

PEACE IN PROGRESS

No 21 - SEPTEMBER 2014



Linguistic
conflicts

ICIP

SUMARI

Introduction

- Language and identity, agents for peace or violent unrest
- The Irish Language and the Long War in Northern Ireland
- Languages in the Ukrainian conflict
- South Africa. End of a “linguistically divided” society?
- The linguistic division in India: a latent conflict?

In depth

- On the need for a linguistic justice index

Recomanem

- Materials and resources recommended by the ICIP

Tribuna

- Protest under attack from all four sides
- The EU involvement in Ukrainian affairs

Interview

- Interview with Ethar El-Katatney, award-winning journalist, blogger and author

Sobre l'ICIP

- News, activities and publications about the ICIP

INTRODUCTION

Language and identity, agents for peace or violent unrest

Rafael Grasa

President of the International Catalan Institute for Peace

This edition of the ICIP magazine deals with linguistic conflict or, to be more precise, the role played by management of linguistic diversity in plural, polarized societies where identity has played a crucial role in conflict dynamics. In this issue we will look at the case of Ireland, India, Ukraine and South Africa. It goes without saying that Catalonia might also have been featured as one of our case studies. Undoubtedly, managing different identities in multicultural societies is an extremely significant factor, and one of the key elements involved in identity is language. As I will explain in greater detail below, the debate regarding whether or not language can be considered an extenuating factor with regard to the risk of violence in a conflict situation or alternatively, a peace-building factor, is outdated and academically almost as controversial as associating water and violent conflict. In any case, it is extraordinarily significant because peace-building researchers are aware that in conflicts that are considered to be basically conflicts of identity, we are aware that it becomes much more difficult to generate “win-win” solutions with shared winnings, which mean splitting differences, something which is much easier in conflicts where incompatibility between the parties is basically material and tangible.

I will therefore limit myself, from the perspective of conflict transformation and resolution, to highlight three aspects. Firstly, that the causal relationships in conflict analysis require a coordinated approach, which translates into forming a standard distinction between structural causes (necessary, basic in order to explain the incompatibilities between the parties), accelerating and multiplying causes (factors

that polarize societies, that provoke confrontation between parties and that can radicalize the options, forcing one of the parties to reach the conclusion that there is no other way out other than resorting to violence), finally, triggering or detonating factors (the straw that breaks the camel's back, the final precipitating factor). What this actually boils down to are the structural causes. Those referred to in the world of mathematics as boundary conditions, the conditions necessary for the conflictive situation, while the accelerating/multiplying and triggering factors are conditions enough to be deemed adequate. The former explains conflict management, while at the same time, the latter explains conflict dynamics and behaviour of the parties involved.

Secondly, in the case concerning us here, in societies with political, social and economic divisions as well as linguistic plurality, management of linguistic diversity forms part of the accelerating, multiplying or triggering factors of the adequate conditions, not the necessary conditions, as occurs in the case of conflicts associated with water. At least that is the case generally speaking. Stated in another way, managing linguistic diversity is a multiplying factor of tensions and polarizations and an accelerating factor of potential violent outbreaks, given that it facilitates the perception of "comparative offense" and "relative deprivation" (Ted R. Gurr) and reinforces the very cause of the incompatibility. The reason is simple; language is the structural factor of identity, and if it is threatened seriously, the perception of what is at risk is a group's collective survival. Therefore, management of linguistic plurality and diversity becomes an element of vital importance in societies divided by conflict and in which its members speak more than one language.

Thirdly and lastly, the fact that it remains an accelerating/multiplying factor and an eventual triggering factor greatly reinforces, in a situation of positive conflict management, its role as a peace-building element. Acknowledgement and protection of linguistic diversity is one of the most objective elements one can agree upon during peaceful negotiations. It is easily perceptible during the implementation stage, and as such, tends to be crucial in agreements between parties engaged in confrontation where identity plays an important part. It is, in summary, a powerful peace builder. Peace also comes through dialogue and respect for the language that enables its utterance.

Photography : Diarioliberdade / CC BY / Desaturated. - *Demonstration in Compostela on the Galician Literature Day 2013* -

© Generalitat de Catalunya

The Irish Language and the Long War in Northern Ireland

Diarmait Mac Giolla Chríost

Professor at the School of Welsh, Cardiff University, Wales, UK.

The assertion made several years ago by the Independent International Commission on Kosovo that understanding any conflict of which ethnicity is a part demands that language be given special attention (Mac Giolla Chríost, 2003: 1) remains as true to-day as it ever was. Language is implicated in all ethno-political conflicts and the case of the Irish language in the historical conflict in Northern Ireland is an effective illustration of how this applies.

While there has been political agreement in the region since 1998, and the erstwhile political enemies Sinn Féin and the Democratic Unionist Party are now sharing power in the Northern Ireland Assembly, the Irish language remains a complex and, at times, divisive issue. Irish is often described as being at the heart of a culture war in the region.

When the violent political conflict that is variously known as 'the Troubles' (the usual terminology of most journalistic commentators) or 'the Long War' (a phrase of Irish republican origin) started in the late 1960s no reasonable person could have foreseen the role the Irish language would come to play in that conflict. After all, it was widely assumed that the last native speakers of the tongue in Northern Ireland passed away sometime during the 1960s (Mac Giolla Chríost, 2005: 136).

The relationship between the language and the Long War begins in the prison known as HMP Long Kesh. During the period 1972-1976 hundreds of young men were interned there without trial on suspicion of being radical Irish republicans, and therefore implicated in the political violence which had already seen car bombs, assassinations and extensive street violence. They were held as prisoners with special Category Status, which meant

that that were able to wear their own clothes, freely associate, not do prison work, receive food and other parcels from a regular stream of visitors, and to organize themselves as members of paramilitary organisations.

Under this regime some of the prisoners set about learning the Irish language. For some Irish republican prisoners this was part of a tradition that began at Frongoch internment camp in Wales in 1916 and continued at the Curragh internment camp in Ireland during the 1940s. Foremost among the young turks at HMP Long Kesh was Bobby Sands, who would later lead the fatal hunger strikes of 1981. Sands and like-minded colleagues learned their Irish under the guidance of a few of the older heads who had acquired some grasp of the language from their schooldays and at evening classes. As their numbers grew they soon organized themselves into so-called 'Gaelic' or 'Gaeltacht' huts.

“ The prisoners resisted the imposition of the new regime and the Irish language became a central feature of that resistance ”

This much is not particularly remarkable, but events took a dramatic and fateful turn in 1976. In March of that year the British Government decided to dispose of Special Category Status and also to replace the dormitory and communal style huts of HMP Long Kesh, known by the prisoners as the Cages, with cellular accommodation laid out in a distinctive H shape and designed to enable the isolation of the prisoners and to stymie their coherence as an incarcerated political community. As the new architecture replaced the old so HMP Long Kesh was re-named HMP the Maze.

Of course, the prisoners resisted the imposition of the new regime and the Irish language became a central feature of that resistance. Between 1976 and 1981 they embarked on an escalating series of protests that culminated in the hunger strikes of 1981, 10 of which ended with the death of the hunger striker. The first to die was Bobby Sands.

During this period the prisoners used the language as, in their own words, a weapon of resistance (Mac Giolla Chríost, 2012). They would use their own peculiar prison argot form of Irish, for which they coined the name 'Jailic' (an obvious play on 'Gaelic'), for communication with each other as a type of code the prison guards could not understand. As the prisoners were held in their cells for 23 hours per day and could not freely associate, they also used the Irish lessons, shouted from cell to cell, in order to maintain their sense of togetherness, thereby sustaining their morale and psychological well-being.

During this period too the protesting prisoners were denied access to educational materials and so they resorted to having Irish language teaching and learning material smuggled in to them. Such was their determination an Irish-speaking core of prisoners quickly coalesced. The prisoners coined the term 'Jailtacht' for this linguistic community (a play on the word 'Gaeltacht').

The 10 deaths in 1981 led to a lull in Irish language activities amongst the prisoners for a number of years. But in the meantime their politicized adoption of the language was taken up by others beyond the prison. Sinn Féin was beginning to emerge as a political party of substance and the Irish language was a part of their mission. The cultural struggle came to be seen as a proxy, for some, of the armed struggle. Thus, the revival of Irish as a community language in places such as west Belfast was in part, at least, inspired by the Irish-speaking community that had somehow willed itself into existence inside HMP the Maze.

“ As they in turn were released as a part of the agreement so they too fed into the continued revival of the language in Northern Ireland more widely ”

Interest in the language in HMP the Maze was renewed towards the end of the 1980s as Séanna Walsh, one of Bobby Sands' closest colleagues, was returned to jail by the

courts in order to serve another long sentence. This time the prisoners set about learning the language in a much more structured fashion. As they were no longer protesting they had the freedom to do so. Hence, they developed their own intensive course and re-instituted the sense of an Irish-speaking community by establishing specifically designated Gaeltacht wings in the H-blocks.

By the time of the political agreement of 1998 a new cohort of Irish-speaking Irish republican prisoners had emerged. As they in turn were released as a part of the agreement so they too fed into the continued revival of the language in Northern Ireland more widely.

As a more usual form of democratic politics has sought to take root in the region it has proven difficult to disentangle the language from the historical politics of the Long War. Irish language activists have campaigned, to no avail, for an Irish Language Act in Northern Ireland. But such institutionalization of the language can only occur when Irish is regarded as a public good (Rawls, 1971) by society in general. In that regard much more work of engagement, explanation and persuasion remains to be conceived of and also to be undertaken.

Mac Giolla Chríost, D. (2003) *Language, Identity and Conflict* London: Routledge.

Mac Giolla Chríost, D. (2005) *The Irish Language in Ireland from Goídel to Globalisation* Londres: Routledge.

Rawls, J. (1971) *A Theory of Justice* Cambridge, MA: Belknap press of Harvard University Press.

Acronyms and glossary

Gaelic – an alternative term for the Irish language

Gaeltacht – an Irish-speaking community

HMP – Her Majesty's Prison

Photography : Marcella / CC BY / Desaturated. – *Mural painting of Bobby Sands in Belfast* –

© Generalitat de Catalunya

Languages in the Ukrainian conflict

Miquel Cabal Guarro

Researcher at the University Center of Sociolinguistics and Communication and member of the Study Group on Endangered Languages at the University of Barcelona

To understand the role that languages have played in this conflict in the past and that they still play today, we must make a brief summary of the languages and population of Ukraine and outline, also concisely, their historical origins. It is also necessary to clarify some of the ideas that repeatedly appear in the analyses that are made of the current confrontation.

When discussing national conflicts in any post-Soviet state, we have to understand properly the term nationality. Appearing during the period of the Soviet Union, *nationality* is not the same as citizenship, but is rather passed down through the bloodline. It is a category inherent in each person that usually comes via the father. Returning to the Ukrainian case: the Russians of Ukraine are not citizens of the Russian Federation living within Ukrainian borders, but are a Russian population native to Ukrainian territories in which they have lived for several, often many, generations. Excepting certain areas of the northeast of the country that are indeed *ancestrally* Russian (such as the area of Kharkov), most of the Russian population of Ukraine are descendants of the great migrations (voluntary and forced) that began at the beginning of the 17th century and were intensified in Soviet times. The changes brought about by the political alliances of the 16th and 17th centuries, the territorial advances of the Slavs to the detriment of the Tatars of the Golden Horde, and the movement of landowners from central Russia to the European part of the Empire took soldiers and serfs of Russian *nationality* as far as the southern borders of the territory that is now Ukraine.

More recently, during the 1920s and 1930s the USSR culturally promoted the diverse nationalities of the Union: due perhaps to a desire to evangelise in the language of the people, to spread communism in the vernacular. Nonetheless, the Soviet government

made Russian obligatory in all schools, and with that began a process of Russification which became unstoppable.

“ The language policy of the early years of the Soviet Union also led to the emergence of cultural elites among many of the nationalities in the state ”

The language policy of the early years of the Soviet Union also led to the emergence of cultural elites among many of the nationalities in the state. This fuelled feelings of national identity within many of its peoples. With the threat of pan-Turkism very close and fearing that these processes of national affirmation would endanger the stability of the Soviet giant, at the end of the 1930s the Soviet Union launched an intense and effective process of Russification. To achieve quick results, the powerful central Soviet government made use of mass deportation, forced migration and repopulation, in a program designed with the objective of redistributing the Russian speaking population. After several waves of immigration, many of the nationalities found themselves displaced and surrounded by unfamiliar languages. Similarly, the Russian-speaking population within the other republics increased significantly and, in certain areas, Russian became the dominant language. As a consequence of all these movements and of the national and linguistic situations they created, many of the national languages began a decline which in many cases has led to their practically disappearing.

After this overview of the Ukrainian Russians (or Russian Ukrainians, it makes no difference), we must also know how to count them. This seems to be an easy task, because the censuses in former Soviet countries still ask about *nationality*. In the 2001 census (this was the last one to be carried out, and everything indicates that it won't be updated for a long time), only 17.3% of the population of Ukraine said they had Russian *nationality*, as against 78% who said Ukrainian.

The post-Soviet censuses also ask about *native language*. This term, which in our tradition we would understand as *mother tongue*, that is to say, our initial language, the first one we learnt as children, is something completely different in the linguistic tradition of the East. It is what we know as the *language of identification*: the language which for whatever reason we link to our identity. Thus, the Ukrainian census of 2001 asked the population about their native language, that is, their language of identity.

The figures about languages in Ukraine that frequently appear in the media are extracted directly from this census. Therefore, when we say that in Ukraine, 67% of the population uses the Ukrainian language and 29% of the population uses the Russian language, we are actually saying that in 2001, 67% of the population identified with Ukrainian, while 29% felt more affinity with Russian. This is regardless of the language that the interviewees had learnt as children at home and of the language that they normally used. But there is one survey of language use, held in 2003, which does provide revealing data: 45% of Ukrainians say they usually speak Ukrainian, while 39% say they use more Russian. The spatial distribution of these uses is clear: to the east and south of the country there is an overwhelming majority of habitual Russian speakers (almost 90%), while in the west Ukrainian dominates (also close to 90% of habitual speakers).

“ Perceptions of injustice and of the violation of language rights arise repeatedly among both Russian speakers and Ukrainian speakers ”

However, the Constitution of Ukraine names Ukrainian as the sole official language. Until the passage of the controversial language law of 2012, Russian had no official recognition, although *de facto* it was accepted as a language of use in virtually all spheres of daily life, even in official matters and, of course, in education and the media. The 2012 language law established that a linguistic community which made up at least 10% of the population in a given territory (be it a village, town, city, district, province or region) could demand official status for their language in this territory. This led to the

adoption of Russian as an official language in many regions of the south and east (including Odessa, Luhansk and Donetsk) as well as of Romanian or Hungarian in towns or villages in the west of the country. In a breathtaking show of political ineptitude, this law was one of the first which the provisional government that emerged after the fall of Yanukovych announced it would repeal. And this threat of repeal was one of the pretexts used both by pro-Russian Ukrainians and by the Russian government to justify an armed intervention to safeguard the rights of the Russian speaking population of Ukrainian.

Ukraine has a long history of deep rooted language conflict. Perceptions of injustice and of the violation of language rights arise repeatedly among both Russian speakers and Ukrainian speakers. Language is one of the most sensitive points of confrontation in the country. Furthermore, we have seen how the mismanagement of language policy at a time of deep social and political crisis has intensified a rupture between the two most numerous linguistic communities of Ukraine that right now seems irresolvable. In April this year, nearly 40% of Ukrainians were still favourable to Russian having co-official status. A territorially based language law, whose effects were more symbolic than real, seemed without doubt the best solution to a language conflict that continues to be entrenched. We will see how the new Ukrainian president faces up to the challenge of finding a peaceful solution to the country's political and social conflict: a consensus on a way out of the linguistic confrontation would be a very good first step on the road to peace.

Bibliography

CABAL GUARRO, Miquel (2013). «El rus com a lingua franca als estats postsoviètics». *Treballs de Sociolingüística Catalana*, núm. 23 (2013), p. 343-373. DOI: 10.2436/20.2504.01.63

— (2014) «Pobres llengües!». *El Punt Avui*, 8 March.

Survey of ideological markers in Spring 2014 by the sociological agency Rating and Razumovka centre. [Available online](#)

KULYK, Volodymyr (2011). «Language identity, linguistic diversity and political cleavages: evidence from Ukraine». *Nations and Nationalism*, 17 (3), p. 627-648.

LAITIN, David D. (1998). *Identity in formation: The Russian-speaking populations in the near abroad*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

SOLCHANYK, Roman (1985). «Language politics in the Ukraine». A: Kreindler, Isabelle (ed.). *Sociolinguistic perspectives on Soviet national languages: Their past, present and future*. Berlín: De Gruyter Mouton, p. 57.

UEHLING, Greta (2004). «The first independent Ukrainian census in Crimea: Myths, miscoding, and missed opportunities». *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 27(1), p. 149-170.

VARFOLOMEYEV, Oleg (2006). «Regions of Ukraine comes back, takes up language issue». *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, núm. 3 (96). [Available online](#).

Photography : Mstyslav Chernov / CC BY / Desaturated. - *Ukrainian activist group in Kiev's Maidan square (February 2014)* -

© Generalitat de Catalunya

South Africa. End of a “linguistically divided” society?

Rocco W. Ronza

Department of Political Science, Università Cattolica SC, Milan

For a long time, the prevention and resolution of linguistic conflicts occupied a central place in Western political research and political theory. The reasons are not difficult to understand. From the 1850s, when the liberal and nationalist movements definitively linked their fates, until the early 1950s, political conflicts between linguistically defined nationalities remained at the heart of national and international politics in Europe. During the first half of the 20th century, two World Wars came about as a result of linguistic-territorial conflicts. Nevertheless, linguistic policies and the politics of language are no longer central issues in contemporary political science. After a brief comeback of interest during the 1970s following the “Ethnic Revival” and the rise of micro-nationalist and ethno-regional movements in Western Europe and North America, multilingualism and language diversity has ceased, with few exceptions, to be included in the research agenda of academic political analysis.

The vision that nowadays prevails regarding the relationship between linguistic unity and political cohesion is quite similar to the one that, in the international dispute over Alsace-Lorraine which opposed France and Germany after 1871, used to be defined as the “French” or “Jacobin” position. According to that, pre-existing linguistic unity should not be seen as a prerequisite for the stability and unity of political communities, which rather depend on the sharing of political and constitutional values. Even when attempts in state- or democracy-building appear to be crucially obstructed by linguistic fragmentation, as in many part of post-Soviet Europe or in the Middle East, the conflicts among linguistic groups are dismissed as a “smokescreen” exploited by political entrepreneurs to disguise more “real” and fundamental interests of economic, political or religious nature.

In no other case can such dramatic decline in the (real or perceived) importance of political-linguistic conflicts be so clearly seen as in the case of South Africa. Until the 1950s, the South African Union established in the aftermath of the Anglo-Boer War was normally described as a “bilingual nation”, based on compromise between two linguistic groups (Dutch/Afrikaans-speaking and English-speaking), similar to those which had taken place in Belgium, Switzerland and Canada (see, e.g., Deutsch 1953). During the 1960s and 1970s, with the mobilization of the black population against the racial discrimination system and the emergence of new doctrines on national development and nation-building in the post-colonial world, South Africa was quickly reinterpreted as a “plural” or “divided society”, in which racial and ethnic cleavages appeared closely intertwined with linguistic pluralism.

“ According to the view held by the ANC, the liberation movement that spearheaded the struggle against apartheid – which has been in office without interruption since 1994 -, linguistic pluralism is to be considered a problem ”

The “grand apartheid” project, launched by the Verwoerd government after the declaration of full independence from the British Empire (1961), was premised on the hypothesis of the existence, within the South African space, of different “nations” defined on a linguistic basis: along with the two language communities of European origin, nine “national” groups were identified within the black/African majority on the basis of the semi-standardized mother tongues which the Christian missionaries had contributed to define in their efforts to bring literacy and the gospel to the natives.

While the same linguistic mosaic is still visible today (with the largest L1 group accounting for a less than 23% of the overall population), linguistic conflicts and language politics seem to have vanished in post-apartheid South Africa. Since 1994, the

political debate has focused almost entirely on the issue of economic inequality and its association with the racial classification of the apartheid era. It is true that, in principle, the value of linguistic diversity has found a place in the new Constitution drafted between 1993 and 1996, which formally elevated all the eleven languages of the apartheid era (Zulu, Xhosa, Afrikaans, English, Northern Sotho, Tswana, Southern Sotho, Tsonga, Swati, Venda and Ndebele) to the status of official languages on equal footing. Nevertheless, the formal rules which should protect multilingualism appear a concession of the African National Congress Party, the liberation movement that spearheaded the struggle against apartheid, to the last white President De Klerk during the negotiations that led to the dismantling of the apartheid regime. According to the view held by the ANC (which has been in office without interruption since 1994), linguistic pluralism is to be considered a problem.

As in the rest of post-colonial Africa, the language of the former colonial power appears to the indigenous elite as the gateway to Western knowledge and modernity as well as an indispensable tool to avoid the politicization of tribal divisions and the rise of ethno-regional alignments across the indigenous majority. Within the ANC, those in favour of promoting a multilingual South Africa have always been in the minority. It is no coincidence that its most famous and influential supporter, the sociolinguist Neville Alexander, associated his vision of a multilingual South Africa with a programme (which never materialised) for the “harmonization” of the nine African languages into just two standard languages (Alexander 1998).

Therefore, it cannot come as any surprise that, since 1994, English, the former Imperial language (spoken as L1 by less than 10% of the South African population), has in fact quickly established itself as the national lingua franca and the principal language in the government offices, the education system, the media and the private economy. Other factors have also contributed to the assertion of English. The full reintegration of the South African economy into the global circuits, which took place while the end of the Cold War allowed for the take-off of the process of economic globalization, has bestowed a fundamental economic value upon English, as one of the infrastructures which connect the South African cities with the centres of global economy and make them act as a linking port between the latter and the African continent. In addition, the international financial media (based in Britain and the US) and the international

markets have always labelled any attempt to limit the advance of English as a throwback to “the old days of the apartheid regime” and a dangerous step threatening an explosion of ethnic divisions within the black majority.

Nevertheless, some of the tensions associated with linguistic differences have managed to find its way into the public space. A conflict of interests between the different linguistic groups has manifested itself in the debate that arose around the language used as the medium of instruction in the South African universities. The deracialization of access to the best universities previously reserved to the whites, including the Afrikaans-speaking universities (or Historically Afrikaans Universities, HAU), has fed an impulse for the adoption of English as the sole medium of tertiary education. Justified by the government within the framework of the Black Economic Empowerment (BBE) policies, this drive has also received backing from the administrators of the country’s best universities, who are eager to integrate them into the international circuits and attract the best prepared and richest students on the national and international marketplace, regardless of the opening up of access to education to the previously disadvantaged groups. Despite the well documented decline of “ethnic voting” for the Afrikaner parties, the project to anglicize the HAU’s has sparked the appearance of a movement of opinion in defence of their linguistic heritage and a vibrant debate around the matter (Giliomee and Schlemmer, 2005; Brink 2006, De Kadt 2006).

**“ The capacity to master the English language
may in the future replace race as a bar and an
identity badge for access to privileged South
Africa ”**

A second question has emerged regarding the effects of the ever-increasing use of English in education and economic life on the gap between the rich and the poor within the African majority after 1994 (Kamwangamalu 2004). As is the case in other countries of the Global South, access to the former colonial language seems on its way to become

a dimension of social privilege. Full knowledge of English is helping enlarge and consolidate the economic rift between the members of the urban elite, who are well-off enough to have their children learn a substantially “foreign” language, and the underprivileged masses, whose social lives remain firmly rooted in the local mother language. According to some, far from acting as a tool for development and as a channel for communication and mobility between different social sectors and between “advantaged” and “disadvantaged” geographic areas, the capacity to master the English language may in the future replace race as a bar and an identity badge for access to “privileged South Africa”, thereby dangerously emphasizing the alienation of political and economic elites from the masses that they are called to represent.

Alexander, N. (1998), “The Political Economy of the Harmonization of the Nguni and Sotho Languages”, *Lexikos* 8: 269-275.

Brink, Chris. 2006. *No lesser place. The taaldebat at Stellenbosch*. Stellenbosch: SUN Press.

De Kadt, Julia (2006). “Language development in South Africa – past and present”. In Vic Webb and du Plessis, Theodorus. (eds.). *The politics of language in South Africa*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers: 40–56.

Deutsch, K.W. (1953), *Nationalism and Social Communication. An Inquiry into the Foundations of Nationality*, New York, Wiley.

Giliomee, Herman and Schlemmer, Lawrence (2005), ‘n Vaste plek vir Afrikaans. *Taaluitdagings op kampus*. Stellenbosch: SUN Press.

Kamwangamalu, Nkonko M. (2004), “The language policy / language economics interface and mother-tongue education in post-apartheid South Africa”, in Kamwangamalu, Nkonko M. and Timothy Reagan (eds.), *South Africa. Special issue of Language Problems & Language Planning*, 28:2: 131–146.

Photography : Robert Cutts / CC BY / Desaturated. – *Afrikaanse Taalmonument, monument in South Africa dedicated to Afrikaans language* -

© Generalitat de Catalunya

The linguistic division in India: a latent conflict?

Alok K. Das

Professor at Jazan University, Saudi Arabia

Till only about a couple of decades ago, language issues and related conflicts, given India's unparalleled diversity, was a commonplace. Which now seem to be either dying down or falling helpless prey to the 'global demon' – English, or helping out the 'big brothers' – *Hindi* in north, *Bengali* in east and one of the four *Dravidian* languages in south, and perhaps *Marathi* in central India. Demands of the changing times, driven by ruthless capitalism, have enunciated a paradigm where unfortunately plurality and diversity have been reduced to mere healthy phrases. Ethnic, and in particular, regional and linguistic adherence seem to have no place in a rapid-paced economy, where differences may well be appreciated, but have little time to dwell upon or to worry about the prospects of. The cost of losing plurality is seemingly inconsequential before the cost of losing an opportunity.

In the answers to the question – *why should one after all learn a language?* – lay the determinants guiding our linguistic practices and behavior (Das 2005: 145). But before reprimanding and bequeathing English, we must not forget that development of English in India, during the early 19th century, has in effect been a course which introduced multilingualism and strengthened further the inherent linguistic diversity, by replacing with it the age-old stranglehold of a subservient and sectarian linguistic legacy (Das 2009: 123). And it cannot be denied that what stood at the very root of economic success has been the availability of an inexhaustible skilled English-proficient workforce (Das 2008: 49). Internet then only precipitated this huge shift in favor of English. Long exposure to the language is a tool of spread, providing an undercurrent of infiltration in all walks of life. This is no more imposed; it is now a choice (Das 2005: 18). And this is a choice of convenience and not of conflict.

“ In India, hundreds of small languages are slowly but surely silently subsumed by their more influential neighbors ”

The present language situation in India may not stand steady even with the proposition that language is often only the symbol of a conflict which is actually taking place in other domains – politics, economy, administration, education, etc. The present-day contours of language controversy have very much changed from a conflict to either coexistence or a one-way coercion. For once, it seems conflict is grossly amiss!

Smaller languages, hundreds of them, are slowly but surely silently subsumed by their more influential neighbors. *Maithili, Bhojpuri, Magahi, Angika, Santhali, Awadhi, Braj, Rajasthani*, and a score of other languages are losing out to *Hindi* in north India. Likewise, many of the titular languages of the south are seriously threatened by *Tamil, Telugu, Kannada*, and *Malayalam*. The same is happening in east as smaller languages of the region are losing ground to *Bengali* and *Assamese*, languages in central and western part of India are marginalized by bigger languages – *Marathi* and *Gujarati*. In all of this, the single other gainer is again English. The most surprising part of this language-loss has been a complete lack of resistance or even a semblance of opposition from the affected language groups. It has quite to do with the nature of concurrent Indian demography.

Today, India has over half of its population below the age of 25 and more than 65% below 35, and some 41% below 18. By 2020, the average age of an Indian will be 29 years. These young people just don't bother to care enough to assert of their linguistic allegiance. Their loyalty is solely driven by the forces of the job market, and they no more wish to be left languishing behind for the lack of any skills, including linguistic. This is precisely why that even in south today there is a considerable penetration of *Hindi*, despite the age-old antagonism towards the language. This is only symptomatic of a nation-wide trend of consigning linguistic conflicts to the emerging economic realities.

For example, in Assam, the speakers of tribal languages like *Rabha* and *Bodo* not so long ago felt that the state language *Ahomia* (Assamese) was a threat to their ethnic self-assertion in a situation of unequal exchange between the mainstream and tribal communities; we hardly hear a voice of dissent today. Even in the *Hindi* heartland, till very recently, there were murmurs of discontent. The languages like *Garhwali* and *Kumaoni* were looked at as dialects though the differences between them and *Hindi* are quite significant. The pro-*Meitei* section of Manipur struggled and fought for long to do away with the *Bengali* script, which, according to them, was imposed by the invading culture of outsiders (Shivaprakash 2012).

India continues to be complimentary to the study of ethnicity's relationship with conflict despite being reorganized into federal states in the 1950s and 1960s along linguistic lines. Still all states in India remain multi-ethnic in composition, and contain examples of peaceful ethnic coexistence that can be used as counter study to the violence (Crowne 2013).

The past controversial language-issues – the resentment of non-*Hindi* regions over *Hindi* being chosen the official language of the Union, only partial acceptability of the three language formula, and the *Hindi*-English duel – seem to have calmed down. But this may only be a pause as the country is passing through a phase of economic transition and great social mobility. The attention might have shifted towards the issues of more immediate consequences; an undercurrent of conflict is on. Direction has changed; the agents and factors are different. Language conflict is now more than simply a conflict between languages. It has taken shapes which include conflicts between political parties; pressure groups; social classes; elite groups vs. the rest of the population; and conflicts between institutions fulfilling specific functions (Das 2002: 21). Huge migration and mobility within the country, in particular from rural to urban and at times, across distances, also 'have a disruptive influence on traditional pattern of life, greatly affecting language behavior and loyalty' (Das 2004: 152).

Only the continent of Africa exceeding the linguistic, cultural, and genetic diversity of India, multiple identities exist, based on social, political, cultural and economic factors, and their mobilizations overlap. We find different types of identity conflict at the centre of social relations – and the most prevalent mode of resolution of any given identity

conflict is the posing of another. But the 'communal question' remains the most formidable; its volatile effects make it central to any political discourse in India. Recent events have simply reasserted this on a global scale (Chandra 2003: 114-115).

“ Language conflict is now more than simply a conflict between languages. It has taken shapes which include conflicts between social classes or between institutions fulfilling specific functions ”

Like any other class-based social system, capitalism destroys primitive political and cultural institutions, but it builds new ones with the same bricks and mortar; it cannot abolish the context in which it is born (Chandra 2003: 116). For the *Hindi/Urdu* conflict was never about the legitimatization of any language, but a struggle over identities. *Hindi* and *Urdu* are in fact two names for the same language. Yet by 'Muslimizing' *Urdu*, and 'Hinduizing' *Hindi*, the rivals succeeded in making this false divide into a national one. *Hindi* would eventually become the official language of India, and *Urdu* of Pakistan (Chandra 2003: 119). But this communalization of language fell flat, when Bangladesh broke away from Pakistan solely on account of refusing to accept *Urdu*, and instead opting for a 'Sanskritized' language – *Bengali*. But within India, this communal divide between *Hindi* and *Urdu* still plays on, which might remain as the sole focal point of an impending conflict.

Chandra, P. 2003. Linguistic-Communal Politics and Class Conflict in India. *Social Register*. p. 114-131.

Crowne, W. 2013. Ethnicity as a source of Conflict in India. *E-International Relations*. Bristol, retrieved, June 4, 2014.

Das, A. K. 2009. When English Replaced Persian: Relinquishing an 'Entangled' Linguistic Legacy. *Language Forum*, 35: 1. p. 123-137.

Das, A. K. 2008. Role of English Language in India's Economic Development. *Language in a Global Culture: Bridge or Barrier?* Bangkok: Ramkhamhaeng University Press. p. 49-56.

Das, A. K. 2005. Changing Constructs of Linguistic Imperialism: Religion, Polity and Economics. In Kim, Lee Su, Thang Siew Ming & K. A. Bakar (eds.). *Language and Nationhood: New Contexts, New Realities*. Bangi (Malaysia): Pusat Pengajian Bahasa & Linguistik. p. 13-22.

Das, A. K. 2004. Survival and Maintenance of Regional Languages in the New Europe: Consequences of Expansion and Changing Demography. *Language Policy and Sociolinguistics I: Regional Languages in the New Europe*. Rezekne (Latvia): Rezeknes Augstskola. p. 152-159.

Das, A. K. 2002. Language Conflict in India. *Journal of Philology*, 2: 10. p. 20-23.

Shivaprakash, H. S. 2012. Language: The Basis of Unity and Conflict, retrieved, June 4, 2014.

Photography : Yann / CC BY / Desaturated. - Indian people. An image of people that has the aim to symbolize the hundreds of languages in India -

© Generalitat de Catalunya

IN DEPTH

On the need for a linguistic justice index

Javier Alcalde

Researcher at the International Catalan Institute for Peace

Herodotus and other ancient Greeks divided humanity into those who spoke Greek on one side and everybody else, the barbarians, on the other. Thousands of years later, linguistic policies applied by the majority of countries continue, in one way or another, to create similar divisions. In this article, I will argue that the promotion of peace is intrinsically connected with reducing discriminatory situations between the various ethnolinguistic groups. A useful instrument to bring about this reduction might be an analytical tool capable of evaluating the degree of linguistic justice existing in a society. This tool could provide systematic and rigorous data to design policies aimed at reducing tensions inherent to multicultural states in this age of globalisation.

Those of us involved in international relations, political science or peace research are not always aware of one fundamental socio-linguistic fact: The United Nations is made up of 193 states, while the number of languages in the world exceeds 6,000. This means that the cases in which state boundaries coincide with linguistic frontiers are more the exception than the rule. On another front, we know that our language is one of the most important aspects in a person's identity and that of a community. If we relate both questions, perhaps we may better understand why the problems associated with identity are at the basis of the majority of violent conflicts throughout the past 70 years.

1

We also know that the majority of current armed conflicts are inter-state. Very often, it is a question of ethnic minorities demanding their collective rights from the central government. The government, unlike what happens when it comes to other aspects of identity -such as religion-, cannot be neutral in the case of language. The states need a

language policy to establish the language adopted for enacting legislation, the language used for communicating with citizens, the medium of instruction and education, etc. Given the impossibility therefore, of liberal neutrality in the case of language, every government action will eventually be seen as partisan, even though this may not always be explicit. A language policy which fails to adequately address diversity will inevitably generate discrimination, thereby creating a breeding ground for future conflict.

In the case of the European Union, this concept is of significant importance and it is noteworthy to point out that the very first decree applied by the Council during the period of Schuman and Monnet concerned the language policy, and deems as official each of the official languages of its six founding members: Italian, German, French and Dutch. In theory, the same policy remains in place today, only now with 24 official languages. The practice, however, bestowed a certain dominant position to French, and gradually to German and above all to English. Nowadays, when over 80% of certain EU member country's population is incapable of communicating in English, some authors use the term linguistic injustice to refer to those situations where, in specific European programmes, English is the only language used.²

In other contexts, situations of linguistic injustice are associated with the outbreak of armed conflict.³ One example is the origin of the UNESCO's International Mother Tongue Day, proclaimed on February 21, 2000. The Pakistani government's decision to choose the Urdu language as its sole official language gave rise to discrimination against the country's Bengali speaking population, who immediately witnessed their political and socioeconomic opportunities reduced. Therefore, each February 21, the UNESCO commemorates the brutal repression of the massive march organized in 1952 to protest against the Pakistani's government language policy. This event was to become a critical juncture for the secessionist movement which would give rise to the creation of the state of Bangladesh.

“ In many contexts, situations of linguistic injustice are associated with the outbreak of armed conflict. One example is the origin of the UNESCO’s International Mother Tongue Day, proclaimed on February 21, 2000 ”

For its part, sparked by a student protest against the South African government’s language policy, the Soweto uprising had far-reaching implications in the fight against South African apartheid. Legislation enacted by way of the 1974 *Afrikaans Medium Decree*, had imposed Afrikaans as the medium of instruction in secondary schools. In Thailand, a country where the majority of the population is Thai-speaking Buddhists and with a Malay-speaking Muslim minority, there are reports of a significant number of cases involving burning of public schools and teachers being assassinated. More than religion, the cause seems to be related to the fact that in the southern provinces, where 80% of the people speak Malay, Thai is the sole medium for instruction and education and as such, the only language required in order to access socio-economic opportunity.

We find traces of the Bengali movement in Sri Lanka, with a Tamil-speaking minority and their reaction to the state’s linguistic preferences. In 1948, the first decolonization government adopted Sinhala as its official language (initially, English was also declared as an official language), resulting in the discrimination against the Tamil-speaking minority and their *de facto* exclusion from holding any position in office or public administration. In each of these cases, poor and inadequate management of linguistic diversity have given rise to situations of injustice which, while not being the sole reason behind the conflict, are a part (thereof and in some cases the fundamental part) of a broader series of cultural, religious and racial discrimination, that have sparked the outbreak of violence.⁴

Having reached this point, the non-violent transformation of a conflict will always be more difficult than if preventive measures had been put in place in a timely manner.

One option could be to compensate the party which a specific language policy has discriminated against. In other words, given that the state cannot fail to take action regarding language policy, and bearing in mind that all policy enacted generates redistributive effects, – in other words, winners and losers –, one way to implement measures to avoid an outbreak of violence would consist in acting to mitigate the existence of linguistic grievances. If this is the case however, why then was no action taken in cases such as in Ukraine recently, and in the Balkans prior to the war in the nineties or on so many other occasions when ethnolinguistic tensions have contributed to violent conflict?

“ A linguistic justice index would enable us to make objective, systematic and conclusive comparisons arising from each language policy, as well as detect the most flagrant grievances, thereby allowing preventive actions within identity conflict to be taken ”

At least a part of the answer to these questions can be found in the non-existence of an index capable of measuring the levels of linguistic justice in a society. This index would enable us to make objective, systematic and conclusive comparisons arising from each language policy, including the relationships between majority and minority languages and even to grasp the effects of prohibiting a language. Using this information, public policy decisions could be made in which, at a minimum, the losers would be compensated. Moreover, it should be possible to detect the most flagrant grievances, thereby allowing preventive actions within identity conflict to be taken, which, as mentioned, account for the majority of current violent conflicts.

In the same way that there are indicators to assess freedom of the press, corruption, inequality, democracy, or in the area of peace the global peace index, the idea is to design a tool that could be used as a guideline in the application of policy aimed at

better managing diversity. Its potential as an element in conflict resolution is enormous and stretches much further than the so-called “linguistic rights”. For example, in the negotiation of a peace process, the varying independence agreement options regarding control of power by the minority might be analysed from this perspective and, in this way, of the language used in education, administration and opportunity. To a large extent, the degree of peace obtained in each case will depend on the level of linguistic justice of the policies resulting from the agreement reached.

1. See, for example, studies carried out drawing on information from the Minorities at Risk conflict database created by Ted Robert Gurr at the University of Maryland
2. Research work by Michele Gazzola and François Grin, among others, provide the most meticulous and conclusive data available. A significant body of their published work is available from the webpage of the University of Geneva Observatory on Economy, Languages and Training
3. The following examples are taken from the contribution of Fernand de Varennes at the international seminar on *Linguistic Diversity management and peace processes*, organized by Linguapax and the UNESCO Center in Catalonia in Barcelona in June 2008.
4. De Varennes (see footnote 3) mentions other cases, such as the Kurdish minorities in Turkey and Iraq, the Albanians in Macedonia, the Abkhazians in Georgia, the Moro people in the Philippines, the Transnieter minority in Moldova, Nagorno-Karabakh in Azerbaijan, the population of South Sudan la non-Arabic speaking population of Southern Sudan, the Arabic-speaking minority in Iran, the Kosovo-Albanians in Serbia, the Tuareg people of Niger, several cases in India, Indonesia, China and Burma... to which we could add a significantly long etcetera.

Photography : Prof. Rafiqul Islam / CC BY / Desaturated. - *Demonstration against Pakistan Linguistic Policy (February 1952)* -

© Generalitat de Catalunya

RECOMANEM

Materials and resources recommended by the ICIP

Book

The Management of Linguistic Diversity and Peace Processes

One of the main arguments of this collective book is that a good management of linguistic diversity is a key factor for conflict prevention. The reason is the following: linguistic policies which do not manage diversity properly generate discrimination and, therefore, contribute to create a breeding ground for ethnic conflicts, which constitute the majority of current political violence. The authors present the situation of different countries in America, Asia and Africa, showing how some languages, when privileged by the State, may develop into a tool for political and socioeconomic opportunities which end up excluding the native speakers of languages that lack this institutional support. In other words, they generate situations of linguistic injustice.

A paradigmatic example is Mexico, where the indigenous languages are never used in negotiations to resolve conflicts, which hampers enduring and nonviolent conflict resolution. On another front, in authoritarian countries such as Uzbekistan, China or Pakistan, repressive and homogenizing policies towards minorities – including the linguistic side of such policies, which means subordination or even elimination of the language of these peoples- have as a direct consequence a rise of ethno-linguistic conflicts. There are also European examples in the book, such as the Balkans, where language has been directly linked to the conflicts that led to the disintegration of former Yugoslavia. The book deals with this issue through the case of Slovenia. Another quite unknown example is New Caledonia, which is still in the process of decolonization and where the difficulties of native languages in fields such as education is considered one of the main challenges for the sociopolitical stability of this multilingual country of

the Pacific.

If such conflicts are to be prevented, the book offers a very clear recommendation: a formal recognition of the diversity and multilingualism present in our societies, as well as profound and structural changes to promote this diversity. It's all about overcoming (usually occidental) paradigms such as monolingualism and ethnocentrism adopting, by adopting the alternative approaches of cultural and linguistic diversity. They are valuable resources and with a great capacity for intercultural dialogue and for peace-building.

Book

LTI- Language of the Third Reich

"The expression of an era is also defined by its language" says Victor Klemperer. Language is the tool we have to think and to understand the world: it creates our reality and guides our thoughts and emotions. We learn and use it instinctive, natural and unconsciously. Then, all discourses hold some truth, and it is precisely because of this that language is so powerful and may even be dangerous.

Victor Klemperer (1881- 1960) was a Jew philologist, journalist and writer who, during the Nazi occupation, dedicated himself to compile in his personal diaries examples of how the Nazi propaganda altered the German language to the point of creating a different one, which Klemperer named *Linguae Terti Imperii* (LTI) or "Language of the Third Reich".

Klemperer highlights as the main characteristics of LTI the fact that it was accessible to and understandable for all kinds of audiences – a common language full of well-known references (for example, Hitler's speeches were full of references to sports and sportsmen)- and that it was an excessive language, with no limits and with an abundant use of superlatives. He also points out LTI's fanaticism; it was a language based on faith, on the almost divinity of the *Führer* and on the supremacy of the German race and its "eternal characteristic traits". The main goal of LTI was to oppress and destroy personal will and autonomous thought and this is why it suspected of intellectualism and reason. It aimed at turning its citizens into a cohort of automats who would not question any of the dogmas of Hitler's National Socialism.

It is well-known what happened during WWII and what the Nazis did and, in this sense, the book does not supply us with any new information. What is probably the most outstanding quality of the book is the thoroughness and strength with which this philologist held onto language (the only thing the Nazis could not snatch from him) and how, through the meticulous observation of language, he was able to preserve his critical thought and survive through brutality.

Beyond the case of Nazism, the book shows how the use we make of language may generate violence (both structural or/and direct) and how no society is safe of the perils of the manipulation of language. Do not get scared by the specificity of the book, it is worth reading every single page.

Document

Language Policy and Civil War, David Laitin

In *Language Policy and Civil War* David Laitin maintains that the decision of recognizing minority languages does not depend on the degree of attentiveness of the country towards the ethnic minorities, but on the fact that these countries are particularly weak. The introduction in the analysis of the variable weak/strong state leads him to conclude that the official recognition of language diversity has different implications depending on the country who performs it. For weak states, such recognition is very risky and might be connected to armed conflict and even civil war. For more stable states (e.g. West Europe and North America), it will only mean cultural concessions to powerful minority groups. According to him (p. 183), “states that are weak (especially those coming out of colonial rule) and groups that can undermine state power conjoin to yield linguistic recognition and this would explain the correlation between language concessions and civil war”.

This idea is further developed by taking into consideration the existence of a strong ethnic group:

A) In case of weak groups and strong states, there are no civil wars and no linguistic concessions.

B) In case of strong groups and weak states, it seems to be both linguistic concessions and high probabilities of civil war.

C) In case of strong states beginning to weaken, we might see linguistic concessions but no civil war.

These findings suggest that weak states should be very careful when implementing linguistic concessions, because in some cases (when there are strong ethnic minorities) this could lead to violence.

Project

Language in conflict

Language in Conflict is a project based at the University of Huddersfield that looks at the potential contribution of linguistics to conflict studies by examining the use of language in conflict situations and resolution at all levels. It also aims to bring together academics and professionals from linguistics, conflict studies and conflict resolution, to enhance understanding and encourage discussion and collaboration.

As a way to realize these aims, Language in Conflict has designed a web platform where exploratory articles written by members of the research team and the website community are added regularly. The platform encourages interaction amongst authors and readers from different disciplines through the comments section, which can be found beneath each article. This function enables readers to provide feedback on articles and to debate different approaches and ideas.

Among many other things, a guide to the wider field of linguistics research is provided by Language in Conflict. The Linguistic Toolbox on the right-hand side of the website comprises concise introductions to the various linguistic methodologies that can be applied to analyse conflict situations. These are accompanied by suggestions for further reading, guiding readers to introductory texts and more specialist work.

Stage play

***Translations*, by Brian Friel**

Translations is a theatre play set in 19thC rural Ireland which narrates how a British military detachment arrives in Baile Beag (a small village in Donegal) with the mission to map and translate into English all Irish place names. This administrative task, apparently innocent, hides a plan of the British Empire to eliminate both Irish language and culture from public life, with the tragic consequences that this entails.

In just a hundred years (from 1800-1900), the English language substituted Gaelic in Ireland. The new schooling system introduced by the British and the Great Famines – which not only caused thousands of deaths, but also a great exodus of the Irish young population to the US- are two of the main factors that contributed to the nearly extinction of the Irish language. However, how and why the Irish, with such strong culture and national identity, abandoned their own language still remains a mystery for linguists.

Brian Friel does not take any political stand in his play; he just describes a chapter of the History of Ireland and allows the audience to come up with their own conclusions. The themes of the play are varied and many – education, love, opposition between rural and urban Ireland, the cultural clash between colonizer and colonized, etc. – but, overall, it shows us how human communication and understanding problems have a lot to do with the complexity of the language issue.

The play was staged by the theatre company La Perla 29 in Barcelona last season, a version directed by Ferran Utzet, and it will tour Catalunya in the fall 2014.

© Generalitat de Catalunya

TRIBUNA

Protest under attack from all four sides

Aida Guillén Lanzarote

Human Rights Institute of Catalonia and Pau a Pams

The crisis and the austericidal measures promoted by our different layers of government (European Union, states and regions) have led to unprecedented cuts in our social programmes and thus to a decline in the effective enjoyment of various economic, social and cultural rights, such as employment, health and education. These cuts are contested, every single day, in the street. Demonstrations, rallies, the occupation of public spaces, citizens' assemblies... According to declarations of the Director General of the Spanish police, Ignacio Cosidó, in his most recent appearance before Congress, there have been almost 100 such protests a day since 2012.

And what is the official reaction to this social discontent expressed in the street? To attack. But not a frontal attack, rather an attack which arrives, and even seems to be coordinated, from four different sides.

Protest or dissent is not recognised as an independent human right. However, some of the elements that make it up are so recognised, such as the right to demonstrate, freedom of assembly and freedom of expression. These rights are considered to be closely linked to the existence of a democratic society, because they are essential for its construction. And these rights are currently being besieged – the word is by no means an exaggeration – by a persistent and sustained offensive which is attacking them – in fact, attacking us – on all four sides, from four branches of power: the executive, the legislative, the judicial and the media.

“ The main role of the police with respect to a demonstration or protest is to protect the demonstrators and their right to express and defend their opinion ”

From the executive power we are witnessing a use and abuse of violence and force by the security forces which can no longer be considered anecdotal or sporadic. There have been too many cases of violent police charges (perhaps the adjective is redundant: I don't know if there is such a thing as a “non-violent police charge”); disproportionate and provocative deployments of riot squads (and here the adjectives are definitely superfluous); and guidelines from policy makers which are clearly intended to intimidate and discourage social mobilisation, with arguments about the need for public safety... the latter referring almost exclusively to the protection of property.

We must not forget that the main role of the police with respect to a demonstration or protest is to protect the demonstrators and their right to express and defend their opinion. However, justifying their actions by the burning of rubbish containers or damage to bank premises, security forces give priority to the protection of these material goods over the physical safety of people. When there is a criminal act, the police must act and try to arrest those responsible. But between that and the abuse of force and endangering people's physical safety, as has been denounced by various international human rights bodies, there is a chasm, which it seems we have decided to jump over.

The government appears to have forgotten that as the guarantor of human rights it is its obligation to respect, protect and guarantee these rights. That is to say, the state cannot violate human rights (respect), it must lay down appropriate conditions for the enjoyment of these rights (protection) and the system must establish appropriate remedies when it cannot avoid a violation (guarantee). Respect, protect and guarantees of the right of assembly and freedom of expression have a very special place as fundamental elements of the Constitution. However, this special protection under the

Constitution may not be sufficient, because the legislative branch has also decided to attack.

The recently passed law on private security, the reform of the Penal Code, and the attempt to reform the Public Safety Act, are just three examples of the legislative offensive whose aim is to try to silence and criminalise protest. On the one hand, a growing number of criminal offenses have been introduced which are clearly associated with protest actions; on the other, more and more powers and discretion are granted to security forces, some of whose functions have even been privatised, with all that implies in terms of loss of public control and accountability.

And faced with the violation of rights, when the subsequent guarantees should come into force, these generally help to reinforce the circle of impunity. Allegations of ill-treatment and torture by security forces during protests have until now almost always had a very short life in the courts. The lack of thorough investigation, the presumption that the authorities are telling the truth and the application of court charges are some of the elements that lead, in most cases, to claims not being submitted, or to their being dismissed in the early stages of judicial proceedings.

Still, there are exceptions, and there have been several convictions against abusive and disproportionate policing. At this point, however, we come up against the phenomenon of the official pardon granted by the executive, thus completing the circle of impunity we spoke of. There have been too many examples of pardons for this type of crime, pardons which only serve to give the message, wrong from our point of view, of “don’t worry, these convictions are just a mistake that can be rectified”.

“ The law on private security, the reform of the Penal Code, and the attempt to reform the Public Safety Act, are just three examples of the legislative offensive whose aim is to try to silence and criminalise protest ”

As a democratic society we can allow neither this climate of fear of protest nor this circle of impunity. But we do allow them. And we do so, among other reasons, because the fourth attack, that from the media, is continuous and systematic. We find that the mainstream media promote one sole message about protest, which identifies protesters as violent, immediately stripping them of humanity and thus opening the way to justifying their being repressed, violently if necessary.

The construction in the public mind of the concept of security is a joint task in which the media have a lot to say and contribute. Defining security solely in terms of public order while ignoring other aspects, such as its economic, social or political dimensions, helps to legitimise the use of violence against those who demand a different and safer social order, with jobs, education, health and diverse uses of public spaces, including for protesting.

At this point some alternative sources of information appear, sources which are still in a minority but are certainly growing. And we find a clear example of the importance of the social role of the media in the attempts at control and censorship that these alternative sources are beginning to suffer at the hands of the state.

In our view, the defence against all these attacks must involve the strengthening of civil society, the promotion of a clear and explicit awareness of our rights as citizens, the search for international backing through human rights protection mechanisms and changes in the way of doing politics, so as to re-establish the respect, protection and guarantee of these rights as a main priority.

Photography : Ivan Bandura / CC BY / Desaturated. - *Riot control police in a demonstration*

-

© Generalitat de Catalunya

TRIBUNA

The EU involvement in Ukrainian affairs

Sergey Sukhankin / Alla Hurska

Historian and political analyst at the International Center of Political Studies at Kiev /
Ucranian political scientist at the UAB and political analyst at the International Center
of Political Studies at Kiev

Reflecting upon horrible consequences of crisis in Ukraine, we were wondering if European Union ought not only to express its concern over democracy and humanity in verbally but also actually pursue implementation thereof in practice?

Within recent several months, Ukraine has faced perils that have not only jeopardized its sovereignty as an actor of international relations but might also affect regional (if not international) peace and security, which could claim involvement of other actors including the EU. The Antiterrorist Operation waged in Southeastern part of the country that has already claimed lives of hundreds of people, as well as major geopolitical shifts, that became unexpected for many, are outcomes of previously obscured issues. Almost a year ago no one could possibly have imagined that tragic events of such scope will be unfolding in Ukraine – one of very few countries that was able to avoid bloody ethnic conflicts on the entire post-Soviet space. Even if anyone did predict possible outbreak of violence it was Ukraine`s west not east, where it might have taken place. Grave economic crisis that Ukraine has found itself to be in aroused matters of energy security that for years have been vital for both foreign and domestic political development. Therefore, a broad array of challenges that newly elected president P. Poroshenko will have to face in the most imminent future have gained additional acuteness.

Undoubtedly, above-mentioned outcomes that have to a substantial degree put Ukraine to the brink of collapse (both economic and preservation of statehood) are a

constellation of events. Current crisis has also been triggered by reckless, highly irresponsible and openly unpatriotic activities that subsequent presidential administrations have been conducting since Ukraine gained its long-desired independence after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. It has also had much to do with the fact that the overall level of development of civil society, intellectual and diplomatic elites in Ukraine has remained extremely low and not corresponding to the seriousness of challenges stipulated by its both potentially lucrative and extremely complicated geopolitical position. Some might be willing to blame Ukraine's eastern neighbor the Russian Federation that has, by launching aggressive campaign supported by mass media, outrageous in its essence propaganda and looming economic sanctions, for an explicit attempt to destabilize internal situation in Ukraine. This aggressive and openly unfriendly stance toward its partner and closest neighbor has explicitly shown not only reviving Russian imperial ambitions yet exposed social Darwinism and Realpolitik approach that Russian elites have adopted as a new vector for further development. It also underscores that crude nationalism is to become a new source of legitimacy that Russian political regime is going to rely upon. Of course, all these assumptions and arguments do contain a kernel of truth. Yet, would it be a rightful thing to put the sole blame on the Russian Federation and previous Ukrainian governments?

“ The European Union has done little to prevent further escalation of violence in Ukraine ”

We deem it vital not to reduce consequences of existing crisis exclusively to one of outlined dimensions. The largest regional player that comprises almost five hundred million people residing in 28 countries with huge economy, high living standards and potentially immense military capabilities, the European Union has done little to prevent further escalation of violence in Ukraine, whereby avoiding responsibility for ensued breakdown of regional stability, security and peace. Even despite exiting institutional frameworks and mechanisms of regional cooperation that include Ukraine, such as for instance Eastern Partnership, reaction of the EU has been dominated by its inability to

clearly produce common position and stand for downtrodden democratic norms and values. Having pushed Ukraine for signing of the Association Agreement with bleak economic prospects and denying Ukraine even the slightest prospective of joining its structures, the EU seemed to have opted for rhetoric rather than any concrete steps when first peaceful protests culminating in violence erupted on Maydan Square. It would not be an exaggeration to suggest that by doing so, the EU has practically deceived those who stood and died on Maydan for European future of their beloved country.

Moreover, by tacitly accepting annexation of Crimea (which breached all existing principles of international law, let alone moral fundamentals) and trying not to implicate itself in crisis in the East of Ukraine (clearly inflamed by Moscow) the EU has once again displayed its inability to stand for principles and values it claims to be a stalwart and defender. And attempts to engage in economic sanctions initiated by the United States against Russian Federation including hampering the construction of the South Stream gas pipeline system appear to be more a reluctantly accepted enterprise rather than a clear and well-defined strategy. By pursuing such behavioral patterns based on indecisiveness and half-heartedness the EU has not only inflamed Russian confidence in its inability to step up for its partners yet also tinted its international image. This crisis has revealed several points that need to be tackled with all seriousness and decisiveness:

1. Despite numerous declarative (and rather costly) attempts to change its perception, the EU remains “civilian” or “soft power”: since the Russo-Georgian conflict (August 2008) up until now EU has not been able to step up for states it has been wooing – this is relevant both in economic and military domains.
2. The EU is unable/unwilling to speak with one voice in the face of challenges of significant gravity: individual member states pursue independent line of behavior when national interests are involved. It stays clear that certain EU member states are still prone to follow “path dependency” in their relations with Russia, which does threaten essence of the entire European project.

3. The EU is unwilling to step for its eastern partners (Georgia, Moldavia and Ukraine) and challenge Russia at this front. In case of further regional destabilization this might cause endangerment of EU attractiveness and “soft power” mechanisms that it still wields in countries of post-Soviet states. Former communist states might once again slide into Russian sphere of influence.

4. Russia has received what it has been longing for – proof of EU`s indetermination to get involved with resurgent and bellicose Moscow, trying to expand its “zone of influence” upon its former satellites from post-Soviet space -. This is usually done with a great deal of coercion and intimidation.

5. Ukraine (and other post-Soviet countries) should not be deceived: the EU will be able to start constructive dialogue of full-fledge accession to its structures only once it has received viable proof of stabilization as well as improvement of economic and political milieu in these countries.

6. Should crisis persist further in Ukraine, it might bring about grave perils for regional stability and peace – consequences of which would be dealt with by the EU. Dealing with repercussions (economic collapse of Ukraine and expansion of military conflict could lead to humanitarian catastrophe) will always be by far much more an onerous task for EU to cope with.

“ The EU should either explicitly renounce of its attempts to include Ukraine in its institutions or it ought to step up for its partner ”

By making Ukraine to choose solely between the Association Agreement or the Customs Union without even pondering over a compromise solution given Ukraine`s geopolitics, economic, ethno-cultural, linguistic and historic ties with the Russian Federation, and not offering any clear economic or membership prospective, the EU should admit its own share of responsibility in the crisis. As a famous saying goes “you become responsible, forever, for what you have tamed”: following this line of behavior the EU

should either explicitly renounce of its attempts to include Ukraine in its institutions or it ought to step up for its partner in need to pose itself as a true follower of democratic principles. After all, it seems that should the EU opt for first path, it might commit grave mistakes of Western democracies of the Interwar period. The question therefore should be: is EU as a supranational global player ready to assume high responsibility of guiding Ukraine to democracy or pecuniary interests and self-concern will prevail?

Photography : Viktor Kovalenko / CC BY / Desaturated. - *Demonstration of Pro-European Ukrainians* -

© Generalitat de Catalunya

INTERVIEW

Interview with Ethar El-Katatney, award-winning journalist, blogger and author

Món Sanromà

International Catalan Institute for Peace

Ethar El-Katatney is an award-winning journalist, a blogger, and an author. She has worked as a staff writer at several Egyptian newspapers and magazines and often contributes to a number of International media.

Ethar El-Katatney is an award-winning journalist, a blogger, and an author. She has worked as a staff writer at several Egyptian newspapers and magazines and often contributes to a number of International media. Born in Saudi Arabia, raised in Egypt, and educated in Western schools, El-Katatney travels all over the world for conferences promoting dialogue between different religions and cultures. In this interview she argues that identity-related conflicts in Egypt have increased because of the fear and uncertainty of the people after the revolution, and she considers that the Arabic language does not necessarily work as a peace maker tool in disputes between Arab countries, but that it helps to cut across barriers because it connects them all.

From a conflict transformation perspective, how can we prevent a conflict from turning into violence?

The problem in Egypt is that people are so poor and hungry that they are not going to sit and discuss their ideological differences because they simply have more urgent priorities. However, from my point of view, things that have actually been successful in bringing different people together and interacting are charity projects, no matter where they come from, or peace projects that make them realize that the others are just like them. While giving speeches in schools I realized that talking to people is definitely not enough: Things need to be done in action. Children of schools in Said have to figure out

how to live so, when I go there, I try to find a way to bring comfort to them rather than discussing the idea of democracy, for example, that for them is an intangible value that does not affect them in their daily lives.

Would you say that most of current violent conflicts in Egypt are identity-related?

Conflicts related to identity issues have definitely increased in recent times. We have a huge Christian Copt population in our country, at least 10% or 15%, and around fifty churches have been burnt down, one of which was over 1400 years old, older than Islam. I do not think that Muslims hate Copts, it is just the way authority works in Egypt. For example, the boss shouts at their employee, the employee shouts at his wife, the wife shouts at her child... So, since Copts are in conditions of less authority than the Muslims in Egypt because they are a minority, they get shouted at.

“ The language connects all Arab countries so none of them will be isolated from another and this is really useful when you want to engage in peace-building activities ”

That church was standing for over 1400 years, why was it attacked now?

Because people are afraid. The harder their lives are, the more afraid they are and the more difficult it is for them to try to accept other communities. Now people only want to stay with whoever shares the same identity and ideology, whereas before they would have interesting discussions among each other. For example, someone from the Muslim Brotherhood and someone liberal would come together and have interesting debates, but the more afraid they are the more they retreat back into what they know. Now they only want to watch the television that supports their point of view, they do not want to be intimidated or challenged in any way.

Do you think that sharing an Egyptian identity can unite people professing different religions?

Under the Muslim Brotherhood's rule, the media narrative placed religion to the forefront. Mursi's rule created such a polarization that even within Muslims themselves there has been an incredible binary opposition. It's not only Christians against Muslims, there are also the Muslims who supported this political ideology against the Muslims who did not, and therefore were infidels. Mursi's speeches always started with God, his narrative was about Muslims and excluded the Christians, some of whom had to escape Egypt. That is why there was an increase in the visual aspects of religion, such as the use of nicab. Now under Al-Sisi the patriotism is being played up again, we are all Egyptians, he tries to bring back inclusiveness but the old narrative still has an impact on people.

Can language have a role in reducing disputes between Arabs from different countries?

I do not think the Arabic language works necessarily as a peacemaker tool, but it works to cut across barriers, so you actually know what is happening when you hear people or when you read articles posted online or posts on twitter... The language connects all Arab countries so none of them will be isolated from another and this is really useful when you want to engage people in peace-building activities or charity work because if someone does not understand what they are writing or doing, he is not going to give his money or his time for that.

Why is the standardized and literary variety of Arabic used in writing and in most formal speech (i.e. Modern Standard Arabic) so difficult to learn?

The way we speak is definitely not the way we write, it is like if we wrote in Shakespearean Language but we spoke in slang, and that has actually created a conflict, especially now that globalization increases. The more people speak English, the less Arabic they speak, even me, I speak Arabic fluently because that is the language I speak at home, but because the written standard is not the same as what we say, and I did not read a lot, it is actually a lot harder for me to write in Arabic than to write in English. Across the Arab region, the more educated you are, your Arabic goes down as your English goes up.

**“ It is like if we wrote in Shakespearean Language
but we spoke in slang, and that has actually
created a conflict, especially now that
globalization increases ”**

What is the relationship between Modern Standard Arabic and colloquial language?

The dialect we speak is a combination of different languages. In Lebanon, for example, the way they mix Arabic, French and English is very clear. Modern Standard Arabic is very different from any dialect. About five years ago, they created a book written in colloquial language, which is like publishing a book in English with phrases like “how r u”. I am very much in favor of such an initiative because it is connecting to a generation that completely abandoned their language because they could not understand it and, therefore, they did not read it. My grandfather was shocked when he saw that book and there are those who say that the Arabic language has to be preserved because it is perfect and it is the language of the Koran, the holy book, but the reality is that by changing it slightly a lot of people will read it more and maybe that is a good thing, you have to be flexible. The book ~~XXXXXX~~ *want to get married*, written by Ghadah Abd al-Al, is another example of that: It came out of a blog written in colloquial language and it had millions of readers across the Arab world. My cousin, 15, who had never picked up an Arabic book before, read it enthusiastically.

Given that language is an intrinsic part of a people’s identity, how can these writings in colloquial language affect the Arab identity?

Colloquial Arabic should not be a substitute of the Modern Standard Arabic. If you do not understand anything of Classical Arabic you will never be able to interpret, for example, the depth of the songs of Umm Kulthum, the lyrics, the poetry... you will not know that there is a huge part of your identity as an Arab that you are missing out.

There are other languages spoken in Egypt besides Egyptian Arabic, such as Saidi Arabic in the South and Nubian languages in the Upper Nile Valley. Does that create tensions of any kind?

Saidi Arabic, for example, has specific words that I only understand because my father speaks that language but, overall, we understand each other, and if we do not we ask. Beyond language issues, most of current conflicts in Egypt relate to other dimensions of identity and culture.

Fotografia: Institut Europeu de la Mediterrània

© Generalitat de Catalunya

SOBRE L'ICIP

News, activities and publications about the ICIP

ICIP

International Catalan Institute for Peace

New ICIP library acquisitions

The ICIP Library collection will increase this month with the arrival of many new publications. A compilation of the most important new titles, most of which are available for loan, can be found in [this document](#).

The ICIP Library, located at Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes, 658, baixos, in Barcelona, is a center specializing in peace culture, security and conflicts that aims to enable and encourage research in these areas. The Library offers support to ICIP and to its researchers and experts in the field of peace studies. It is part of the network of specialized libraries of the Generalitat and is in permanent contact with similar institutions and centers from around the world.

New ICIP Working Papers and Policy Papers

The following essays have been recently published in the ICIP Working Papers series:

El “[Alien Tort Claims Act](#)” de 1789: su contribución en la protección de los derechos humanos y reparación para las víctimas, by Maria Chiara Marullo.

[Disembedding Terrorists: Identifying New Factors and Models for Disengagement Research](#), by Diego Muro and Sandra Levi.

And the following essay has been recently published in the ICIP Policy Papers series:

The right to live in a context of human rights, peace and development. A debate within the Human Rights Council, by Christian Guillermet Fernández and David Fernández Puyana.

Latest ICIP Research publications

The second and third numbers of the collection ICIP Research have been recently published:

Building a regional framework in Central Asia between cooperation and conflict, edited by M. Campins Eritja and coordinated by A. Mañé Estrada

Conditions pour la consolidation de la paix en Côte d'Ivoire, edited by Rafael Grasa and with articles by Alfred Babo, Fahirman Rodrigue Kone, Gnangadjomon Kone, Mariatou Koné, N'Guessan Kouamé, Fofana Moussa, Séraphin Néné Bi Boti and Azouma Yao.

Antoni Pigrau a jurist on the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal

Antoni Pigrau, ICIP board member and Professor of Public International Law and International Relations at the URV, participated as a jurist on the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal in the session on the Canadian mining industry, which took place from May 29 to June 1 in Montreal.

This was the 40th session of the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal (PPT), a court founded in Italy in 1979 by the lawyer and senator Lelio Basso. In this session, some fifteen victims and experts from Latin America denounced, before a panel of jurists consisting of public figures from various countries, the human rights violations and environmental damage caused by Canadian mining companies supported by the government of Canada.

© Generalitat de Catalunya