions of social cohesion in conflicted societies around the world (Soudien, 2012; Tawil & Harley, 2004), highlighting the fact that the full complexity of heterogeneity remains unacknowledged while the hegemonic view of integration is infused in daily societal and educational practices.

Acculturation theory, which explains the process of change when different cultures meet, has also been used to support integration work in education. In his work, Berry (1997, 2009) identifies two dimensions—identification with the host culture and identification with the group culture—and four strategies—integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization—that minority groups utilize in negotiating the encounter. Recent studies in this tradition show that biculturalism, in which people maintain the values and customs of their native culture while acquiring those mainstream values and customs that allow them to become full participants in society, is the preferred option for the minority groups entering contact situations. Esser (2010), using a model based on Berry’s approach, distinguishes between two features: the individual (e.g. language) and the social (e.g. labor market). These features, he argues, are intertwined, influencing both the social integration of the individual and the system integration of the society. Although various manifestations of acculturation theory abound, most show that minority groups adjust their customs, cultures, and identities to accommodate those of the dominant majority.

Acculturation theories share the same weaknesses described for social cohesion, i.e. they assume reified conceptions of culture and identity without reflecting the complexity of individual interactions. As Rudmin (2003) has posited, the integration construct, as it develops through acculturation theories, does not allow for the minorities’ processes of articulation because some cultural aspects (e.g. religion) resist code switching, making integration at multiple levels difficult, if not impossible. Still, although acculturation theory does not allow much progress in terms of intergroup educational policy articulations, its shift toward the specifics of intergroup contact is welcome, and may be useful in furthering contact theories.

Contact Hypothesis

The second theoretical tradition that has been used to justify integrated education is that of implementing educational intergroup contact activities (e.g. encounters/dialogues) as a tool to improve relations and mutual perceptions among the groups in conflict. The ‘contact hypothesis’ (Allport, 1954) stands today at the basis of most educational efforts towards integration. The contact hypothesis suggests that intergroup contact—when occurring under conditions of status equality and cooperative interdependence while allowing for sustained interaction between
participants and the potential formation of friendships—might help alleviate conflict between groups and encourage change in negative intergroup attitudes (Allport, 1954; Amir, 1976; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Since Allport’s initial theoretical formulation, the contact hypothesis has been developed over the years and in addition to the conditions proposed – status equality and cooperative interdependence while allowing both for sustained interaction between participants and for the potential forming of friendships – attention has been turned to how and why contact works.

A large number of studies have been conducted on intergroup contact, and most of these have tried to assess their effectiveness by focusing on attitudinal change based on pre- and post- measures (Bargal, 1990; Gaertner et al., 1993; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). A comprehensive meta-analysis has marked evidence for the benefits of intergroup contact, especially when the contact situation maximizes most, or all of its optimal conditions (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000). However, what characterizes these encounters is that they are often one time, singular, two-to-three day events; they do not allow for any conclusions to be reached regarding the potential influence of sustained educational initiatives geared towards the alleviation of conflict. This is also true for more long-term arrangements (i.e. shared or integrated schools) for which there are no conclusive positive results, except that contact is shown to be effective in fostering positive intergroup attitudes and identities, if Allport’s conditions of contact are upheld (e.g. see Dovidio, Gaertner & Kawakami, 2003; Hughes & Donnelly, 2012; Niens, 2009).

**Multiculturalism**

Finally, the third theoretical tradition is that of multiculturalism, defined as a situation in which culturally diverse groups are accorded status and recognition at the individual and institutional levels of society (Parekh, 2002), also contributes to the theoretical foundations of integrated education. Multiculturalism involves the endorsement of harmonious and constructive relationships between culturally diverse groups (Cashmore, 1996). According to Gates (1993), the boundaries of meaning for the ‘multiculturalism’ are not sufficiently clear; since the beginning of the 1960s, the concept ‘multicultural’ has been applied to situations involving the recognition of worldwide cultural variation. As such, it may be interpreted as a demand for greater awareness of the increase in intercultural contexts between and within various countries. In its development, multiculturalism has drawn from multiple theoretical perspectives including feminism (Asher, 2005), critical pedagogy (Giroux & McLaren, 1990), cultural studies (Olneck, 2000), critical race theory (Ladson-Billings, 2004), ethnicity (Nieto, 2002), and citizenship (Banks, 2008).

Multiculturalism has been influential in the social sciences, particularly in the field of education in which it has become a well-established sub-discipline sustained by a variety of theoretical perspectives, practical guidelines, and curricula (Banks, 2008). These perspectives have highlighted the need to revise all aspects of schooling, from
teacher education to classroom discourse and practice to curricular design, resulting in a bewildering array of competing theories within the field of multicultural education. Some commonalities can be found among them, however. All posit sensitivity to context in the appreciation of educational difficulties, attention to the multiplicity of voices present in educational settings, and awareness of the influence of structural and symbolic asymmetries on educational practice and outcomes. Also, approaches to multicultural education agree that students should be the main beneficiaries of the educational process. If they are to realize their potential, students should be encouraged to be actively involved in the educational process, and critical thinking skills must be treated as a central competence.

Research on the impact of multicultural educational reform reveals considerable debates and criticisms. Some claim that multicultural reform endangers national cohesion and supports shallow intellectual perspectives (Bloom, 1987; D’Souza, 1992; Duarte & Smith, 2000; Schlesinger, 1991), while others criticize its underlying assumptions and its focus on and conceptualization of identity and culture (Bekerman, 2004; Hoffman, 1996). In particular, it has been contended that by calling for appreciation and recognition of cultural variety, multiculturalism adopts an essentialist approach to culture. In fact, although multiculturalism aims at improving society, it errs by assuming that each group has a defined number of participants who resemble each other and are differentiated from other groups’ participants by virtue of their birth and early socialization. It has become apparent that true multiculturalism cannot be affected simply by the addition of more culture(s) (Arvizu & Saravia-Shore, 1990). Superficial and uncritical applications of multiculturalism risk aggravating the interethnic tension they hoped to alleviate. Eldering (1996) argues that a proper understanding of multiculturalism in society implies differentiating among dimensions related to objective reality, ideology, official policies, and the processes of practical implementation. Ignoring these dimensions might put us in a situation in which even well-intentioned multicultural initiatives end up delivering shallow renditions of an otherwise worthwhile educational endeavor (Lustig, 1997).

In light of these points, critical multiculturalism has risen as a response to the limitations of liberal multicultural education (May, 2009; McLaren, 1997; Sleeter & Bernal, 2004). Kincheloe and Steinberg (1997), for example, argue that the key problem of liberal multicultural approaches is their failure “to see the power-grounded relationships among identity construction, cultural representations, and struggles over resources” (p. 17). On such issues, critical multicultural perspectives are strongly aligned with critical race theory and antiracist education, pointing out that critical multiculturalism needs to actively challenge racism and other forms of injustice rather than merely recognize and celebrate differences (Berlak & Moyenda, 2001). Indeed, a principal concern of critical multiculturalism is to redress the over-emphasis on the impact of curricular change and the under-emphasis on the impact of structural racism on students’ lives in educational theory, policy, and practice. Critical multiculturalism has itself not been spared criticism, primarily for
its apparent inability to translate its theoretical concerns into actual pedagogy and practice. However, in spite of multiculturalism’s circuitous path toward the field of education, there can be no doubt about its relevance to education in general and integrated peace education in particular.

RE-VISITING THE NOTION OF INTEGRATION

Most of the theoretical traditions we have discussed so far seem to be grounded in a similar assumption about integration: they take for granted that there is something called ‘group identity’ or ‘group culture’ and thus social cohesion, intergroup contact or acculturation takes place when one (homogeneous) group interacts with another. Yet, this assumption runs into a number of problems. First, there is the danger of essentialising identity and culture, a challenge that is particularly intensified in conflicted societies (Bekerman & Zembylas, 2012). Second, this assumption does not always recognize the multiple complexities (political, social, emotional) that are present in processes of social cohesion, intergroup contact and acculturation; these complexities are immersed in multiple power relations that cannot be explained by simply attributing them to issues of culture and/or identity.

For example, it can be argued that the Northern Irish approach to integration “is limited by the fact that in practice, it forfeits the value of recognition and risks leaving students unable to grasp the region’s past and present contentions with sectarianism” (Ben-Nun, 2013, p. 15). If the opportunity to unmask the complexities of social cohesion is overlooked, as Ben-Nun says, students may walk away from the experience of integration with a shallow appreciation of difference and without understanding the implications of living without violence and conflict. On the other hand, the Israeli approach to integration with its strong focus on recognition and a firm binary conception of identity runs into the danger of reproducing essentialist perceptions of culture and identity (Bekerman, 2004, 2005); therefore, integration in this context is again limited by the fact that it is framed within theoretical traditions on recognition and contact that fail to take into consideration the multiple complexities of interaction and proximity between conflicting communities.

In this section, we want to briefly discuss two ideas that carry the possibility to invoke a new theoretical language of integration that can move us beyond the unproblematised assumptions identified so far. The first idea concerns Butler’s theorization of vulnerability and the second takes on Kristeva’s analysis of interaction and proximity; Butler is talking about social conflict situations, while Kristeva is working on disabilities and inclusion. These ideas situate integration in a different theoretical ground that recognizes the complexities of interaction without assuming essentialised group identities and cultures. Collectively, these ideas offer a different vision and practice of integration and sense of community in conflicted societies.

First, we draw on the notion of ‘mutual vulnerability’, the idea that there is interdependence between human beings and that the recognition of all people as
vulnerable’ has important implications for integrated education in conflicted societies. This idea is grounded theoretically in the work of Judith Butler (2004) and particularly her essay “Violence, Mourning, Politics”. Butler (2004) presents a number of examples to show that “each of us is constituted politically in part by virtue of the social vulnerability of our bodies… Loss and vulnerability seem to follow from our being socially constituted bodies, attached to others, at risk of losing those attachments, exposed to others, at risk of violence by virtue of that exposure” (p. 20). This is evident, for instance, in the experience of losing someone whom one is attached to; thus each one of us is mutually obliged to others because of this common vulnerability. The denial of such vulnerability unleashes violence against others whereas its acknowledgment creates openings for an ethical encounter with others. Consequently, “we might critically evaluate and oppose,” Butler emphasizes, “the conditions under which certain human lives are more vulnerable than others, and thus certain human lives are more grievable than others” (p. 30). Once we consider how hegemonic power relations determine “who will be a grievable human” and what “acts” are “permissible” for “public grieving” (p. 37), then we may begin to realize how a prohibition of grieving others’ lives extend the aims of violence and conflict.

Also, we draw on Kristeva’s (2010) recent theorization of interaction and proximity in her essay “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, and… Vulnerability.” Kristeva argues that disabilities (motor, sensory, psychical and mental) can bring us closer to the most vulnerable and lead us to reconsider the political implications that establish a true solidarity. As she points out, she is wary of the term ‘integration’ because “it has a whiff of charity about it toward those without the same rights as others” (p. 34). Thus she prefers the term ‘interaction’ “which expresses a politics that has become an ethics, broadening the political pact to the frontiers of life” (ibid.). This (politicized) view of interaction and proximity, explains Kristeva, should be one that allows us to care for the most singular and unshared vulnerabilities, otherwise it is doomed to produce new forms of totalitarianism. For this reason, Kristeva uses the term ‘democracy of proximity’ to denote the political formation that consists of beliefs, policies and practices grounded in the idea that vulnerabilities are shared and thus we are ethically and political obliged towards the other.

The notions of ‘vulnerability’ and ‘interaction’ have important theoretical and practical implications for integrated education in conflicted societies, because the mutual experience of vulnerability reveals the possibility of an alternative moral responsibility and sense of community (Vlieghe, 2010). Butler’s and Kristeva’s theorizations constitute a point of departure for a renewed politics of recognition in conflicted societies—a politics that is not founded in essentialist identities, but in the experiences of vulnerability and interaction as such. The notion of vulnerability, for example, enriches integrated education because it disrupts normative frames of community on the basis of (e.g. ethnic or religious) identity and puts forward the notion of renewed communities on the basis of sharing and shared vulnerability. Importantly, this idea does not imply an equalization of vulnerability, but the
recognition that there are different forms of vulnerabilities in conflicted societies. Also, what is important about Kristeva’s contribution is that the concept of ‘interaction’, unlike integration and inclusion, is not unidirectional; interaction works in both ways as border crossing, invoking a type of obligation on both sides, not just the weak and marginalized. Thus, vulnerability and interaction provide a new language for integrated education that re-evaluates and repositions integration in relation to the range of differences and power relations which are implicated in conflicted societies.

RENEWING THE THEORETICAL LANGUAGE OF INTEGRATED EDUCATION IN CONFLICTED SOCIETIES

While recognizing how and why dominant theoretical traditions—social cohesion and acculturation theory, contact hypothesis and multiculturalism—and their language retain their pertinence in integrated education, what is of concern here is thinking about integrated education in new theoretical ways that enable us to engage and even displace the power/knowledge couplet of essentialized identities. The following questions are important to consider in our discussions about integrated education in conflicted societies:

• How do (can) we write about integrated education in conflicted societies in ways that will subvert the power that comes from the language and the underlying assumptions of social cohesion, intergroup contact and acculturation?
• How do we make ‘integration’ an object of both analysis and critical action that has the potential to bring students from conflicting communities together, without remaining stuck in essentialist understandings of culture and identity?
• How do we move beyond seeing words such as ‘social cohesion’, ‘inclusion’, ‘multiculturalism’ and ‘integration’ all tinted by essentialist undertones expressive of pre-given realities and begin to view those as events within certain social and material structures and power relations?

As Soudien (2012) suggests in his response to a similar set of questions in the context of integration in post-apartheid South Africa, we need to realize that our explanations of the realities we confront are always incomplete and depend on unproblematized theories that normalize what is essentially partial and incomplete. To develop, therefore, a language that reflects this shift from pre-given realities about integrated education to a new space in which ‘integration’ is an object of both analysis and critical action, we need to recognize how our current theoretical traditions are complicit with hegemonic practices on social cohesion, identity, culture and so on.

For example, Butler’s and Kristeva’s ideas highlight how new concepts such as vulnerability and proximity enrich our understanding about social and material structures and power relations. These concepts also expose how dominant theoretical traditions have been mostly guided by psychologised and idealistic perspectives
when articulating the aims of integrated education (Bekerman & Zembylas, 2012). The issue, therefore, of introducing new theoretical concepts into existing discussions about integrated education is extremely important and needs to be explicitly addressed in debates about integrated education (McGlynn, Zembylas & Bekerman, 2013). In other words, we question whether it is the right direction to work with the same assumptions that are constituted and constitutive of the modern nation-state under which much of the lack of social cohesion, harmony and peaceful coexistence is attributed to factors that fail to systematically consider the multiple implications of unequal social structures.

We are deeply concerned that despite its innovativeness and good intentions, integrated education in conflicted societies may reproduce existing structures of division, particularly as dominant theories of integration are appropriated in educational policy and practice. Taking this into account, we need to be constantly vigilant about the consequences of our theoretical choices and develop new concepts and approaches of integrated education that are fundamentally conscious of the ways in which integration succeeds to disavow division and frame heterogeneity in broader political and ethical terms. The difference that new theoretical concepts and approaches make—such as Butler’s and Kristeva’s ideas—is that they force us to appreciate the theoretical limitations of dominant traditions as well as their practical failures in achieving ‘real’ integration and inclusion. As Soudien (2012) argues, if we are seeking a new space in which notions of integration drive educational policy and practice, then we need to ask what realities we are to integrate, how these realities are sensitive to difference in all of its multiplicity, and finally whether as we include or integrate we create new hegemonies that exclude ‘others’.

For us, integrated education is not a ‘technocratic’ process where simply different students come together when they are usually educated apart; integration is a multi-faceted, long-term and open-ended process in which ideally all stakeholders come together and benefit from it (Gallagher, 2004; McGlynn, 2009; McGlynn, Zembylas & Bekerman, 2013). This realization demands careful theoretical and practical considerations that will strengthen long-term commitment to the process of integrated education and will address explicitly the concerns of those who are not only positively inclined but also those who oppose it or are not convinced for its merits. Where integrated education is discussed as the deliberate co-education of children who are normally educated apart in conflicted societies, a strong link should be made with wider issues of integration such as socio-economic situation, race, gender, ethnicity, special needs, and notions of vulnerability and interaction (see also Mickelson & Nkomo, 2012). Renewing the theoretical point of departure for integrated education does not automatically erase the challenges confronted by those who want to promote integrated education initiatives, especially when trying to negotiate between their understanding of students’ needs, their personal commitments and their commitments to the larger society within which they are asked to educate (see Bekerman, 2009a, 2009b; McGlynn et al., 2004).
However, there are important issues that need to be on the agenda of integration discussions to help us engage more critically in self-reflection and evaluation of integrated education. For example, when discussing integration we need to ask questions of politics and power relations, of dominance and marginalization and also questions about self-positioning and belonging and how those issues are relevant to asymmetrical vulnerabilities (Butler, 2004). As noted, integrated education grounded in the dominant theoretical traditions—social cohesion, intergroup contact, acculturation—might take on a naive liberal or pluralist direction and fail to confront the multiple complexities of vulnerability and interaction. To grasp these complexities within the context of engaging in a renewed theorization of integrated education means much more than identifying differences and similarities or somehow accounting for the multiple social, political and economical contexts within which different individuals and groups ‘come together’ to be educated. It means historicizing how current social conditions have evolved, including the realization that integrated education might often create an artificial ‘bubble’ within which all groups become suddenly ‘equal’ when in fact societal structures are grossly unequal and unjust.

CONCLUSION

Integrated schooling has developed in recent decades in response to segregation practices that have been occurring, not only in conflicted societies but around the world (Mickelson & Nkomo, 2012). The issue is not so much about defining what is meant by ‘integrated education’ in different settings but rather how it is understood and practiced and what its consequences are. So there has not been a systematic examination of what integrated education does in specific settings and under which circumstances. Such an examination is urgently needed in a socio-political context inflected by conflict and post-conflict implications that raise numerous complex issues about the future prospects of a society that is truly ‘integrated.’ Given that there has been little scholarly work that theorizes the different accounts of integrated education, more systematic research and theorization is needed on the practices and the results of integrated education in different settings.

More importantly, perhaps, we have argued in this chapter that current concepts and approaches of integrated education in conflicted societies are constrained by the particular theoretical language that is used to frame integration. This theoretical language predefines identity and culture in essentialist terms and thus fails to account for the multiple ways in which conflicted communities and individuals may come together. Alternative theoretical concepts—such as the ideas of vulnerability, interaction, and proximity that have been discussed in this chapter—are enabled and invigorated by efforts that do not remain stuck in taken-for-granted assumptions about integration. Although transformations are not always immediately available, it is important to reflect theoretically on the possibilities that are enabled by new theoretical concepts.
RETHINKING THE THEORETICAL GROUNDING OF INTEGRATED EDUCATION

NOTES

1 An extended version of this chapter is published in the journal European Educational Research Journal (2013) under the title “Integrated education in conflicted societies: Is there need for a new theoretical language?”

2 The terms shared and integrated education are often used interchangeably; however, the term ‘integrated’ is more accurate when there is roughly an equal balance of students who come from conflicting communities and choose to be educated together (McGlynn et al., 2004). The term ‘shared education’ is used when the contact between students coming from conflicting communities is not grounded on the basis of equal balance but rather on a more loose structure of contact (Hughes & Donnelly, 2012).

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2. CONFLICT-FRAGILITY-EDUCATION

Issues in Conceptualization and Measurement

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the concept of state fragility has become increasingly pertinent to discussion of conflict and education. The Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), for instance, created a Working Group on Education and Fragility in 2008, which brings together donors, policymakers and academics to ‘catalyze collaborative action on issues relating to education and fragility’ (INEE, 2014). Working Group research and mapping exercises (e.g. Smith Ellison, 2013; Davies, 2011; Barakat et al., 2008) and academic publications (e.g. Mosselson et al., 2009; Kirk, 2007) have contributed towards a growing body of literature on education and fragility. However, consideration of state fragility in research on conflict and education introduced a new level of intricacy into what is already a highly complex set of relationships. Research around the ‘two faces’ of education in conflict has already highlighted the multi-directionality of the relationship(s) between education and conflict (e.g. Davies, 2010; Paulson, 2008); fragility introduces further uncertainty around the causes, effects and interconnections of the outbreak of violent conflict, poor educational performance and instability. This complexity is heightened when seeking to explore these multiple relationships empirically as the definition and measurement of concepts like fragility are notoriously difficult (Mata and Ziaja, 2009).

This chapter seeks to lay foundations for future research on conflict, fragility and education by discussing the conceptual underpinnings of this three-way relationship, and looking at how it can be empirically operationalized. We explore ways in which conflict and fragility are defined and measured in research and policy literature and in empirical datasets and we draw out implications of these definitional issues for research around education, conflict and fragility. In doing so, we draw upon our recent longitudinal examination of the relationship between conflict, state fragility and educational outcomes (Shields and Paulson, 2014) as an exemplar, discussing how the data measures these concepts and discussing limitations of the indicators used.

We begin by introducing the three-way relationship that this chapter focuses upon by showing how recent debate around education and conflict has opened space for the consideration of fragility. We then turn to an exploration of each dimension of...
the three-way relationship. First, we discuss how armed conflict has been measured, particularly in relation to education. This section demonstrates how recent quantitative research supports the assumption that conflict is damaging educational outcomes, which underpins the practice of education in emergencies (EiE). It also raises a number of questions about the most useful ways to define violent conflict in future research in order to best grasp and understand its impact on education. We then scrutinize the concept of state fragility, looking at conceptual understandings and measurements in order to highlight and consider the implications for education research of a continuing lack of clarity around the meaning of fragility. In this section we argue that research which focuses on the impact of specific aspects of fragility (e.g. governance or security) and their relationships to education may be more fruitful in understanding and explaining change. Finally, we discuss how conflict and fragility are related both conceptually and empirically before concluding with thoughts about the utility of these concepts alongside the realities of a globalizing world.

EDUCATION AND CONFLICT: ‘HIDDEN CRISIS’ OR BIASED ‘MAINSTREAM NARRATIVE’?

One of the foremost assumptions in the field of EiE is that conflict has a damaging effect on education. This has been substantiated by a great deal of qualitative research detailing the effect of violent conflict on access to education (e.g. UNESCO, 2011), childhood wellbeing (e.g. Davies, 2004), education infrastructure (e.g. O’Malley, 2010) and loss of human capital (Buckland, 2005) among other negative effects in particular conflict-affected contexts. However, the 2012 Human Security Report (HSR) has challenged this assumption, arguing that recent quantitative research does not substantiate it. The HSR argues that the ‘mainstream narrative’ around education in emergencies, epitomized by the conflict-focused Education For All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report (GMR) (UNESCO, 2011), uses research from ‘worst-case’ conflict situations to generalize about the experience of education in all conflict-affected contexts. However, the HSR has challenged this assumption, arguing that recent quantitative research does not substantiate it. The HSR argues that the ‘mainstream narrative’ around education in emergencies, epitomized by the conflict-focused Education For All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report (GMR) (UNESCO, 2011), uses research from ‘worst-case’ conflict situations to generalize about the experience of education in all conflict-affected contexts. The GMR states that conflict around the world, a ‘hidden crisis,’ poses a serious threat to achieving EFA goals. The HSR, in contrast, argues that in fact quantitative research (EPDC 2010; Gates et al., 2010; UIS 2010) does not substantiate these claims since it finds that education outcomes often improve during periods of conflict.

When we review this recent research, we do find evidence of a negative relationship between conflict and education, despite the HSR reservations. The HSR is accurate in pointing out that enrolment rates do often increase during periods of conflict, but the rate at which they improve tends to decrease in conflict-affected countries (Gates et al., 2010). Other studies find negative legacies of conflict at sub-regional level or on the enrolment and attainment of particular groups of students (EPDC, 2010; UIS, 2010). So, this recent quantitative evidence along with earlier studies (e.g. Lai and Thyne, 2007) does build up a picture of a negative relationship between conflict and
enrolment. This picture is substantiated by qualitative research as discussed above. However, limitations and contradictions in existing research mean the picture is still not definitive. Generalizability is limited due to selective sampling in a number of studies, and the use of cross-sectional analysis does not allow for the exploration of how enrolment changes over time. Thus, it is possible that the observed negative changes in enrolment and the conflict often thought to have caused them may in fact share a common cause. Aside from our recent analysis (Shields and Paulson, 2014) quantitative research to date has not explored this possibility. So, the strong causality often suggested in the ‘mainstream narrative’, for instance that ‘conflict is destroying opportunities for education on a global scale’ (UNESCO, 2011, p. 31) is not firmly supported. The HSR usefully suggests that a possible common cause of conflict and negative education outcomes may be state fragility and urges researchers to explore this.

We therefore included state fragility in our analysis (Shields and Paulson, 2014), which longitudinally examined the relationship between enrolment, conflict and state fragility and included all countries for which data is available, 150 in total. Using multi-level modeling techniques we were able to explore the overall trajectory of enrolment rates across our 13-year period, from 2000 to 2012. We used enrolment rates as our indicator of educational outcomes because they are among the most consistently measured indicators of educational performance, the improvement of which has been a priority over the last decades with the EFA and Millennium Development (MDG) goals. In our analysis enrolment is measured using primary and secondary net enrolment rates (NER) as reported in the World Bank’s World Development Indicators (2013), which report data collected by the UNESCO Institute of Statistics. We required countries to have at least five NER data points over the 2000–2012 period, meaning that countries that did not meet this data requirement were excluded.

A key challenge for this research was selecting an appropriate measurement of education that could be related to conflict. While the HSR speaks of “educational outcomes” (2012, p. 79) most of the studies it cites are related to enrolment rates. Most educational research would differentiate between access – which could be measured by enrolment – and the broader notion of outcomes, which could include literacy, completion, achievement, and a broad range of phenomena such as social inclusion and emotional well-being. However, relating these outcomes to conflict is exceptionally challenging as data tends to be missing or unavailable for many countries affected by conflict. We therefore selected enrolment as our outcome variable acknowledging that it is a limited measure of education, but preferring an indicator with the widest availability of data. If enrolment is considered an outcome, this is more at the systems level (i.e. the outcome of an education system) than for individuals. However, it is quite possible that post-2015 agenda-setting and a new focus on learning outcomes and quality among donors may open possibilities for the use of other types of education data in future.
Our analysis found a statistically significant negative relationship between conflict and educational enrolment. The effects of this relationship depended upon the baseline enrolment level of a given country, like the studies discussed above. Given the long-term trend of expansion in educational enrolment over time (Boli et al., 1985) both conflict-affected and non-conflict countries in our sample tended to experience increasing enrolment rates across the period. For countries with high enrolment rates at the beginning of the period (at baseline), the effect of conflict tended to be an actual decrease in enrolment. For countries with a low baseline enrolment rate, the effect of conflict tended to be a decrease in the rate at which enrolment grows. Figure 1 illustrates this finding with hypothetical and actual conflict and non-conflict affected countries.

![Figure 1. Hypothetical and actual changes in enrolment in conflict and non-conflict affected countries](image)

We also found that the greater the intensity of conflict, the greater the negative effect on enrolment; an intuitive finding that suggests that more severe conflicts have a greater negative effect on education. Finally, when we included fragility in the analysis, we found a statistically significant relationship between state fragility and educational enrolment. When we controlled for fragility, the relationship between conflict and enrolment was no longer significant. In other words, state fragility was
a more powerful explanatory variable for changes in enrolment than is conflict. This finding lends support to the HSR’s suggestion of that fragility may be a common cause of both conflict and changes in enrolment. Clearly, then, the definitions of conflict and fragility – both conceptually and in the data with which we worked – are important in order to fully understand and to explore the policy implications of these findings. We now turn our attention to these definitions, looking first at how conflict is defined and measured before turning our attention to fragility.

DEFINING AND OPERATIONALISING CONFLICT

Although the relationship(s) between education and conflict is a key focus for much research, systematically defining conflict in a way that applies across multiple contexts is deceptively challenging. Conflict clearly refers to violence – and generally implies organized and systematic armed violence. However, this alone may not be sufficient to define conflict as it is commonly understood in relation to education and development more broadly; questions of who is involved and why the violence occurs can shape how conflict is understood in relation to education.

Such issues are addressed by the Uppsala Conflict Data Programme (UCDP), which maintains the Battle-Related Deaths (BRD) dataset. UCDP defines armed conflict as: ‘a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in one calendar year’ (UCDP, 2014). The UCDP dataset dates back to 1989 and uses the conflict-year and dyad-year as its unit of observation; meaning that each observation in the dataset corresponds to any conflict that meets the criteria for inclusion in a given year; with multiple observations for conflicts that span across multiple years. The inclusion of dyads – each dyad is made up of two armed, opposing actors – also allows researchers to track the intensity of a given conflict over time, and to identify multiple simultaneous conflicts within a given nation-state. An armed conflict is considered to be a war by the UCDP when BRD exceed 1,000. The UCDP rightly claims that its dataset ‘is becoming a standard in how conflicts are systematically defined and studied’ (ibid). The dataset is used in the World Bank’s 2011 World Development Report, which took conflict as its theme, the 2011 Education for All Global Monitoring Report, the 2012 Human Security Report, and much published academic research on violent conflict (Gates et al., 2012; Barakat & Urdal, 2009; Shields and Paulson, 2014).

UCDP’s focus on conflict as organized combat is shared by the Correlates of War (CoW) dataset (Sarkees & Wayman, 2010), another major source of data on violent conflict. Unlike UCPD, CoW’s unit of observation is the war, which it classifies into inter-state wars, intra-state wars and extra-state wars. The CoW dataset takes a somewhat broader view of wars, which it defines as ‘sustained combat, involving organized armed forces, resulting in a minimum of 1,000 battle-related fatalities,’ (ibid.) sharing the UCPD focus on organized violence but reducing the focus on the
role of the state. The data date back to 1816, and although it is less commonly cited than UCDP’s data among development donors, the CoW dataset is used as the basis much academic research (e.g. Lai and Thye, 2007; Collier & Hoeffler, 2004).

Although they differ somewhat, both the UCDP and CoW data are extremely useful in providing standardised measures of conflict; while their focus is narrow, the systematic nature of their criteria allows for some measure of comparison and generalization across nation-states, conflicts, and time. Furthermore, the two indicators are closely correlated and follow similar patterns in yearly variations, suggesting that although they are defined and measured differently, the accurately reflect a valid underlying construct. For example, as Figure 2 illustrates, the annual total of BRDs shows a clear downward trend across both UCDP and CoW data. It is important to put the early years of the twenty-first century into their historical context, particularly as they are the focus of much EiE work. As Figure 2 shows, this is as a period that has witnessed a ‘continuous general decline in minor armed conflict and war’ (Themnér and Wallenstein, 2012). The early 1990s, ‘peak years’ for conflict after the end of the Cold War, saw the UCDP count over 50 active conflicts per year, while recent 2011 figures find 37 armed conflicts active in 30 locations. 2010 figures recorded 31 active armed conflicts. While the increase between 2010 and 2011 is significant, it remains to be seen whether this is the start of an upward trend.

![Figure 2. Annual battle-related deaths in UCDP and CoW datasets](image)

*Figure 2. Annual battle-related deaths in UCDP and CoW datasets*
While they are exceptionally clear in their criteria, the focused nature of the UCDP and CoW datasets inevitably excludes incidents of violence that are relevant to any understanding of conflict and education, especially given the overall trend toward declining armed conflict as conventionally defined. For instance, organized violence in which one party is not the government of a state – for example organized crime or banditry – would not be included in the UCDP data. Neither dataset would include deaths related to violence against civilians who are not organized for combat (e.g. genocide or violently suppressed popular uprising). Examples of UCDP (2012) conflicts classified as non-state or one-sided and thus not considered as conflict-affected in our analysis include recent conflicts in Mexico, Nigeria, Mali, Libya, Egypt, Thailand, Somalia and Sudan. By and large, therefore, drugs-related violence, uprisings like those witnessed during the Arab Spring and extremist violence tend to be excluded from quantitative work on education and conflict, which, thanks to data availability, must only use data on armed conflict.

Further methodological problems arise when states are classified into the binary categories of the conflict-affected and non-conflict-affected. While this distinction is regularly relied upon by researchers and policymakers alike, such binary classification homogenizes states that have very different experiences with conflict: BRDs per conflict-year in the UCDP data range from many instances of 25 BRDs, to 50,000 in the Ethiopia/Eritrea conflict in 1999. Furthermore, nation-states vary considerably in their geographic size and population: the meaning and implications of 25 BRDs in India – with its population of over a billion – is in many senses incomparable with similar levels of violence in East Timor.

Despite these problems, battle-related deaths are used as a proxy for the effects of conflict by the UCDP because in comparison with alternative variables (for instance the economic consequences of war), this data is possible to collect and compare across a range of contexts (Strand & Dahl, 2010). BRD comprise deaths that occur in the ‘normal’ warfare of the conflicting parties and so include military and civilian deaths caused by ‘traditional battlefield fighting, guerilla activity (e.g. hit-and-run attacks / ambushes) and all kinds of bombardments of military units, cities, villages, etc.’ (UCDP, 2014). However, BRD are not a measure of total fatalities (all those who would be alive were it not for the conflict), which are often estimated to be much higher than BRD.

These contextual and definitional issues about conflict, data and the early twenty-first century context have implications for education in emergencies research. The frequently operationalized definition of conflict is likely to underestimate the human cost of conflict since it has to use BRD and not total fatalities or a measure that may proxy the effects of conflict on survivors. Likewise, it is limited to a very conventional understanding of violent conflict that excludes many forms of contemporary violence. This definition is then applied to a period that witnessed a comparatively low frequency and intensity of this kind of conventional conflict. Despite the limitations of this definition and its manifestation in the data, our recent analysis found that conflict had a negative effect on enrolment. This negative effect
was stronger, the more intense the conflict. Given these findings, we feel reasonably confident supporting the assumption that conflict has a damaging effect on education – in this case on rates of enrolment. We also draw attention to the need for research into the relationships between non-state and one-sided conflict and education in order to more fully understand the ways in which violent conflict might affect education. While ‘conventional’ armed conflict has been declining since the 1990s, other forms of organized violence may be on the increase (World Bank, 2011) and their effects on education remain understudied.

DEFINING AND OPERATIONALISING FRAGILITY

A good deal of work on fragility begins by discussing the lack of consensus around the term and its definition (e.g. Stewart and Brown, 2010; Cammack et al., 2006). Nevertheless, the term has gained increasing currency among development donors and the concept of fragility has been influential in donors’ policies relating to education and many other sectors (e.g. DFID, 2005, 2012; OECD/DAC 2008a, 2011). Figure 3 illustrates the rise of the use of fragility vocabulary within World Bank publications since 2000, demonstrating the increasing importance of the term in recent years.

![Figure 3. The term ‘fragile states’ in World Bank publications since 2000](image)

As Bengtsson (2011) argues, development actors see fragility as ‘a unique and solvable problem’ to which they are devoting attention and resources. However, there is little consensus among actors about the boundaries of the problem that fragility
poses. This uncertainty is evident when surveying the detail of how the concept of fragility is defined in development policy, which shows considerable variation between donors and across time. One of the most commonly cited definitions, around which many state there is ‘a growing consensus among development actors’ (Elhaway et al., 2010, p. 1), is that of the OECD’s Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC), which in 2007 wrote:

States are fragile when state structures lack political will and/or capacity to provide the basic functions needed for poverty reduction, development and to safeguard the security and human rights of their population. (OECD/DAC 2007, p. 2)

The definition encapsulates several key features of a donor consensus around the concept of fragility: the combination of willingness and capacity (first described by DFID [Torres and Anderson, 2004; DFID, 2005]), its relationship to poverty reduction and development, and the issue of security. It is noteworthy that the OECD/DAC definition does not allude to conflict, although this is specifically mentioned in other definitions (e.g. USAID, 2005; World Bank, 2007; AusAID, 2011). Despite the stated consensus around the OECD/DAC 2007 definition, the UNDP (see Clark, 2013) is one of the few donors and international agencies to have explicitly adopted this definition. Other agencies opt instead to develop their own definitions of the concept1 while often referring to the OECD DAC definition in introducing their own. It is worth noting that despite its impact on development agency thinking about the concept of fragility, the OECD/DAC itself modified its 2007 definition just one year later, writing:

We propose modifying the OECD/DAC definition of a fragile state, simply as one unable to meet its population’s expectations or manage changes in expectations and capacity through the political process. Whether and to what degree these expectations entail poverty reduction, development, security or human rights will depend on historical, cultural and other factors that shape state-society relations in specific contexts. (OECD/DAC, 2008a, p. 16)

The 2008 revision is couched in far more general and less specific language. The meaning of fragility is situated relative to the expectations of the population concerned, rather than laying out in absolute terms the functions of a state as the 2007 definition did. The trend towards a more loosely defined notion of fragility sits comfortably with analyses that argue the concept of fragility is normative, based on the assumption that all societies should and will eventually converge towards a model of the state based upon the Weberian ideal, which entails a state monopoly of the use of force and violence, legitimate authority and well-functioning rationalized bureaucratic institutions (Stepputat & Engberg-Pederson, 2008; Tesky et al., 2012).

The rhetorical shift in the OECD’s definition of fragility has been accompanied by other trends towards more nuanced and reflective language around the concept
of fragility. Donor documents allude to fragile “situations” instead of “states” in recognition that fragility can be confined to geographic regions or discrete aspects of society. Increasingly, fragility is juxtaposed with the notion of resiliency, defining fragility by what it is not: “the ability to cope with change while maintaining the bargain of the social contract.” (OECD 2008a, p. 18). Interestingly, however, it is the 2007 OECD DAC definition, which continues to be referenced when referring to consensus around what fragility means (e.g. Elhaway et al., 2010; Clark, 2013). This is evidence of a tension between understanding the problem of fragility and its potential solutions as a problem akin to that of traditional or conventional state-building (e.g. Stepputat and Engberg-Pederson, 2008) or as a new set of globalized challenges (e.g. OECD, 2012).

Under both understandings, there is some consistency in the understanding that fragility is a departure from states (or ‘situations’) behaving as they ‘should’. Beyond this, there is considerable ambiguity on the specificities of fragility. In other words, it is unclear what this bad behavior looks like and who or what causes it and how. Clearly, this poses a challenge for assessing how well any index or dataset that sets out to measure or assess fragility in a given circumstance succeeds in doing so as such efforts inevitably set out to measure a concept around which there is limited definitional clarity.

**Measuring Fragility**

Despite the conceptual challenges, the rise of the fragility phraseology has been accompanied by several efforts to quantitatively measure and rank state fragility. The most prominent among these include:

*Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA):* Developed by the World Bank in order to help determine the allocation of development assistance, the CPIA was first published in 2005 and is used by the World Bank and others (e.g. DFID) to determine fragile countries and “situations.” The CPIA combines scores on 16 separate, policy-related criteria, based on assessments from World Bank country offices.

*State Fragility Index (SFI):* Developed by the Centre for Systemic Peace at George Mason University, the State Fragility Index measures political, economic, security and social aspects of countries’ effectiveness and legitimacy. It combines a variety of indicators related to development outcomes (e.g. the Human Development Index, and GDP), political processes and stability (e.g. regime types, and coups d’état), and some measure of relations within the global economy (e.g. the ratio between raw commodities and manufactured goods in exports). The eight different indices are also adopted by USAID in its writing on fragility (USAID, 2005).
Details on these and several other fragility measures are discussed in detail by Mata and Ziaja (2009). Their analysis reveals considerable variation in how donors operationalize fragility in quantitative terms. This variability is reflected in their correlations of fragility indices, which range from 0.94 (between the Brookings Institute’s Index of State Weakness and the Ibrahim Index of African Governance) to 0.10 (between the University of Maryland’s Peace and Conflict Instability Ledger and the CPIA). The large variation in correlations shows that measures of fragility may line up very closely, or be almost entirely unrelated, providing evidence that the concept of fragility is ambiguous and slippery.

What is most important to realize is that any measurement of fragility is simultaneously a theory of how a society should function. In nearly all cases, indicators are purposively selected and weighted in order to give an overall measurement of fragility. While the technicalities of their respective methodologies offer an impression of objectivity, the precision in measurement is underpinned by implicit and normative assumptions of how societies should function. While some of these indicators and their associated assumptions are relatively uncontroversial (e.g. the absence of armed violence) others are politically contestable. For example, the World Bank’s CPIA explicitly associates high import tariffs with state fragility: countries with average tariffs over 20% are scored poorly, while those with tariffs under 5% receive the best score.

While recognizing the limitations of fragility measurements, we used data from the Centre for Systemic Peace’s (2011) State Fragility Index (SFI) in our research, mainly because data date back to 1997 and because it is specifically cited in the Human Security Report. The SFI is also a fairly centrist view of fragility: according to Mata and Ziaja (2009) its correlation with other indices is quite high (between 0.57 and 0.92), and it includes indicators related to governance, development outcomes and conflict. The SFI defines fragility based on the state’s ‘capacity to manage conflict; make and implement public policy; and deliver essential services and its systemic resilience in maintaining system coherence, cohesion, and quality of life; responding effectively to challenges and crises, and sustaining progressive development’ (Marshall & Cole, 2011, p. 26). The definition combines elements of the more traditional, Weberian understanding of the failed state and the more fluid understanding of fragility as failed resiliency. However, the degree to which its domain indicators, as shown in Table 1 below, capture and reflect this definition in the SFI’s measurement of fragility is an open one.

As indicated in Table 1, the SFI is heterogeneous, as it includes indicators related to conflict (e.g. residual war), governance (e.g. stability) and development outcomes (e.g. the infant mortality and the HDI). This raises conceptual and empirical issues for studying the relationship between fragility and any type of development outcome, including education, as the analysis can become circular. A related problem is that the weightings of the indicators are essentially arbitrary – each element of the SFI
has an equal weight regardless of how it relates to outcomes in education or any other sector: HDI and GDP both contribute a possible total of four points to the overall score, but they predict outcomes in very different ways. Both these limitations of the SFI suggest a need to use observed indicators – rather than composite indices – in the analysis of fragility and education. In other words, there may be more value in exploring individual dimensions of fragility and their relationship with education than in continuing to study fragility as a ‘unique problem’ in its own right. While more challenging, this approach will yield the best insight into how various aspects or interpretations of fragility (e.g. political institutions, functions of the state, etc.) relate to educational outcomes.

Table 1. State fragility index domain indicators

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<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Data Source</th>
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<tr>
<td>Security effectiveness</td>
<td>Total Residual War as collected in the Major Episodes of Political Violence data set held by the Centre for Systemic Peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security legitimacy</td>
<td>State Repression as measured by the Political Terror Scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance effectiveness</td>
<td>Regime/Governance Stability as measured by the Polity IV project at the Centre for Systemic Peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance legitimacy</td>
<td>Regime/Governance Inclusion as measured by the Polity IV project at the Centre for Systemic Peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic development effectiveness</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product per capita as measured by the World Bank’s World Development Indicators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic development legitimacy</td>
<td>Share of Export Trade in Manufactured Goods as measured by the World Bank’s World Development Indicators and the UNDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social development effectiveness</td>
<td>Human Development Index score as reported by UNDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social development legitimacy</td>
<td>Infant Mortality Rate as reported by the US Census Bureau’s International Data Base</td>
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While our recent findings, which find a stronger negative relationship between educational enrolment and state fragility than between conflict and education, do lend support to the need to consider fragility in education in emergencies research, they do not shed much light upon how fragility might explain negative changes in educational outcomes. This is because of the definitional uncertainty around what fragility is, what causes it and how it is manifest. We did find that higher levels of fragility are associated with greater changes in enrolment (in the same way as more intense levels of conflict were), however in much the same way as earlier research begged the question of a common cause for conflict and poor educational outcomes, we cannot establish causality or eliminate the possibility of a common cause. Future research in this area could usefully explore potential elements of fragility – for instance governance – and their effects on education.

CONFLICT AND FRAGILITY

We now turn our attention to the final dimension of the relationship between education, conflict and fragility: that between conflict and fragility. As discussed above, the many definitions of fragility do not view the term as synonymous with violent conflict. Some definitions view conflict as symptomatic of underlying fragility (e.g. World Bank, 2007) while others see fragility as a cause of conflict (e.g. OECD/DAC, 2006) and some definitions make no mention of conflict (AusAID, 2011). Therefore, there is considerable definitional ambiguity about the relationship between conflict and fragility, including around whether the two phenomena are interlinked and whether one causes the other (and, if so, which one). Most indices that seek to measure fragility include conflict as one dimension or indicator towards their composite score (Mata & Ziaja, 2009), a decision that understands conflict as one of the causes or symptoms of fragility. As we saw above, the SFI uses a measure of ‘total residual war’ (a measure that includes the legacy of conflict as well as active armed conflict) as its indicator for security effectiveness. The presence or legacy of violent conflict, therefore, leads a country to score highly on at least one of the eight dimensions of fragility.

Though often connected conceptually and in measurement, there is also empirical evidence that the two phenomena are not necessarily interlinked. Figure 4 shows the average fragility scores of the conflict-affected countries in the dataset that we used in our analysis as well as the logarithmically averaged BRDs of each conflict. It does not show a clear relationship between the intensity of conflict and the fragility score. Eritrea and Sri Lanka, for instance, have relatively high BRDs but their fragility levels are around the average for conflict-affected countries. Ethiopia and Liberia both have high levels of fragility, which in Ethiopia coincide with very high BRDs and in Liberia with low levels of BRDs.

Furthermore, when we created a dichotomous fragility variable by classifying all those countries whose SFI score was above the median as fragile and all those
whose score was below the median as non-fragile, we found independent variation between conflict-affected and fragile countries. For instance, a number of fragile countries, such as North Korea and Zimbabwe, did not experience conflict, while conflict-affected countries like Russia and Israel were not considered fragile (Shields & Paulson, 2014).

This analysis shows that notwithstanding the limitations of conflict and fragility measures discussed above, there is good evidence that the two concepts can be conceptualized and measured independently of one another. Therefore, the possibility of distinguishing between conflict and fragility, and of examining their effects independently of one another, has clear potential for research in comparative and international education. Our research lays groundwork in this area but much remains to be done, particularly in terms of disaggregating the dimensions of fragility and their relations to conflict and education.

DISCUSSION: THE CONFLICT-FRAGILITY-EDUCATION NEXUS

The preceding discussion has sought to illuminate how researchers can consider the conflict-fragility-education relationship and – of equal importance – how it can be operationalized in research. Measuring all three aspects of this relationship is challenging. This chapter has shown how most measures of conflict are somewhat...
narrow interpretations of conventionally organized wars focused on relationships with the state. Broader measures of violence and instability are captured in the concept of state fragility, but the concept is vague and ambiguous. Measures of fragility can only be related to education in any meaningful sense by disaggregating the constituent indicators or dimensions of fragility and relating these directly to education outcomes of interest. Critics of large-scale comparative research would be right to point out the importance of small-scale qualitative studies that offer a “thick description” of educational contexts in relation to conflict. Nevertheless, the independence of fragility and conflict demonstrated in Figure 4 suggests that there is a good deal of affordance in considering conflict and fragility independently of one another. This is supported in our recent research, which shows that conflict and fragility have clearly differing effects on education. This demonstrates that despite considerable variation between contexts, there were discernible patterns in the relationship between enrolment, fragility and conflict in the period of our analysis.

All measures of education, conflict and fragility discussed here are state-centric: they use the nation-state as the unit of analysis or reference point. However, much research on globalization and education suggests a changing role for the nation-state, whether it is usurped entirely or transformed through its relation to flows of capital (Robertson et al., 2002). The changing nature of nation-states suggests a further need to reconsider how conflict and fragility are conceptualized and measured since they depend so heavily on the state as the unit of measurement and analysis. Changes are already taking place. UPCD recently published its geo-referenced dataset, which records individual incidents of state and non-state conflict and their geospatial coordinates, allowing researchers to investigate trends of conflict across national borders and within regions of nation-states. The language of donors also exhibits a discursive shift, adopting terms such as fragile “situations” and “contexts” rather states, an implicit acknowledgement that in contemporary times more variation is to be found within and across nation-states than between them.

The focus on the nation-state also obscures analysis of the more systemic aspects of conflict and fragility. While some donor documents allude to “exogenous” causes of fragility, these are put in impersonal or non-hierarchical terms (e.g. natural disasters or regional conflict – OECD, 2008b). Little work on fragility takes seriously the possibility of a shared ontology of fragile and non-fragile contexts, i.e. that fragility is to some-extent a zero-sum game and that non-fragile states are structurally dependent on fragile states. However, there are also signs of change in this respect: the SFI index includes a measure of manufactured goods as a proportion of total exports, providing insight into how countries are positioned in commodity chains and measuring the weak and unstable position of those that rely heavily on primary exports (e.g. minerals, oil, etc.). A more systemic approach to fragility is also evident in the OECD’s recent work, which looks at fragility through the perspective of networks of aid – noting that many fragile states are heavily reliant on a relatively small number of donors for most of their aid (2013) – and explores global factors that influence conflict and fragility (2012). Understanding
fragility as an outcome of positionality in global networks – with their own core-periphery structures – may help to develop a better understanding of fragility and its relationship to education.

This chapter has discussed approaches to conceptualizing and measuring the three-way conflict-fragility-education relationship. While our own research has laid some groundwork, there is a great deal more to be done in this respect. The questions raised through this research – the changing nature of conflict, the model of the nation-state and its reliance upon systems of mass education – are theoretically rich and of great practical significance. We hope this chapter serves as an impetus to further research that draws upon the concepts discussed here to better understand the conflict-fragility-education nexus.

NOTE

1 The following organisations have developed their own definitions of fragility: AusAID, DFID, the European Community, GIZ, OECD/DAC, USAID and the World Bank.

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