Education and Social Capital in Ethnically Divided Societies: A Comparative Study of Rwanda and Guatemala

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Education makes a people easy to lead, but difficult to drive; easy to govern but impossible to enslave.  
– Henry, Baron Brougham (1778-1868)

Abstract

This paper stems from an endeavor to understand how social capital can be established between conflicted groups, with a goal of exchanging division for a cooperative drive toward national development. The ethically divided societies of Rwanda and Guatemala are used as cases to examine the role education systems perform on social capital. Through qualitative and quantitative analysis, I find that specific educational structures, pedagogical methods, and curriculum content impact the formation of social capital in each state; and therefore, also influence the potential for a nationally united people. Rather than assuming that Rwanda and Guatemala have reached a level of ethnic nonviolence and national identity, the following pages reveal gaps in the existing education systems that may contribute to ethnic divisions in the future. The comparative study also provides insight into the varied impact of direct and indirect education techniques.

Introduction

In the span of less than one year in Rwanda, a divide between two groups caused the death of nearly one million people. The deaths were not carried out because of one group’s actions, but because of their ethnicity – an innate quality that each of us is born into. Although we are familiar with the tragedy of Rwanda, it is not the only recent site of violence based on ethnicity. Throughout the world – especially in Central Asia, South America, and Africa – multiethnic societies remain violently divided. Beyond the human toll suffered as a result of these conflicts, the lack of national unity greatly effects state formation, diplomatic relations, and international business, making it a pertinent topic for scholars, policymakers, and developers. I
have taken personal interest in topics of group division, national unity, and an understanding of ‘the other,’ as I witness the effects of exclusive, rather than collective, national identity both internationally and in the United States. Social capital theory represents an approach to understanding the interaction between different groups. Such an understanding of how social capital can be fostered among divided groups may provide methods that turn ethnic prejudices into a cooperative, driving force for national development. This paper is an attempt to discover those methods.

A review of the literature, in an effort to discover how social capital is maximized for positive gain in an ethnically divided state, reveals a reoccurring theme of state institutions being linked to increased views of common good. I first came across real world evidence of this in small-scale systems such as the public infrastructure of wastewater management in Panajachel, Guatemala.¹ However, to make a cross-regional, comparative analysis that has broader implications, a more universal state structure was necessary. Further research led me to Stephen Heyneman’s work on social cohesion and education. Heyneman identifies education as one of “four pillars” that, when all working consistently, promote social cohesion in a society.²

Other institutional theorists, including Francis Fukuyama who claims that education has the “greatest direct ability to generate social capital”, specifically support the education component of Heyneman’s research.³ These theories outline an argument that becomes the foundation for this paper: that education is the most important factor in building social capital.


From there, what the following pages attempt to answer is specifically how education can build social capital, what methodology can be used to measure that impact, and whether that impact has implications in each of the case studies. Two multiethnic societies, Guatemala and Rwanda, are analyzed to provide a cross-regional comparison of developing states. These cases allow for an evaluation of how educational policies and structures impact the formation of national identity, while also revealing the complexity of this process and difficulty of measurement. However, in comparing the cases, this paper will argue that the institutional design, pedagogical methods, and curriculum content of an education system are strong indicators of social capital in each state.

The first section consists of a literature review that answers whether legitimate evidence exists to tie social capital developed from educational systems to impacts on ethnic relations. This review also provides the methodology, outlined in section two, which is used to move forward in analyzing the case studies. Sections three and four apply the methodology in a review of the case studies – Rwanda and Guatemala. I will conclude with a summary and limitations of the results.

**Support for the Connection Between Education and Social Capital**

Some have heard the story already – in 1999, 14 year-old Yaguine Koita and 15 year-old Fode Tounkara decided to search for something better than their Guinean lifestyle of poverty, conflict, and autocratic rule. They snuck into the landing gear of an airliner in route to Brussels from Conakry, Guinea, prepared for the bitter cold of 30,000 feet. Unfortunately, Koita and Tounkara did not survive their daring plot, and would never discover life in Europe. However, within their garments, they left behind a letter addressed to the, “Excellencies and officials of Europe.” That letter revealed the motives for their perilous plan and desire for an effective
education: “We suffer enormously in Africa. Help us. We lack rights as children. We have war and illness, we lack food … we have schools, but we lack education.”

Koita and Tounkara acknowledge an important distinction between having schools and having education, which is similar to what the research here reveals. It is more than just having schools; it is about how those schools are structured and what is taught within those schools that can result in positive effects on the very war and illness that the young Guinean men wanted to end. A thorough examination of literature in the field of social capital and democracy, along with an analysis of the two cases, supports the idea that the three educational variables discussed in this paper are linked to positive outcomes in multiethnic societies.

However, before social capital can be tied to education, it is important to discuss the definition of social capital and why it is so important. Various social scientists dating back to Alexis de Tocqueville have commented on the origins and understanding of social capital; however, two of the most modern analyses are provided by Francis Fukuyama and Robert Putnam. Putnam paints an idealistic outlook, suggesting that social capital is, “a set of ‘horizontal associations’ among people who have an effect on the productivity of the community.” He goes on to clarify these associations as being “networks of civic engagement.” Fukuyama, agrees that the existence of such associations creates the possibility for enhanced “trust and civil society.” However, he also acknowledges the potential of social capital to produce negative outcomes by isolating groups that are not part of the strong internal bond.

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Therefore, Fukuyama argues, for social capital to be a positive force in societies, multiple small groups must share common norms with other small groups. He calls this the "radius of trust." Further, Fukuyama demonstrates how national unity exists when the 'radius of trust' permeates through all aspects of society so that individuals can have multiple associations with a shared common goal. Given this explanation, the question arises, how can social capital be fostered within a state to expand the level of trust?

Although one study suggests education has a negligible effect on social capital, theories based on an institutional school of thought overwhelmingly support the idea that education can play the role of expanding social trust. In one such UNESCO report published in *Prospects*, authors summarize the significance of education, stating, "education is increasingly recognized as the early warning barometer by which ... conflicts can be measured. Wider social tensions or divisions are frequently reflected in the classroom, in teaching and in distribution of education resources. Analysis of the education sector ... can provide a ‘fragility’ lens through which to plan, manage and implement tolerant, inclusive, quality education programmes. These education programmes need to build resilience and social cohesion rather than creating division and conflict." The impact of education can be broken down into two main categories – what I classify as indirect and direct impacts. Indirect focuses on what Hilker identifies above as the equality of education ‘distribution.’ In other words, the structure and makeup of educational institutions

within a state. Direct impact stems from Hilker's acknowledgement that the actual classroom experience matters as well – better stated as the curriculum and pedagogy of a state's education system. Because indirect and direct are vague terms, further classification is necessary to define them.

When looking at indirect impacts – the institutional design of education systems – Heyneman points out that education systems have a history of physically bridging different groups. Dating back to the 1700s in Prussia, Frederick William I suggested that education access not be separated based on religious identity – in his case, the Protestants and Catholics living in Prussia. Instead, he insisted that the school be a place where individuals learn tolerance of private ideologies to foster the common good: "There are few lands in which all citizens have the same religion, and the question arises: is such unity to be forced or can one permit every one to think according to his own views? To this the answer must be that it is impossible to establish such unity... general tolerance alone guarantees the happiness of the state."  

This idea of the school being a place where, sometimes conflicting, identities merge has carried over in the purpose of education. In the 19th century throughout France, New England, and the Netherlands education continued to become more about 'attitudes and values' as opposed to learning specific skills. "Popular education was not simply to teach literacy," Charles Glenn says of the time period, "but to develop common attitudes and values considered essential to a society." Analysis of public education history is important because it provides evidence of how developing countries 300 to 400 years ago bridged societal differences – the same thing many states are struggling with today. The focus then was on "reorganizing" and "coordinating"

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existing private educational structures in a way that provided different backgrounds to be educated together. Through this process, Hyman and Wright concisely summarize, “children learn to think about what it is like to be another person.”

Further support for education having indirect impacts (via institutional design) on social capital is provided by Heyneman’s work on the functions of education. As noted earlier, Heyneman posits that all societies need four pillars to support social cohesion – one of them being education (the others are political, social, and economic). Within the pillar of education, Heyneman acknowledges core functions that provide students with an understanding of what the social contract of a state is and how to behave within that contract. These functions include: teaching the ‘rules of the game,’ providing a classroom experience similar to a state’s citizenship principles, providing equality of opportunity for all students, and incorporating the interests of various different groups while keeping in mind the common good. Many of these functions are more relative to direct impacts of pedagogy, which will be discussed later. However, the idea that an education should provide equal opportunity and incorporate multiple group interests implies an institutional design that brings individuals of diverse origins together – in essence, “decreasing the distance” between “cultural strangers.” Of course, this goal of more interaction between different groups can only be accomplished if the structure of an education system includes a diverse population and provides access to all students.

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Direct impacts, on the other hand, focus more on how pedagogy and curriculum affect the potential for ethnic conflict or cohesion in a society. Support for this argument is based on socialization theory. Coenders and Scheepers describe socialization theory as the idea that "educational institutions transmit norms, values, and models of behavior deemed to be appropriate in a given society."\(^{16}\) Essentially, this theory suggests that the education system is where citizens begin to understand what their role is in society, and how that role should be enacted. In political terms this is often referred to as learning the "rules of the game."

One way of learning these rules is through a pedagogy that mirrors them. William Galston’s research supports this argument, by acknowledging that the existence of democratic institutions alone is not sufficient. "Democracies require democratic citizens," he states, suggesting that citizens must acquire the necessary "knowledge, competences, and character."\(^{17}\) Galston notes that perceptions of democracy fall within a spectrum, raising questions about representative versus direct participation and civic loyalty versus civic dissent. Viewpoints on these debates can be shaped by pedagogic experiences, Galston claims: community-based, open-discussion pedagogy instead of teacher-led, rote learning leads to citizens who are more civically engaged and able to question authority.\(^{18}\) These varying pedagogy methods represent different ways of enacting Heyneman’s core purpose of education to create a classroom experience similar to citizenship principles and to incorporate the interests of multiple groups.

Beyond pedagogy, the actual curriculum also has an immense impact on ethnic relations. According to the literature, curriculum impacts are largely a result of how multiethnic societies


teach subjects such as history and social studies. Time and again, it is shown that accurate historical information is key for societies that have a divided past. Ronald Wilhelm suggests that a curriculum must not only be accurate, but that it must also allow the acknowledgement of ethnic differences, the questioning of national identity, and an active discussion surrounding these tensions. When these factors exist, he believes they promote counter hegemonic, democratic potential for multiethnic societies.\textsuperscript{18}

Aside from social studies and history, another curriculum method that is often discussed, and has specific effects on the case of Guatemala, is bilingual teaching. In places like Nicaragua, Bolivia, and Guatemala, bilingual education has provided enhanced access for students. Aside from access, the implementation of bilingual education also provides equal opportunity and enhances the sense of ‘the other.’\textsuperscript{19}

This literature review demonstrates how institutional design, pedagogy, and curriculum each have the ability to impact ethnic relations by bridging the literal distance between groups, providing a classroom experience similar to democratic ideals, and teaching students accurate and open information. However, at this point, it is important to recognize that education can just as easily support the reverse effect through the same methods. Sri Lanka and the former Yugoslavia are examples. In Sri Lanka, segregated into different schools, each ethnic group read a separate version of history starting in the 1950s. Sinhalese read of their historical entrapment by the Tamil, while the Tamil learned that national heroes were those who compromised with the


\textsuperscript{19} Wilhelm, “Columbus’s Legacy, Conquest or Invasion?” 173-194.
Sinhalese people. Undoubtedly, Sri Lanka suffered from ethnic conflict throughout the 1970s and 1980s.

Similar issues of historical curriculum existed in former Yugoslavia. In 1994, twelve year old Bosnians read in their textbooks that:

Horrible crimes committed against the non-Serb population of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Serb-Montenegrin aggressors and domestic chetniks were aimed at creating an ethnically cleansed area where exclusively Serb people would live. In order to carry out this monstrous idea of theirs, they planned to kill or expel hundreds of thousands of Bosniaks and Croats... The criminals began to carry out their plans in the most ferocious way. Horror swept through villages and cities... Looting, raping, and slaughters... screams and outcries of the people being exposed to such horrendous plights... Europe and the rest of the world did nothing to prevent the criminals from ravaging and slaughtering innocent people.

Examples such as these show how education can have negative indirect (through segregation) and direct (through bias history curriculum) effects on a multiethnic society. Yet, these examples only reinforce my thesis that factors within education have impacts on the formation of social capital. From this literature, I specifically hypothesize that a combination of (x) factors including rote pedagogy, bias curriculum, and segregated institutional design have a positive correlation to (y) the potential for and length of ethnic conflict.

Methodology

The literature makes it clear that, through the institution of education, ethnic groups can be socialized to either appreciate the ‘other’ or feel a level of hierarchy between groups. However, what prior research does not provide is a comparison of specific factors within the education system that correlate to the level of ethnic tensions. Therefore, what

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I do in this paper is select major themes that emerged in the literature – institutional design, pedagogy, and curriculum – and perform a cross regional comparison of two multietnic societies that have witnessed conflict. Rwanda and Guatemala were chosen primarily because they are both developing states from different regions of the world that have endured major ethnic violence. The goal was to eliminate limitations that are specific to either Latin America or Africa. However, these cases are also comparable because they are at similar levels of democracy today, according to Freedom House ratings.

The approach includes collecting quantitative and qualitative data on the presence and level of the independent variables (rote pedagogy, bias curriculum, and segregated institutional design) before, during, and after ethnic conflict. The data will then be compared and evaluated to conclude whether relationships exist between the existence and/or level of the independent variables in each case.

**Rwanda: Explicit Discriminatory Policies**

Before analyzing the role Rwanda’s education system has in national unity and democratic articulation, the country must be briefly placed in its historical and ethnic context. Located in East Africa, Rwanda is made up of three major ethnicities – Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa. Prior to colonization, Tutsi kings maintained significant control. European colonizers, Germany and later Belgium, continued pro-Tutsi policies until the ethnic Hutu population revolted and gained independence of a Hutu Rwandan state in 1962. Throughout the immediate post-independence decades, hundreds of thousands
Tutsi either fled the country or were killed. Then in 1990, the Tutsi population organized as the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) in Uganda and enacted guerrilla warfare upon the Hutu regime, demanding return to the country and a power-sharing government. In 1994 the Hutu President’s plane was shot down, killing the president and sparking a genocide that wiped out close to a million Tutsi and moderate Hutu. Within five months, the RPF gained control and implemented a temporary government focused on unity. Throughout the late 1990s, ethnic conflict decreased and thousands of refugees returned. A new constitution was accepted in 2003, and several elections have occurred since. However, the 2011 Freedom House Report still classifies Rwanda as “not free,” citing issues of political choice in elections, strict anti-divisionism laws that silence political pluralism, violence against independent media, and minimal freedom to protest and organize.

_Institutional Design_

Throughout Rwanda’s history, the institutional design of education fluctuated depending on the political group in power. Pre-conflict information dates back to colonization when the education system in Rwanda was dominated by pro-Tutsi policies. At places like Astrida College, Tutsi made up 80-85% of the school despite being only 10-15% of the national population. The Belgians also issued “ethnic” cards that categorized individuals and prevented movement among groups. This design resembles a


top-down approach by the state that provided educational advantages to the Tutsi.

However, after the Hutu-led independence movement, control of the education system began to shift. The Hutu implemented what they considered “free and obligatory education.”25 From 1975-1993, there were signs that this was working at the primary level, as aggregate enrollment rose at a rate of 3.5%.26 But, access to education was not equal, and many rural, poor Rwandans (read Tutsis) were not able to attain public schooling. This lack of diverse ethnic makeup within schools was likely the result of an ethnic quota policy implemented by the Hutus in 1962. At the time, Tutsis represented 9% of the overall population; therefore, the policy stipulated that Tutsi could makeup no more than 9% of students within a school, clerks in the civil service, or employees in any sector.27 This policy led to intense discrimination and even massive purges of the Tutsi population from schools. It worsened in the Second Hutu Republic, and statistics show that Tutsi students had proportionally low representation.

Today, the education system in Rwanda is made up of 1.5% private schools that enroll 0.7% of the total population – most of these schools are located in urban areas and serve the elite.28 The remaining schools, and therefore the majority, are under the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) in Rwanda. 71% of the MINEDUC schools are part

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25 Freedom House, 2011 Freedom in the World Country Report: Rwanda. (This was essentially a political statement without a strategic plan to implement the idea.)


28 World Bank, Education in Rwanda: Rebalancing Resources to Accelerate Post-Conflict Development and Poverty Reduction.
of a program called Libre subsidie, which are funded by the government but operated by non-government organizations/churches, including the Catholic SNEC program and Protestant CPR program.\textsuperscript{29} Post-genocide statistics are difficult to produce because ethnic identification was outlawed in the most recent constitution; however, the overlap of class and ethnic divisions is helpful to provide some analysis. One study suggests that there is near universal access to education in Rwanda today.\textsuperscript{30} But, Hilker’s research points out that the number of students who complete higher levels of post-primary and secondary education is similar to the level it was at pre-genocide.

Regardless, concern remains that access may be skewed towards the Tutsi because of their wealth and power in major cities such as Kigali where the education system is superior. It is widely believed that when the Tutsi returned to the country they flocked to Kigali and gained powerful institutional positions while the Hutu remained in rural, impoverished locations – ultimately creating an overlap of ethnic and class divides.

This overview demonstrates how the institutional design of education in Rwanda before genocide, included policies that were incongruent with methods the literature demonstrated to bridge group divides. Specifically, the ethnic quota policy implemented by the Hutu did not allow for students to be educated together, or for equal opportunity to be realized. Beyond the research already cited, there is also a study relating specifically to Rwanda that classifies this ethnic quota policy as structurally exclusive, something Thyne argues has a direct effect on ethnic conflict. Through expansive quantitative analysis,


Thyne produces a model that connects equal education access to, “higher opportunity costs” for rebels and acts of peaceful protest as opposed to expression of grievances through violent means. Therefore, it is possible that structural education exclusion is connected to why the, “majority of militia who carried out the genocide were unemployed, uneducated youth.” Although inconclusive, the fact that the pre-conflict structural setup of education in Rwanda clashed remarkably from the literature’s findings makes a compelling case that this factor had an effect on the genocide that killed so many.

**Pedagogy**

Shifting to direct impacts, accounts of the pedagogic style of schools in Rwanda prior to genocide are also indicative of conflict. These accounts suggest practices that include ethnic identification, segregation of the classrooms based on ethnicity, bias access to national exams, and violent punishment. Research also denotes a teacher-focused style that promoted “rote learning” over “critical thinking,” – a practice that parallels the behavior of genocide executors who were “obedient or conformist,” to the state. Muhimpundu argues that this top down, didactic education approach resulted in a “responsibilisation” of the state and “deresponsibilisation” of the people, another factor that promotes the idea of authoritarian state actor and a submissive citizenry.

Post-genocide pedagogy does not appear to be significantly different, which may be

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characteristic of many post-conflict states. As stated earlier, any identification based on ethnicity or discussion of ethnic differences is not allowed in Rwanda. Hilker attributes this to the idea that post-conflict societies function in an atmosphere of intense apprehension as a means to avoid further ethnic tensions. This also indicates that there is a lack of open discussion allowed within Rwandan classrooms today. This teaching approach falls short of fulfilling many of the functions of an effective educational institution that were outlined in the literature, including a failure of the education system to demonstrate democratic principles.\(^{34}\)

This assessment of pedagogy demonstrates that the practices in Rwanda before ethnic conflict were unable to pass along the core values of an open democracy via the socialization process. Instead, the rote learning techniques may have contributed to less civic engagement and an inability to question authority (according to Galston). And, following the genocide, pedagogy in Rwanda remains the same, which could have implications on existing social capital.

*Curriculum*

Curriculum methods in Rwanda also provide warning signs in regard to education and social capital. An analysis of history textbooks from the pre-genocide era reveals a bias colonial stereotype, and interpretations that likely empowered ethnic division. The text portrayed Tutsi as outsiders who were supported by the colonial powers in surmounting the Hutu and Twa.\(^{35}\) This form of curriculum did not incorporate all of the

\(^{34}\) This failed pedagogy style can be attributed to the state's decision to outlaw ethnic identification and silence any discussion of ethnicity.

interests of an ethnically diverse nation.

Immediately after the genocide, a moratorium was placed on teaching History until agreements could be reached on how to represent the ethnic history of Rwanda. In 2003 History was still not being taught and a research group from the University of California, Berkeley, in collaboration with non-government organizations, developed a curriculum that focused on open discussions of the country’s ethnic past. Despite broad support and evidence that the curriculum was effective in Rwandan schools, the Rwandan government refused to accept the program’s version of history. Instead, in 2010, the government began distributing its own History textbooks. The Rwandan government’s version of the country’s history places significant blame on colonial powers and may be harmful, in that it generates a feeling of injustice among ethnic groups who are unable to discuss their past pain. New calls for action suggest a History curriculum that provides peace strategies and conflict resolution, ideas that would essentially teach the ‘rules of the game’ in a democratic society.

Another curriculum factor that may produce inequalities among ethnic groups in Rwanda moving forward is a recent change in the trilingual approach. Prior to 2008, students were taught in Kinyarwanda through the fourth grade, at which time parents chose whether their students would continue in French or English-taught education. Many Tutsi who returned from Anglophone countries sent their children to English schools, while the Hutu that remained in Rwanda sent their children to Francophone schools. However, the 2008 law now mandates that all schools after the fourth grade use

English as the language of instruction. This raises concern that the Tutsis with advanced English skills will have an unfair advantage, as Hutu parents may choose not to continue their children’s education past the fourth grade.

Curriculum is highlighted often in discussions of how to shape educational systems. This is not surprising, as it is usually considered the most direct method to inculcate young students with a bias interpretation of facts. It is also no revelation then, that Rwanda has a record of misconstruing history. Students experienced pervasive anti-Tutsi text in a classroom environment that did not allow them to dispute credibility. And following genocide, curriculum has been one of the most debated factors throughout the reconciliation process.

**Guatemala: Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Access Inequities**

Guatemala is a Central, Latin American country that was conquered by Spain in the 1500s causing damage to the native population. In the mid-1800s the land officially became the Republic of Guatemala, and several years of dictatorship, foreign intervention, guerrilla insurgencies, and military coups occurred. From 1960 until 1996, Guatemala suffered from a civil war that killed over 200,000 people, mostly indigenous. Today Guatemala is considered an electoral democracy, conducting generally free and fair elections despite recently being plagued by drug violence and corruption. Although it appears free constitutionally, Freedom House only considers Guatemala “partly free,” citing concerns of the press being mostly private and censored at times, discrimination against indigenous religious practice and domain, child labor issues, and government
intimidation among assembling groups.\textsuperscript{37}

Distinction of ethnic identity in Guatemala is vaguely classified as either indigenous or non-indigenous. For this analysis, indigenous includes the multiple Amerindian populations, including the Mayan, who maintain aspects of their native culture. Non-indigenous identity is often called ‘ladino,’ and includes those individuals with Spanish background who have adopted the Western characteristics. Tensions between these two groups have evolved, especially since the 1970s when indigenous consciousness and identity began to intensify. At that time the indigenous people, with the help of the Catholic Church, began to demand voice for rural, agricultural, working populations. Then, in the 1980s guerrilla organizations began representing the marginalized – a battle that some indigenous populations supported while others did not. Finally in the 1990s, Mayan identity appeared to form more concretely with the signing of the Agreement on the Identity and Rights of the Indigenous Peoples. Today the indigenous groups make up around 37\% of the population and the non-indigenous represent 63\%.\textsuperscript{38} As with Rwanda, class and ethnicity are largely crosscutting in Guatemala where 76\% of the indigenous population is considered poor as opposed to 36\% of non-indigenous people.\textsuperscript{39}

\textit{Institutional Design}

Before beginning an analysis of any independent variables, it is important to note


that the nature and length of conflict in Guatemala was much different than in Rwanda. Because of this, the evaluation of time periods before, during, and after is fluid and roughly based on the dates mentioned above.

Beginning in 1965 with a new constitution, the institutional design of education in Guatemala became focused on ‘integrating’ the indigenous and non-indigenous populations; however, this essentially meant a Castilianization of the indigenous people. Spanish became the official language and education became the central state institution utilized to create Guatemala’s new national identity. The Ley Orgánica de Educación also became law in 1965, specifically stating that the “incorporation of [Indians] into the educative process will be considered a national interest.” Although there is not significant data on the ethnic makeup of schools throughout Guatemala during this time period, one analysis stated that the 1965 policies were the first of many steps to educate indigenous and non-indigenous students together.

As conflict increased throughout the 1970s, a time when only half of the population had access to primary education, Guatemala implemented a new bilingual education system known as PRONEBI. The differences in this program were mainly curricular and pedagogic, which will be discussed later. However, this new institutional design had a goal to increase access and attendance among the rural, indigenous groups. While it is noteworthy that Guatemala was taking steps to address issues of unequal access, the


42 John Edwards, Education and Poverty in Guatemala, 3-71.
scope of the program was not realized right away, as 80% of the population still attended non-PRONEBI schools.\textsuperscript{43} And, because non-PRONEBI schools were not focused on bilingual education, they were likely composed of mostly non-indigenous youth.

Since the decrease in ethnic conflict, there have been significant expansions and changes in the educational design to address existing issues. PRONEBI (and other forms of bilingual schools) have expanded from 40 schools in the 1980s to nearly 800 today.\textsuperscript{44} And while this increase has meant more indigenous people have access to education, there is still tension about whether the bilingual approach is working toward a cohesive national identity or simply as an act of ethnocide. In 1994 a new education system known as PRONADE was also implemented as a supplemental attempt to increase access to rural communities. One study on the effectiveness of PRONADE credits the new program for significantly increasing education coverage in Guatemala.\textsuperscript{45}

However, access to education is an ongoing problem in Guatemala, which is reflective in the 31.3% illiteracy rate – one of the highest in the Latin America region.\textsuperscript{46} From the 1970s to 1990s, primary education access did rise from 50% to 74%, but that still leaves Guatemala behind other low to mid-income countries in the region. When that lack of access is broken down into class and ethnicity, the level of inequity is clear. At


\textsuperscript{45} Patrick McEwan and Marisol Trowbridge, "The achievement of indigenous students in Guatemalan primary schools," 61-76.

the primary level, disparity between the two groups is not prevalent. However, at the secondary level, 41% of non-indigenous people within the age range attend school compared to only 18.7% of indigenous people. One reason for this may be that public expenditures on secondary education are less than 10%, thus private schools fill the void and limit access for the extreme poor.47 Another reason for low levels of indigenous completion may be attributed to a Mayan cultural issue. “Indigenous students and their families may be less sanguine about the future payoffs of schooling,” Jeffery Marshall proposes, “perhaps because cultural and/or physical isolation reduces access to urban labor markets.”48 He goes on to describe that indigenous families are primarily rural and students feel an obligation to return to the farm after completing primary school to help the family farm. Regardless of the reason, what this data reveals is that access to education, especially post-primary, is skewed considerably toward the non-indigenous ethnic population.

Further, the PRONADE program that focuses on rural education creates an increased dichotomy between these two populations. PRONADE, which only exists at the primary level, is made up mostly of the lowest two quintile groups of economic income – groups that are significantly indigenous.49 Although the PRONADE does increase access to an underserved population, its design also prevents ethnic and class groups from interacting – a problem that is counteractive to social capital.


This evaluation shows that, unlike in Rwanda where the institutional design was explicitly segregated, Guatemala has focused on a policy of integration even before conflict existed. Bilingual education is a positive attempt to educate the two ethnic groups together and instill a common set of values and beliefs. However, some would argue that the impact of this approach has actually been to wipe out the indigenous culture. And, the data here shows that equal access remains a persistent pitfall of education in Guatemala. The question, though, is whether the low number of indigenous students is a result of institutional design or simply Mayan cultural beliefs.50

Pedagogy

There is minimal research available on the pedagogy in Guatemala in the years leading up to ethnic violence. However, when looked at critically, there is information suggesting that there may have been a complete lack of communication between teachers and students in some schools. The reason for this is because indigenous, Mayan children were entering classrooms that were predominantly led by Spanish teachers. The result was a cultural and linguistic divide that left indigenous students as, “simply spectators, which resulted in an absolute lack of interest in school on the part of those being educated, as well as the parents.”51 Essentially what this created was rote, teacher centered pedagogy – at least for the indigenous students.

During the period of ethnic conflict in Guatemala, the new bilingual PRONEBI

50 This study does not include enough data to strongly discredit the Mayan cultural influence. However, the study does indicate (as demonstrated in the Guatemalan pedagogy section) that indigenous parents and community leaders have supported the PRONADE model. Therefore, the right institutional design and pedagogy style may override cultural barriers.

system included elements that should have prompted a shift toward open-discussion
formats and critical thinking. However, the PRONEBI curriculum was also significantly
more counter-hegemonic than traditional schools, which left teachers afraid to be as
detailed as the program encouraged for fear of retaliation during the already tense period.
Therefore, teachers continued to present the material in rushed, didactic style so that
many students would not actually grasp the counter-hegemonic content. This happened
despite the fact that PRONEBI textbooks included exercises, like the excerpt below, that
prompted student discussion about the Spanish invasion: “Talk with the children about
the reasons why the indigenous leaders resisted the invasion”52

Since the period of intense ethnic conflict, Guatemala’s community based
PRONADE model has provided an encouraging pedagogic method. There is growing
support, especially in developing countries, for an education that helps students
understand their communities. Marshall acknowledges such programs as a, “policy
initiative that provides a natural arena for more dynamic influences on quality.”53 Despite
issues of diverse population makeup, PRONADE’s pedagogic style meets Heyneman’s
four criteria for effective education systems. When it comes to teaching the ‘rules of the
game,’ teachers of PRONADE schools place emphasis on civic engagement and social
studies. They also create a classroom experience that is consistent with citizenship
principles by utilizing small groups and cooperative learning more than other

52 Ronald Wilhelm, ”Columbus’s Legacy, Conquest or Invasion? An Analysis of Counterhegemonic Potential in
53 Jeffery Marshall, ”School Quality and Learning Gains in Rural Guatemala,” Economics of Education Review, no.
techniques.\textsuperscript{54} PRONADE, although utilized primarily by poor communities, promotes equal opportunity of access and incorporates the interests of many different groups. The COEDUCAs component of this program also involves community leaders and parents in the educational institution. When interviewed, parents expressed confidence in the PRONADE school and felt a sense of responsibility for its operation.\textsuperscript{55} Evidence like this supports the ability of the PRONADE structure as a system that promotes an idea of the citizen responsibility of participation in the community. The downfall is that this system does not extend beyond primary level, and therefore, the pedagogic style that promotes democratic principles may not carry over to the crucial years when students are still learning their role as citizens.

This overview of pedagogy in Guatemala demonstrates that the PRONEBI program was well intentioned, but teacher fear limited the actualization of an open-classroom environment that parallels Galston’s researched instruction technique. However, the current PRONADE model in Guatemala is consistent with the literature’s proposals for a pedagogy that instills the meaning of citizenship. It includes components that promote civic knowledge and community engagement, and it maintains broad support from parents and other local leaders.

\textit{Curriculum}

When analyzing the variable of curriculum, history and bilingual teaching are the most important factors in Guatemala. Prior to conflict, when integration of the two ethnic

\textsuperscript{54} US Agency for International Development (USAID), \textit{Meeting EFA: Guatemala PRONADE, Case Study} (Washington DC: Educational Quality Improvement Program, 2007).

groups became a national priority, it was mandated that Spanish be taught at all levels of school. This bilingual approach was meant to allow local Mayan languages to persevere, while also beginning the process of creating one common language (Spanish) for all Guatemalans. Issues arose from the Spanish mandate though, including a lack of effort by Spanish teachers – one analysis suggests that they found the Spanish language more important and chose to only teach that curriculum.  

During the period of conflict, there are reports that suggest a stark difference in history curriculum between the PRONEBI and non-PRONEBI schools. Ronald Wilhelm produced a study that analyzed practices in the two different programs. Wilhelm’s findings indicate that 80% of Guatemalan elementary students were being taught in non-PRONEBI schools, which promote, “romanticized images of pride in the pre-Colombian Maya culture,” and “positive images of the Spanish as bearers of civilization to the indigenous population.” In contrast to this curriculum, PRONEBI schools highlight Mayan social values and distinguish between the acts of ‘conquering’ versus ‘invading.’ In Wilhelm’s interviews with PRONEBI teachers, one suggested that it is important to teach that the Spanish goal was to invade – a strategic process that was not “en buena forma (in good form).” The same study notes that Mayan scholars, who highlight the social values and peacefulness of the indigenous people, created the PRONEBI curriculum. An excerpt from this program describes the indigenous as having the attitude

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57 Ronald Wilhelm, "Columbus's Legacy, Conquest or Invasion?" 181.

58 Ronald Wilhelm, "Columbus's Legacy, Conquest or Invasion?,” 185.
of, “If I do good, good I expect. If I do evil, evil I expect.”

Today, the Spanish elite controls the curriculum in Guatemala, which indicates that there is likely a bias interpretation being taught in relation to ethnic and national identity. Further, only 0.8% of the non-indigenous population receives a bilingual education while 33.3% of the indigenous population learn two languages. This supports critics of the bilingual program who suggest that it is simply a steady process of ethnocide – the indigenous people are being forced to learn Spanish, but the non-indigenous are not being taught Mayan culture.

In summary, the bilingual curriculum push in Guatemala may be an instrument of ethnic domination under the disguise of an integrative policy. Over the years, there is evidence that aspects of the program were ignored and focus was given to the Spanish language over the Mayan languages. Aside from this, the non-bilingual schools (which nearly all non-indigenous students attend today) instill a skewed historical curriculum that exalts the Spanish while leaving out positive aspects of Mayan culture. As stated earlier in this case analysis, the bilingual program is a positive approach to access and equal opportunity. However, it is unlikely that the curriculum issues listed above provide an accurate sense of the ‘other.’

Overview of Findings

To be explicit, it is beneficial to summarize the findings and what they indicate in regards to education and social capital. It is clear that both cases implemented educational policies that yielded negative outcomes on social capital. In Rwanda the shortcomings

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were less ambiguous – ethnic quota policies, rote learning, segregated classrooms, and bias curriculums. Each of these variables relate to a failure for strong social capital to develop among the Hutu and Tutsi population. There is no indication that the two groups were forming associations or participating in civic actions together. Instead, accounts of the genocide suggest that the Hutu and Tutsi were so divided that individuals often killed their own family members who were of different ethnic background.60

Weaknesses in Guatemalan education policies were less overt, and possibly unintentional. However, there were still issues of access, failed bilingual design, and differences in history curriculum that correlate to low levels of social capital among the indigenous and non-indigenous groups.

This paper suggests that if proper educational variables were in place several years prior to the conflicts in each case, social capital would have developed among the divided groups and allowed for mutual understandings of each other, the state’s past, and a common idea for the state’s future.

Conclusion

In Rwanda and Guatemala – and several other countries today – ethnic identity remains a persistent issue that permeates relations within a state and can cause violent conflict, generational divides, and unequal power distribution. Yet, in some multiethnic states, such as the United States, various groups are able to coexist (comparatively) peacefully.

What makes this possible? The literature in this paper shows that the institution of

60 Philip Gourevitch, *We wish to inform you that tomorrow we will be killed with our families* (New York: Picador, 1998).
education has the ability to impact social capital. However, an analysis of the case studies provides more depth on how three specific factors – institutional design, pedagogy, and curriculum – are manipulated, and have potential effects on ethnic cohesion. The findings in Rwanda suggest that, prior to conflict, all three independent variables were explicitly counter to ideal social capital-building practices outlined by scholarly research. Today in Rwanda, pedagogy and curriculum (both direct educational impacts) continue to have aspects that negatively affect the ability for a common national identity to exist. In Guatemala, the variables were much less distinct. And, in fact, the government openly recognized education as a tool to integrate the two ethnic groups. Today, access to education (an indirect educational impact) remains the most significant setback in Guatemala.

These findings pose several potential implications. First, the information is important because it demonstrates how two multiethnic states used similar and varying educational tactics to influence how citizens formed national identity. From this, scholars and policymakers are able to draw comparisons while also grasping the potential hidden effects of a well-intentioned program. For example, states often manipulate education factors, such as curriculum, with a stated goal of reducing ethnic tension. We see this in Rwanda today, where genocide content is limited to prevent ethnic tensions from resurfacing. But, limiting the flow of information will only reinforce power in the dominant ethnic identity while slowly eliminating minority identities. This point illustrates why all three variables must be implemented simultaneously, so that civil discussions (pedagogy) of a contentious past (curriculum) can occur in classrooms that are populated by an equal representation (institutional design) of ethnic identities.
The comparative analysis also provides insight into the difference between direct and indirect impacts of education. In Rwanda, the educational policies that most overtly impacted the formation of social capital (and continue to do so) were direct. While institutional design in Guatemala continues to pose issues of equal access. This idea needs further research, but it could indicate that direct impacts cause a deeper, psychological feeling of the ‘other’ while indirect impacts limit access, and therefore leave a sense of unfamiliarity with the ‘other’ – but not necessarily a deep hatred.

This paper provides strong support for the idea that education impacts social capital by demonstrating how specific factors influence the socialization process. However, critics would take aim, suggesting that other factors also influence ethnic relations. While I do not discredit the potential for other determinants, I think education has the greatest impact. For example, family values are often considered a stronger influence on how one perceives ethnicity. But, if the proper educational policies are in place, ethnic discrimination learned from the home can be broken down over time in school.

It is important to realize, though, that the goal here is not to support education as a tool that is utilized to forge a new national identity. Too often education serves as a catalyst for the dominant ethnic identity to establish itself and slowly eliminate existing cultures for the sake of a singular identity. What this research proposes instead, is for state sponsored education to be a place where diverse ethnic groups learn an understanding and appreciation of each other’s backgrounds and beliefs. This education experience will eliminate biases instead of cultures, and promote national development alongside coexistence.

Still, this paper does include limitations. It would be naïve to assume that education
is the only factor that contributes to low social capital between ethnic groups. More time and resources could have allowed the inclusion of other factors such as international organizations, nongovernmental organizations, foreign indebtedness, and the nature of humanity in the face of desperation. Also, a more clear design, data on both cases from a single source, and the inclusion of a case that did not undergo conflict could have provided more causal conclusions.

With this in mind, there is immense potential for further exploration of this topic. Specifically, another component of research that analyzes how post-conflict educational policies affect long-term democratic outcomes could provide policy advice for reconciliation processes. A more in-depth analysis of the governmental structure – who the government is and how it evolved throughout time – would also be beneficial for further study.

Aside from further research, my hope is that this paper will generate discussion on the power of effective educational policy – specifically, the role education serves in an integrative process towards strong social capital and national development. Yaguine Koita and Fode Tounkara were smart for their young age, as they understood that schools must be more than buildings, they must be educational institutions. These institutions, when structured and utilized appropriately, can directly and indirectly effect the buildup of social capital in a society torn apart by cultural differences.
**Bibliography**


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