Conceptualising the Multiscalar Politics of Education for Sustainable Peacebuilding and Social Justice in Aceh, Indonesia[1]

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Abstract

A critical and more nuanced understanding of the multifaceted relationship between projects of peacebuilding and educational provision is starting to develop. Critical theoretical positions are helping academics and practitioners to map this relationship and to understand the actions that are undertaken by strategic actors in such settings. Drawing on an epistemological and ontological anchor of critical realism, and a methodology informed by the application of cultural political economy analysis and the strategic relational approach to understanding educational discourses, processes and outcomes, we illustrate how the 'many faces' of education in conflict-affected situations can be better theorised and conceptually represented. In doing so, we link goals of peacebuilding to those of social justice, and reinvigorate the notion of education playing a transformative rather than a restorative role in conflict-affected states.
Keywords: critical realism; cultural political economy of education; strategic relational approach; peacebuilding; social justice

Introduction – Research Rationale and Relevance

'Neglecting education can sow the seeds for a next conflict. Education in emergencies is demanded, life-saving and life-sustaining', were the words of long-standing international education consultant Christopher Talbot, who presented at an international seminar in Geneva.[2] It is now well established that communities place high value on education in conflict-affected settings and perceive it as one of the few protective measures in situations of insecurity or instability (Smith and Vaux 2003; Smith 2005; Winthrop and Kirk 2008; UNESCO 2011; Winthrop 2011). Great importance has been given in such environments to the restoration of education provision due to its visible and important role in restoring/reconstructing state legitimacy and the important function as a 'peace dividend' it can play (Rose and Greeley 2006). Education has often also been noted to have an important role in reconciliation or nation-building goals, through the messages and shared values it can promote—in essence promoting a form of social cohesion that can be often lost during conflict (Tawil and Harley 2004). Yet there is also growing recognition that education, as a fundamental

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[1] This paper reflects the equal input and scholarly contribution of each of the two co-authors irrespective of the order in which the names appear.

human right, is threatened and often under-resourced in conflict-affected settings, leading to a situation where the restorative and transformative functions of education are unduly compromised.

Beginning with Bush and Saltarelli's (2000) report, *The Two Faces of Education in Ethnic Conflict,* the widespread assumption that education is innately a force for good in fragile or conflict-affected states has come under increasing scrutiny. A proliferation of studies built on this scholarship in subsequent years has suggested ways in which education was either actively, or inadvertently, promoting conflict or instability. Applying the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education's definition of access (Tomaševski 2003) – which includes the premise that education must be available, accessible, acceptable, and adaptable to all – studies found that those 'attending' school may be effectively excluded from meaningful participation by the form, function and purpose schooling takes in the context they live in (Bakarat, Karpinska, and Paulson 2008; Paulson 2008; Davies 2010, 2013). Viewing education in conflict-affected and fragile situations (CAFS) from this expanded notion of access helps to elucidate how restoring access in itself may not be the panacea for envisaged processes of conflict transformation.

While a commitment remains to the ideal that education can, and should, contribute to sustainable, peaceful and equitable development, increased attention is being given to uncovering how, and under what conditions, education might do so. In this paper, we will suggest a conceptual and methodological approach to critically analyze education's role, function and purpose in CAFS, and more reflexively engage with the location of education within projects of social transformation. We identify key interrelationships between education and the political, social and economic spheres of CAFS using social justice frameworks (Fraser 1995; Keddie 2012). The intent of the model we propose allows one to move away from state-centric and educationalist accounts, by acknowledging the important role and function that the interplay between social, cultural, political and economic structures, institutions and actors at a multiple levels has in efforts to build a lasting peace through education.

Critical Theory and Critical Realism: What can it contribute to the analysis of Education for Sustainable and just Peace?

As a central premise, we follow the argument of critical theorists that research should question and challenge conditions perceived to be hegemonic in a quest for social change (for example Cox and Sinclair 1996; Sayer 2000). Rather than a consensual process, educational policy production, reproduction, modification and adaptation in such settings is located within highly contested projects of state, nation and region building. This is particularly important to the field of education and peacebuilding, where a recently completed literature review as part of the Education and Emergencies and Post-Conflict Transitions research project (EEPCT) notes five current limitations for current education and conflict research (Smith, McCandless, Paulson, and Wheaton 2011):

1. A lack of emphasis on the role of education in longer-term peacebuilding efforts.
2. Insufficient attention to the context, political will and motivations, of various actors involved in education projects in CAFS.

3. An overemphasis on concerns of educational service delivery in CAFS, with less attention given to education's location within broader governance and social change agendas.
4. A dearth of theory on education's complex relationship to peacebuilding, and a general lack of acknowledgement of education's location within a broader political economy on a number of different scales (local, national, regional, global).
5. A lack of theory on the relationship between education and the drivers of conflict in dimensions such as social mobility, social inclusion, economic opportunity, social justice, and social norms.

As noted by Novelli and Lopes Cardozo (2008), too much attention has been given to solving the policy dilemmas caused by conflict/fragility on matters of educational access and quality; and conversely, insufficient concern has been given to questioning the underlying premises, values and functions under which educational problems are both identified and defined in such situations. Driven by the pragmatic concerns of practitioners and institutions operating 'on the ground', the assumptions were that educational interventions failed because they were the product of poor policy design or implementation failure. Such thinking is what Dale and Robertson (2009) would identify as too 'educationalist' in nature—accepting the status quo and educational problems as internal to education itself—rather than noting its position within broader social structures and institutions of conflict-affected environments. This problem-solving approach largely ignored the interrelationships between micro/meso-scale action and macro-systemic issues that may have led to, or could lead to, a reproduction of an unequal status quo or even a return to conflict.

Additionally, the education and conflict literature has often been too 'state-centric' in its modes of analysis. Understanding of the location, function and role of education as solely within the envelope of the nation-state limits acknowledgement of the fact that 'conflict and its resolution is shaped by a range of structures, institutions and agents that operate below, around, above and beyond the nation-state (local government, national state, neighbour states, regional agreements, supranational bodies, other nation-states)' (Novelli 2011, 7). This is especially true for the contemporary field of education and peacebuilding which is located in a 'complex and highly unequal system of local, national, regional and global actors, institutions and practices' (Novelli and Lopes Cardozo 2008, 483).

Another pressing issue in need of research is the difficult marriage between immediate- and short-term humanitarian responses versus longer-term development approaches (Novelli and Smith 2012; Talbot 2013). There is a lack of evidence on the role of the state as well as broader institutional change and challenges in the transition phase from (often) donor-led humanitarian assistance to domestically financed long-term development strategies. Yet, we need to be careful not to simplify the transition phase between these two spheres as a linear binary, as the field of education in conflict and emergencies often operates on the thin boundaries in between (INEE 2009, 18).

Finally, as Davies (2013, 3) notes, research that has tried to link particular actions and interventions in the education sector to particular outcomes in CAFS is severely flawed. She remarks that input–output models do not work in social terms, as too many messy contextual factors and power interests intervene. The

'attribution gap' is too huge. Even if conflict were to decrease, it is almost impossible to trace this back to something in education.

For that reason positivist, reductionist and deterministic understandings based on mapping clear cause–effect relationships between education and conflict are wholly insufficient. Her observation is one that is duly noted in a recent INEE (2011, x) synthesis report, which concluded that, 'the issue of discriminating the interlinking and cross-cutting dynamics between [various] domains' made it, 'apparent that a full understanding of fragility dynamics was necessary before beginning to tease out how education interacts and interfaces with indicators of fragility.'

Critical Realism

We argue that a critical realist approach is best suited within the broad field of critical theory to mapping the contingent and partially known interactions that exist between education and conflict. Ontologically, critical realism understands reality as stratified and composed of:

1. The **real**, or the structures, mechanisms and powers that exist by virtue of an object's nature but that may or may not be activated;
2. The **actual**, which are the potential events and outcomes that could occur if and when particular powers and mechanisms are activated, and which happen continuously whether we experience them or not; and
3. The **empirical**, which is what we experience and observe of the world, either directly or indirectly (Pawson et al., 2005).

The role of the researcher is to 'investigate and identify relationships and non-relationships, respectively, between what we experience, what actually happens, and the underlying mechanisms that produce the events in the world', through what is labelled a process of *retroduction* (Danermark et al. 2002, 21). Critical realism differs from positivist forms of enquiry in its explicit focus on *how objects work in relation to their context*, acknowledging that structures and institutions of society do, in fact, matter in a myriad of outcomes. The contingent and spatio-temporal nature of education's relation to society in post-conflict society comes to the fore rather becomes relegated to the backdrop, largely because analysis becomes situated in the relationship between events and underlying mechanisms (structures, institutions, discourses, and beliefs/values). The role of the researcher becomes attuned to, 'establish[ing] the presence of [processes and mechanisms], how they work and with what outcomes' (Robertson and Dale forthcoming, 5).

A Critical Methodological Approach

Methodologically, we draw on the Strategic Relational Approach and Cultural Political Economy Analysis to illustrate how one might go about conducting research from this ontological and epistemological perspective. We argue that these conceptual tools help to: (1) articulate a multi-scalar relationship that recognizes both external and internal factors and their dynamic inter-relationship in the production and resolution of conflict in education; (2) capture the dynamics of education and peacebuilding interventions, including the

divergent interests and practices that these are part of; (3) ground analysis in an explicit understanding of the historical basis on which existing discursive and material settlements within society have or were formed; and (4) provide a method for closely interrogating how actors understand and act on the 'crisis' created by conflict, and the ways in which educational discourses, structures, and institutions are (re)constructed in the post-conflict moment. They directly speak to Unterhalter's (2013) recent plea to ensure that comparative education research engages more deeply with notions of reflexivity by looking closely at the interplay between material and discursive conditions and the actors and institutions which navigate them.

Strategic Relational Approach

In the Strategic Relational Approach (SRA) model, structures and agents are treated analytically as separate entities, but a contingent and dialectal relationship between structures, agents and the agency they employ is clearly articulated (Hay 2002b; Jessop 2005). Specifically, structures are seen as *strategically selective*. Within the confines of particular temporal periods and spaces, specific structures and structural configurations can selectively reinforce the action, tactics, activities and strategies of actors, and discourage others. All actors have tendencies, or preferences for action, but the structural spaces they operate within may allow only certain tendencies to be realised. The social, economic and political spaces in which actors operate are 'densely structured and highly contoured' which presents an 'unevenly distributed configuration of opportunity and constraint to actors' (Hay 2002a, 381). A key aspect of structures being strategically selective is that resource- and knowledge-rich actors may be well capable of achieving their tendencies, while those without such endowments are likely to view these structures as an obstacle.

Actors respond to these conditions by being 'reflective ... reformulat[ing] within limits their own identities, and ... engag[ing] in strategic calculation about the "objective" interests that flow from these alternative identities in particular junctures' (Hay 2002b, 129). Thus, action is framed by a constant engagement of actors within their environment, and can lead to the pursuit of different strategies and tactics in different conjectures. The idea of *strategy* is an essential concept of the SRA, in the belief that actors have 'intentional conduct oriented towards the environment ... to realize certain outcomes and objectives which motivate action' (ibid.).

Emergence and transformation come about from the ability of actors to respond to and alter the structures governing them. SRA acknowledges that different individuals and groups may have varying opportunities to do so and constraints due to their levels of access to particular strategic resources (social, political, cultural, economic capital). The unequal access to such resources is also strongly connected to issues of social justice, as we further assert below. For one, actors may at the same time be differentially motivated in a desire to alter such structures, acting in ways that consciously and unconsciously serve to reproduce/transform existing conditions. Additionally, actors often lack perfect information of their context, and 'their knowledge of their terrain and its strategic selectively is partial, at worst it is demonstrably false.' Imperfect information leads to false assumptions and actions that may appear unintentional, but are responding to a set of perceived structural constraints,

which may not be perceived correctly (Hay 2002a, 381–383). Finally, it might be assumed that, over time (educational) actors would come to better understand and respond in kind to their context through the routine monitoring of the consequences of their actions. However, very rarely do the environments in which these actors act remain static. This is particularly true in the changing environment of CAFS, where a density of existing institutions and practices, and a proliferation of new strategic actors and new discourses lead to the possibility of changing strategic selectivities.

Specific to our proposition for a more critical and nuanced approach to understanding the relation between education and peacebuilding, recent scholars have suggested that teachers' roles, beliefs, values and practices be explored more explicitly in CAFS (Shriberg, Kirk, and Winthrop 2007; Davies and Talbot 2008; Tebbe 2009). To date there is little understanding of teachers' own self-perceptions in such times; namely of their hopes and expectations in reshaping the future, and of the possible supports and constraints they face in such moments. Teacher self-image and agency play an important role in delivering an education that is transformative (Kirk and Winthrop 2007; Winthrop and Kirk 2007; Kirk 2008). The goal of this research project is to show that, in spaces of 'social groundlessness', where state capacity is sometimes weak, and political will and motivations greatly vary, teachers have an important role to play in societal transformation. Similar to the work of Vongalis-Macrow (2006) and Weinstein, Freedman and Hughson (2007), the aim is to facilitate the understanding, articulation and contribution of 'unofficial' viewpoints and concerns into an ongoing process of societal transformation.

In order to do so, by building on the SRA we aspire to conceptualise an understanding of teachers' (un)conscious use of the strategic space for manoeuvre enabled through particular structural constraints and opportunities – their *agency* – in relation to processes of societal and educational change. Teachers' *agency* is defined for this research as their space for manoeuvre as political strategic actors, in a multiscalar and strategically selective context, to develop intended or unintended *strategies* that work to enhance or obstruct processes of social inclusion and conflict mitigation. These key educational actors – and particularly teachers – face an uneven distribution of opportunities and constraints in their contexts, thus different access to strategic resources (knowledge, capital, training opportunities) may be a significant determinant of the capacity of actors to realize opportunities (Hay 2002a, 164–166). As Jessop (2005, 51) notes, these teachers' 'knowledge of their terrain and its strategic selectivity is partial, at worst it is demonstrably false'. In this strategically selective environment, the outcomes of the decisions teachers make can vary greatly, with 'resistances' to goals of peacebuilding and social justice driven by multiple agendas in terms of their intentionality, objectives, and purpose. Hay's notion of *strategically selective context* in educational terms can be described using Apple's words: 'a space of schooling as a site of contestation, resistance and possibility' (1980, in Giroux 2003a, 6); or, as explained by Giroux we should: 'view schools as economic, cultural and social sites that are inextricably tied to issues of politics, power and control. [...] schools actually are contested spheres that embody and express struggle over what forms of authority, types of knowledge, forms of moral regulation and versions of the past and future should be legitimated and transmitted to students...'(2003b, 48).

Understanding the Strategically Selective Context using a Critical Cultural Political Economy of Education

CPE (Cultural Political Economy) analysis can improve understanding of the dynamics and constitution of the context that influences the choices of actors such as teachers. It complements critical realist ontology and the SRA in acknowledging that: (1) history and institutions matter in economic and political dynamics occurring at present; (2) a complex relationship exists between meanings and practice; and (3) the strategic selectivity of this relationship leads to a process of variation, selection and retention of particular meanings and practices which, over time, leads to the production of particular hegemonic conditions. In CPE, the role of culture[3] is brought into equal footing with political and economic structures and institutions, as a constitutive element and as a contingent factor in the actions of actors. Social processes come to be understood as a related set of 'moments' between the cultural (discourse, language, beliefs, and values), the political (power and institutions) and economic (the practices in which social relations are produced and articulated).

CPE, when critically applied to education (hence becoming CCPEE, see Robertson and Dale 2013b) locates educational policy production, reproduction, modification and adaptation within the aspiration of legitimating a particular social, political and economic order (Jones 2010; Robertson 2012b). CCPEE allows one to make explicit the struggles and conflicts between discourses, practices and institutions of schooling, and the impact these have on the on-going social contract (Robertson 2012). Robertson and Dale (forthcoming, 7-8) have developed a series of 'education moments' that can help to guide such exploration:

1. The **moment of educational practice** – where one looks into the questions of who is taught, what and the circumstances in which education takes place;
2. The **moment of educational politics** – where the relationship between policy and practice is analysed, acknowledging that not everything that happens in practice is a direct consequence of the decision and actions of policy-making;
3. The **moment of the politics of education** – where the rules of the games set limits to what is possible and desirable in education are analysed, and where education is understood in relation to the broader economic, political and cultural projects (i.e. the relationship between neoliberalism and education); and
4. The **moment of the outcomes of education** – where the consequences of educational practices, policies and politics are studied in relation to both immediate actions and wider social relations and processes.

Using this analytical lens, scrutiny can be given to how problems and solutions in education have been conceptualised in policy discourse and reflected in the structures that emanate from them. That which is empirically observed in schools (and, in particular, the work of teachers) is understood as connected to a particular conceptualisation and rationalisation of political, economic and social relationships in society at a particular time, space and place (Robertson 2000, 8–9).

In the context of a post-conflict or post-colonial society, where meanings, purposes, and beliefs about the role of education are thrown into question, we contend that CPEE can offer a powerful tool for retroductively unpacking how discursive claims on education's role and function and society have been reconsidered, and subsequently relocated into a new framework that attempts to legitimate and/or restore the social contract between citizen and state. The types of claims, beliefs, and values made, and the material capabilities they enable/constrain can have powerful resonance in terms of education's potential to serve productive means of building a more peaceful and socially just society. We believe that CCPEE analysis provides a clear and comprehensive roadmap for exploring how: (1) the relationship between education and peacebuilding is articulated discursively and materially through social relations, experiences, and practices (the cultural); (2) the ways in which education and peacebuilding fit into relations of production, distribution and exchange in society (the economic); and (3) the fashion in which an agenda promoting education's links to peacebuilding has been determined and subsequently governed (the political). Doing so helps us to locate education in CAFS within cultural scripts in which it is constructed and mediated, as well as to understand the relationships it holds (political, economic and social) with actors and institutions on the supra-national, national, and sub-national scales. Ultimately, it helps us to move between *what is* (the moments of outcome) and the moments of educational practice, politics of education, and educational politics. It provides more reflexive and nuanced insights into the strategic actions undertaken by teachers and other school-based actors in the process and helps to inform a retroductive approach to uncover such actions and mechanisms.

Understanding Peacebuilding through a Social Justice Framework

Conceptually, we also feel it is also necessary to reassert the potential for education to serve a transformative, rather than a restorative or reproductive, role in CAFS, particularly if the goal is to build a lasting peace. We argue that any educational framework that attempts to seriously work towards an objective of building peace would need to consider responsibilities around what Fraser (1995, 2005) has termed the cultural (recognition), political (representation) and economic (redistribution) injustices.

Departing from, but not limited to, a critical feminist perspective, Fraser asserts that in order to reach 'parity of participation', the economic solution of redistribution should be targeted, and socio-cultural remedies of better recognition and political representation are necessary to ensure 'participation on par with others, as full partners in social interaction' (Fraser 2005, 73). Fraser also characterises two types of remedies to social injustices including 'affirmative remedies', which correct outcomes without changing structural frameworks; and 'transformative remedies', correcting outcomes by restructuring the underlying generative framework (Fraser, 1995, 82, 86). Keddie (2012) claims that 'Fraser's model should not be offered as an ideal of justice that is static and uncomplicated but rather as a productive lens for thinking about and addressing some of the key ways in which different dimensions of injustice are currently hindering the schooling participation,

engagement and outcomes of marginalised students' (2012, 15). Furthermore, Tikly and Barrett (2011, 3–4) argue how in developing contexts a social justice approach, drawing on the work of Nancy Fraser and Amartya Sen, 'can provide a fuller rationale for a policy focus on education quality than that provided by a human capital approach with its emphasis on economic growth or by the existing human rights approach with its emphasis on the role of the state in guaranteeing basic rights'.

We contend that when education serves the three facets of redistribution, recognition, and representation, it can effectively contribute to what Fraser termed a 'transformative remedy'. We see this transformative emphasis as connected to the notion of education playing an important (yet not exclusive or stand-alone) role in fostering positive peace and social justice, which are necessary to transform the root causes of conflict. Her framework is critical if the intent is for education to contribute to 'sustainable peacebuilding', or what Galtung (1975, in Smith et al. 2011, 12–13) identifies as building a 'positive peace', namely 'the absence of structural violence, the presence of social justice and the conditions to eliminate the causes of violence'. Positioning education in this light moves us beyond that of doing no harm, as Davies (2010) suggests is the best it can do in CAFS, or as a means to an end such as delivering peace dividends, supporting state-building, or promoting social cohesion as McCandless (2011) infers. We stand more aligned with the position of Novelli and Smith (2011, 14) who argue that acknowledging education's contribution to peacebuilding would entail 'the need for structural and institutional changes that involve changes to existing power relations within society'.

Combining Fraser's theory with various insights of scholars working on the relation between education and social justice (Connell 2012; Robertson and Dale forthcoming Young 2006), we have developed three interrelated goals to ascertain education's contribution towards social justice/peacebuilding agendas in CAFS. These are:

1. Redistribute access to safe and secure educational opportunities and resources;
2. Recognise culture diversity through a relevant (acceptable/adaptable) curriculum and pedagogy;
3. Ensure fair and transparent representation and responsibility in educational governance[4].

The rationale for why we have included these three dimensions in relation to education's role in post-conflict societies is articulated in brief below:

1. (Unequal) redistribution of educational access, opportunities and resources
'Education is dangerous', Raewyn Connell (2012, 681) asserts, as she writes how colonial rulers, and consequently numerous authoritarian governments and some (more orthodox) religions have persistently tried to control the content of education and ration its distribution to certain groups rather than others. In some situations of conflict, an education system is purposefully constructed to limit access to particular segments of the population (for example Apartheid-era South Africa, or arguably, for residents of the occupied Palestinian Territories). Even when not intentional, poor education service delivery can inadvertently contribute to a lack of access, particularly when resources are perceived to not be equitably deployed, delivered or managed. When a lack of meaningful access

to education mirrors patterns of social, political or economic exclusion in society, it can serve as a significant grievance of citizens against ruling authorities (Dupuy, 2008). Young (2006, in Robertson and Dale, 2013, 5) calls this (mis)distribution of who has access to what resources the 'social division of labour'.

In contrast, education that would work towards a *redistributive remedy* would foster more equal educational opportunities, this way ideally lessening societal tensions and working towards 'social cohesion'. In addition, particularly in CAFS we need to consider the availability of a safe learning environment for all groups of pupils (including girls, minorities, students living in the cross-fire, refugees), as security issues obviously become a key priority. Dupuy (2008) argues here how protective and violence-free education is a necessary condition for building peace, as students may be less likely to accept violence as a way to solve conflicts. Moreover, better and safe school conditions and (job) opportunities for all may install fewer grievances, less motivation and fewer opportunities to engage in armed conflict, as the opportunity costs of engaging in armed conflict will be higher. This remains, however, an area where more research is needed.

2. A lack of cultural recognition and educational relevance
When education is not perceived to be relevant it has also been shown to also be a significant source of grievance amongst populations. This lack of recognition of the diversity of learners and their relevant needs can occur within the curriculum due to the language(s) of instruction in schooling effectively excluding particular linguistic groups within a nation-state or when learning content presents biased or intolerant messages towards specific ethnic or cultural groups. The converse problem can also exist where, in attempts to 'sanitize' the content of the curriculum following conflict or ethnic tension by removing any references to difference, citizens feel that important questions of identity and struggle are artificially glossed over. For example, history textbooks have infamously been reported to be biased and exclusive of minority views, as was the case in Sri Lanka (Lopes Cardozo 2008). A lack of relevance can also be the product of education not being seen to provide social mobility, increased economic opportunity, and improved livelihoods. In such circumstances, citizens may feel that the skill-set that education has given them is poorly matched to the realities of their daily lives or the demands of the labour market into which they enter.

In order to foster recognition in and through education, some authors have argued for a critical intercultural pedagogy which respects minorities as indigenous rather than identifying them as 'infiltrators', and a pedagogy that stays away from uncritical and stereotyping forms of multiculturalism that do not take into account issues of religion, race, class or gender (Davies 2011, 13, 17, 34; Keddie 2012, 9). Such an approach requires a 'critical engagement with *all* relations and knowledges (i.e. within dominant *and* subordinate cultures) that oppress and marginalize' (Keddie 2012, 11). Here we can also draw from debates on coloniality/decolonization of societies and education system, in order to analyze and deconstruct how alternative knowledges and epistemic approaches can help to foster a more equitable and socially, politically and economically just future (Lopes Cardozo 2011). Eventually, rather than following

a global (neoliberal) market agenda for education, including tendencies of competitiveness and standardized testing for educational 'effectiveness' (Robertson and Dale 2013a), a just education system would rather respond to diversities and promote curricular justice by providing relevant education to all. This means drawing extensively on 'indigenous knowledge, working-class experience, women's experience, immigrant cultures, multiple languages, and so on; aiming for richness rather than testability' (Connell 2012, 681–682).

3. Limited transparency, participation and representation
The way in which educational management functions and processes of education systems are laid out, and how stakeholders' participation is facilitated within them can foster constructive interactions and relationship building, or promote distrust and entrench intolerance. Decision-making power (Young 2006) and political representation (Fraser 2005) should ideally be fostered though fair representation (of all kinds and categories) at multiple (*supra and sub*) national scales of educational governance. Centrally controlled and managed educational provision can lead to a general lack of accountability and transparency between citizens and the state, particularly when educational resources and services are seen to be inequitably deployed. As a solution, mechanisms such as school-based management and decentralization of authority and control have the potential to promote citizenship, social inclusion, and cooperation, and also increase levels of accountability between educational service-providers and communities. Moreover, when participation and cooperation between various educational actors enhance trust, this can become beneficial for broader aims of peacebuilding (Dupuy 2008). Nevertheless, they also hold the danger of exacerbating differential access to resources, to lead to partisan decision-making influenced by local politics and to carry the potential for dominant groups to force their views at the local level, limiting rather than enhancing levels of trust. Connell (2012, 682) argues in this regard how curricular justice can only take shape if decision-making is decentralized to the classroom level, and when classroom teaching is separated from 'audit mechanisms of competitive testing'. This, she recognizes, needs firm institutional support and a sound teacher education system that would prepare teachers to develop relevant curriculum. In CAFS, however, these institutional mechanisms are often absent or significantly under-resourced (Shah 2011, 2012).

Bringing These Ideas Together—Investigating the Politics of Education for Sustainable Peacebuilding and Social Justice in Aceh, Indonesia

As a way to make these abstract ideas concrete, we now move to describe how we have sought to bring these ideas together to look at one specific case – that of Aceh Province, Indonesia. In early 2012, a new research partnership was established between the University of Amsterdam's IS Academie for Education and International Development[5] and the University of Auckland's Research Unit for Pacific and International Education (RUPIE) under the leadership of the two co-authors. The aim of this long-term partnership is to locate educational policy production, reproduction, modification and adaptation in conflict-affected

regions of Indonesia within highly contested projects of state and nation building. The contention is that this contestation has important consequences for the dynamics of social cohesion, social justice, and national and regional stability. Drawing on Robertson and Dale's CCPEE framework, and with the aim to build a longer-term research engagement, this research project aims to identify the interrelationship between particular structural conditions[6], institutional arrangements[7], and actors/agents[8], as a way of understanding whether and how this interplay contributes to education's role in peacebuilding and social justice. The key question members of the research team are currently exploring is: *How do the multiscalar politics of education in conflict-affected regions of Indonesia – influenced by security, governance, socio-economic and socio-cultural conditions and the natural environment, and as reflected/contradicted in discourse – shape a strategically selective context for the work of actors which advances or hinders an agenda of **peaceful and equitable development** through schooling?*

The focus on Indonesia is based on the nation's regional and international importance. Economically, Indonesia has experienced impressive growth in recent years – largely spurred through natural resource and petrochemical extraction – leading to significant external investment in the country. The country's stature as the largest Islamic nation in terms of population, as well as its proximity to China, situate it in a prime geopolitical position. The perception of countries such as New Zealand, Australia and the United States is that a peaceful, democratic and economically prosperous Indonesia is vital to regional stability and growth and is a key factor behind Indonesia continuing to receive large amounts of multilateral and bilateral donor assistance despite its status as a middle-income country (Commonwealth of Australia 2010; New Zealand Government 2012). Key to internal and external goals of democratization, peacebuilding, and economic growth, according to the government, is education. The present focus is on ensuring that students have access to a quality educational experience given that Indonesia's education system is the fourth largest in the world, with around 57 million students, 3.8 million teachers and 314,000 schools across 491 districts. Education is viewed as a vital component of maintaining the state's peace dividend with its citizens, and ensuring a level of social cohesion amongst the population during reconstruction and peacebuilding efforts (Mollet 2007). However, growing inequalities in education – the product of a process of radical decentralization undertaken since 1998 (Bjork 2002); fragmented educational provision with varying degrees of oversight[9] (Pohl 2006; Milligan 2009); and an under/unqualified teacher workforce (Chang 2013) – are seen as significant threats to the nation's stability and economic development (Government of Indonesia 2010). This is particularly true in regions of Indonesia such as Aceh province that have been engaged in conflict, and where educational access and quality have been significantly compromised (Clarke, Fanany, and Kenny 2010; UNDP 2010; Government of Aceh 2012).

A nearly thirty-year conflict in Aceh left more than 600 schools destroyed or damaged, and hundreds of teachers killed. It left 55,000 children with few educational opportunities. In 2004, a devastating tsunami and earthquake dealt an additional blow to a system that was already reeling from the impacts of conflict. Estimates are that an additional 2000 schools were destroyed, 2,500 teachers killed, and 160,000 students left without a school to attend (Commonwealth of Australia 2008). In 2005 a peace accord was signed which

designated Aceh as a special autonomous region within the Republic of Indonesia, affording local and provincial governments much greater control over most matters of state, including educational provision. The agreement also included a commitment to significantly increase the province's share of Aceh's mineral wealth as a way to redress past injustices over how financing for education and other basic services disadvantaged the province. The project of building a socially just and harmonious society following the signing of the accord has been symbolized by several challenges and issues including the decision to restore Islamic, or sharia law in the province; the lack of local capacity to deliver basic services to its citizens and manage the large inflow of funds from Jakarta and the international community that they have been entrusted with expending; and issues of rampant corruption, clientelism, and growing inequities within Acehnese society as former military combatants are reintegrated into society (Aspinall 2009; Miller 2010; Waizenegger and Hyndman 2010; Dwyer 2012). Education, nonetheless, remains a key component of Aceh's aspiration of building a sustainable peace, according to government strategies and policies.

We note that the discursive and material selectivity created by the cultural political economy within which education in Aceh is located at present offers a field of opportunity and constraint for local educational actors, and shapes the conditions under which agency is employed. Agency is the product of teachers juxtaposing their own motivations and space for manoeuvre within a context that is both strategic and selective towards particular lines of action. In such an environment, they are negotiating a vision of education effectively contributing to ambitions of peacebuilding and social justice, within a set of structural and material conditions that are emerging and contested. To understand what is visible in terms of educational practices and activities, one must retroductively investigate the negotiation that has occurred between the context within which teachers' work and practices are currently structured, and the variety of strategies and responses that are enacted based on this. This interplay is reflected in a conceptual scheme (Figure 1) below.
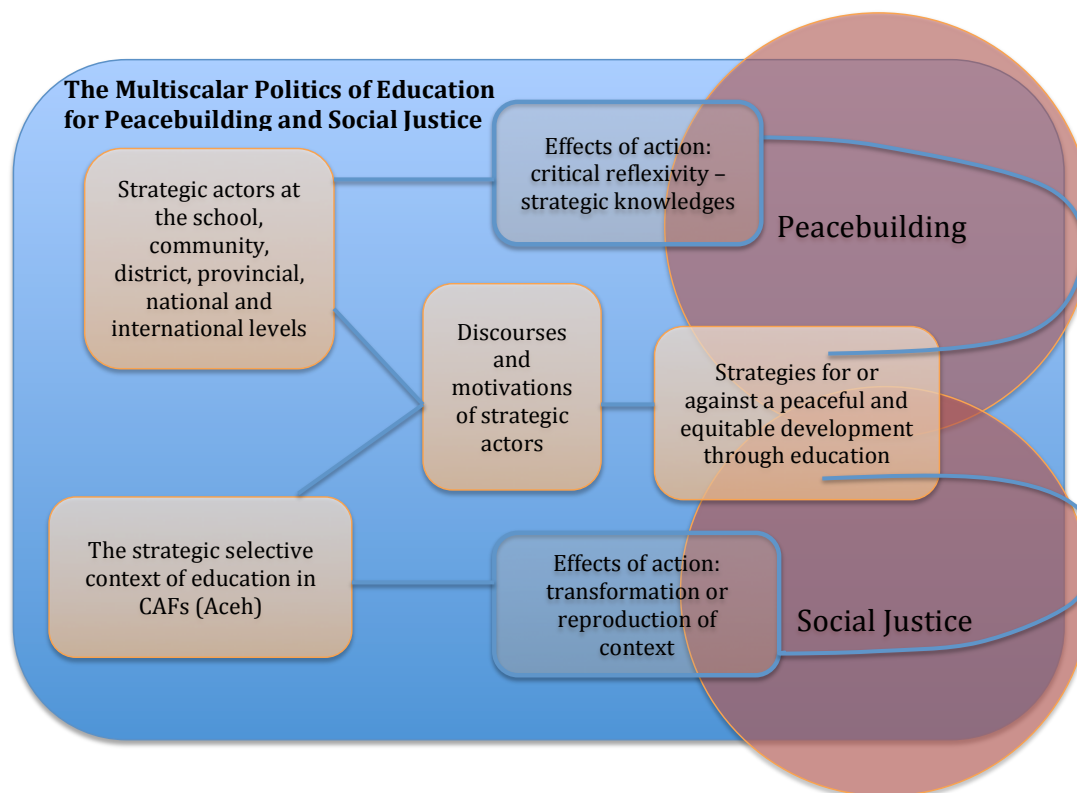
Figure 1: Conceptual scheme, adapted from Hay's (2002b) SRA [also included as in Word template at the end of the document]

The argument embedded within this conceptual framework related to education, peacebuilding and social justice in Aceh is that this strategically selective context – influenced by economic dynamics/relationships, governance arrangements, security concerns (internal and external), the natural environment, and the unique culture/religious identity of Aceh – affords both possibilities and constraints for discursive and material conditions to take shape.

The framework is an adapted version of Hay's schematic understanding of the SRA (2002b, 131). As it suggests, strategic actors are dialectically related to the strategic selective context. Both the actors and the context are connected to (competing and sometimes contradictory) discourses and motivations that surround the strategic actors, consequently leading to certain strategic actions, or 'strategies', that may work in favor of, or working against, peaceful and equitable development through education. Acknowledging this, allows us to ask: *What types of strategies do various key actors engage in within the education sector as a response to the strategically selective context?*

From these strategies, there are various effects of these actions that include strategic forms of learning that may affect future action, or partial transformation or reproduction of the context itself. With this understanding, we can also begin to explore: *What are the outcomes of these strategic actions regarding strategic knowledge gained or transformation of the strategically selective context itself?*

The aim of this analytical framework, which includes a multidimensional social justice lens, is not about simplifying a complex reality but rather highlighting the

various relations that exist. Each context within Indonesia will see this framework applied differently, and will consequently influence the ways in which equity is addressed and prioritised in terms of redistributive, recognition or representative measures.

Concluding Reflections

According to Novelli and Smith (2011, 6–8) in a report written in the context of UNICEFs work on education in emergencies, 'peacebuilding is essentially about supporting the transformative processes any post-conflict society needs to go through, and these changes unfold over generations. Developments through the education sector represent a very important part of this transformative process'. They continue to argue how 'the nature of the education system is at the heart of societal debates on social justice and well-being' (2011, 27). It is this close connection between the role of educational governance, the agency of educational actors (and particularly teachers) and these crucial processes of transformation to build a positive peace and socially just society that this methodological paper speaks to.

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Notes

[1.] This paper was originally presented at the *World Congress of Comparative Education Societies* conference (Buenos Aires, June 24–28, 2013) and was subsequently modified.

[2.] NORRAG Policy Seminar, *Education in Conflict Emergencies in the Context of the post-2015 MDG and EFA* Agendas, Thursday 30 May 2013, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva.

[3.] Culture is understood in its broadest terms, namely the meanings given to social life and material objects and the concrete practices they enable and depend on for their continuance/transformation. Jessop (2004) originally interpreted culture in his proposition of CPE as semiosis defined as the intersubjective production of meaning, including narrativity, rhetoric, hermeneutics, identity, reflexivity, historicity and discourse. Robertson (2014) takes the notion of culture a step further by adding the materiality of social relations, and the constraints agents face to such analysis. According to her, in order to fully comprehend the complexities of the field of educational governance and practice, critical examination of the meaning-making process is vital for us to understand, "…how worlds, meanings and consciousness are formed" (Robertson 2012b, 3).

[4.] We are conscious that an analytical framework that includes a multidimensional social justice lens should not be about simplifying a complex reality. In addition, social justice should not just be conceptualised as a means 'to education' (access), but also 'in and through' education – or how teaching and learning processes and outcomes reproduce certain (socio-economic, cultural and political) inequalities. Perhaps obviously, each context requires a specific approach, which will consequently influence the ways in which equity is addressed and prioritised in terms of redistributive, recognition or representative measures (Keddie 2012, 13–15).

[5.] http://educationanddevelopment.wordpress.com

[6.] Structures are broadly understood as long-term factors in society (historical settlements, economic relations, gender expectations, population demographics) that shape the environment in which actors make strategic choices. It is important to note that structures are not assumed to be static, but rather evolve over time in a

dialectic relationship with institutions and actors. This is particularly true in a dynamically changing environment such as Aceh.

7. Institutions include both formal (legal statues, policies, and governance arrangements) and informal (political, social, religious) norms that frame the work of various actors.
8. In the case of this research project, this includes national policymakers, government bureaucrats within the Ministry of Education, teachers, school directors, parents of children attending school, and the development partner community in Indonesia (multilateral, bilateral and INGO partners).
9. Comprising secular state-funded schools, religious state-funded schools (madrasah), religious private schools (Pesantren/Dyah), and private secular schools.